

**FIGHTING FOR A FUTURE:  
POSTWAR MIGRATION POLICY AND THE DISPLACED OF THE  
BRITISH ZONE (1945-1951)**

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A DISSERTATION

in

History

Presented to the Faculties of the Central European University  
In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Vienna, Austria

2020

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## Technical Notes

This study has recorded any references to individual DP names as they originally appear in the primary source documentation. In the case of Polish Displaced Persons, individual Care and Maintenance files (CM/1 forms) do not typically include original Polish diacritics. The body of the text attempts to correct any misspelt proper nouns by respecting original spellings. For instance, while regularly omitted in official source bodies, Polish DP individual and place names that would have included a *kreska kośna* (stroke) in the letter *l*, are written as such.

All translations in this text are the author's, unless otherwise indicated.

## ABSTRACT

Far from sites of bare survival, the Displaced Persons (DP) camp universe that emerged at the end of the Second World War represented a lively world of debate and activity. Fundamentally, this thesis explores the interaction between migration policy and the migration strategies of those Displaced Persons (DPs) who populated the DP camp universe of Occupied Germany from 1945-1950. It demonstrates in particular how the policies of the British Zone impacted DPs' itineraries after 1945 and aims to highlight the structural factors that constrained the lives of postwar displaced persons, while examining the ways in which DPs own migratory strategies adapted to, negotiated and even challenged those constraints.

At the DP level, this thesis systematically compares the migratory experiences of Polish and Jewish DP communities. It examines how both communities made sense of displacement after 1945 and the ways in which DP nationalism may be said to have guided different DP communities' decision-making with respect to migration. As much as ethno-national distinctions gained currency in the DP camps, Polish and Jewish DP communities hardly constituted a unified or coherent group. Importantly, the systematic ethno-national comparison between Polish and Jewish communities offered in this study is also tested against the individual account. Particularly where resettlement abroad was considered, it is this project's contention that alternative identifications gained primacy and, to some extent, challenged notions of solidarity as DPs looked forward. As much as the experience of displacement is shaped by diverse structures, including—but not limited to—social class, gender, age and religion, so too were the imagined and realized visions of the future outside the displaced persons camps. Of central concern, therefore, is where it was, exactly, that DP *individuals* saw their futures, if anywhere, and how these visions were affected and adapted.

The flesh of this study are the Care and Maintenance Files (CM/1 Forms) of individual DPs, accessible through the records of the International Tracing Service (ITS) archive. Although official in setting, ITS records go a long way to evidencing evolving DP strategizing with respect to migration and are at the heart of this research as a body of sources not yet actively engaged with in scholarship on migration out of Displaced Persons camps.

While the past few decades have seen a steady stream of scholarship devoted to DPs in the aftermath of the Second World War, there is today a new wave of interest in chronicling the voices of the agencies and governments who came into contact with them and in particular, of the DPs themselves. In its exploration of the relationship between formalized collective pressure and individual migratory considerations, and its juxtaposition of the individual and the collective, this research offers a fresh analysis of the migratory experiences of Displaced Persons after the Second World War and what this can reveal about displacement more generally. While the life of the refugee was constrained by very real structural factors, displaced *subjects* with specific experiences sought to modify their circumstances by making choices and acting upon them.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Principal thanks must go to my supervisor, Carsten Wilke, without whom there would surely be no completed dissertation. I decided to pursue a Doctorate at CEU based on the possibility of continuing to work with Carsten. I sensed even at this time, that his supervision would be the decisive factor in ensuring that I crossed the finish line. It has been. His careful diet of encouragement and critique; his balancing of contact and space; his consistent professionalism and friendship have sustained both myself and this project from the start. Such a supervisor is rare and precious indeed. Carsten, it has been an immense privilege to have been your supervisee these past few years. Thank-you.

Over the course of my Doctoral journey I have benefited from engagement with a number of outstanding scholars and professors. To Vladimir Petrović, in particular, I am much indebted. Vlado allowed me to act as his Teaching Assistant for a fascinating course on conflict and justice at CEU. Since then, Vlado has served as an important inspiration to me: a true scholar and friend. My thanks to Philipp Ther for his lively classroom discussions and ongoing support. I am grateful to Miriam Rürup of the Institut für die Geschichte der deutschen Juden (IGdJ) and Denise Klein of the Leibniz-Institut für Europäische Geschichte (IEG) for the comments and encouragement on my work-in-progress as well as providing the freedom to pursue my writing independently. The chance to both work with and develop a friendship with Christine Schmidt of the Wiener Library in London and Budapest has been an utter delight. Christine represents precisely the kind of scholar, educator and mentor I hope one day to become. To the faculty of the CEU History Department, in particular Matthias Riedl, Marsha Siefert, Balázs Trencsényi and Constantin Iordachi, I thank for colouring my roaring 20's with debate, learning and an enduring curiosity for all things historical.

This research would not have been possible without the ongoing financial support of the Central European University, including a CEU Doctoral Fellowship, Summer School Grants, numerous Conference Travel Grants and a final Write-Up Grant. I am thankful to the many archives and libraries in Hungary, Poland, Germany and England that have enabled this research. I would like to single out the Wiener Library as having been particularly impactful in helping me navigate the records of the International Tracing Service and for first sparking my interest in the potential of its postwar collections so many years ago. Over the course of writing this Doctorate, it was important for me to invest in Yiddish language-learning. Words cannot express how wonderful were the many summers spent immersed in Yiddish language at the Centre for Yiddish Culture. I'd like to thank the Shalom Foundation for all their help in facilitating my journey with Yiddish in Warsaw, providing me with a lifelong love of the Yiddish language and entry into a diverse, fascinating and immensely warm community of Yiddishists world-wide. Back in Budapest, I have Szonja Komoroczy to thank for pushing me forward with Yiddish and for being so willing to answer all my questions. The POLIN Museum in Warsaw generously offered me an internship with their research Department in the summer of 2017, which helped me to think critically about the ways in which history can and should be used for the purposes of public education, debate and the preservation of memory. I'd like to thank the International Relations Department at ELTE University, Budapest, for inviting me to put into practice some of these ideas and for taking a chance on my course on displacement.

A Doctoral student is nothing of course, without her comrades-in-arms. To the many colleagues and friends met and made over the course of fieldwork, seminars, summer schools, workshops, conferences, exchanges, fellowships and more; thank-you for making the past few years so stimulating, so lively, and for keeping me on my toes. While there are too many of you to name individually, to have been able to engage with such an immensely rich tapestry of persons has been of immeasurable benefit to me. To my fellow CEU travellers: it goes without

saying that while this particular chapter may be closed and we inevitably find ourselves scattered across the globe, our friendships will endure, and you are always welcome where I am. No acknowledgement's section however could be complete without singling out the unwavering support of Alexandra Medzibrodzky. Szandra, we finally did it: together all the way! To my dearest friend Ági Kende, you know how much our friendship has meant: you have been a light in dark places and the shoulder upon which I have so often leaned. To my beloved "Academic Mamas": Réka Krizmanics, your solidarity and encouragement boosted me daily during our mutual write-up process; Ruth Candlish, your humour, energy and activism are infectious (you're next!); Ashley Mears, your solidarity, empathy and unique understanding was a lifeline to me here in Belgrade; and finally, Ljiljana Pantović, for the countless cups of coffee and always knowing just what to say. To my friends Stephanie Siwec, Lauren Stephens, Nirvana Siljnović, Mihailo Šuljagić and Mike Morris in particular, thank-you for all the words of encouragement and offers of help along the way.

To my mother-in-law, Dusica Bojović, thank-you for all your ongoing support and for bringing so much laughter into our lives. My father-in-law, Bajo Bojović, passed away suddenly only a few months before submitting this PhD. He was one of the kindest, most generous men I have ever known. I hope always to make you proud, Bajo. To my parents, Angela and Nicholas Bayley, I owe an immense debt. Your unfailing belief in my capabilities has provided me with a solid bedrock of confidence that has always kept me moving forward, even as fear and doubt loomed overhead. The example you set guides me in all things. To my siblings, Phoebe, Lucy and Jeremy, I look forward to the day we Bayley's can raise a glass together again soon: wherever in the world that may be.

Of course, I became a parent myself two years ago, to the most beautiful, clever and incredibly fun little daughter. Mila Rosalie Bojović, you are my rhyme and reason. Thank-you for being so patient and good to your Mama. I love you so much. Finally, and most importantly,



I would like to thank my husband, Jakov Bojović, whose gentle patience and steadfast loyalty to his family knows no bounds. Jakov, here's to the past, to the present and more importantly, to the future. This thesis is dedicated to you.

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## INTRODUCTION

### **Introducing the displaced: Research question and scope of study**

When Allied forces entered the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in April of 1945, Polish-Jewish prisoner Chaim Strykowski weighed little more than 40 kilos. Under medical care in Belsen, Chaim recalls wondering, for the first in years, “what was I looking for now”? Liberation for Chaim, as for all survivors, meant having to adjust and adapt to new conditions. It was not long before Chaim was able to regain the strength to assess what he saw as his options for the future. One thing was certain; at a time when Allied forces were directing everyone “home,” 25-year-old Chaim did not want to return to his native Poland. At the same time, he was determined to leave German soil behind him. He thus found himself in the extreme situation of being unable to return and unable to stay, with little idea of what lay on the horizon. Similarly adamant to avoid an uncertain future in Palestine, Chaim set his sights on America, where distant relatives had pledged to help him emigrate. Rigid immigration policy, however, frustrated hopes of any swift departure from the DP camps. In his imagination, Chaim crossed the globe, thrown into a postwar landscape in which he was forced to find a place for himself detached from the regional and family backgrounds that had been destroyed by war. Having consistently weighed remaining in a DP camp against all available alternatives, only in 1950, a full five years post-liberation, was Chaim issued a visa for America.<sup>1</sup>

Far from representing sites of bare survival, the Displaced Persons (DP) camp universe that emerged at the end of the Second World War represented a lively world of debate and

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<sup>1</sup> JHI, 302/292 “Henry Strick/Chaim Strykowski,” 224ff. Chaim’s weighing of options grew increasingly hesitant: “I was scared to go to the United States, afraid I would have trouble adjusting. I thought that all Americans were so smart. How would I compete with them? [...] Here I come and what will there be left.” He began to consider alternatives, explaining; “I wanted to go to Australia, the second choice was Venezuela. I heard that in Venezuela you could come around and do some business. They had a lot of oil money. In Australia, I figured there is empty land. There will not be so much pressure to compete for a job because they will need people.”

activity. In this universe, DPs themselves attempted to burst out from their political restraints to develop explicit agendas both for themselves and for regions far outside the DP camps. The postwar world was one of continuity and shifts, full not of static outsiders, but of bodies of people negotiating and renegotiating their own place in the postwar world. DPs' strategizing out of displacement was in constant adaptation.

As the Allies moved further into Germany, millions of imported forced-labourers, concentration camp inmates and prisoners of war were freed from Nazi camps. To these millions were added nationals who flooded into Germany from a war-torn Eastern Europe, fleeing continued conflict at home, Soviet forces, or a spreading communism. Established in anticipation of the problem of homeless victims of war in Germany, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) identified 8 million civilians as Displaced Persons (DPs) in occupied Allied territory.<sup>2</sup> By April of 1946, 7 million had been repatriated to their countries of origin.<sup>3</sup> Of the "last million" that remained in the DP camps of Occupied Germany, approximately a third were in the British Zone.<sup>4</sup>

While the vast majority of DPs were Eastern European nationals, DPs communities were comprised of distinct national and ethnic groups. The largest among these was the Polish DP community, representing over two-thirds of the DP population of the British Zone. Although recorded in the British Zone as Polish, a growing Jewish DP community distinguished itself both physically, on the site of the former Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, as well as rhetorically. Joined in 1946 by Jewish "infiltrates" crossing into the DP camps from Poland "at the rate of several thousand a day," DP Jews fought for separate national

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<sup>2</sup> William I. Hitchcock, *The Bitter Road to Freedom: The Human Cost of Allied Victory in World War II Europe* (New York: Free Press, 2009), 215-217.

<sup>3</sup> George S. Marshall, "Concern Expressed on Resettlement of DPs; Statement by Secretary of State," Department of State Bulletin (July 27, 1947): 194-95.

<sup>4</sup> J. A. Tannahill, *European Volunteer Workers in Britain* (Manchester University Press, 1958), 26. The Allies after 1945, supported the division of Germany into four Allied occupied Zones, worked out by the European Advisory Council in 1943. Until a peace treaty was signed, individual military governments had responsibility for administration in their respective Zones. See Norman Naimark, *The Russians in Germany: A History of the Soviet Zone of Occupation, 1945-1949* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 9.

status.<sup>5</sup> While half of the displaced Polish community in Germany could be found in the British Zone, as a consequence of British authorities' refusal to formally segregate Pole from Jew, it sheltered only a tenth of the Jewish DP population at its height in 1947.

Deemed unrepatriable, uprooted DPs represented both the legacy of the war, as well as an enduring problem: where could they permanently settle? With military victory after World War II, came the right to assert the national principle that re-emplaced refugees, a project that continued even as the winds of a Cold War dictated a change in strategy, bringing with it fears of new enemy aliens. It was in this atmosphere that the first international agreements about refugees were concluded. The situation of the remaining thousands of displaced persons, unwilling or unable to go "home," coupled with a new emphasis on human rights protection, supplied the humanitarian basis for refugee policies whose emerging legal norms nonetheless remained overwhelmingly state-centred. An unusual paradox, still being grappled with today, was thus generated. The humanitarian norm of barring forced/involuntary repatriation to a place where any individual refugee could suffer persecution went hand-in-hand with the reinforcement of the right of the state—over the individual—to control its own borders and block recognition of a right to asylum.

It is well established that national belonging has its counterpart in the notion of alienage. Refugees, like war, are both generated by, and threaten states. Displacement, by definition, suggests rupture. Chaim represented the utmost uprootedness of refugeedom, "the instant when a person becomes a human being in general—without a profession, without a citizenship, without an opinion, without the deed by which to identify and specify himself—and different in general, representing nothing but his own absolutely unique individuality which, deprived of expression within an action upon a common world, loses all significance."<sup>6</sup> And yet, a

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<sup>5</sup> Hitchcock, *The Bitter Road*, 14-15.

<sup>6</sup> Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* [1951] (New York, 1973), 302.

separation from the complex of economic, political, socio-cultural and psychological elements that had previously made up the framework of existence, by no means entails separation from the capacity for thought and action. Stories like Chaim's draw attention to the fact that while it would be easy to conceive of DPs as powerless masses—orphans awaiting only the benevolence of a new state parent—consideration of evolving DP migration policy must simultaneously grapple with the extraordinary convictions and ability of displaced persons to attempt to chart their own course of out displacement. Both collectively and individually, DP communities expressed agency, reflective of their own migratory preferences and evolving strategies out of displacement. Decisions including which DP camp to register oneself and what information to provide upon arrival, represent but a few of the considerations that were reflective of—and could have bearing on—where the individual DP themselves saw their future beyond the DP camp and how this was negotiated with British authorities. Significantly, collective manifestations of DP agency could in turn impact migration policy.

Fundamentally, this thesis explores the interaction between migration *policy* and the migration *strategies* of those Displaced Persons (DPs) who populated the DP camp universe of Occupied Germany from 1945-1950. Crucially, it asks: what was the relationship between DP policy and individual choices, and how did this evolve over time? How was *pressure* exerted on choices, and how successfully? It aims to highlight the structural factors that constrained the lives of postwar displaced persons, while examining the ways in which DPs own migratory strategies adapted to, negotiated and even challenged those constraints. It demonstrates how the specific policies of the British Zone impacted DPs' itineraries after 1945. I focus on the British Zone of occupation and the period from 1945-51, during which time the Zone was host to thousands of DPs and a changing, vibrant and controversial DP politics.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Prominent DP historians Anna Holian and Gerard Daniel Cohen, among others, nominate 1951 as the year marking a point of closure in the postwar DP story. During this year, responsibility for the care of approximately 140,000 DPs was transferred from IRO to West German authorities, who were then tasked with absorbing these

While negotiation and fight are metaphors used regularly to describe the interactions between British authorities and the DPs, this dualism is also complicated in this study. The postwar period was characterized by ambiguous relationship between benefactor (the British administration) and those on the receiving end of aid (the DPs). However, while British authorities subjectively created the impression of enormous generosity towards DP populations—in which they were maintaining camps, providing food and helping refugees to think about their future—refugees themselves, on the basis of different political interests, cast themselves in opposition to British authorities and DP policy. A paradoxical situation was thus created in which British authorities believed that liberated DPs should be grateful as the recipients of ongoing aid; whereas DPs themselves often argued that aid was owed to them, and more. Far from benevolent benefactors, British authorities were increasingly viewed as antagonists refusing to allow the unlimited migration of Poles and Jews outside Germany, with the latter's migratory hopes focused on Palestine. As this thesis argues, policies often persisted even after encountering strong opposition and were sometimes adhered to even as experience and evolving conditions proved them unfeasible. In several cases, policy based on incorrect assumptions also produced unintended effects. As the theoretical considerations below make clear, analysis of the complex modes and models of interaction between actors after 1945 points to the difficulties of any strictly dualistic ontology of negotiation and fight.<sup>8</sup>

At the DP level, it systematically compares the migratory experiences of Polish and Jewish DP communities. How did Polish and Jewish DP communities make sense of displacement after 1945? How did these communities emerge within the DP camp universe, and in what ways were they reinforced by particular categories of belonging? Scholarly

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persons into German society. Anna Holian, *Between National Socialism and Soviet Communism: Displaced Persons in Postwar Germany* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011).

<sup>8</sup> I will make use of Pierre Bourdieu's conception of "negotiation," in which the social order is the outcome of a compromise, constantly renegotiated and culturally transmitted, between multiple interests, hegemonic and subaltern forces. See Anthony King, "Thinking with Bourdieu against Bourdieu: A 'Practical' Critique of the Habitus," *Sociological Theory* 18:3 (2000): 422.



literature has confirmed the centrality of ethnonational categories for DPs, but while DP nationalism may have played a central role in the positive affirmation of communal bonds—to what extent was it the driving force behind evolving migration strategies? The seeming emergence of political and national solidarity among DPs is a topic that has long interested postwar scholars and yet, few have examined the role either of these factors played in exciting DP imaginings of the future. Ties of solidarity and community however, emerged in complex interaction marked by historical and cultural conditions.<sup>9</sup> What visions of the future emerged within these DP communities, and how did they differ? How were these visions expressed and communicated? How were collective Polish and Jewish DP communities' strategies with respect to migration connected to wider political projects? What considerations guided different DP communities' decision-making? In what ways did an emerging postwar order determine options for different DP communities?

As much as ethno-national distinctions gained currency in the DP camps, Polish and Jewish DP communities did not constitute a unified or coherent group. In fact, particularly where resettlement was concerned, it is this project's contention that *alternative* identifications gained primacy and to some extent, challenged notions of solidarity as DPs looked forward. Displaced persons were people with qualitatively different causes behind their displacement. Adequate consideration of background is critical to any examination and understanding of their subsequently competing images about the future. It is thus critical to consider: what competing priorities and loyalties came to the fore as DPs negotiated their individual futures? How was family, network and dependency negotiated and balanced against migration policy? What forms of communal pressures were applied on competing individual projects as related to migration? It is the contention of this thesis that as much as the experience of displacement is

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<sup>9</sup> Bo Stråth, "Belonging and European Identity," in Gerard Delanty, Ruth Wodak and Paul Jones, eds., *Identity, Belonging and Migration* (Oxford University Press, 2008): 21.

shaped by diverse structures, including—but not limited to—social class, gender, age and religion, so too were the imagined and realized visions of the future outside the displaced persons camps. Of central concern, therefore, is where it was, exactly, that DP *individuals* saw their futures, if anywhere, and how these visions were affected and adapted.

This thesis views forced migration as a lived experience for which different individuals and displaced groups, as well as the international system within which they operated, had varied and competing ideas about the future. One of the central themes of this study is the destruction and dispersion of families by the war and postwar catastrophes, its effect on individual and collective migration strategies and on competing conceptions of future. After 1945, the family (with its promise of stability) was written into the collective futures offered by the Communist Party, the Zionist movement, and the broader capitalist system. Like memory, “future” is a construction collectively mediated by social institutions who vice versa, are defined through specific constructions of future supported by historical beliefs. As anthropologist Arjun Appadurai has argued, “conceptions of the future may play a far larger role than ideas of the past in group politics.”<sup>10</sup> Certainly, postwar migration and the experiences of Displaced Persons after 1945 highlight the clash of individual strategies with British social engineering and collective ideologies based on management of the future.

While the life of the refugee was constrained by very real structural factors, it is this thesis’ contention that displaced *subjects* with specific experiences sought to modify their circumstances by making choices and acting upon them. Considering refugees as human agents highlights both the constraints upon them and the options these made available, as well as individual experiences of displacement and, in particular, refugees’ own strategies out of displacement.

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<sup>10</sup> Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 145. The interest in the historicity of the conceptions of future was triggered by Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985).

In order to adequately address the research questions posed by this study, it is essential to consult and work with a variety of primary source documentation produced during the period. Migration out of the DP camps by the end of 1945 was carefully controlled and subject to heavy constraints. The many and varied restrictions and the broader geo-political space that was covered by migration in the postwar period are reflected in the records of the National Archive at Kew, London. This thesis works actively with relevant source materials therein, that tell the “official” story of postwar migration as it was believed (or at least, affirmed) by British authorities.

The flesh of the thesis, however, are the records of the International Tracing Service (ITS). A fascinating repository, this archive is a heady blend of “official” and “unofficial” source materials. Within the ITS, this study works overwhelmingly with what were known as Care and Maintenance Files (CM/1 Forms). A discussion on primary sources further into this Introduction clarifies the make-up of this particular repository and its contents. Although official in setting, ITS records go a long way to evidencing evolving DP strategizing with respect to migration. It makes clear that for so many who found themselves in DP camps at war’s end, individual choices had already been made and continued to be made. While limited, these source materials are at the heart of this research as a body of sources not yet actively engaged with in scholarship on migration out of Displaced Persons camps. Considered alongside official sources, ITS has the potential to corroborate or challenge official narratives as well as well as the arguments of secondary source scholarship that often presupposes—due either to the absence of, or limited nature of relevant primary sources—what DP voices *must* have been saying, instead of engaging with those voices. ITS represents an avenue through which research can attempt to reconstruct the experiences of large numbers of Europe’s displaced.

This thesis also attempts to work with what published DP memoirs are available, where these reflect on the DP experience in the British Zone. However, in cases where life history materials are incorporated into this study, the focus is on materials that were produced as close to the events as possible. Other forms of contemporary sources; published and unpublished, official and unofficial, have been consulted. These include a number of DP publications distributed in the camps themselves, international media surrounding the DP problem, as well as personal petitions and correspondences.

This thesis, then, is an exploration of the relationship between formalized collective pressure and individual migratory considerations, as they developed over time. More broadly, it proposes to offer a fresh analysis of the migratory experiences of Displaced Persons after the Second World War and what this can reveal about displacement more generally. While the past few decades have seen a steady stream of scholarship devoted to DPs in the aftermath of the Second World War, there is today a new wave of interest in chronicling the voices of the agencies and governments who came into contact with them and in particular, of the DPs themselves. I hope to join historians attempting to make DPs the key players in their own history, and in particular, to offer a fuller sense of who these DPs were, in an examination of where they came from and where *they* saw their futures in the post war era.

### **Literature overview and contribution to the field**

Research dealing with displaced populations at war's end—as old as the postwar period itself—lies, often uncomfortably, at the nexus of an incredibly diverse range of scholarly interest and disciplines. Consequently, scholarship that both includes and concentrates on DPs is vast and has developed along a number of different trajectories. Grounding further research in such a diverse body of secondary literature spanning multiple fields of enquiry requires identifying significant trends reflecting the various angles and historiographical traditions in which DP

history has been approached. It further requires identifying layers of analytic and geographic focus, as well as and the different and even competing source bodies that have informed research to date. While there is significant overlap, the following attempts to highlight the primary categories of organization and focus within a broadly defined “DP history” with an emphasis on the most prominent studies upon which this dissertation builds.

The bedrock of DP history includes a number of key, general studies published even *as* the “DP problem” emerged and was being grappled with by Allied administrations.<sup>11</sup> Firmly situating the DP case within the historiography of ethnic cleansing and forced migrations in Europe, Eugene Kulischer’s *Europe on the Move: War and Population Changes, 1917-1947*, published in 1948, and Jacques Vernant’s *The Refugee in the Post-War World* published in 1953, represent two early panoramic studies attempting to present an overview of a collective DP experience and analysis of the relevant social, cultural and political climate that created it.<sup>12</sup> These authors were among the first to problematize the idea of “liberation” by spotlighting the fate of DPs and the limitations and challenges of ongoing repatriation, resettlement and later absorption efforts.

Building on these early studies, a second wave of monographs concentrating specifically on the “DP moment”—almost exclusively limited to the period covering the mandates of UNRRA and the IRO, from 1945-1952—emerged in the 1980s. Well-known works including Mark Wyman’s *DP: Europe’s Displaced Persons*, Malcolm Proudfoot’s

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<sup>11</sup> There are a number of early studies of DPs from the period of the life of the DP camps: from 1945 until their closure in the early 1950s. Among the most significant include: Hannah Arendt, “The Stateless People,” *Contemporary Jewish Record*, 8:2 (1945), 137–153; David Boder, “The Displaced People of Europe,” *Illinois Tech Engineer*, 13:2 (1947); David Boder, *I Did Not Interview the Dead* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1949); Samuel Gringauz, “Jewish Destiny as the DPs See It: The Ideology of the Surviving Remnant,” *Commentary* 4:6 (1947): 501-509; Zorah Warhaftig, *Uprooted: Jewish Refugees and Displaced Persons after Liberation* (New York: American Jewish Congress and World Jewish Congress, 1946); Francesca Wilson, *Aftermath: France, Germany, Austria, Yugoslavia 1945 and 1946* (West Drayton: Penguin, 1947).

<sup>12</sup> These texts remain among the standard texts on the subject of postwar displacement, even as new publications emerged following the opening of key archives after 1989. They are distinguished still by their impressive scope and breadth of analysis. See Eugene Kulischer, *Europe on the Move: War and Population Changes, 1917–1947* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1948); Jacques Vernant, *The Refugee in the Post-War World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953).

*European Refugees* and Michael R. Marrus' *The Unwanted: European Refugees in the Twentieth Century*, continued to underscore the logistical and humanitarian challenges presented by the "DP problem," as situated in a wider European postwar context.<sup>13</sup> In recent years, historians Philipp Ther and Peter Gatrell have expanded still further understandings of the chaos of forced and voluntary population movements on the Continent since the First World War within a broad transnational perspective.<sup>14</sup> These authors describe how, as millions moved across the continent, the prospects for the lasting integration of refugees into postwar societies was shaped by high-level political deliberations around national borders and citizenship.<sup>15</sup>

In his hugely influential study of 2012, Gerard Daniel Cohen has made a powerful case for considering the "DP story," as well as the history of the International Refugee Organization (IRO) created in response to mass displacement at war's end, as a "a seminal case in the study of post-1945 international history."<sup>16</sup> Cohen's *In War's Wake* argues that the "battle of refugees"—international political negotiations over the fate of DPs—represented the first

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<sup>13</sup> Mark Wyman, *DP: Europe's Displaced Persons, 1945–1951* (Philadelphia and London: Balch Institute Press and Associated University Press, 1989); Michael R. Marrus, *The Unwanted: European Refugees in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985). The same year as Wyman's study was released, Stanislaus Stepień published another general DP study in German. The latter includes important surveys of DP publications that illustrate the sway that anti-communist credentials came to have in the camps and its effects on migratory options for DPs. See Stanislaus Stepień, *Der alteingesessene Fremde. Ehemalige Zwangsarbeiter in Westdeutschland* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 1989). Of the general DP works appearing in German, arguably the most influential remains Wolfgang Jacobmeyer's *Vom Zwangsarbeiter zum Heimatlosen Ausländer. Die Displaced Persons in Westdeutschland 1945–1951* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1985).

<sup>14</sup> Peter Gatrell, *The Making of the Modern Refugee* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2013); Philipp Ther, *The Dark Side of Nation States: Ethnic Cleansing in Modern Europe* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2014); Unsurprisingly, there is significant cross-over between studies focused on DPs and a growing body of literature dealing with the creation of refugees through forced removal, in which the DP episode is a significant chapter. See Philipp Ther and Ana Siljak, eds., *Redrawing Nations: Ethnic Cleansing in East-Central Europe* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield 2001); Pertti Ahonen et. al., *People on the Move: Forced Population Movements in Europe in the Second World War and its Aftermath* (Oxford: Berg 2008); Richard Bessel and Claudia B. Haake, eds., *Removing Peoples: Forced Removal in the Modern World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2009).

<sup>15</sup> John George Stoessinger, *The Refugee and the World Community* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1956); Tony Kushner and Katharine Knox, *Refugees in an Age of Genocide: Global, National and Local Perspectives during the Twentieth Century* (London: Frank Cass 1999); Peter Gatrell, *The Making of the Modern Refugee* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2013); Matthew Frank and Jessica Reinisch, eds., *Refugees in Europe, 1919–1959: A Forty Years' Crisis* (London: Bloomsbury 2017). For a recent and vast (1492 onwards) history of refugees in the context of several modern trends, including identity formation, state consolidation, and globalization, see Philipp Ther, *The Outsiders: Refugees in Europe since 1492* (Princeton University Press, 2019).

<sup>16</sup> Gerard Daniel Cohen, *In War's Wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

direct confrontation over political dissidents between the two emerging superpowers of the time. He concludes: “Human rights politics did not only hasten the end of the Cold War, as commonly assumed, but also led to its outbreak.”<sup>17</sup> Taken as a whole, such studies have gone a long way in analyzing wider global trends impacting upon the “DP politics” of the postwar period and the impact that mass displacement itself had, in turn, in determining the course of history.

In recent decades however, scholarly attention has turned to the limitations of a macro-level approach that often neglects both the DPs’ national particularities and voice. Undoubtedly, the most striking feature of contemporary literature dealing with displacement is the reproduction of state logic when it comes to refugees. Outside of biography, individual circumstances and experiences are seldom systematically considered. In literature—as in reality—the refugee represents a failure of the state system; a problem to be solved. Too broad a focus risks reducing displaced individuals themselves, in the words of Hannah Arendt, to “problematic stateless outsiders.”<sup>18</sup> It has been well established that the position of the thousands of individuals existing on the faultlines highlights both the power and limitations of the dominant belief that viable and stable nation-states in the postwar period should be ethnically homogeneous.<sup>19</sup> The unwanted players thrown awkwardly onto the wrong playing field, *where* and *who* these DPs were, has been shown to be in constant friction with views of broader social/cultural/political cohesion and security. Nevertheless, whilst this broader narrative of international politics makes an important contribution to our understanding of the period, the perspective of DPs is markedly absent. Macro-level analysis risks presenting a unified DP experience—a perennial problem of balancing structure and agency.

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 59.

<sup>18</sup> See Arendt, “The Stateless People.”

<sup>19</sup> Matthew Frank, “Reconstructing the Nation State: Population Transfer in Central and Eastern Europe, 1944–8,” in Jessica Reinisch and Elizabeth White, *The Disentanglement of Populations: Migration, Expulsion and Displacement in Post-War Europe, 1944–49* (England, Palgrave MacMillan, 2011), 34.

Fortunately, DP history has developed to incorporate a strong tradition of more specialized studies that have narrowed their lens on specific DP groups, with a focus on ethno-national divisions. A vein of research centered on Jewish displaced persons within DP scholarship is remarkably rich in both quantity and quality. Indeed, literature on Jewish DPs arguably constitutes a historiography within a historiography, characterized by its own internal development. Though far from neat, generally speaking, scholarship on the Jewish DP community may be broken down into two dominant strands: studies that focus almost exclusively on the Jewish DP camps and its inhabitants (with an emphasis on pro-Zionist politics and its impacts on the foundation of the State of Israel), and those that more concretely aim to situate the fate of Jews after the Holocaust within a longer history of German-Jewish relations.

The former strand has its origins in foundational texts including the oft-referenced article of 1947 from Koppel Pinson, *Jewish Life in Liberated Germany*, alongside Leo Schwarz's *The Redeemers: A Saga of the Years 1945-1952* from 1953.<sup>20</sup> Schwarz's work, in particular, was one of the first to explicitly argue that the existence of a Jewish "surviving remnant" (She'erit ha-Pletah, in Hebrew)<sup>21</sup> as well as the community's tremendous clamour for new life in the DP camps were in large part responsible for the creation of the State of Israel. Building on these early descriptions of Jewish life in liberated Germany, the last 80 years have witnessed a wealth of scholarship emerging overwhelmingly from the German, American,

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<sup>20</sup> Koppel Pinson, "Jewish Life in Liberated Germany," *Jewish Social Studies* 9:2 (April 1947); Leo W. Schwarz, *The Redeemers: A Saga of the Years 1945—1952* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Young, 1953). Both Pinson and Schwarz were themselves intimate with the subject. Schwarz was the director of the Joint Distribution Committee program in the American Zone of Germany from 1946-47 and worked closely with the organizations of the Jewish survivors.

<sup>21</sup> For a neat description of the meaning and origin of the term, see the Glossaire in Dalia Ofer, "Les Survivants de la Shoah dans L'historiographie Israélienne," *Revue d'Histoire de la Shoah* 188 (2008): 331; Dalia Ofer, "The Leadership of the Yishuv and She'erit Hapletah," in Yisrael Gutman and Avital Saf, eds., *She'erit Hapletah, 1944—1948: Rehabilitation and Political Struggle. Proceedings of the Sixth Yad Vashem International Historical Conference, Jerusalem, October 1985* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1990): 306–310.



British and Israeli<sup>22</sup> contexts.<sup>23</sup> Yehuda Bauer and Michael Brenner's individual monographs are distinguished by their convincing analyses of the scope of Jewish DP organizations' cultural, social activities as well as their pro-Zionist political orientation.<sup>24</sup> Studies that narrow their lens on individual Jewish DP camps and the leadership therein, including contributions from Yisrael Gutman, Angelika Königseder, Juliane Wetzel and Menachem Rosenhaft<sup>25</sup>—to name but a few—have continued to establish the dynamism and activism of Jewish life in DP camps across occupied Germany, with an ongoing emphasis on its political aspects and intimate relationship to Israel's founding in 1948. Three key works, published within two years of each other in the early 2000s, have significant bearing on the subject of the present study. Arie J. Kochavi's *Post-Holocaust Politics*, Ze'ev Mankowitz's *Life between Memory and Hope* and Hagit Lavsky's *New Beginnings* have established a standard macro-narrative concerning Jewish immigration in the postwar period that focuses almost exclusively on a

<sup>22</sup> Dalia Ofer's 2008 article, as cited above, has presented an excellent overview of the predominantly Hebrew-language literature emerging from the Israeli context, on Jewish DPs. She illustrates that in Israel, research—as with DP history more generally—has developed according to several criteria: the generation to which the researchers belong; their status as historians or as active participants in events after 1945; documents and sources, as well as different levels of analysis that focus on different actors. She stresses the impact of ongoing public debate in the State of Israel and the competing ideological positions of scholars devoted to this subject. Key DP monographs and studies in Hebrew include the contribution of Yisrael Gutman to the symposium on “She'erith hapeletah Vehakamat Hamedinah” (*She'erith Hapleitah* and the establishment of the State [of Israel]); Anita Shapira, “The Yishuv and the Survivors of the Holocaust,” *Studies in Zionism* (Autumn 1986): 277–302; Anita Shapira, “Historiah shel mithologiah: kavim le-historiografiah al odot ben-gurion vehashoah” (The history of a mythology—guidelines for an historiography relating to Ben-Gurion and the Holocaust), *Alpayim* 18 (1999): 33–53; Irit Keynan, *Lo nirga ha-ra'av: nitzolei ha-shoah ve-shlichei eretz yisrael: germaniyah 1945–1948* (And the hunger was not stanchd: Holocaust survivors and the emissaries from Eretz Yisrael: Germany 1945–1948), (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1996).

<sup>23</sup> Several of the general works on DPs already cited dedicate full chapters to the specificities of the Jewish DP case. Prominent works centred on Jewish DPs include Angelika Eder, *Flüchtige Heimat: Jüdische Displaced Persons in Landsberg am Lech 1945 bis 1950* (München: Kommissionsverlag UNI-Druck, 1998); Idith Zertal, *From Catastrophe to Power: Holocaust Survivors and the Emergence of Israel* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Avinoam J. Patt and Michael Berkowitz, eds., *We Are Here: New Approaches to Jewish Displaced Persons in Postwar Germany* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2010).

<sup>24</sup> Yehuda Bauer, *Flight and Rescue: Brichah* (New York: Random House, 1970); Yehuda Bauer, “The Initial Organization of the Holocaust Survivors in Bavaria,” *Yad Vashem Studies* 8 (1970); Michael Brenner, *After the Holocaust: Rebuilding Jewish Lives in Postwar Germany*, trans. Barbara Harshav (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997); Michael Brenner, *Geschichte des Zionismus* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2002).

<sup>25</sup> Yisrael Gutman and Avital Saf, eds., *She'erit Hapleitah, 1944–1948: Rehabilitation and Political Struggle. Proceedings of the Sixth Yad Vashem International Historical Conference, Jerusalem, October 1985* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1990); Angelika Königseder and Juliane Wetzel, *Lebensmut im Wartesaal: Die jüdischen DPs (Displaced Persons) im Nachkriegsdeutschland* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1994); Menachem Z. Rosensaft, ed., *Life Reborn: Jewish Displaced Persons, 1945-1951* (Washington, DC: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2001).

collective desire to resettle in Palestine and Britain's opposition to the Zionist project after 1945.<sup>26</sup>

The second dominant strand of research on Jewish DPs has similarly focused attention on the political organization of the She'erit ha-Pletah, albeit with a different emphasis. In particular, it has shed light on the relationship and cooperation between predominantly Eastern European Jews that made up the bulk of Jewish DPs after 1945, and their cooperation with German Jews, as well as the relationship between DP politics and the history of antisemitism, including its continued threat in the postwar world. It has aimed to concretely situate the fate of Jews after the Holocaust within a longer history of German-Jewish relations. Among a number of important monographs<sup>27</sup> in this tradition, Jay Howard Geller's *Jews in Post Holocaust Germany* explores the position of German-speaking Jews vis-à-vis largely Yiddish-speaking DPs from the East and illustrates the continuities of a fractious history between the two groups as they navigated the postwar world.<sup>28</sup> Geller's study highlights the hostility of international Jewish organizations to the idea of any ongoing Jewish presence in Germany as well as examining in detail, the nascent antisemitism in Eastern Europe that fueled their position. Building on Geller's work, Atina Grossmann's *Jews, Germans, and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany* remains one of the most persuasive analyses of the politicized social landscape of postwar Germany and the competing territories occupied therein

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<sup>26</sup> Arie J. Kochavi, *Post-Holocaust Politics: Britain, the United States, and Jewish Refugees, 1945–1948* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001); Zeev W. Mankowitz, *Life Between Memory and Hope: The Survivors of the Holocaust in Occupied Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Hagit Lavsky, *New Beginnings: Holocaust Survivors in Bergen-Belsen and the British Zone in Germany, 1945–1950* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2002).

<sup>27</sup> Including Frank Stern, *The Whitewashing of the Yellow Badge: Antisemitism and Philosemitism in Postwar Germany*, trans. William Templer (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1992); Anthony Kauders, *Democratization and the Jews: Munich, 1945–1965* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press/Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism, 2004); Eva Kolinsky, *After the Holocaust: Jewish Survivors in Germany after 1945* (London: Pimlico, 2004).

<sup>28</sup> Jay Howard Geller, *Jews in Post Holocaust Germany, 1945–1953* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

by the “historic triangle” of defeated Germans, victorious Allies, and Jews.<sup>29</sup> The interactions between Jews, Germans, and Allies were both complex and fractious. While interaction was commonplace, at the economic, social and even sexual level, it was characterized by shared antipathy and fierce debates over the future of German society. Grossmann’s text is a thorough exploration (though limited in its focus on American-occupied Bavaria) of the entanglement between these groups and rightfully calls attention to oft-neglected aspects of their interactions, of which she argues the significance of its gendered aspects in particular, have been neglected.

While the histories of other DP communities have been comparatively less treated, literature dealing with different DP groups continues to grow.<sup>30</sup> Surprisingly however, given that DPs from pre-war Poland made up the great majority of DPs in occupied Germany, accounts concentrating exclusively on the Polish DP community are limited to a significantly more discrete set of authors and texts.<sup>31</sup> Prominent literary accounts, emerging in the late 1940s and early 1950s, have provided some of the first portrayals of DP Poles and their position in Germany’s DP camps. Inspired by their own experiences as DPs, Tadeusz Nowakowski and Tadeusz Borowski’s fictionalized accounts paint a grim picture of the DP camp as a site of simultaneous rugged individualism alongside fierce patriotism. Nowakowski’s 1957 *Obóz Wszystkich Świętych*, [All Saints’ Camp]<sup>32</sup> describes fellow Polish DPs as “the leftovers of the

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<sup>29</sup> Atina Grossmann, *Jews, Germans and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

<sup>30</sup> For a useful review of the literature on Ukrainian and Soviet DPs especially, see Holian, *Between National Socialism and Soviet Communism*, Note 19, 274f. Important studies include Marta Dyczok, *The Grand Alliance and Ukrainian Refugees* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000); Wsevolod W. Isajiw, Yuri Boshyk, and Roman Senkus, *The Refugee Experience: Ukrainian Displaced Persons after World War II* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1992); Yuri Boshyk, *Political Refugees and “Displaced Persons,” 1945-1954: A Selected Bibliography and Guide to Research with Special Reference to Ukrainians* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1982). In recent years a number of significant studies have focused on the fates of Baltic DPs, Bernard John Maegi, *Dangerous persons, delayed pilgrims: Baltic displaced persons and the making of Cold War America, 1945–1952* (University of Minnesota, 2008); Tomas Balkelis, “Living in the Displaced Persons Camp: Lithuanian War Refugees in the West, 1944–54,” in Peter Gatrell and Nick Baron, eds., *Warlands: Population Resettlement and State Reconstruction in the Soviet-East European Borderlands, 1945–50* (Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2009), 25-47.

<sup>31</sup> Relatedly, due most likely to linguistic barriers, literature that does exist in the Polish is often neglected in many of the more prominent DP monographs appearing in the English or German.

<sup>32</sup> T. Nowakowski, *Obóz Wszystkich Świętych* [All Saint’s Camp] (Libella, Paris 1957). According to Bartłomiej Krupa, the text was much discussed in the Polish press, although publication and circulation of the Polish edition

barbed wire.”<sup>33</sup> The condition of being displaced, for Nowakowski, is one of ongoing internment, with DPs likened to

[...] fish in a fish tank. International charities drop for the fish one fly each so that they don't die. And that is all that today's man in his great nobility can come up with. Initially, he knocked on the glass with his head, but he soon noticed that the walls are made of thick glass. Now he lies, dead in the muck, at the bottom. Covered in seaweed, waiting – no one knows what for. Supposedly free because liberated. Yet, in reality, a prisoner, interned [...].<sup>34</sup>

Borowski's picture, presented in the bitter *Bitwa pod Grunwaldem* [Battle of Grunwald]<sup>35</sup> follows the poet Tadek as he navigates the world of the DP camp. Borowski's DP is a similarly tragic figure: “our Pole, our brother, always stupid. Wants to drown his brother in a spoon of water,” whose experiences are marked by cynicism, animosity and rivalry.<sup>36</sup> His Tadek is likewise fated to ongoing internment, longing and helplessness: “It's nice in the world, dear brothers [...] but, oh well, man: you sit imprisoned like under the Germans, they won't give you a pass to the world, because you don't know how to lick yourself [...]”.<sup>37</sup> Beyond such literary explorations of the condition of displacement, scholarly accounts of Polish “Dipisi” (DPs) in the Polish language remain, as compared to the Jewish DP literature, certainly, relatively few.<sup>38</sup> Analysis of the Polish-Jewish DP experience has in recent years garnered much

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of Nowakowski's text was suspended shortly after its release, once it was revealed that the author had “collaborated” with Radio Free Europe. A second edition was only published again in 1989. See Bartłomiej Krupa, “DP camp—literary accounts of the life “in between”. An invitation to the topic,” *Acta Universitatis Lodzianis. Folia Litteraria Polonica* 46:8 (2017): 114-115, footnote 7.

<sup>33</sup> For the English translations of Nowakowski and Borowski's work provided here, I rely on Krupa, *Ibid*.

<sup>34</sup> Nowakowski, *Obóz Wszystkich Świętych*, 16-17.

<sup>35</sup> Tadeusz Borowski, “Bitwa pod Grunwaldem” [Battle of Grunwald], in A. Werner, ed., *Utwory wybrane* [Selected Works], (Ossolineum: Wrocław–Warsaw–Krakow 1991). The most oft-cited short-story from Borowski in the English-language literature on DPs appears in the English monograph: Tadeusz Borowski, “The January Offensive,” in *This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen, and Other Stories*, trans. Barbara Vedder (London: Jonathan Cape, 1967).

<sup>36</sup> T. Borowski, “Bitwa pod Grunwaldem,” 257.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 259.

<sup>38</sup> Including general studies such as Wiesław Hładkiewicz, *Polacy w zachodnich strefach okupacyjnych Niemiec 1945-1949* [Poles in the Western Zones of Occupied Germany 1945-1949], (Wyzsza Szkoła Pedagogiczna, 1982); Czesław Łuczak, *Polacy w okupowanych Niemczech 1945-1949* [Poles in Occupied Germany 1945-1949], (Poznan: Pracownia Serwisu Oprogramowania, 1993). In the German there appear also general studies translated subsequently into Polish, including Andreas Lembeck, *Befreit, aber nicht in Freiheit*, 1997 (pol. trans. 2007); Peter Oliver Loew, *Wir Unsichtbaren: Geschichte der Polen in Deutschland*, 2014 (pol. trans. 2017). There are a number of more recent, specialized studies in Polish focusing on Polish DPs. Jolanta Chwastyk-Kowalczyk and Tamar Lewinsky have both drawn attention to journalism in Polish DP camps; the latter analysing the contents of the official newspaper of Polish Jews in Germany. Since then we have more recent specialized studies, which, for

scholarly attention, best exemplified by the work of Katarzyna Person.<sup>39</sup> Person's recent 2019 monograph, *Dipisi*, presents an impressive overview of the situation of Polish-Jewish DPs in occupied Germany after 1945.<sup>40</sup> The most prominent work on Polish DPs in the English language literature however remains that of Anna D. Jaroszynska-Kirchmann whose work has drawn significant attention to the particularities of Polish DP community experience and particular, to the politics of postwar immigration.<sup>41</sup> While these studies have done much to further understandings of different DP communities' histories in the postwar period, in many of the more specialized, national studies of displacement, the same topics that interested wider studies, including nationalism, human rights and challenges to state sovereignty, as well as travel and citizenship, have been divorced as beyond the scope of study.

While the various trajectories of current research outlined above have gone a long way in their attempts to marry the broad to the more particular, they continue to overwhelmingly examine DPs and their experiences in isolated national groups. Anna Holian notes that while this suggests an opportunity for fruitful comparison, little has been done in the way of systematic group comparison in DP scholarship.<sup>42</sup> Rather, the particularities of the experiences of certain DP communities are emphasized; especially those of the displaced Jewish

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example, focuses on journalism in the DP camps, Jolanta Chwastyk-Kowalczyk, *Katyń, dipisi, PKPR ma łamach polskich czasopism uchodźczych* [Katyn, Dipisi, PKPR and published Polish refugee magazines] (Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Humanistyczno-Przyrodniczego Jana Kochanowskiego, Kielce 2011); Lewinsky Tamar, "Żydowskie uchodźcy i przesiedleńcy z Polski w okupowanych Niemczech, [Jewish refugees and displaced persons from Poland in occupied Germany]" in Feliks Tych and Monika Adamczyk-Garbowska, eds., *Następstwa zagłady Żydów. Polska 1944–2010* [The aftermath of the extermination of Jews. Poland 1944–2010] (Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, Żydowski Instytut Historyczny im. Emanuela Ringelbluma, Lublin–Warsaw 2012), 95–121.

<sup>39</sup> Person offers a brief review of the literature on Polish DPs in the first few footnotes of Katarzyna Person, "'I am a Jewish DP. A Jew From the Eternal Nowhere,' Jews from Poland in Displaced Persons Camps in the Occupation Zones of West Germany: Encounters with Poles and Memories of Poland, 1945–1946," *Kwartalnik Historii Żydów* 246:2 (2013): 312–318.

<sup>40</sup> Katarzyna Person, *Dipisi: Żydzi z Polski w Obozach DP w Amerykańskiej i Brytyjskiej Strefach Okupacyjnych Niemiec* [Dipisi: Polish Jews in the American and British Occupation Zones of Germany, 1945–1948] (Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, 2019).

<sup>41</sup> The author's name between the publication of her two most significant works: Anna Dorota Kirchmann, "'They are Coming for Freedom, not Dollars': Political Refugees and Transformations of Ethnic Identity within Polish American Community after World War II," (PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 1997); Anna D. Jaroszyńska-Kirchmann, *The Exile Mission: The Polish Political Diaspora and Polish Americans, 1939–1956* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2004).

<sup>42</sup> Holian, *Between National Socialism and Soviet Communism*, 9.

populations, whom as established, have remained very much at the center of DP scholarship. Her own study of DP camps in Bavaria systematically compares Jewish as well as non-Jewish DP groups and the political “communities of interest” they formed to represent what they understood as their collective experiences. Her work is backward-looking, it highlights how divergent political narratives about National Socialism and Soviet communism formed the basis for the development of group identity in the DP camps.

A shift to a focus on the mechanics of DP migration, including its longer-term impact, most recently offered by historians Jessica Reinisch and Elizabeth White, have attempted to bridge the divide.<sup>43</sup> Secondary literature of this category, perhaps the most relevant for a project that hopes to deal with migration, generally approaches DPs as a delineated category of people, albeit including different nationalities, whose experiences—as a collective—then reflect on broader socio-political processes and developments. DPs are seen within unique, typically national or ethnonational, units who nevertheless shared a common experience of displacement.

Some studies have taken this line of approach in exploring divergences and convergences with respect to administrative attitudes/provision towards different nationalities and why this occurred; with emphasis typically placed either on Allied policy or the work of international and/or independent relief operations. Historians Kathleen Paul and Linda McDowell have attempted to break down the category of “DP” by considering more comprehensively divergences, prejudices and even biases in attitudes towards the migration and resettlement of particular DP nationalities.<sup>44</sup> Jessica Reinisch, in particular, has extended

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<sup>43</sup> Peter Gatrell, “Trajectories of Population Displacement in the Aftermaths of the Two World Wars,” in Jessica Reinisch and Elizabeth White, *The Disentanglement of Populations: Migration, Expulsion and Displacement in Post-War Europe, 1944-49* (England, Palgrave MacMillan, 2011), 3; Matthew Frank, “Reconstructing the Nation State: Population Transfer in Central and Eastern Europe, 1944-8,” in Reinisch and White, *The Disentanglement of Populations*, 27.

<sup>44</sup> Kathleen Paul, *Whitewashing Britain: Race and Citizenship in the Postwar Era* (USA: Cornell University Press, 1997); Linda McDowell, *Hard Labour: The Forgotten Voices of Latvian Migrant 'Volunteer' Workers* (London: UCL Press, 2005).

her research to consider in-depth the histories of non-governmental and international institutions providing refugee relief in Europe beyond occupied Germany.<sup>45</sup> Along with the work of Kim Salomon, broader political narratives are explored alongside a number of concrete cases that cast light on the histories of the different officials and volunteer experts who spent months in unfamiliar and challenging circumstances exercising administrative power of DPs.<sup>46</sup>

While a number of important steps are being taken towards moving this burgeoning field of research forward, much work remains for the historian. This dissertation promises three significant contributions to the literature. In the first instance, it poses a new set of as-yet unaddressed questions regarding the relationship between shifting migration policy and that of the migration strategies of displaced persons. As the theoretical considerations below make clear, answering the driving questions of this dissertation necessitates synthesis of different levels of analysis (at the macro-, meso- and micro- level). Furthermore, a focus on DP migration showcases the intellectual rewards—as well as the possibilities—of drawing from the insights of different disciplines, in particular those of the nascent field of refugee and migration studies. New exciting questions, operationalized in an interdisciplinary manner, have the potential to reframe understandings of the dynamics of the postwar period and its politics after 1945.

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<sup>45</sup> Reinisch has published extensively on the role of internationalism in relief. See Jessica Reinisch, “‘We Shall Rebuild Anew a Powerful Nation’: UNRRA, Internationalism and National Reconstruction in Poland,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 43:3 (2008): 451-476; Ibid., “Internationalism in Relief: the Birth (and death) of UNRRA,” *Past and Present* 210:6 (2011): 258-289; Ibid., “‘Auntie UNRRA’ at the Crossroads,” *Past & Present* 218:8 (2013): 70-97.

<sup>46</sup> Kim Salomon, *Refugees in the Cold War: Toward a New International Refugee Regime in the Early Postwar Era* (Lund: Lund University Press, 1991); See also: Tommie Sjöberg, *The Powers and the Persecuted: The Refugee Problem and the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees* (Lund: Lund University Press, 1991); Susan Armstrong-Reid and David Murray, *Armies of Peace: Canada and the UNRRA Years* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008). The main intergovernmental agencies charged with assisting displaced persons have also produced official histories which are worked with comprehensively in this study. See George Woodbridge, *UNRRA: The History of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950); Louise W. Holborn, *The International Refugee Organization, A Specialized Agency of the United Nations: Its History and Work, 1946–1952* (London: Oxford University Press, 1956). See also Rene Ristelhueber, “The International Refugee Organization,” *International Conciliation* 470 (April 1951).

A second major contribution concerns the sustained use of a comparative approach. As established in the literature overview above, an emphasis on nationality continues to permeate DP literature; with most research divided between those examining the experiences of isolated national groups or simply DPs as a whole. Adopting a comparative approach, building on that of historians such as Anna Holian, between different DP communities, can bring clarity and nuance to the history of postwar displacement. It is attentive however to the risk of focusing on different national and even political positions to the detriment of DPs' own negotiations of their fates. Crucially, the systematic ethno-national comparison between Polish and Jewish communities offered in this study is also tested against the individual account.

A more implicit geographic comparison similarly makes an important contribution. Where historians have largely focused their energies on DP administration in occupied Germany, efforts have concentrated overwhelmingly on the American Zone of occupation. Not only does focusing on a particular Zone of occupation make this study more manageable, it helps to shed light on different—often neglected—Zonal particularities that also had bearing, and placed restrictions upon, DP migration strategies. Despite acknowledging the importance of the situation of DPs outside the American Zone, few studies have explicitly addressed the British Zone. One of the strengths of this contained focus will be to highlight the role that geography and administrative differences also played in the DP future.

Thirdly and perhaps most significantly, this study represents one of the first attempts to bring to bear significant findings from the records of the International Tracing Service (ITS) archive to DP history. As further explored below, the records of the ITS are uniquely positioned to reveal a great deal of the logic and workings of the DP camp universe as it grappled with the “DP problem”. As Diane Afoumado advocates, the ITS sub-collection 3.2.1.1. (Care and Maintenance Program – CM/1 files originating in Germany) in particular, has enormous potential to illustrate the relationship between DPs' self-definition and their pursuit of



emigration out of the DP camps.<sup>47</sup> While historians, including Dan Stone,<sup>48</sup> Ruth Balint,<sup>49</sup> Suzanne Brown-Fleming<sup>50</sup> and Eliana Hadjisavvas,<sup>51</sup> are only now beginning to embed findings from the ITS archive in their respective studies, this dissertation is arguably the first to place its Displaced Persons records at the forefront of research, and thus represents a significant contribution to the DP literature to date. Furthermore, it represents a concerted effort to reflect upon ITS' materials contribution to a wide variety of relevant secondary source literature as well as in conversation with other primary sources.

Thus finally, while not the primary aim of this dissertation, it serves the additional benefit of acting as a fruitful reference point for scholars from a range of different disciplines aiming to engage with the subject of displacement in the postwar period. The result marshals together existing work on DPs and disparate primary source materials into a single study. The methodology and conclusions drawn could be pushed and applied to other parts of occupied Germany, as well as compared to the many cases of mass displacement and migration that we see today.

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<sup>47</sup> Afoumado calls for more research on precisely this area. See Diane F. Afoumado, "The 'Care and Maintenance in Germany' Collection: A Reflection of DP Self-Identification and Postwar Emigration," in Rebecca Boehling, Susanne Urban, and René Bienert, eds. *Freilegungen: Displaced Persons-Leben im Transit: Überlebende zwischen Repatriierung, Rehabilitation und Neuanfang* vol. 3 (Wallstein Verlag, 2014), 218.

<sup>48</sup> In the past five years, historian Dan Stone has purposefully attempted to incorporate the war-time records of the ITS into scholarship on Nazi concentration camps in particular. See Dan Stone, *The liberation of the camps: The End of the Holocaust and Its Aftermath* (Yale University Press, 2015); Dan Stone, "The Memory of the Archive: The International Tracing Service and the Construction of the Past as History," *Dapim: Studies on the Holocaust* 31:2 (2017): 69–88.

<sup>49</sup> Balint's recent article stands out as one of a very limited number of studies that centres on the records of the ITS to support its central argument. Balint has identified a number of important themes touched upon in the present study, including the centrality of family with respect to decision-making around emigration after WWII. See Ruth Balint, "Children Left Behind: Family, Refugees and Immigration in Postwar Europe," *History Workshop Journal* 82:1 (2016): 151–172.

<sup>50</sup> Brown-Fleming's study of Lahnstein was one of the first to illustrate the ways in which the ITS archive may be successfully worked with to illuminate different aspects of both forgotten and familiar histories. Her companion to the ITS archive carefully explores avenues of potential future research. See Suzanne Brown-Fleming, *Nazi Persecution and Postwar Repercussions: The International Tracing Service Archive and Holocaust Research* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2016): Chapter 2.

<sup>51</sup> Very recently, Eliana Hadjisavvas has considered ITS records in light of well-known events surrounding Jewish DPs and illegal immigration to Mandatory Palestine. This is an example of the kind of new and exciting research borne of systematic consultation with the records of the ITS. See Eliana Hadjisavvas, "Journey through the 'Gate of Zion': British policy, Jewish refugees and the La Spezia Affair, 1946," *Social History* 44:4 (2019): 469–493.

Ultimately, the aim of this thesis is to harmonize often contradictory images of DPs in the British Zone in a study based on systematic group comparison, conflicting identifications, and state-individual relations. As such, it strives to contribute a more nuanced interpretation of the complexities of the DP experience, with an emphasis on DPs' own strategies out of displacement. As such it represents an original and significant addition to the literature, on a subject which continues to resonate powerfully today.

### Theoretical considerations

As historians move to take refugee and forced migration studies seriously, the wider refugee and forced migration studies community must start taking history seriously too.<sup>52</sup>

Research on migration, it is often stressed, is interdisciplinary by nature and requires engagement with a broad range of theoretical contributions from relevant fields, from political science to anthropology.<sup>53</sup> While affirming the interdisciplinary nature of studies dealing with migration, establishing a productive connection between theories and concepts borrowed from different disciplines remains challenging. In addressing its main research questions,<sup>54</sup> this thesis engages with migration in the postwar period on a number of different levels.<sup>55</sup> In framing the ongoing interaction(s) between each level, the dissertation predominantly borrows

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<sup>52</sup> Jérôme Elie, "Histories of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies," in Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, Gil Loescher, Katy Long, and Nando Sigona, eds., *The Oxford handbook of refugee and forced migration studies* (OUP Oxford, 2014), 32.

<sup>53</sup> Here we take migration to refer to geographical moves that are (relatively) long term and (relatively) permanent: "This definition allows us to separate migration from both permanent but highly short-distance moves (intralocal, residential mobility) and potentially long-distance but non-permanent moves (commuting, tourism)." Jan Kok, "The Family Factor in Migration Decisions," in Jan Lucassen, Leo Lucassen and Patrick Manning, *Migration History in World History*, vol. 3 (Brill NV: Leiden, The Netherlands, 2010), 216.

<sup>54</sup> Which, once again, deals with the relationship between (and the pressure exerted from) shifting migration policy and that of the migration strategies of displaced persons.

<sup>55</sup> As we shall see, "Individual" refers to the level of migrant's themselves, and includes individual, family/household and group strategies.

relevant theoretical contributions from within the fields of history, political science (policy-oriented studies) and anthropology.

The theoretical considerations below will be broken down as follows. Firstly, a brief clarification of how this study navigates the connection between definitions and experiences of “forced” versus “voluntary” migration will be presented. It will be shown that instances of forced migration have bearing on, and should be considered within, broader debates within the field of migration studies. The remaining theoretical considerations will turn to four closely interrelated levels of enquiry in the DP case, from the global to the individual, stressing the interdependence of these different categories. The first level concerns historical time, the incidence of historical change and discusses periodization as theory. It describes the way in which migration out of Displaced Persons camps in the postwar period should be situated and analysed as part of broader global change post-WWII.<sup>56</sup>

The following levels of enquiry correspond to a distinction between “macro,” “meso,” and “micro” levels. Any migratory movement may be seen as the result of the interaction, over time, between macro-, micro- and meso-structures.<sup>57</sup> As Castles explains, macro-structures are taken to refer to *large-scale institutional factors*—including but not limited to efforts by states of sending and receiving countries to control migration.<sup>58</sup> Micro-structures, by contrast, “embrace the practices, family ties and beliefs of the migrants themselves.”<sup>59</sup> Linking the two, are meso-structures between the individual/family and the state/world system, in particular, immigrant communities and networks built on ethnic lines.

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<sup>56</sup> Discussion of the situation before and after the establishment of the postwar political order, the rise of international law, the communist takeover in Poland, the foundation of Israel, the change of immigration policies worldwide, the foundation of the Federal Republic of Germany, among others, are central to this study.

<sup>57</sup> Stephen Castles, Hein de Haas and Mark J. Miller, *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 26.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

The second, macro level turns to the impact or failure of state policy in regulating migration. It focuses on the British occupation authorities in Germany in cooperation with international organizations and foreign state governments. A third, meso level considers the sociocultural group-specific differences among migrants, especially as a result of religious and secular traditions, as well as social categorization and discrimination. This study compares the Polish and Jewish displaced communities. A fourth—and decisive—micro level, concerning the anthropological factors of migration, is then elucidated. This study emphasizes the individual and family strategies of DPs in light on the records of the ITS. As will become apparent, demonstrating the interdependency of these different levels allows the researcher to fruitfully question and relativize them. A brief concluding section will reflect on the way in which the dissertation hopes to advance understandings of the multi-level forces that drive migration.

*Defining useful historical-political categories: “forced” vs “voluntary migration*

At the outset, the use of term “migrant” to encompass the DPs of Occupied Germany engages immediately with debate concerning the appropriateness of (potentially) conflating the definition and experience of forced migration—generating displaced persons and refugees—and so-called voluntary migration. This question reflects the broader need to reflect on how forced migration studies should relate to migration studies more generally. Anyone studying displacement, whether in the present day or historical cases, encounters the on-going debate among scholars concerning how to establish the contours of the burgeoning field of refugee or forced migration studies whose subject matter, with a long history of research across the Humanities and Social Sciences, suddenly burst to life in the 1980s.<sup>60</sup> While many scholars take the view that a differentiation between forced (or involuntary) migration and voluntary

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<sup>60</sup> The discussion surrounding disciplinary boundaries is given weight by what is commonly known as the “dual imperative” faced by researchers; many of whom claim have the responsibility of orientating their work toward the alleviation of the suffering of the refugees whose work they concentrate on and advocate for and give platform to the plight of the refugee more generally.

migration risks reinforcing misleading and disempowering terminology,<sup>61</sup> others point to very real and palpably felt disparities; particularly with respect to the individual's relationship to the state and citizenship in both cases.

Certainly, forced and voluntary migration are inherently linked. This thesis takes the position that "the most exciting research in these areas reflects the best insights from both the migration studies and forced migration traditions."<sup>62</sup> It follows in the tradition of historians such as Ulrich Herbert who integrated forced migration within general migration history; presenting migration as a unity, though with considerably different motivations governing individual migrants. The postwar period offers important insights concerning this debate. In the 1940s, the "refugee" concept was being construed in its still prevalent form in contradistinction to the migrant. Allied administrative bureaucracies post-1945, were hostile to the idea of refugees suspected of following a purposeful economic rationality. At the same time, they and the new international organizations of which they were part, empathized deeply with the "refugee." The latter's migration was seen as constrained, with their movement imposed by external events over which they had no control. A normative construction in the service of policy thus developed in which the refugee was characterized by a lack of agency and strategy. This study highlights that the 1940s represent a kind of turning point in which we can observe, perhaps for the first time, a distinct shift in the prevailing attitudes of the powers towards the conjunction of a distinct pro-asylum, anti-immigrant position; in contrast to that espoused during the Evian conference,<sup>63</sup> at which refugee status was not considered apart from that of migrant status.

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<sup>61</sup> See Karen Jacobsen and Loren B. Landau, "The dual imperative in refugee research: some methodological and ethical considerations in social science research on forced migration," *Disasters* 27, no. 3 (2003): 185-206.

<sup>62</sup> Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, *The Oxford Handbook*, 5.

<sup>63</sup> The Evian Conference took place in France between July 6-15, 1938 at the invitation of US President Franklin Roosevelt with the intention of discussing what the options were for accepting refugees from Nazi Germany. See Paul R. Bartrop, *The Evian Conference of 1938 and the Jewish Refugee Crisis* (Springer International Publishing, 2018).

In the administration of the DP camps themselves, any definitional clarity in distinction between voluntary and forced migrations broke down rapidly. The second chapter of this thesis highlights the benefits of adopting an inclusive analytical framework that better represents how fluid definitional boundaries can be. In dealing with recruitment out of the DP camps to destinations in Western Europe, it treats the various recruitment schemes that emerged as cases of both free and unfree labour migration. Economic motivations are typically seen as prevailing among labour migrants, whereas war and violence (and increasingly, natural disasters and extreme weather conditions) are cited as the main reason for the movement of refugees.<sup>64</sup> Consequently, they are often dealt with in literature separately. Yet, while DPs who originated from behind the descending Iron Curtain were increasingly welcomed in Allied-run DP camps in Germany—at least in theory—as political refugees fleeing persecution, recruitment drives selected only the “best” in the camps, a process with very little real interest in distinguishing between labour migrants and refugees.<sup>65</sup> The artificial distinction between the political-humanitarian passively displaced refugee and the socio-economically driven migrant in search of a better life exists only in idealized construction. In reality, any migration involves constraint and choice in different proportions, and can be positioned on a scale between “voluntary” migration and extrusion or expulsion.<sup>66</sup>

This study is generally attentive to the risk of conflating policy categories with the analytical. It does not juxtapose true and false judgments about migration but concentrates on the perspectives of policy and history. Each chapter focuses on ways in which DPs found ways to play the refugee and deemphasize their plans (particularly where based on economic rationale) in response to different migratory options. Stressing lack of choice in order to

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<sup>64</sup> Gil Loescher and John A. Scanlan, *Calculated Kindness* (Simon and Schuster, 1998).

<sup>65</sup> For a very general introductory overview on the context of the need for refugee labour after 1945, see Tomas Hammar, ed., *European Immigration Policy: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 242ff.

<sup>66</sup> Eli Lederhendler, “The Interrupted Chain: Traditional Receiver Countries, Migration Regimes, and the East European Jewish Diaspora, 1918-39,” *East European Jewish Affairs* 44:2-3 (2014): 172.

correspond with administrative understandings of “the refugee” is evidenced in particular in the case of DP interviews as well as in the public image that different DP communities created over time. The primary source record is markedly rich in this respect. The parallel constructions of the passive refugee and migrant labourer driven by a sense of economic rationality may not have depicted reality correctly, but it did create a reality in which individuals adapted their own self-image. Both Polish and Jewish DP communities identified themselves with the plight of the worst victims of National Socialism—concentration camp survivors and slave labourers—in spite of the fact that a majority had not been liberated as either. In the postwar period, administrative categories rarely corresponded to realities on the ground and in this respect, DPs were paradigmatic rather than atypical.

#### *At the level of history*

The case of postwar displaced persons highlights the importance of grounding research in its historical context. It is useful to reflect further on the contribution of the discipline of history to migration studies. It is not only a focus on periods past, or the privileging of primary source documentation that distinguishes history from other fields of inquiry. There are scholars studying the past and working with primary sources to be found in other disciplines as well. Jerome Elie has recently argued that the role of historians in migration studies remains weak and poorly defined, with the field often subsequently described as “deeply ahistorical.”<sup>67</sup> In fact, the discipline of history makes an important theoretical contribution (and one best able to highlight important elements of continuity and change): namely, periodization.

The study of history is concerned with time, timing and temporality.<sup>68</sup> The theorization of time through periodization offers a major contribution to migration studies. As Donna Gabaccia explains, “establishing and analysing chronology, temporal sequencing, contingency

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<sup>67</sup> Elie, “Histories of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies,” 23.

<sup>68</sup> See Donna R. Gabaccia, “Time and Temporality in Migration Studies,” in Caroline B. Brettel and James F. Hollifield, eds., *Migration theory: Talking across disciplines* (Routledge, 2014): 37-66.

and contextualization, and assessments of continuity and change over time, together constitute the heart of the historical method.”<sup>69</sup> This is an important form of theorization. This thesis attempts to illustrate that the exploration of historical phenomena; the changes in structures, policy or processes and their impact on individual or groups differs when analysed at different temporary scales. The structure of the dissertation points to historical changes and events that intervene on the level of policy and individual decision-making. For instance, the communist take-over of large swathes of Eastern Europe after 1945 prevented the straightforward repatriation of over a million DPs who remained in Germany: a situation that was in many respects unanticipated. Key changes in American immigration policy, and the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, offer two further examples of historical changes that had direct bearing on policy and life in the DP camps.

How does policy react to global developments, and how do individuals on the ground face these new situations? The chapters of the dissertation single out time periods in which refugee policy changes abruptly, in which new standards are created and new political circumstances born. It thus brings in the factor of historical change into an analysis that could otherwise be considered from an *ahistorical* anthropological (concerning itself only with family strategies and life cycle issues) or public policy viewpoint. It insists that time matters analytically and therefore challenges ahistorical theorizations of the cause and consequences of migration.

The thesis focuses especially on changing conditions that render a policy irrelevant or germane. What is plausible or desirable at one point in time ceases to be so under evolving conditions.<sup>70</sup> As shall be discussed further into this section, policy and the policy process reflect wider political, social and conceptual systems.<sup>71</sup> The result is that in some cases policy proves

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid, 38.

<sup>70</sup> As will be discussed in Chapter 1 of this dissertation, the short-lived Allied policy of forced repatriation is one-such example.

<sup>71</sup> See David Haines, "Migration, policy, and anthropology," *International Migration* 51:2 (2013): 77-89.



durable, in others, it is inconsistent or inchoate. For instance, when there is no agreement on the admission of migrants as workers or seekers of humanitarian aid, resultant policy can be deliberately ambiguous. The most intriguing parts of this thesis are cases in which, as a result of global transformation, we have a change in policy or rather an overlap of different kinds of policy. One major change with respect to existing migration law comes in the form of the emergence of a new human rights rhetoric, which concretizes certain shifts in the ways of thinking among different actors. Whether or not these actors react to historical changes is thus a crucial question posed throughout.

#### *At the level of policy*

This thesis consistently asks how the migration policies of receiving states affected migration out of DP camps in the British Zone. This study draws on insights from the fields of political science, policy studies and public administration to determine the ways in which politics matters in both driving and channelling migration. It was the decisions made by states and political actors that so often determined the outcome for the DPs of the postwar period. There is thus a need for a “top down” level of analysis to understand the macro-level structures that influence states’ and other international actors’ responses to (forced) migration.<sup>72</sup>

Policy is the domain of institutional decision-making. For our purposes, we may define policy as “a principle or course of action adopted or proposed as desirable, advantageous or expedient; especially one formally adopted by a government, political party, etc.”<sup>73</sup> Or more succinctly, “a course of action adopted and pursued.”<sup>74</sup> It is not difficult to see how migration touches upon several dimensions of politics: “the procedural or distributional dimension—who gets what, when and how; the legal or statist dimension, involving issues of sovereignty,

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<sup>72</sup> Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, *The Oxford Handbook*, 61.

<sup>73</sup> (OED online 2007).

<sup>74</sup> See J. R. Wedel, C. Shore, G. Feldman and S. Lathrop, “Toward an anthropology of public policy,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 600: 30—51 (2005): 35, as quoted in Haines, “Migration, policy, and anthropology,” 78.

identity and legitimacy; and the ethical or normative dimension, which revolves around questions of citizenship, justice and participation.”<sup>75</sup> It is intuitive that policy discouraging or encouraging certain kinds of migrations will subsequently have some effect: the question, once again, is how and with what relative importance. If we have variance determined by shifts in the world order, then it stands to reason that subsequent manoeuvring of migration policy is often, at least in some way, limited.

In order to tackle the larger question of how states and policy interact both with historical events and migrants’ own agency, this thesis works firstly with two key hypotheses. The first is that the *kind* of state impacts the degree of power it subsequently has to influence immigration. As will be expanded upon below, liberal, democratic states—as opposed to the authoritarian models developing East of the Iron Curtain during the period—increasingly had to take into account commitment to fundamental human rights. This thesis incorporates the question of rights, which are heavily contingent “upon legal, institutional, and ideational developments”<sup>76</sup> in consideration of how evolving human rights rhetoric can act to limit the capacity of states to control immigration. Secondly, it sees the state and policy as capable of initiating migration; as a consequence of, say, active recruitment or military occupation, among others. Migration policies “can be defined as laws, rules, measures and practices implemented by national states with the stated objective to influence the volume, origin and internal composition of migration flows.”<sup>77</sup> This dissertation is structured around key changes in significant immigration policies. It is especially interested in the effect that different migration policies, over time, have on the volume of migration, the timing, as well as its spatial aspects and compositions. In particular, it argues that the immigration policies of the Powers were most effective in determining the composition of immigrant cohorts.

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<sup>75</sup> James F. Hollifield and Tom K. Wong, “The Politics of International Migration: How Can We ‘Bring the State Back In’?,” in Brettel and Hollifield, *Migration theory*, 235.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> de Haas, “The determinants of international migration,” 25.

In order to discuss how migration policy affects migration flows, a framework of analysis must be adopted. Haines' proposes a simple analytical grid comprised of context, logic and effects. Haines argues that we can consider policy—in this case, immigration policy—through an anthropological lens, and on the basis of three key factors: 1. Its consistency with the broader beliefs of policy makers; 2. Social conditions and; 3. National political and cultural context and synchronization with minimal international norms.<sup>78</sup> This rubric is useful in considering the immigration policies affecting DPs and how these were affected and responsive to developments on the individual and world historical levels.

Consistency with broader beliefs simply refers to the idea that a given policy should be appropriate on its own terms. Chapter 1 of this thesis discusses the Allied policy of forced repatriation, which was eventually abandoned as inconsistent with a growing interest in, and commitment to human rights on the international stage. It investigates the overall moral commitments of the societies and states in question. Importantly, it illustrates that the fit between context and policy is not always neat. While the British may have stopped the forcibly repatriating DPs, they nonetheless continue to impose significant pressure on DPs to return to their countries of origin. The British administration's initial refusal to recognize Jewish DPs as a separate national group, while consistent with its position on Palestine, was altered due to increasing international pressure in the wake of the findings of the Harrison Report and subsequent American responses to the unique position of Jewish survivors.

Reflecting on the broader beliefs of states and policy makers requires in turn reflection on the anthropological assumptions of states' own theorizing on the nature of persons. Running through the dissertation is the evidence of different and in many ways, competing views of the human person. The second half of Chapter 3, "While We Wait," investigates migrants' own choice to "delay" emigration. The language of delay, however, is taken from the administrative

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<sup>78</sup> Haines, "Migration, policy, and anthropology," 78.

point of view that belies certain tacit assumptions frequently at odds with those of migrants themselves. While most scholarship focuses on the “pragmatic, the numbers, and the results,” there is “renewed interest in anthropology or the nature of the persons in public administration and those for whom they are administering.”<sup>79</sup> As National Archive records illustrate well, a deeply pragmatic British administration does not discard normative questions.

The British implicitly, and often explicitly as well, defended a certain operational anthropological theory that scholars should be attentive to. One example will be expanded upon here. The belief that displaced persons were inherently at risk of idleness and laziness; and would avoid responsibility unless offered external stimulus, is well evidenced in official source records. This paradigmatic belief profoundly impacted the approach to the management of DPs in general. The result was a policy that relied on the generous application of carrots and sticks to attempt to get DPs to act in preferred ways. Remaining idle was thus conceived of as unnatural: while seeking out work and directing one’s own life, natural. As we shall see when turning to the micro-level of analysis, this view was regularly in conflict with DPs’ own self-perceptions, as reflected in alternative source bodies. Ego-documents in particular, reflect a self-understanding of individual DPs as creative and innovative.

The second factor identified by Haines was social conditions. “While being true to general societal context, public policy ought also to have some plausibility as a practical plan of action.”<sup>80</sup> This study is careful to consider in particular the broader position of the British government as it emerged from the Second World War. It is especially attentive to the manner in which relevant policies were represented as reasonable courses of action and responsible to wider social contexts. It spotlights the ways in which a British administration was alert to, and impacted by, the reactions of a domestic British public (as well as a broader international

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<sup>79</sup> Gerald L. Zandstra, “Public Administration Theory and Views of the Human Person” (PhD. Diss. Western Michigan University, 2007): 9.

<sup>80</sup> Haines, “Migration, policy, and anthropology,” 79.

community) to its DP policy. Britain's policy in Mandatory Palestine, and its internment of Jewish DPs on the island of Cyprus as a response to illegal border crossings after 1947, suffered a number of problems. To sustain its policy, British policymakers were forced to argue a certain logic in defence of border control, even as the veneer of its plausibility increasingly wore off.

A third factor relatedly concerns the need for policy to accomplish what it sets out to accomplish at acceptable fiscal cost, but also at "acceptable human cost." This does not mean a default to considerations of effectiveness and efficiencies, but also a consideration of synchronization with minimal international norms. The world of public policy, and of migration policy, is a "complex one, multi-faceted and multi-tiered [...]" to make matters worse, policy development and implementation are usually dispersed among many organizations with separate but overlapping mandates each with all the intertwined technical and human dynamics that make them not complete social systems but at least 'part cultures'—although often quite dysfunctional ones."<sup>81</sup> British occupation authorities in Germany worked in cooperation with international organizations and foreign state governments. Through membership and commitment to various international bodies charged with the care of DPs, it nominally subscribed to emergent international legal, political and social norms that centred on human rights after 1945. The idealized construction of the passive and defenceless refugee, for instance, was crucial for a human rights policy largely based on Christian compassion and championed by the United States of America in the postwar period. This encourages a focus on a refugee regime that promoted certain modes of behaviour while not being able to directly impose them, where international institutions as well as NGOs have a role to play alongside state institutions.

*At the level of group-specific differences*

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 78.

While macro-level analysis is useful in advancing understanding of the structural constraints limiting migrants' choices, alone, it risks marginalizing migrants' motivations at the group level and eschewing the necessity of treating migrant communities as active actors.<sup>82</sup> Furthermore, any binary division between macro and micro determinants would fail to account for group-specific variation at the level of *ethnicity*: in this case, across Polish and Jewish DP communities. The different political motivations across ethnic populations provide an obvious case-in-point. After 1945, Jewish DPs centered their migratory aims around collective, Zionist goals. The second half of Chapter 2, "Fighting for Palestine," is in many regards a testament to the inability to unilaterally portray displaced persons as passive agents, nor reducible to the level of individuals and their immediate families. It highlights the active choice made by the Jewish DP community to attempt to improve and widen their migratory options through what was initially illegal passage to Palestine. The astonishing push for Palestine from the DP camps of Germany can only be understood in consideration of non-economic determinants that centered around definitions of Jewishness. Certainly, the majority of Jewish DPs themselves ascribed fiercely to ethnonational categories; categories that had been so rigidly imposed upon so many as victims of the Nazism. Demanding not only physical separation from other DP nationalities, but the recognition of "Jewish" as a distinct ethnonational category in the British Zone, became of primary importance. Different DP communities were comparable in aggressively—and even in opposition, as in the Jewish case—defining themselves along ethnonational lines that helped them to preserve a sense of belonging in exile and present a positive, separate identity within the category of "Displaced Person."

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<sup>82</sup> More generally, the focus on labour migration in theory has meant a separation from research on refugee migration. Again, this thesis sees migration as a broader social process in which labels reflect legal categories and administrative processes but are not necessarily analytically helpful insofar as they risk assuming agency in one category and not in the other.

Ethnic adscriptions in the postwar period were characterized by the creation of community boundaries seen as pre-existent and inescapable, with Pole and Jew respectively born into their different ethnic group. Ethnic identities were reinforced by a variety of factors including religious symbolism and ethics, and even economic specialization (with Polish DPs overrepresented in agriculture and Jews in trade). With its focus on the impact of the development and formation of communities of interest along ethno-national lines on migration, this study is particularly concerned with the relationship between ethnicity and migrant networks. While ethnic adscription may not be reduced purely to a basis for social networking, the relative strength of networks built on ethno-national lines was evident in the postwar period.

There is an abundant literature concerning the manifold ways in which migrant communities create and rely upon meso-level structures reinforcing migration between certain places. Classic studies from Peggy Levitt highlight the transnational character of migration and the durability of ethnic belonging where “migrants’ social and economic lives are not bounded by national borders [...] Instead, they are integrated, to varying degrees, into the countries that receive them, at the same time that they remain connected to the countries they leave behind.”<sup>83</sup> The formation of community-based networks provides a vital link at the meso-level. Migration network theory<sup>84</sup> (returned to further into this theory section when the individual level of analysis is discussed) explains how social ties connecting migrants with individuals (friends, acquaintances, family—close or distant) leads to the emergence of social networks.<sup>85</sup> These meso level structures aid further migration: the migration process can thus become self-perpetuating, creating a kind of feedback loop. Chapters 3 and 4 of this dissertation demonstrate

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<sup>83</sup> Peggy Levitt, *The Transnational Villagers* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 5. As well as Peggy Levitt Nadia B. Jaworsky, “Transnational Migration Studies: Past Developments and Future Trends,” *Annual Review of Sociology*, 33:1 (2007): 129-156; Linda Basch, Nina Glick Schiller, and Christina Szanton Blanc, eds., *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments, and Deterritorialized Nation-States* (Routledge, 2005).

<sup>84</sup> The term has replaced “chain migration” in the literature; this dissertation uses these terms interchangeably.

<sup>85</sup> Castles, *The Age of Migration*, 39.

well that the *ethnic* dimension of migratory networks were not only based on actual social interaction between individuals, but on imagined communities that connected strangers. The case of DPs' emigration to the United States is telling, where both Polish and Jewish DP communities relied on the lobbying efforts of different pre-existing ethnic communities to affect immigration policy in their favour. Ideas about joining communities with a common origin abroad similarly created new patterns of chain migration of DPs over time. Emigration to America from the DP camps provides a key example of how migrants create meso-level structures that reinforce migration between certain places along group-specific lines, as well as the ways in which the presence of ethnic communities in receiving countries were perceived to decrease both risk and often cost.

Without minimizing the power and significance of ideas of ethnic and national belonging, as well as shared community origins across national boundaries, the basic analytical category is not the "group" itself, but rather *groupness* as something that is contextually fluctuating, as variable and contingent. Rogers Brubaker warns against a "groupism" that takes discrete groups as "basic constituents of social life, chief protagonists of social conflicts, and fundamental units of analysis."<sup>86</sup> While the DP camp was the site of successful group-making efforts of ethnopolitical players both within and external to the desired group, there were many instances where groupness simply did not seem to matter, or even failed to crystalize. The units "Polish" and "Jewish" will be explored as categories institutionalized and administratively entrenched in the postwar period, invested with emotional and evaluative assessments and deployed in different migratory contexts. However, it will not ex post frame the experiences of DPs according to ethnonationality. The postulated centrality of the ethnonational category for DPs risks masking alternative identifications, such as gender, class, age, place of origin, migratory history, political convictions and more. Furthermore, the juxtaposing of *individuals*,

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<sup>86</sup> Rogers Brubaker, "Ethnicity Without Groups," *European Journal of Sociology* 43:2 (2002): 164.



who may actively identify with a “Polish” or “Jewish” DP collective, forming constantly evolving individual survival strategies reminds us not to mistake groupist rhetorics for substantial groups-in-the-world.

*At the level of the individual*

The following turns to anthropological theories of migration and specifically to individual and family strategies, as these may be productively related to group-specificities and migration policy. It begins with a critique of functionalist and economic-structural migration theories before turning to the key concepts directly informing this study.<sup>87</sup>

Functionalist migration theories postulate society as a system, “a collection of interdependent parts (individuals, actors), somehow analogous to the functioning of an organism, in which an inherent tendency towards equilibrium exists.”<sup>88</sup> Prominent functionalist Everett Lee argued that migration is determined by push-pull models.<sup>89</sup> These identify different factors (predominantly economic and demographic) which “push” people out of their points of origin and towards a destination: the destination being dictated, in turn, by certain “pull” factors including demand for labour, economic opportunity and political climate.<sup>90</sup> Functionalism stresses that migration is thus the result of spatial disequilibria, with social forces tending towards equilibrium.

From functionalist theory more broadly was borne neoclassical migration theory, which stresses the primacy of the supply and demand for labour within the push/pull model, as exemplified by Harris and Todaro (1970). In its predictive aspect, neoclassical theory argues that migration ultimately acts as an equalizer across sending and receiving countries, which in turn, lowers the need for migration. Consequently, both theories cast migrants as passive pawns

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<sup>87</sup> Following the example set in the “Age of migration” (referenced above), these theories will not be reviewed along strict disciplinary lines.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Everett S. Lee, “A Theory of Migration,” *Demography* 3:1 (1966): 47-57.

<sup>90</sup> Brettel and Hollifield, *Migration theory*, 28.

and do not view migration as a *process*.<sup>91</sup> Migrants passively react to external features of the international system. Seeing migration as a product of difference in wage and income across geographies neglects entirely its non-economic factors, such as political freedom, and fails to theorize the role of the state and of migrant networks as migration drivers, and not as a distortion in this equilibrium of the otherwise perfect markets.

A historical-structural approach offers a deeper critique of functionalism by postulating that economic systems *reinforce* structural inequalities.<sup>92</sup> Dependency and world systems theory see migration as a process<sup>93</sup> that serves the interest of specific economic interest groups and states that are lobbied by these interests.<sup>94</sup> Dual (or segmented) labour market theory attempts to make explicit the structural embeddedness of immigrant labour within capitalist economies. Advanced economies require low-skilled workers to meet manufacturing demands for which they turn to migrant labour, in correspondence with a decrease in domestic supply.<sup>95</sup>

Undoubtedly, in the postwar period, the way in which labour markets were segmented in places like Britain, France and Belgium created an urgent demand for *cheap foreign labour*. This demand was sector-specific and embedded in the structure of battered postwar Western European labour markets. Segmented labour market theory does consequently offer important explanatory insight into how the vulnerable legal status of migrants could serve employers'

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<sup>91</sup> And those derived from it, such as neoclassical migration theory. See Hein de Haas, "The Determinants of International Migration," *International Migration Institute (IMI), Oxford Department of International Development (QEH)* (University of Oxford, 2011): 9.

<sup>92</sup> A historical-structural approach was developed from the 1970s onward, with foundations in Marxist political economy.

<sup>93</sup> In contrast to the push/pull single process view of migration. Nicholas Van Hear, Oliver Bakewell and Katy Long, "Push-Pull Plus: Reconsidering the Drivers of Migration," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 44:6 (2018): 929.

<sup>94</sup> From dependency and world systems theory emerged in the 1990s, globalization theory, characterized by Held in 1999 as "the widening, deepening and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary social life". Quoted from D. Held, A. McGrew, D. Goldblau, and J. Perraton, J, *Global Transformations: Politics, Economics and Culture* (Cambridge: Polity, 1999), 2., as cited in Castles, *The Age of Migration*, 33. Central to globalization theory is the idea that globalization represents a new world order rather than a new manifestation of the capitalist world economy described by conflict theory. According to Globalization theory, the new order emerged in the 1980's - and is characterized by rapid increase in cross-border flows of capital, as well as people.

<sup>95</sup> Michael Piore, *Birds of Passage: Migrant Labor and Industrial Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

interests. Refugees' *lack* of rights made them active targets for recruitment schemes that saw them as easier to systematically exploit. However, most DPs had already chosen to migrate from their country of origin (or opted not to return to it) at the time when labour recruitment schemes were offered to them. They fled forms of political oppression and religious persecution that do not fit neatly into this model of dependency. While it is possible that observations on labour migration apply to aspects of DP recruitment, the unique positions of DPs and political refugees must be distinguished. This thesis thus joins a growing body of literature within migration studies faced with the challenge of recognizing and incorporating the role of migrants' own agency as well as the historical and existential situation of DP survivors.

A number of anthropological theories engaging the micro-level have theorized what motivates individual people to migrate, offering promising avenues of cross-fertilization. The New Economics of Labour (NELM) theory sees migration as a collective *household* strategy. De Haas characterizes NELM as a theory that explains migration as an active attempt "by social groups to overcome structural constraints."<sup>96</sup> Stark expands upon the idea of migration as risk-sharing behaviour by family and household units, aimed at minimizing income risk.<sup>97</sup> Migration then, according to the NELM model, is not always in response to emergency but rather a proactive choice informed by wider social contexts.

Emergency, nonetheless, cannot be discarded in cases involving forced migration. Furthermore, as several of the chapters in this study attest, migration after 1945 was often ideology-driven, with some DPs weighing their options on an abstract level between economic systems (capitalism vs. communism), between geographical generalizations (America vs. Europe), or between ways of collective life (nation-state vs. diaspora). Theory must account

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<sup>96</sup> de Haas, "The Determinants of International Migration," 10. As de Haas explains, NELM focuses on forced migration in particular and is in line with the idea that we need to think about divisions between forced and voluntary migration as inherently problematic.

<sup>97</sup> See O. Stark, *The Migration of Labor* (Cambridge and Oxford: Blackwell, 1991).

for agency with the power to disrupt structure. It must also be applied to cases of forced migration and avoid discounting the relative weight of more abstract persuasions. How did experiences of forced migration inform individual decision-making? How did individual migrants themselves affect policy? How can we understand the mechanisms through which migrants are able to affect, or even defy immigration policy?

In order to address these questions, this dissertation utilizes two key, cross-cutting concepts taken from migration network theory: that of *social network* and *social capital*. As a method of analysis, it sees an individual as a “node” linked with other nodes to form a network.<sup>98</sup> Chapter 3 of this dissertation, in particular, narrows in on ITS source material and collects, analyses and describes certain trends revealing migratory strategies and preferences at the individual and household level. It operationalizes the concept of social network by reflecting on the size of emergent networks reflected in the sources, the number of participants in different networks, their density (which is to say, how well individual members can be assumed to know each other; it points out clusters of high density as well as those of low density), overlap (or multiplexity) across networks and the strength of network ties. As is argued in the case of immigration to America after 1948, the connections between dispersed family members who may or may not choose to offer support to one another has direct bearing on generating and sustaining migration streams.<sup>99</sup>

As well as the dynamics of family networks and structures, the economic logic of family households must be considered: “Joint production and consumption give rise to migration dynamics of their own.”<sup>100</sup> Thus, to the concept of social network must be added that of social capital. Bourdieu defined social capital as “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources

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<sup>98</sup> Steven Vertovec, “Migration and other Modes of Transnationalism: Towards Conceptual Cross-fertilization,” *International Migration Review*, 37: 3 (2003): 646.

<sup>99</sup> Through kinship networks and ethnic solidarity. Furthermore, scholars have to be attentive to power struggles within the family however (particularly when accounting for variation in cases where families do actively choose separation, for instance); especially where migration represents possibilities for escaping family restriction.

<sup>100</sup> Kok, “The Family Factor,” 216.

which are linked to the possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition—or in other words, to membership in a group.”<sup>101</sup> In short, social capital is not the sum of an individual’s private property but “exists in, and is drawn from, that person’s web of relationships.” It is maintained, “for example, by visits, communication by post or telephone, marriage, participation in events, and membership in associations.”<sup>102</sup>

Social capital theory is an important framework for understanding migration patterns both into, and beyond the DP camps. For instance, as the first chapter of this dissertation shows, so-called “infiltrates,” who arrived to the DP camps in 1946, often acquired skills, connections and knowledge that expanded their social capital. Once in DP camps, DP families did not have access at all times to reliable sources of information or to reliable sources of income. Establishing webs of personal contacts that spread beyond the boundaries of the DP camp was critical to maximizing opportunities for information and assistance. Personal connections were often decisive in lowering the risk and cost of emigration. Social networks and social capital thus had significant and often decisive impact on capabilities and aspirations with respect to migration strategies.

At the core of the DP life stories presented in this study is the ongoing interaction between private and collective belonging. Different theories of belonging and of social needs however, have shown that there is not necessarily a strict opposition between the two. The question of the hierarchy of social and individual needs is explored by American psychologist Abraham Maslow, who integrates social belonging among the needs of the individual.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, “Le Capital Social: Notes Provisoires,” *Actes De La Recherche En Sciences Sociales* 31: 1 (1979), 2-3 as quoted in Castles, *The Age of Migration*, 40.

<sup>102</sup> Vertovec, “Migration and Other Modes of Transnationalism,” 648.

<sup>103</sup> A. H. Maslow, *Motivation and Personality* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970). Maslow’s analysis is objectivistic, insofar as he claims that one need may not be substituted by another. On this model, needs are essential, and every need must be satisfied by itself. Further, on Maslow’s model, the self-realizing human being is governed from “within” and free from the influences of the cultural and social environment

Subsequent approaches have diverged to consider needs as both substituted and sublimated to broader cultural and social environments. Bo Stråth argues that “Concepts such as interest and identity are not essential but discursive categories, and as such undergo continuous transformation through processes of social bargaining.”<sup>104</sup> Stråth, as a historian, challenges a broad consensus among contemporary psychologists around Maslow's humanistic psychology, based on the parallel and balanced fulfilment of human needs in different domains of life.<sup>105</sup> After 1945, both Polish and Jewish DP communities created new frameworks of belonging to which they directed their social ambitions. In the absence of national belonging, Polish DPs invested their social needs into ethnic networks, the family and religious community. By contrast, Jewish Holocaust survivors, who had largely lost their entire pre-existing family, searched for social belonging within the Zionist project or Jewish society at large. The forms in which different DP communities substituted social needs; the role of transnational networks and newly formed family unions replacing lost local environments; the experience of personal solidarity as opposed to political and ethnic belonging; but also the extreme case of the radical loss experienced by Holocaust orphans, with their will to revive the Jewish nation after destruction, is evidenced throughout this study.

### *Theoretical contribution*

This thesis aims to contribute to theory within migration studies firstly by illustrating the productive role of history as a discipline. It sheds important light on the manifold ways in which refugees have been thought about and defined over time. It aims to shed light on postwar displacement in a manner that will engage refugee and forced migration scholars and encourage

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<sup>104</sup> Bo Stråth, “Belonging and European Identity,” in Gerard Delanty, Ruth Wodak, and Paul Jones, eds., *Identity, Belonging, and Migration* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008), 21-37.

<sup>105</sup> See also M. Joseph Sirgy and Jiyun Wu, “The Pleasant Life, the Engaged Life, and the Meaningful Life: What about the Balanced Life?,” *Journal of Happiness Studies* 10 (2009): 183–196; Louis Tay and Ed Diener, “Needs and Subjective Well-Being Around the World,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 101 (2011): 354–365. The latter adopt Maslow's medical comparison: “Like vitamins, each of the needs is individually required, just as having much of one vitamin does not negate the need for other vitamins” (355); and conclude: “Need theories hypothesize that there are universal needs and that they are not substitutable for each other ... Improving one's own life is not enough; society-wide improvement is also required.” (364).

situating displacements in their historical context. In addition, it hopes to illustrate the possibility of re-integrating a structural approach investigating individual and group choices and structural constraint.<sup>106</sup>

The theoretical considerations above have outlined a number of working terms, theories, hypotheses and concepts engaged with in this study. A number of arguments have been presented. Firstly, the case has been made that Displaced Persons of occupied Germany at the end of the Second World War, are *especially* illustrative and illuminative *both* of the challenges of any clear-cut distinctions between forced and voluntary migration as well as the differences between the two. Without detracting from the reality of the liminal space in which so many were forced to operate, the heterogeneity of lived experience is similarly testament to the agency—though restricted by structural factors that cannot be ignored—of individuals and families on the ground. Secondly, it has stressed the historical aspect of this study and discussed the theorization of time through periodization.

In its investigation of refugee migration after 1945 and the interaction between migration policy and displaced persons' own migration strategies, this thesis necessarily lies at the nexus of theoretical debates within a variety of relevant disciplines. Consequently, synthesizing different migration theories ranging from political science to anthropology, presents a daunting challenge. A third argument has not sought to outline an *all-encompassing* theoretical framework, in which the subject of postwar migration, or indeed migration more generally, should be approached. Rather, it has reviewed the most important migration theories—and key concepts therein—that have informed this study. In particular, it has stressed the importance of an anthropological approach to forced migration that recognizes the historical context in which DP survivors were embedded as well as highlighting social

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<sup>106</sup> Nancy Green calls for this explicitly: “for migration studies, this means examining and reinterpreting the structures surrounding the migration process in light of individual choice and vice versa.” See Nancy L. Green, “The Comparative Method and Poststructural Structuralism: New Perspectives for Migration Studies,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* (1994): 17.

networks whose dynamics are testament to migrants' own agency. Network analysis highlights the multiple and varied relationships among individuals and observe how these are interwoven and have bearing on the capabilities and aspirations of individual migrants and their families. It also draws attention to the formation of communities of interest along ethno-national lines, the ways in which ethnic adscription influenced migration, and the question of socially generated futures among refugees after 1945.

While Polish and Jewish displaced communities made decisions collectively and individually, this fact should not obscure the ongoing structural constraints faced by all Displaced Persons and the impact of macro-level conditions including the impact of states and policy in initiating and shaping movement out of DP camps. Indeed, at the macro level of analysis, this dissertation takes policy itself as an object of analysis. It engages with the underlying assumptions—particularly on the nature of persons—that direct administrative policy and inform how problems are identified.

### **Primary sources**

The records of the International Tracing Service archives were gathered by the International Refugee Organization and the Red Cross, under the aegis of the Allied forces, for the purpose of locating missing people and documenting claims. Bad Arolsen was selected after lengthy deliberation to host the ITS administrative headquarters, as the city was located at the border of the American and British Zones and had not been bombed during the war. The use of the archival material for educational and scholarly purposes was outside the humanitarian mission of the archive and was even ruled out for legal reasons. In order to turn the ITS into an archive, custody needed to be transferred from the Red Cross to an international committee and given a new institutional identity as the “Arolsen Archives – International Center on Nazi Persecution,” which was opened to the public in late 2007. While the ITS documents are in



possession of the Arolsen Archives, this study is based on a digital copy accessible at the Wiener Library in London, England.<sup>107</sup> The ITS tells story after story; not of grand strategy, but of the human factor—alongside the terrifying memories of inhumanity and genocide. Its postwar documentation is unprecedented, and rich in so many survivor accounts and statements. The scholarly and educational potential of ITS is immense, and a goldmine for advanced research.

The following describes and puts into perspective ITS materials regarding postwar emigration. Every Displaced Person, upon registration into a DP camp, was issued a CM/1 File along with their DP Registration card (subsequently filed and included in their CM/1 File). CM/1 Files were made up of standardized forms designed to gather as much information about the Displaced Person as possible, including brief histories to date, reasons for registration and objections to repatriation and desired destination for emigration.<sup>108</sup> CM/1 files also contain information relating to the Displaced Persons family connections, marital status and often include medical data, again with standardized forms within which the particularities of any illness and hopes for recovery are noted. CM/1 files frequently contain brief details about interviews with DP individuals. Such examples are overwhelmingly likely to be found in the cases of individuals who remain in camps long into the late 40's and particularly the so-called “unrepatriable” DPs. Thus, a significant proportion of the documentation deals with the post-1947 period, after the International Refugee Organization (IRO) took over the management of DP camps and focused its energies on resettlement abroad. While many of the same, standardized forms may be found in each individual CM/1 file, the content of the files and their

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<sup>107</sup> For further reading on history and opening of the archive to the public, see Paul A. Shapiro, “Vapniarka: The Archive of the International Tracing Service and the Holocaust in the East,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 27:1 (2013).

<sup>108</sup> From 2010 to 2012, the USHMM, in partnership with Bad Arolsen, and Yad Vashem indexed the CM/1 files in Germany (3.2.1.1) adding the following categories: nationality, ethnicity, religion, dates, DP camp names, DP camp locations, sex, and availability of photos. See Afoumado, “Care and Maintenance in Germany,” 218.

subsequent size vary from individual to individual. As Diane Afoumado recently remarked, consequently, “almost each form is a case study in itself.”<sup>109</sup>

It is significant to note that while much progress has been made with respect to digitization, the ITS archive is still relatively poorly indexed. It is best worked with when individual names are searched for via a Central Name Index, there are however, options available to the researcher hoping to get “in the back door.” To generate a greater number of results, while limiting say, geographic scope, researchers can search for files within individual DP camps, for instance “Hohne-Belsen,” and then isolate resultant records to CM/1 holdings. While labor-intensive, insofar as each subsequent CM/1 result must be individually examined, such strategies are the surest way (currently) to locate relevant individual records and to subsequently attempt to identify trends. IRO documents pertaining to the management of camps in the British Zone can also be isolated with a narrower search criterion and overwhelmingly offer up lists of those repatriated in a given month, say, or who emigrated to a particular destination. While equally laborious, it is possible to work *backwards* from such lists to then trace the CM/1 files of individuals concerned, and this has been attempted in this study as relating to overseas and assisted emigration as part of mass recruitment and resettlement schemes.

With respect to migration, CM/1 files and the DP2 card collection represent the kind of source which can go some way to confirming the initial preferences DPs were at least willing to note upon arrival at DP centres, what they were saying to officials about where they wanted to go and when—and importantly, why they wanted to go there. These are to be approached with caution, however, as they can also reflect the kinds of destinations DPs felt would be best to register with an UNRRA or IRO officer (the Methodology and Methods section below, explores in more detail some of the limits and possible biases within ITS). As well as the DP2

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 223.

cards and CM/1 files, there are also subfiles including “6.1.2 Child Search Branch (Tracing Service) under UNRRA and IRO” which records the experiences of unaccompanied minors and once again, the debates and problematics surrounding what to do with these individuals in the postwar period. Subunits like these have also been consulted and frequently offer support in establishing the primacy of inter-personal relationships when it came to determining possibilities and preferences for DP migration—as well as illustrating the priorities of relief workers where these conflicted and/or overlapped with DPs.

Particularly where Care and Maintenance files are concerned, the historian can start to build a picture over time, of what options DPs saw themselves as having, how they were classified and how this changed over time. Undoubtedly, this kind of new and exciting information can go a long way to establishing the contours of “DP history” and *must* now be actively engaged with by any historian of the postwar period. It is through the documents at ITS that the historian can start to put individuals and families back into literature on the displaced and begin to give them voice.

While the ITS Archive provides an access to the DPs' points of view, the DP collection at the National Archives (NA) at Kew form the governmental source base upon which this thesis is built. It includes the records of British policy positions, minutes of cabinet meetings, immigration policies and more. The International Refugee Organisation (IRO), which eventually took over the administration of DP camps in the British Zone, was funded in large part by the British government and was subordinate to the DP policy it established in its Zone of occupation. A significant body of files within the DP collection in the National Archives thus contains a large amount of material relating to IRO resettlement schemes, the mechanics of DP migration, the assistance offered by voluntary groups, to name but a few. It also contains a particularly rich collection concerning Jewish DPs, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Commission (JDC) and the Palestinian question. As well as the holdings of British DP camp

administration records, the personal accounts of its staff and extensive correspondence with British volunteer agencies working in the Zone can be found at Kew.

As well as the NA and ITS, the records of several other archives have been consulted. The Sikorski Institute, in London, contains an important collection, predominantly in the Polish language, relating to the fates of Polish Displaced Persons. While there is significant overlap with the records of the NA, Sikorski files contain important correspondence one cannot find at Kew, including for example between Polish liaison officers in DP camps and individuals sent abroad to investigate opportunities for resettlement, in locations such as North and South America.<sup>110</sup> Importantly, Sikorski Institute DP records include some materials produced by Polish DPs themselves, predominantly taking the form of petitions or complaints relating to cases of unpleasant migratory experiences either post-repatriation or resettlement.

Accessed through the Wiener Library in London, the YIVO DP collection remains one of the most important collections regarding the fates of Jewish DPs. The Jewish DP press, appearing mostly in Yiddish (with many instances of Polish, English, Hebrew and German), were of especial importance for the present study. Efforts have been concentrated on the predominantly Jewish DP camp, Belsen, and the *Unzer Sztyme*<sup>111</sup> paper (and articles therein) as relating directly to questions of migration. As with examples taken from the Polish DP Press, this material is treated with caution, with attention paid to the biases of its authors and its intended audience(s).

The Wiener Library is also home to the digitized Rose Henriques Archive (RHA), which comprises the working papers of Rose Henriques from 1945 to 1950, when she served as head of the Germany Section of the Jewish Committee for Relief Abroad (JCRA) and led

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<sup>110</sup> One finds such cases within the A.XII.1 - A.XII.91 Polish General Staff and Ministry of National Defence, 1939 - 1948 (1948 - 1990 in-Exile) section.

<sup>111</sup> To be introduced and explored in the Second Chapter of this study, in the section titled “The Push for Palestine.”

one of the Jewish Relief Units (JRU) into the former concentration camp of Bergen-Belsen.<sup>112</sup> This is undoubtedly another rich pool of sources dealing predominantly with Jewish DPs. It includes documentation relating to the court cases made against Jews, the situation of Jewish “infiltrates,” financial concerns, report regarding various camps in the British Zone housing Jewish DPs, General Reports, correspondence with the Jewish community in Palestine, the personal papers of prominent individuals and much more.

As well as consulting the official record, this thesis incorporates first-hand accounts, published and unpublished, of both DPs themselves and the volunteers who worked in DP camps beyond the archival holdings outlined above. In July/August 1946, an American psychologist named David Pablo Boder (1886–1961) visited a number of DP camps in occupied Germany (as well as in France and Switzerland) where he conducted dozens of interviews with former concentration camps inmates.<sup>113</sup> As Boder himself explained, his interviews were borne of an obligation he felt to preserve victims’ stories, as they were told “in their own languages and in their own voices.”<sup>114</sup> The interviews are available to the public and accessible in full online.<sup>115</sup> They have been transcribed in their original languages with an English translation available. For the purposes of this study, only interviews that took place in occupied Germany with DPs who had been registered in the British Zone of occupation have been consulted.<sup>116</sup>

With respect to the question of retrospective vs. simultaneous narration, wherever possible, this thesis focuses on memoirs written before or during resettlement, as opposed to

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<sup>112</sup> The RHA is found at the Wiener Library under collection reference MF Doc 52; For a catalogue description of the holdings of the RHA, see <https://wiener.soutron.net/Portal/Default/en-GB/RecordView/Index/71004>

<sup>113</sup> For a useful introduction into the context and history of the David Boder interviews, see Julia Bernstein, “The Art of Testimony: David Boder and his Archive of Holocaust Survivors’ Audio-Interviews,” *East European Jewish Affairs* 48:3 (2018): 354-371.

<sup>114</sup> David Boder, “The Displaced People of Europe: Preliminary Notes on a Psychological and Anthropological Study,” *Illinois Tech Engineer* 12 (1947): 18.

<sup>115</sup> <https://iit.aviaryplatform.com/collections/231> (accessed last on 1/05/2020).

<sup>116</sup> While in no way disparaging its potential fruits, this project does not intend to include other oral histories as part of its source base.

those commenting on the process from hindsight.<sup>117</sup> However, both published and unpublished memoirs offer intriguing accounts of individual's strategies out of displacement, which can be read critically alongside official sources.<sup>118</sup> The Jewish Historical Institute (JHI) in Warsaw, Poland, has one of the largest collection of documents concerning the history of Polish Jews and their postwar fate. It includes dozens of unpublished accounts, including from individuals liberated in the British Zone of occupation and granted DP status.<sup>119</sup> A number of published accounts, including prominent memoirs of individuals working within the DP camps (often volunteers from the UK or the States) also reflect upon postwar trajectories and competing ideas around the DP future, as experienced by those dealing with DPs on the ground.<sup>120</sup> Through a careful and critical reading of life histories and of personal narratives, it is possible to identify underlying themes that contribute to our understanding of migration out of the DP camps in the postwar era. In some cases, retrospective testimony may be tested against the records of the ITS. While none of the records described are perfect measures, exploring such a variety of primary source materials and incorporating them into a single study on displacement, in conversation with each other, provides new and fruitful insight into different and shifting migration strategies as they evolved after 1945.

<sup>117</sup> Significant published sources including memoirs from between 1945-1951 include Samuel Gringauz, "Jewish Destiny as the DPs See It: The Ideology of the Surviving Remnant," *Commentary* (1947): 501–509; Francesca M. Wilson, *Aftermath: France, Germany, Austria, Yugoslavia 1945 and 1946* (West Drayton: Penguin, 1947).

<sup>118</sup> Including for example, Joseph Fink's *The Day Was Short, the Work was Vast: A Memoir 1944-1949*. (Pasadena, CA: Ane Image, 1998) and Donald L. Niewyk's *Fresh Wounds: Early Narratives of Holocaust Survival* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); Hadassah Rosensaft, *Yesterday: My Story*, 2nd edn (New York: Yad Vashem, 2005).

<sup>119</sup> Within the JHI archive, the collection 302: Zbiór pamiątek Żydów Ocalałych z Zagłady [A collection of memoirs of Holocaust survivors] has been consulted. This collection is made up of 349 testimonies written predominantly in Polish, Yiddish and with a few in French, English or German. They are typically handwritten memoirs both written and submitted to the archive at different times; some significantly closer to events, while other decades later. The translations of testimonies in this sub-unit of the archive contained in this thesis are my own. A full inventory of the archive and this particular collection is accessible online here: <http://www.jhi.pl/en/inventories>

<sup>120</sup> Examples include Susan T. Pettiss and Lynne Taylor's *After the Shooting Stopped: The Story of an UNRRA Welfare Worker in Germany 1945-1947* (Victoria, BC: Trafford, 2004); Kathryn Hulme, *The Wild Place* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1953); Chaim Avni, *Im ha-yehudim be-machanot ha'akurim: rishmei shlichut 1945–1947* [With Jews in the DP camps: impressions of a mission 1945–1947] (Tel Aviv: "Chaverim" Publishers, 1980); and Margaret McNeill's *By the Rivers of Babylon: A Story of Relief Work Among the Displaced Persons of Europe* (London: Bannisdale Press, 1950).

## Methodological considerations

The CM/1 collection is a tremendous source of information regarding postwar emigration. Almost each form is a case study in itself. [...] the forms contain nearly limitless information about the subject. There are vast horizons for deducing patterns.<sup>121</sup>

Fundamentally, this project is an exercise in comparative history. At one level, the use of comparison and a comparative method of some sort for historians seems an obvious tool.<sup>122</sup> Nevertheless, as already touched upon, a major challenge for the historian is not to allow the needs of the comparative method to create greater solidity for historical entities than the history of those entities can in fact support; without going to the other extreme of assuming that all is flux. Perhaps surprisingly, the fact that this study operates within a particular unit of analysis (the ethno-national category), while specifically hoping to illustrate where “Polish” and “Jewish” units blurred or obfuscated alternative identifications (from the interpersonal, to class and gender-based) through which DP migration may be explored, is in fact a strength of the present comparative approach. Polish and Jewish were far from discrete categories. The linguistic, religious and even territorial criteria of being Polish did not neatly overlap after 1945, and conceptions of Jewishness were diverse and changing. Important emphasis is thus placed on group-building strategies that brought DPs together or pulled them apart as they “replaced” themselves for the future. Where DPs saw their future prospects and what visions fuelled their views of those prospects, calls attention to the *process* of group formation and the increasing centrality of the nation as a place of possibility and coherence in the DP imaginary.

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<sup>121</sup> Afoumado, “Care and Maintenance,” 223.

<sup>122</sup> Bloch for instance, is clear from the outset that a number of voices recommend the comparative approach for analysing the history, in particular, of political, economic and legal institutions. See Marc Bloch, “A Contribution towards a Comparative History of European Societies,” in *Land and Work in Medieval Europe* (1967), 44-81.

Furthermore, a limited comparison between Polish and Jewish DP communities that excludes other national groups in the DP camps avoids arriving at less-well supported generalizations in what Sartori describes as a potential pitfall for the comparative method known as conceptual “stretching.”<sup>123</sup> The clearer the purpose of comparison, the more analytical fruit it can bear.<sup>124</sup> The focus on a particular Zone of occupation and certain categories of DPs therein does not limit any analysis of broader international contexts—but rather makes it manageable; with a narrower focus making inter-connections easier to discern.

Beyond the comparative method, working with personal narratives introduces a number of important questions to be addressed. With attention to the records of the ITS in particular—which represent a potent mix of both official source materials and recorded personal narratives—what follows will consider issues of sample selection and representativity of the study, before turning to significant factors shaping the representation of individual itineraries.

At the outset, it bears stating that the relevant CM/1 files, because of their sheer quantity, cannot be exhaustively processed. There are thus two main avenues of sample selection available to the researcher; either focusing on a random segment of the total, or in the attempt to identify trends in files retaining the most interesting, extensive, explicit, or quotable documents found in the course of research. The second procedure is by far the most practiced in research, but ultimately confronts a problem of representativity that is addressed in the current study by imposing more conscious criteria for the selection of sources.

Generally speaking, there were three broad options available to DPs with respect to migration, stressed with varying degrees of intensity by British authorities after the War. These was repatriation to respective countries of origin, resettlement in a third country outside of Germany or finally, absorption into the German economy and society outside of the DP camp.

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<sup>123</sup> Giovanni Sartori, “Concept Misinformation in Comparative Politics,” *American Political Science Review* 64:4 (1970): 1033-1053.

<sup>124</sup> Ragin is also sensitive to this: See Charles C Ragin, *The Comparative Method* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).



With these three broad umbrellas in mind (and of course, recognizing that one option need not always preclude another; for instance, in cases where a repatriated DP elects to return to Germany and register once again for DP status) a researcher can start to build a picture of the range of opportunities for manoeuvring available to DPs.

This study thus takes a sample of DPs from both Polish and Jewish communities that represent the plethora of options available to the Displaced with respect to emigration after 1945. Relying on the official sources found at Kew and elsewhere, to elucidate upon the options that were presented to Displaced Persons at different times, available options are cross-checked in the archive at ITS to find examples of individuals that availed themselves of those options, with preferential treatment given to records that indicate in more detail DPs' evolving thinking with respect to emigration, including the role of different factors (such as family).

A number of variables have had to be balanced in the process of source selection. Firstly, proportionate numbers of Polish and of Jewish DP individuals were represented. Certainly, where some options were more available to the former (such as in the case of repatriation), many more examples of one of the two communities will be offered. Secondly, the records of both male and female DPs (unmarried and married) are incorporated into this work. Thirdly, a range of age groups, from new-born infants raised in the camps to elderly institutionalized cases have been considered. Besides ethno-nationality, gender and age, careful consideration has been paid to a fourth criterion, war experience, to ensure representation of both Nazi concentration camp survivors or forced labourers in Germany, as well as subsequent "infiltrates" from Poland or the Soviet Union into the DP camps after 1946. Finally, the study ensures that individuals from the full spread of DP camps across the British Zone have been identified.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> For a full and accessible inventory of all the DP camps established after 1945, see <https://dpcampinventory.its-arolsen.org/>

As well as imposing criteria on the selection of sources from within ITS, research working with CM/1 files must be attentive to the external inducements that could (and likely did) shape the representation of individual itineraries. These are systematized in what follows at different levels according to 1. textual construction of the self-image for the authorities; 2. immediate context of the testimony; 3. rationalization of the (historical and personal) past; 4. trauma.

The aftermath of the Second World War “saw a general sorting out of good and bad, victim and victimizer, hero and villain” across Europe. Just as belligerent states targeted politically “unreliable” ethnic groups during the Second World War, so too did the governments and international organizations charged with DP care.<sup>126</sup> From 1946 onwards, only those who could present “valid objections,” including proof of persecution, or fear based on reasonable grounds of persecution, could be classified as a DPs.<sup>127</sup> As a consequence of this form of external pressure, one finds the evidence of generic responses including “fear of persecution” and “does not support communist regime at home” reappearing across otherwise diverse bodies of individual files as DPs learned the “right” stories to tell at interview. Furthermore, the “right” story evolved as Cold War tensions mounted and anti-communist criteria gained credence. In the DPs camps, the politics of retribution and international justice were complicated and coloured by conflicting and changing narratives of the war. It is important for the researcher to bear these wider geo-political considerations in mind when examining individual casefiles. Many DPs invented, constructed or improved their life stories in accordance with the perceptions of shifting criteria for the acquisition of DP status.

The immediate context of an interview could similarly have significant bearing on testimony. In some instances, the interviewer themselves have noted their own interjections

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<sup>126</sup> Peter Gatrell, 'Trajectories of Population Displacement in the Aftermaths of the Two World Wars', in Jessica Reinisch and Elizabeth White, *The Disentanglement of Populations: Migration, Expulsion and Displacement in Post-War Europe, 1944-49*, (England: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011), 5.

<sup>127</sup> Cohen, *In War's Wake*, 33.

into personal files—often in the form of brief comments on their assessment of the validity of what a given DP has stated. It is relevant that those conducting DP interviews felt both comfortable and authoritative enough to make such interventions. Nonetheless, while personal histories cannot be taken at face-value, once DP status was granted, DPs could more readily afford to be candid in expressing their desires with respect to emigration. It was firmly in the mutual interests of governing bodies and the DPs' themselves, to develop strategies towards emptying the DP camps of their inhabitants as soon as possible. Consequently, interviews concerned with establishing DP migratory preferences are characteristically frank, with DPs often willing to argue with welfare workers over questions of repatriation, resettlement or absorption. Individual CM/1 forms often contain both simplified biographical sketches alongside extended biographies significantly richer in detail and more discursive. The latter overwhelmingly tended to be produced where the focus of the interview is on the *future*; in this case more detailed dialogues were carefully recorded.

Beyond both the immediate context of testimony and the textual construction of the self-image for the authorities, the ways in which DPs rationalized both the historical and personal past must be considered. As Bruner notes, discussion of the past is “not *only* about the past, but is busily about the present as well.”<sup>128</sup> Being attentive to what aspects of the past are stressed at interview highlights the ways in which the meaning of past suffering is constructed in the aftermath of the Second World War. Furthermore, and in light of the fact that this thesis concentrates on sources produced in the immediate postwar years, the role that trauma may have played with respect to testimony has to also be acknowledged. The impact of trauma “makes the processes of remembering and forgetting more complex than in other situations [...], This in turn means that the understanding and analysis of these stories is inevitably

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<sup>128</sup> J. Bruner, “Self-making and World-making,” in Jens Brockmeier and Donal Carbaugh, eds., *Narrative and Identity: Studies in Autobiography, Self and Culture* (2001), 29.

complicated and challenging.”<sup>129</sup> In the case of Jewish Displaced Persons in particular, an emphasis on trauma narratives was reflective to the degree to which DPs reacted to the space within which they could be heard, or fought to be heard and thus became a powerful political tool in a well-documented struggle against, in particular, British authorities.<sup>130</sup>

While ITS files must be read with caution, the present study is not concerned with DPs' representations of the past *per se* but focuses on its influence on representations of the future. As previously described, CM/1 files contain a wealth of information not only about where the DPs eventually ended up—but their stated initial aims as well as changes in their migratory preferences over time and such cases where thinking is clearly shown to have evolved are singled out preferentially.

### **Structure of the thesis**

The thesis follows key shifts in policy that opened up different geographies for DPs. It thus broadly breaks down into considerations of repatriation policy in Chapter 1; labour recruitment and DP resistance in Chapter 2; Mass resettlement and delayed migration in Chapter 3; and a second wave of mass resettlement as well as a final policy of absorption in Chapter 4. What becomes evident is that each development in policy leaves behind significant numbers of DPs who do not fit the model, thus necessitating a change in policy. As a natural consequence of following these shifts over time, the thesis follows a loose chronological order, moving from the immediate postwar years to the early recruitment schemes of 1947, before finally considering the fates of a “hard core” population remaining in the camps after 1951.

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<sup>129</sup> S. Leydesdorff, G. Dawson, N. Burchardt and T. G. Ashplant, “Introduction: Trauma and Life Stories,” in Lacy Rogers, Leydesdorff and Dawson, eds., *Trauma and Life Stories: International Perspectives* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 1.

<sup>130</sup> For a general discussion of the impact of trauma on refugee narratives, see Julia Powles, *Life History and Personal Narrative: Theoretical and Methodological Issues Relevant to Research and Evaluation in Refugee Contexts* (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2004), 9ff.

Chapter 1 focuses on the evolution of what was effectively policies of border control after 1945, the emergence and recognition of an “unrepatriable” DP group split into Polish and Jewish communities and the growth of this group by the arrival of so-called “infiltrates” into the DP camps. While military presence after 1945 was, on the one hand, supposed to facilitate the speedy repatriation of DPs “home” through a necessarily porous border, formal entry into DP camps and a policy of DP screening to secure and retain DP status made for increasing rigidity. While the idea of rehabilitation of DPs through repatriation was based on the assumption of the repatriable Pole, Jewish DPs emerged after 1945 as the quintessential asylum-seekers of international refugee politics.

Chapter 2 turns to consider the various DP labour recruitment schemes that first emerged in late 1946, imposing a strict ethno-national criterion to the deliberate exclusion of the Jewish DP population. It concentrates on areas of cooperation with British recruitment as well as Polish DP resistance to labour schemes. The theme of partially successful resistance is picked up in the second half of the chapter concerning the enrolment of Jewish DPs in the Zionist project and its contested origins. While policy clustered DPs based on national origins, the Jews had no recognized national home, resulting in a paralysis of policy within a contested context in which migrants themselves were able to exert important pressure.

Chapter 3 continues the treatment of alternatives to repatriation, moving to extra-European destinations, with a focus on North America and the emergence in 1948 of a specific set of laws and policies that enable the movement of large numbers of DPs. It examines the motivations of DPs bound for America, highlighting differences and convergences across Polish and Jewish DP communities. The second half of the chapter shifts to focus on prominent aspects of DP social and communal life in the camps that, from an administrative perspective, often served to prolong a stay in a DP camp and ultimately delay emigration, even as more opportunities to exit the DP camps became available.

Chapter four continues to stress the significance and complexities of chains of historical migration, personal relationships and trajectories of the family. It examines the conditions that perpetuated movement to America and Israel into 1950 and highlights the role of migrant networks and institutions supporting the transnational migration of Polish and Jewish DP communities. The labor recruitment and resettlement schemes that form the focus of Chapters 2 and 3 were based on qualification requirements that could not (and indeed, were not designed to) provide a way of solving the “DP problem.” The final half of the Chapter deals with a policy of absorption after 1949, after which those remaining in the DP camps and unwilling or unable to repatriate or resettle, became the responsibility of the German authorities.

## 1.1 REPATRIATION AFTER LIBERATION

The following subchapter considers the evolving relationship between Polish and Jewish DP communities and British repatriation policy at war's end. It is essential at the outset however, to reflect critically on the use of term "repatriation," which must be problematized as part of a propaganda discourse that emerged after 1945. As shall become clear, "repatriation" was, in the postwar period, a euphemism that falsely implied that all Displaced Persons had the opportunity to return to the pre-war homelands in which they had originated.

While there remains no exact data, current estimates suggest that for each year of the German occupation of Poland some 100,000 Poles were forcibly relocated to Nazi concentration camps and exploited as slave labourers. Total figures suggest that over 2.5 million Poles served as forced labourers in the Reich, representing the second largest group after citizens of the USSR.<sup>131</sup> What follows focuses on the pressures exerted on Polish DPs to repatriate immediately following liberation and even after the DP camp universe took on more permanent form. It begins with a general description of the establishment of the DP camps and the initial non-separation of ethnic communities therein, the seemingly spontaneous readiness of Polish DPs<sup>132</sup> to return home contrasted with the resistance of Soviet DPs to be repatriated. Although Polish DPs were not subject to forced repatriation on a scale akin to their Soviet counterparts, they were subject even in these early months, to significant *pressure*.

By the winter of 1945, it was apparent that most of the DPs who were willing to go "home" had done so. The number of Poles willing to go back had dwindled significantly,

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<sup>131</sup> Alexander von Plato, Almut Leh, and Christoph Thonfeld, eds., *Hitler's Slaves: Life Stories of Forced Labourers in Nazi-Occupied Europe* (Berghahn Books, 2010), 73.

<sup>132</sup> Determining precise figures of Polish repatriates in the immediate weeks and month post-liberation is challenging given the sheer volume of individuals making their way back to Poland unassisted. While by June of 1947, UNRRA was claiming to have repatriated almost 550,000 Polish DPs from all three Western occupied German territories, although this number does not include large numbers of self-repatriating former forced labourers. For UNRRA figures, see George Woodbridge, *UNRRA: The History of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, vol. III* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), 426.

disappointing hopes of complete repatriation. As at June 1946, estimates of remaining DPs in the British Zone saw Poles in the overwhelming majority; making up some 200,000 of an approximate 327,000 total.<sup>133</sup> This large body of “unrepatriables,” as they were dubbed, presented a significant problem for policy that had failed to predict the emergence of this administrative category.

The bulk of this subchapter thus turns to investigation of the “unrepatriable” DP group, now split into Polish and Jewish communities. Uniquely, liberated Jews were never subject to the same pressure to return that characterized the Polish DP experience. While the Polish DP community was seen as territorialized in the country of Poland, Jews were widely accepted as a de-territorialized community in diaspora. Unlike DP Jews, “unrepatriable” Poles were confronted with, and resisted, a number of coercive measures aimed at fostering their return; blurring any neat definitional boundary between “voluntary” and forced repatriation in the postwar period.

In early 1946, the “last million” were joined by so-called “infiltrates” from the East. Jewish numbers in particular, rose dramatically across occupied Germany to reach almost a quarter of a million at their peak in 1947. While seen as extraneous to ongoing political debates, the Jewish DPs’ wholesale rejection of the “infiltrate” category and collective association with the term *She’erit Hapletah*<sup>134</sup> (a Hebrew term meaning surviving remnant) nonetheless challenged the prevailing discourse on repatriation. Jewish DPs rejected a de-territorialized structure and, unlike DP Poles, *embraced* the logic that underscored repatriation efforts: the DP problem was best solved by a return to the national fold. An emergent DP Zionism agreed: Jews would be safest in their own state. The only problem was that the state they were offering existed, at this time, only as a project.

<sup>133</sup> FO 945/389 Future of Displaced Persons Camps in Germany, ‘Estimates of Hard Core’, June 24, 1946..

<sup>134</sup> One finds a number of different transliterations for the original Hebrew, “שארית הפליטה” across the literature.



In different forms, Polish and Jewish resistance to repatriation policy, as it evolved after 1945, ultimately represented a fundamental challenge to the dominant idea that rehabilitation could, and should, mean repatriation.

### **"Liberation": The establishment of the camps and the “spontaneous return” of Poles**

The magnitude of the task of repatriating Displaced Persons, in all its vast physicality, had been anticipated by the Allies prior to 1945 and postwar relief—including the repatriation of displaced persons—had long been considered a problem requiring international cooperation. When the Second World War broke out, it was the Inter-Governmental Committee on Refugees (IGCR), established March 24, 1938 at Evian,<sup>135</sup> that nominally claimed responsibility for individuals who “must migrate on account of their political opinions, religious beliefs or racial origin,” and persons who, for these same reasons, “have already left their countries of origin and who have not yet established themselves elsewhere.”<sup>136</sup> It was evident at its inception however, that the IGCR had neither the resources, not the organizational structure to respond to the enormity of a growing European refugee crisis.<sup>137</sup> By June of 1943, with pressure mounting on British and American governments in particular to act, the first Draft Agreement for a new international United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) was written.<sup>138</sup>

The entirety of UNRRA services fell under four main umbrella areas: relief supplies, relief services, rehabilitation supplies and services, and rehabilitation of public utilities and

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<sup>135</sup> By thirty-two representative countries. For a history of the IGCR, see Tommie Sjöberg, *The Powers and the Persecuted: The Refugee Problem and the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees (ICGR), 1938-1947* (Sweden: Lund University Press, 1991).

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> Determining accurate estimates of the numbers of DPs had proved difficult given their mobility. See Malcolm J. Proudfoot, “The Anglo-American Displaced Persons Program for Germany and Austria,” *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 6:1 (October, 1946): 34.

<sup>138</sup> Ben Shephard, “‘Becoming Planning Minded’: The Theory and Practice of Relief 1940-1945,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 43:3 (2008): 405.

services.<sup>139</sup> ‘Relief Services’ was to include care of those “displaced by reason of war”.<sup>140</sup> While the IGCR remained ostensibly tasked with the care of *refugees*—fleeing persecution—UNRRA was to repatriate *displaced persons*. The former was defined by UNRRA “as a person who had left his native country of his own free will to escape persecution or the ravages of war”; as opposed to the latter, who “was defined as a person who had been removed by official or para-official action—that is deported by Germans.”<sup>141</sup> This distinction however, both definitionally and functionally, swiftly broke down. In the postwar period, the terms DP and refugee were used interchangeably, with UNRRA ultimately overseeing the administration of both.<sup>142</sup>

Surprisingly, given the scale of mass repatriation in 1945, it is only in recent years that historians have begun to turn to questions concerning the experiences and motivations of the hundreds of thousands of Polish DPs who departed for Poland as part of an initial wave of mass repatriation directed by first by Allied military units. In the initial period of mass military repatriations, Poles were being moved by the thousands through the British Zone, with targets set in October of 1945 at 3,000 a *day*, and projected to continue at that pace until the end of the year.<sup>143</sup> Such was the volume of repatriates that their numbers often outran the physical means of repatriation.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Donald S. Howard, “UNRRA: A New Venture in International Relief and Welfare Services,” *Social Service Review* 16 (December, 1944): 5.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>141</sup> Sjöberg, *The Powers and the Persecuted*, 80.

<sup>142</sup> Sjöberg describes the limited role of the IGCR in Chapter V, “The Problem of Non-Repatriables”. Evolving definitions and understandings of the terms “refugee” and “displaced person” are considered further in the second half of Chapter 1, concerning DP screening.

<sup>143</sup> To speed repatriation efforts, protracted discussion with the Soviet Union had established what appeared to be a satisfactory road by which Polish DPs could be conveyed by lorries from Hamburg to Stettin, and from there into the Soviet Zone. As we shall come on to further into this section, by the winter of 1945, numbers of Polish repatriates dropped significantly by the winter of 1945, frustrating these early projections. FO 371/47722 Repatriation of Polish DPs, ‘Cabinet Distribution’, October 1945.

<sup>144</sup> The first few months after liberation proved a frustrating teething period for UNRRA, whose relief workers regularly clashed with military personnel on the ground. FO 945/591 SHAEF Outline Plan for DPs and Refugees, ‘Visit to Europe by D.S. Dawes’, April 24, 1945.

In part, this deficit in scholarly attention may be situated within the context of the history of forced labour more generally. Despite the scale of forced labour in the German Reich, the memories of Polish forced labourers were suppressed in Communist Poland.<sup>145</sup> Piotr Filipkowski and Katarzyna Madori-Mitzner argue that this repression ultimately meant that forced labourers simply did not exist as a distinct victim group after 1945: “the attitude of the [Polish] state,” they claim, “was ambivalent.”<sup>146</sup> While there was some interest in documenting the experiences of forced labour, including their immediate postwar experience, efforts were limited in both breadth and depth.<sup>147</sup> In 1965, a writing competition in Poland recorded 359 autobiographies of which fragments survive in two publications by *Zofia Bilgorajska*.<sup>148</sup> These contain but a few references to individuals’ movements post-liberation and much less on individual reasoning or motivation. Machteld Vender attributes the limited scope of such

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<sup>145</sup> This point is well argued in Machteld Venken’s reflections on the historiography of child forced labour. See Machteld Venken, “Child Forced Labour: An Analysis of Ego Documents Throughout Time,” *European Review of History: Revue Européenne d’Histoire* 22:2 (2015): 370.

<sup>146</sup> By contrast, internment in a concentration camp was more readily instrumentalized for political purposes. The authors go further and argue that it was the concentration camp experience that was remembered as a *common* experience, while forced labour was viewed as an *individual* one. Piotr Filipkowski and Katarzyna Madori-Mitzner, “‘You can’t say it out loud. And you can’t forget’: Polish Experiences of Slave and Forced Labour for the ‘Third Reich,’” in von Plato, *Hitler’s Slaves*, 81.

<sup>147</sup> This is not to suggest that there were no comprehensive studies of forced labour under the German Reich prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union or outside of Polish historiography. To the contrary. Alexander Dallin’s work, *German Rule in Russia*—first published in 1957—stands out as foundational for its breadth of scope and documentary evidence. Dallin’s work paved the way for further work including Ulrich Herbert’s much-cited study, *A history of foreign labor in Germany* (appearing in the German original in 1985), presented as an exhaustive treatment of the almost 8 million foreign workers in Nazi Germany. Herbert’s estimates of the extent of the slave labour system are still relied upon by scholars of forced labour. Herbert’s work also represents a significant systematic attempt to retrieve the *experiences* of forced labourers—as well as the attitudes of indigenous German populations to these foreigner “workers”. While this has emerged at the fore of ongoing scholarship on the subject of forced labour, the postwar period is beyond the scope of enquiry. Similarly, while several DP scholars have begun in recent years to focus on the voices of DPs themselves, and their interactions with local German populations, the vast majority of forced labourers (having been repatriated early on) fall outside the bounds of consideration. The result is that the period of mass repatriation often slips through the cracks of the two fields of historical enquiry. Alexander Dallin, *German Rule in Russia, 1941-1945: A Study of Occupation Policies* (London: Macmillan, 1957); Ulrich Herbert, *A History of Foreign Labor in Germany, 1880-1980: Seasonal Workers, Forced Laborers, Guest Workers* (University of Michigan press, 1990).

<sup>148</sup> Venken, “Child forced labour,” 371. Von Plato notes the same deficit of interviews, but contrasts this with the case of Jewish concentration camp survivors “up to now only Jews—if anybody—had been interviewed: in projects such as the Shoah Foundation interview project, other victims, particularly Soviet prisoners of war, who also suffered an enormous death rate (almost 60 per cent) in camps comparable to concentration camps, had barely been taken into consideration at all.” Von Plato, *Hitler’s Slaves*, 12.

primary source records to censorship.<sup>149</sup> Testimonies as laconic as Czesław Łuszczyński's only hint at the early postwar period: "I had traveled a long and arduous route—but not in vain. A horse stayed with me. The household was very happy. Selling the horse, I created food reserves for my parents."<sup>150</sup>

What appears to be clear from the sources that do exist, is that mass repatriation—even in its earliest, seemingly most spontaneous manifestations—was shrouded in much uncertainty and fear. Based on dozens of interviews with former Polish forced labourers who returned to Poland, the collaborative 2010 study *Hitler's Slaves*, has recaptured some of the chaos of the early period of mass repatriation. Several of its chapters note the presence of a symbolic moment of liberation across individual narratives, followed almost immediately by great indecision: "When I saw Polish and American flags crossed, I thought I was in heaven. God! How precious was this liberty! No one can imagine! When we heard the word "liberty" we just shouted out loud." But with liberation came the unknown: "Everyone was shouting 'We're free!' ... And now we're alone, just prisoners—who are free, but what else, what now? What to do with oneself? We don't know where to go."<sup>151</sup>

While the majority did set forth for Poland, fear of the hazards of a return journey feature strongly across interviews and in particular, fears of Soviet forces encountered along the way. This was found to be especially prevalent in the narratives of female survivors who "were afraid, even terrified, of the Soviet soldiers who molested them when they were going back home after the war was finished."<sup>152</sup> Furthermore, while many DPs did attempt to get to Poland as quickly as possible even without external assistance, "on foot, by bicycle, by any

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<sup>149</sup> Vender effectively chalks censorship up to the violence of liberation. As "the keystone in the legitimisation of Communism," liberation went through thorough censorship. An emergent liberation myth has by now been well complicated. Testimony concerning "the murder and rape of women, as well as the torture of civilians" that was absent in early narratives have subsequently re-emerged in great detail in more contemporary interviews. Vender, "Child forced labour," 380-381.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 378.

<sup>151</sup> Filipkowski and Madori-Mitzner, "You can't say it out loud," in von Plato, *Hitler's Slaves*, 81.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 77.

means possible,” still most preferred to conditionally wait for transportation or some word from home;<sup>153</sup> in particular that “relatives were (already) there and waiting.”<sup>154</sup> The status and location of family members and perceptions of homecoming appear to have played a decisive role in determining whether individual DPs returned to Poland: “I decided I have to come back home. I missed my parents, my sister—it was the most important thing to me ... Later on I thought I had made a mistake. I’ve lived for forty-five years in the PRL (Polish People’s Republic), and I should have gone in a completely different direction then.”<sup>155</sup>

Following the mass repatriation drive of the spring and summer of 1945, military units were eventually able to dilute their own personnel, and hand over the administration of an “extraterritorial universe of DP camps”<sup>156</sup> to UNRRA-run teams. By March of 1946, UNRRA was claiming responsibility for the successful repatriation of a grand total of approximately 7 million DPs from occupied Germany.<sup>157</sup> However, the time UNRRA had fully taken over, numbers of returning Polish DPs were dwindling and had all but stagnated by the winter of 1945 and 1946, frustrating hopes of a complete repatriation. Thus, repatriation out of the DP camps entered a second, slower and significantly longer phase.<sup>158</sup> There remained some 1.2

<sup>153</sup> In the chaos of the first few weeks and months after liberation, communication often took the form of word-of-mouth, or letters and photographs carried by individuals including welfare workers moving across borders.

<sup>154</sup> Filipkowski and Madori-Mitzner, “You can’t say it out loud,” in von Plato, *Hitler’s Slaves*, 77.

<sup>155</sup> A number of important studies have focused attention on the reception of Soviet DPs. Wyman recounts the experience of the Russian DP Viktor, who escaped repatriation into Soviet-held territory. The DPs, Viktor explains, “were stripped at the zonal boundary by the Russian ‘welcoming committee,’ their personal belongings were seized, and they were received as traitors rather than as long-suffering fellow countrymen.” Christoph Thonfeld considers the return of Polish as well as Soviet citizens, arguing; “repatriation in no way guaranteed that forced labourers would be welcome in their home countries. Even those refugees who had endless marching behind them and had crossed several front lines along the way were likely to be greeted as ‘undignified traitors’.” This was especially the case in the Soviet-dominated territories.” Christoph Thonfeld, “A Moment of Elation and ... Painful! The Homecoming of Slave and Forced Labourers after the Second World War,” in von Plato, *Hitler’s Slaves*, 60.

<sup>156</sup> Gerard Daniel Cohen, “Between Relief and Politics: Refugee Humanitarianism in Occupied Germany 1945—1946,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 43:3 (July 2008): 441.

<sup>157</sup> George S. Marshall, “Concern Expressed on Resettlement of DPs; Statement by Secretary of State,” *Department of State Bulletin* (July 27, 1947): 194–95.

<sup>158</sup> There is a question in the literature as to when it may be said that mass repatriation “ends”. Wyman puts it at September of 1945: “now a hard core of DPs remained.” Wyman, *DPs: Europe’s Displaced Persons*, 69. Certainly, the bulk of returning DPs had already departed prior to the start of winter. ’45. However, others place the end of mass repatriation at around March 1946, when returning figures had all but stagnated and DP figures were even rising as they were joined by “infiltrates” from the East (to be discussed further below). This

million unable or refusing to repatriate, commonly referred to interchangeably in the administrative slang of the period as the “last million,” “hard core,” or most commonly, the “unrepatriables” or a combination “unrepatriable hard core.” UNRRA’s Displaced Persons Division, effectively organized as a repatriation division, was radically under-prepared for the presence of these “unrepatriables.”<sup>159</sup> The DP universe—which was always supposed to be a temporary one—began to look more permanent.<sup>160</sup>

The administrative categories of “hard core” and “unrepatriable” have largely been uncritically adopted in the secondary source literature.<sup>161</sup> The Polish perspective, however, spotlights the limitations of administrative terminologies and implicit dichotomy between “repatriable” and “unrepatriable” DPs. What existing scholarship tends to overlook is both the fact that even as DP administrations used the short-hand “unrepatriable,” they did not see Polish DPs as such, and there remained a relatively steady trickle of repatriates well after the initial period of mass repatriation. Indeed, numbers of returning Poles spiked as a result of certain key policy shifts (to be explored further below) that necessarily regarded Polish DPs as remaining “repatriable.” March 1946, a month in which repatriation reached its lowest point to date, still saw several hundreds opting for return. In the British Zone, the total number of Polish repatriates as recorded by British military authorities in the Zone, at March 2<sup>nd</sup> was 176,603; by the 16<sup>th</sup> that figure was at 186,960, and by the end of the month on 29<sup>th</sup>, it had reached

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chronological ambiguity is precisely because there was still a significant amount of repatriation going on into 1946.

<sup>159</sup> The Displaced Persons division was a sub-division the Welfare Division, itself one of three main Service Divisions developed by UNRRA’s administration, eventually grouped to form a ‘Bureau of Services’. For more on the internal structure of UNRRA, see W. Hardy Wickwar, “Relief Supplies and Welfare Distribution; UNRRA in Retrospect,” *Social Service Review* 21:3 (September 1947): 367.

<sup>160</sup> While the ultimate responsibility for the supervision of DPs remained with the Commander-in-Chief’s of the respective Occupied Zones, UNRRA had overtaken the international administration of all assembly centres housing DPs.

<sup>161</sup> One finds these terms reproduced by the official historian of UNRRA’s successor, the International Relief Organization. See Louise W. Holborn, *The International Refugee Organization, A Specialized Agency of the United Nations. Its History and Work, 1946-1952* (London: Oxford University Press, 1956), 197. DP history is yet to develop an independent terminology that better reflects the Polish DP experience, and largely relies on administrative categories. John George Stoessinger, *The Refugee Community* (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1956), 55-58; Mark R. Elliott, *Pawns of Yalta: Soviet Refugees and American’s Role in Their Repatriation* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982), 83.

204,752.<sup>162</sup> Crucially, repatriation policy continued to operate on the assumption that pressure could be applied on DP Poles to successfully foster return.<sup>163</sup> Most significantly, the option to repatriate remained *at all times*, the easiest and most welcome from the British administrative perspective.

### **Soviet DPs and a backdrop of forced repatriation**

Varying degrees of pressure to repatriate was applied unevenly across occupied Zones even in the early months post-liberation.<sup>164</sup> While British, Thonfeld claims, were distinguished in their attempts to repatriate as quickly as possible in order to minimize their costs, they were not, however, as consistently hard-line as their Soviet counterparts. The Soviet view on repatriation was straightforward: those DPs who did not wish to return were not refugees but quislings.<sup>165</sup> Non-return, from the Soviet perspective, was the equivalent to omission of war-time collaboration and simultaneously, a rejection of Soviet leadership.<sup>166</sup> While the British did not take such an extreme view, for a full year following liberation, British forces nonetheless zealously upheld an agreement with the Soviet Union to forcibly direct thousands of Soviet DPs towards the Soviet Zone.<sup>167</sup>

<sup>162</sup> FO 945/401 Displaced Persons Statistics 1946, 'Figures of repatriation from the British Zone'.

<sup>163</sup> Official IRO repatriation figures for the period July 1, 1947-December 31, 1951 indicate that the British repatriated to Poland a total of 23,168 Polish DPs from their Zone, the highest figure of all three Zones. See Holborn, *The International Refugee Organization*, Repatriation Annex 37, 364.

<sup>164</sup> Thonfeld, "A Moment of Elation," in von Plato, *Hitler's Slaves*, 396.

<sup>165</sup> Gerard Daniel Cohen, *In War's Wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 23.

<sup>166</sup> As the second half of this chapter explores in more detail, the Eastern Bloc's insistence that all DPs who claimed non-repatriation be treated as full nationals and returned "home" immediately, was premised on a framework of presumed collective guilt and subsequent desire to punish. See Linda McDowell, *Hard Labour: The Forgotten Voices of Latvian Migrant 'Volunteer' Workers* (London: UCL Press, 2005), 87-88.

<sup>167</sup> Wyman argues that forced repatriation from a British and American perspective was driven by two main considerations; yielding up the DPs would allay Soviet distrust and moreover, prevent any retaliatory Soviet action in the form of non-return of British and American soldiers. See Wyman, *DPs: Europe's Displaced Persons*, 64. As we shall see in the second half of this Chapter, a wholesale and formalized rejection of the Soviet perspective would not occur until a year after liberation, when the constitution of UNRRA's successor, the International Refugee Organization (IRO) explicitly barred the forced repatriation of any DPs under its care. See Linda McDowell, *Hard Labour*, 87-88.

Current literature tends to break down Allied DP repatriation policy in two; between policy governing the repatriation of Soviet DPs and that governing those of non-Soviet DPs (again, the majority of which were Polish). This division in turns corresponds to the oft-made distinction between forced and “voluntary” repatriation in the period: “Unlike other displaced persons, Soviet DPs could be compelled to return home.”<sup>168</sup>

Following agreements made with both the US and British governments, by September of 1945, the Soviet authorities had assisted in the immediate repatriation of over two million of their nationals. The summer repatriation rush had seen most Soviet citizens depart East without little reservation.<sup>169</sup> However, as growing numbers of reports began circulating in international media detailing a system of forced-labour camps in which Soviet repatriates were sent to euphemistically “reintegrate” into Soviet society, pressure to abandon a policy of forced repatriation and to recognize the permissibility of freely opting for non-return mounted.<sup>170</sup>

Soviet DPs themselves were themselves searching for channels to actively resist being forcibly repatriated. In the most extreme cases, suicide was a final and desperate protest.<sup>171</sup> More common however were individual petitions made directly to British forces. Examples of such petitions may uniquely be found in the holdings of the ITS archive and indicate common strategies used by individual DPs to avoid repatriation.<sup>172</sup> A closer look at the short, often

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<sup>168</sup> Anna Holian, *Between National Socialism and Soviet Communism: Displaced Persons in Postwar Germany* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011), 38. Mark R. Elliott’s, *Pawns of Yalta: Soviet Refugees and American’s Role in Their Repatriation* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982) remains the foundational text on the subject of Soviet repatriation, alongside Wolfgang Jacobmeyer’s contribution in the 5<sup>th</sup> chapter of *Vom Zwangsarbeiter zum Heimatlosen Ausländer. Die Displaced Persons in Westdeutschland 1945–1951* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1985).

<sup>169</sup> Wyman, *DPs: Europe’s Displaced Persons*, 64. Wyman notes that the veneer of Soviet repatriation based on patriotism and goodwill was cracked even before the war had officially ended. As early as March 1945, British forces forcibly repatriated some 6,000 Soviet citizens, captured in German uniforms; of which one hanged himself and another slit his own throat, preferring suicide to the alternative of return. Wyman, *DPs: Europe’s Displaced Persons*, 65.

<sup>170</sup> Elliott, *Pawns of Yalta*, 110; Marshall, “Concern Expressed on Resettlement of DPs,” 195.

<sup>171</sup> Several important studies have painted a grim picture of “the scenes of anguish and suicide which invariably accompanied repatriation.” Nicholas Bethell, *The Last Secret: Forcible Repatriation to Russia, 1944-7* (Deutsch, 1974), xiii.

<sup>172</sup> These records do not pertain to individuals attempting to entirely falsify their biographies. The records of these short petitions in the ITS archive are not indexed and had to be tracked down by searching for camps where Soviet



handwritten, mini-biographies and objections to return of dozens of Soviet DPs in the British Zone, highlights a few key themes these DPs clearly hoped would resonate with authorities and save them from unsavoury fates at home.<sup>173</sup>

Most DPs stressed in no uncertain terms, their surety of the fatal consequences of return. Eugenjusz Sztal writes simply “My return to a territory occupied by the Bolsheviks would have certain death in consequence.”<sup>174</sup> Victor Bakhtin, the son of a priest, asserts that “a return to the land of terror, lies and lawlessness equals an execution.”<sup>175</sup> Galine Ushazki, on behalf of her family, notes that “transport to the Soviet Zone means deadly danger and a torturous death to us” and concludes, “we would rather be shot here.”<sup>176</sup> Others stress that their remaining family have been exiled to Siberia, and that the same fate would await them as ideological opponents of the present social and political regime.<sup>177</sup> Evidencing a familial history of persecution, and risk of ongoing targeting was seen as paramount.<sup>178</sup>

A second major tack was to distance oneself biographically from the Soviet Union as much as possible and to establish a better connection to Poland, while still pleading one’s case against repatriation. Luba Bazalska, nee Baranovici, similarly states at the outset, “I was born in Poland” in order to highlight his family’s history of emigration on the basis of being

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DPs were likely to be housed (such as Burgdorf) and mining subsequent records. Consequently, to this author’s knowledge, these have not been treated in any secondary source literature to date.

<sup>173</sup> The documents appear to represent a mix of former forced labourers and refugees who entered Germany following the “population exchanges” (known as “infiltrates,” to be discussed further into this sub-chapter). The latter were eventually granted DP status.

<sup>174</sup> ITS, ‘Eugenjusz Sztal’, Doc. No. 81973329\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>175</sup> ITS, ‘Victor Bahktin’, Doc. No. 81973153\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>176</sup> ITS, ‘Galine Ushazki’, Doc. No. 81973338\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1). One can find dozens of examples in ITS, men and women alike: Vitali Gorbov simply says “I cannot return home, for I will be shot.”; Mary Vassilieff pleads that her entire family have been executed by Bolsheviks; Valerie Vojzehovska has already been put on trial in the past and knows imprisonment awaits her if she returns. ITS, ‘Vitali Gorbov’, Doc. No. 81973197\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1); ITS, ‘Mary Vassilieff’, Doc. No. 81973341\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1); ITS, ‘Valerie Vojzehovska’, Doc. No. 81973344\_0\_2 (3.1.1.1)

<sup>177</sup> ITS, ‘George Tuchatchevski’, Doc. No. 81973333\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1): “The signed does not wish to return to my native land, because severe persecution from the part of the NKVD awaits me. All my family is at present exiled to Siberia. A return “home” would be a terrible punishment for me.”

<sup>178</sup> Files frequently stress that being related to someone targeted was enough to be targeted yourself on the basis of “social descent” see for example ITS, ‘Igor Twerdy’, Doc. No. 81973335\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

considered enemies of the Soviet government and a stronger association to Poland.<sup>179</sup> Igor Twerdy begins his protest similarly, and describes his family's history of having fought against the Bolsheviks in Ukraine and emigrated to what *was* Poland, resettling in a Polish-Ukrainian town of the *Kresy*, now officially USSR territory. Regrettably, Twerdy notes, the family had not sought Polish citizenship "for national reasons" but stresses that "a return to the USSR or to Poland occupied by the Bolsheviks would mean a death sentence for me."<sup>180</sup> While identifying oneself with Poland was seen as useful, it still came with significant risk where re-drawn borders were concerned.<sup>181</sup>

Despite the fact that so many Soviet citizens tried, successfully or unsuccessfully, to escape the British repatriation net by convincing authorities that they were Polish,<sup>182</sup> there was no consistently defined programme in place to deal with the reality of Poles claiming non-repatriation. Instead, what evolved was a series of coercive measures targeting the Polish DP community directly.

### **Poles, pressure and coercion in the camps**

The Polish DP experience complicates any clear line, in literature or reality, between forced and "voluntary" repatriation after 1945. While Poland did not adopt as radical sanctions against former forced labourers as the Soviet Union proper, there remained much unease and fear among DP Poles around the *possibility* of being forcibly repatriated and what, if any,

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<sup>179</sup> ITS, 'Luba Bazalska', Doc. No. 81973157\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

<sup>181</sup> The trend is to emphasize distance from the Union in whatever capacity, wherever possible. Pavel Belkin for instance, was born in Kupiansk but grew up in Yugoslavia, studied in Belgrade and graduated in Vienna. He stresses, "I have never lived in Soviet Russia, have no relatives there and I do not wish to go there." ITS, 'Pavel Belkin', Doc. No. 81973160\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1). Akulina Ziablowska writes, "I have not lived in Soviet Russia at all and do not wish to go there." ITS, 'Akulina Ziablowska', Doc. No. 81973358\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1). A third trend, though much less common (perhaps because it was seen to be less effective), was to indicate plans for the future and to package these in such a way as to be as unthreatening as possible. Peter Volkovitch and his brother Vladimir, from Bolehowo, Galicia: "I beg to be directed to Canada for labour. We are all able to work and honestly earn our living." ITS, 'Peter Volkovitch', Doc. No. 81973346\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>182</sup> Wyman, *DPs: Europe's Displaced Persons*, 65-66.

potentially persecutory policies might await them in Poland. Early provisions did protect DP Poles from the same policies that originally governed Soviet DPs. Immediately following the German surrender, the fate of ex-Wehrmacht Poles in the British Zone was of especial concern<sup>183</sup> and as early as April 1945, Allied Supreme Commander, General Eisenhower, had broadcasted the view that the repatriation of Poles to Poland should only take place with the explicit consent of the individual Polish DP.<sup>184</sup> Nonetheless, the Soviet Union both expected and demanded that Allied governments release into their custody DPs who had lived in territories that had now been formerly annexed by the Soviet Union and generally, firmly expected all DP Poles to resettle in Poland. As a consequence, the backdrop of a policy of forced repatriation during the period of mass repatriation, generated a great deal of fear within the Polish DP community, and there can be very little doubt that the Soviet DP experience played a major role in slowing the pace of repatriation to Poland.<sup>185</sup>

In order to understand why it was that so many thousands of Polish DPs feared and/or were resistant to return to Poland, a brief description of the Polish postwar political and economic landscape is necessary. The emergent geopolitical framework of the postwar saw a war-torn Poland shackled to Soviet influence in a number of significant ways,<sup>186</sup> not least of which was the restoration of the western frontier of imperial Russia, at the “Curzon Line.”<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> FO 371/47722 Position of Polish Prisoners of War and Displaced Persons in Liberated Territories, ‘Telegram from the Political Advisor to the Commander-in-Chief in Germany (Berlin) to the Foreign Office’.

<sup>184</sup> FO 371/51211 Repatriation of Polish Displaced Persons, ‘Memorandum from Polish Embassy London’, April 26, 1945.

<sup>185</sup> As with Soviet DPs (though not on the same scale), there were some instances of displaced Poles going as far as to commit suicide in fear of forced repatriation. For instance, in stresses the dangers of return, the British League for European Freedom (a self-described anti-communist organization) raised alarming reports of the suicides of several former female Home Army members in the British Zone. See FO 371/47722 Repatriation of Polish DPs, ‘Letter to Lawson, Secretary of State for War from British League’, August 25, 1945.

<sup>186</sup> The war-time Polish Government lost all accreditation when Great Britain and America recognized the Soviet-backed TRJN in Warsaw in June 1945. The Home Army was formally disbanded in 1945, with many former members moved swiftly to labour camps in the USSR, and Poland’s wartime Resistance was quickly put on trial in Moscow in June. Norman Davies, *Heart of Europe: A Short History of Poland* (Oxford: 1986), 32, 97-98, 105.

<sup>187</sup> Poland was granted by the Allies nothing of the historically Polish lands in the East. Hitchcock, *The Bitter Road*, 279.

Poles who had been residing east of the Curzon line—in what had formerly been a part of Poland—were now, according to the Soviets, Soviet citizens.<sup>188</sup>

From 1944-8, a victorious Soviet Union steadily and forcibly imposed a Soviet-style system of communism onto a war-ravaged Polish territory; a project infamously described by Stalin as the equivalent of saddling a cow.<sup>189</sup> The endeavour effectively represented the beginnings of a decades-long foreign tyranny that systematically disregarded the political preferences of the vast majority of Poland's inhabitants. In many respects, DP Poles' reluctance, or outright refusal, to return to Poland, mirrored the disharmony between the wishes of a new communist establishment and the traditions of the Polish nation as a whole.

The Liberation of Poland took nearly a year to accomplish and a retreating German Army left almost every major Polish city in rubble. It is unsurprising that in this setting, a process both of physical and economic reconstruction, and political consolidation moved slowly. Amid the rubble, populations were on the move. As part of the Potsdam agreement, approximately five million Germans—as well as hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians—were to be forcibly expelled from the country. War refugees and displaced persons, including over 200,000 Polish-Jewish “repatriates” from the Soviet Union (to be discussed further into this subchapter) were moving through the rubble of transportation routes on their way to their new destinations.

Not only were Soviet authorities faced with the task of rebuilding a collapsed Polish industry, of reorganizing agricultural labour, but an ongoing anti-Soviet rebellion and bitter civil war would last a further two years. Native Polish communists, of which there were few, were thought to be largely unreliable. Consolidating power amidst the chaos, meant steadfastly purging the land of its internal enemies: of its “antisocials.” The Provisional Government of

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<sup>188</sup> Wyman, *DPs: Europe's Displaced Persons*, 68.

<sup>189</sup> Dariusz Stola, “The Communist Regime as a Process: ‘People's Poland’: from Imitation to De Totalitarization,” *Divinatio* 31 (2010): 161.

National Unity (TRJN) that emerged, was largely transplanted from the Soviet Union and grafted onto the Polish political scene where it governed unelected, in opposition to the legal Polish Government-in-Exile in London, from June 28, 1945 to the beginning of 1947. Its successor Government, headed by Józef Cyrankiewicz, was denounced by the Allies as having been undemocratically elected.

From February of 1947 onwards, Cyrankiewicz oversaw the steady instalment of a one-party state in Poland. As the temperature of the Cold War rose, and with growing rumbles of dissent in Tito's Yugoslavia, Cyrankiewicz was under increasing pressure to consolidate Soviet influence in Poland. Inevitably, this resulted in a careful reshuffling of party figures. In December 1948, the Congress of the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR) installed a First Secretary in the form of Bolesław Bierut. As historian Norman Davies concludes, "The imitation Soviet Poland had received its imitation Stalin. The new Poland had created its New Order."<sup>190</sup>

An administratively dubbed "unrepatriable last million" DPs, scholars have argued, shared only "a common opposition to repatriation."<sup>191</sup> This "opposition," however, is rarely systematically unpacked. Instead one finds a neat construction, once again borrowed from administrative language, that reduces a plethora of positions to "unable or unwilling" to go "home."<sup>192</sup> The phrase however, fails to capture important degrees of opposition to repatriation and most significantly, reactive degrees of pressure—including coercive measures—to

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<sup>190</sup> Davies, *Heart of Europe*, 5.

<sup>191</sup> Cohen, *In War's Wake*, 6.

<sup>192</sup> The construction survives into the legal definitions of a refugee in 1951. The revised 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, defined a refugee as: "An individual who owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is *unable, or owing to such fear, unwilling* [author's emphasis] to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it." Henry P. David, "Involuntary International Migration: Adaptation of Refugees," *International Migration* 7:3-4 (1969): 67-68. It is regularly used by IRO historian Louise Holborn and widely across the secondary source literature. See for example, Cohen, *In War's Wake*, 5, 33; Holian, *Between National Socialism and Soviet Communism*, 3; Atina Grossmann, *Jews, Germans and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 133, 263.

repatriate imposed on the “unrepatriable,” at different times, and crucially, across different DP communities. As the largest DP community in the Zone, Poles were especially targeted, as a British DP administration continued to prioritize repatriation as a durable solution to the “DP problem.”

In their determined pursuit of repatriable DP Poles, the British had no greater ally than UNRRA. So stringent was UNRRA adherence to their policy of prioritizing repatriation, that UNRRA field representatives were explicitly barred from presenting any alternative to repatriation to DP communities, and any alternatives were judged for their probably negative impact on repatriation.<sup>193</sup> While purposefully failing to present alternatives to repatriation is arguably coercive in and of itself, there are plenty more examples of UNRRA’s zealotry in the case of Polish DPs. For instance, as minors, unaccompanied Polish DP *children*, had no say as to whether or not to accept repatriation.<sup>194</sup><sup>195</sup> Around 2000 such cases were registered in the British Zone of which half were categorized as Polish.<sup>196</sup> Most of these Polish children had been fostered for years by German families and many more had never been to Poland. However, the “judicial basis for refusing to agree to their immediate repatriation is not strong.”<sup>197</sup> UNRRA was responsible,<sup>198</sup> typically with the assistance of German authorities for repatriating these children and once located, most were sent immediately to Poland. As one UNRRA worker complained, “Some of the children can’t speak or understand a word of Polish and for the older ones it must be a most terrifying experience to be herded onto a train with

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<sup>193</sup> George Woodbridge, *UNRRA: The History of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration*, vol. II (New York: 1950), 506, 514. Emerging alternatives to repatriation are considered in depth, in the following Chapters of this dissertation.

<sup>194</sup> Nothing has been written on this topic to date, but the primary source material is rich. Children, in general, generated a great deal of documentation in both the ITS and National Archives.

<sup>195</sup> As at October 28, 1946 there were some 10,000 unaccompanied or orphaned children under the exclusive care of UNRRA in Germany. 7,000 had been identified by their countries of origin and were being rapidly repatriated, while 3,000 were still “unclassified”. FO 945 578 Citizenship of Children of DPs, ‘Number of Unaccompanied Children by Zone 1946’.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, While it was unclear how many were Jewish, 500 were “assumed Baltic”.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*

people you have never seen before.”<sup>199</sup> Although a ruling was made in that no child can be moved without the approval of the British CCG,<sup>200</sup> ITS records indicate that both the British and UNRRA nonetheless went to great pains to stress “to the Poles [...] by facts [...], that we are genuinely interested in returning their children to their home country.”<sup>201</sup>

This tripartite cooperation between UNRRA, the British, and Polish governments was mobilized consistently on the wider Polish DP community. An UNRRA led, and aptly named, “Operation Carrot”—officially known as the 60 Day Ration Scheme<sup>202</sup>—was a straightforward bribe. It pledged to provide any Pole opting for repatriation from October to the end of December 1946 with 60 days food worth of food to be collected at certain points across Poland.<sup>203</sup> The Scheme is testament to how well the various administrative bodies in the Zone were able to cooperate around the issue of repatriation; the occupying British government would supply the provisions, the government in Poland would oversee their distribution and UNRRA would act as the go-between, administering the distribution of the rations.<sup>204</sup> The mere fact that there was a scheme “had an encouraging effect on all concerned. It provided a focusing point.”<sup>205</sup>

While the scheme did see an uptick in repatriation; results fell below expectations.<sup>206</sup> For reasons previously explored, the vast majority of DP Poles that remained in occupied

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<sup>199</sup> Ibid., ‘Letter Joan Apple BAOR 1946’. The relief worker continues, “This child is a typical example. Her name is Anna Marie Lamcha and she is illegitimate. Her mother was Polish and her father German [...] The mother did not want the baby and left it with the foster parents. [...] They have cared for her as their own for 3 ½ years. [...] The Polish Repatriation Mission was notified and down they swooped to take the child back to Poland.”

<sup>200</sup> Ibid., ‘Letter R. Stokes’, This ruling was made only following a number of complaints concerning the “the outrageous policy which UNRRA is carrying out in uprooting these wretched children from perfectly happy homes merely to satisfy the desire of the Governments of their supposed country of origin for cannon fodder.” The British however did not enforce new procedures, with fresh complaints claiming that UNRRA officers disregarding them. Only following a deal made with UNRRA’s successor, the IRO, in which the “humanitarian interests of children are considered,” did this repatriation fully cease.

<sup>201</sup> ITS, ‘Polish Policy on Child Search and Repatriation’, Doc. No. 82486606\_0\_1 (6.1.2).

<sup>202</sup> Woodbridge, *UNRRA*, vol. II., 515.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid.

<sup>204</sup> FO 371/66701 Repatriation of Polish displaced persons: Sixty-Day Ration Scheme, ‘From UNRRA to Ambassador of Great Britain’, March 19, 1947.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid., ‘60 Day Ration Scheme for DPs’, January 10, 1947.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid.

Germany, certainly by March of 1946, were, to some degree or other, politically opposed to the new Polish regime.<sup>207</sup> The limited success of the Ration Scheme was arguably an extension of the British failure to mitigate the political concerns of DPs. Certainly, there were multiple attempts to do so. As early as October of 1945, the British DP administration was discussing the ways in which the British Control Commission<sup>208</sup> could appear to be providing Poles with more “balanced” news of the situation in Poland.<sup>209</sup> “The political views held by the majority of Polish Displaced Persons are hazy. This should be expected from people who, for several years, have been cut off completely from all sources of information. Many of the younger displaced persons have never learned to read or write in Polish. The overwhelming majority of Poles now in the camps are badly informed [...] They are an easy prey for factional propaganda.”<sup>210</sup> The Commission was invested in controlling the spread of information to Polish DPs to favour return: “It is hoped that the European service of the BBC and newspapers will help to calm these DPs down.”<sup>211</sup>

To better facilitate the spread of propaganda that would call Polish DPs to question, or to dislodge any political objections to repatriation, British authorities agreed that representatives of the New Order could and should themselves propagandize the new Poland. To this end, Władysław Wolski, the Polish Minister for Repatriation, pushed successfully for the establishment in the British Zone of Polish liaison officers appointed by the Polish Provisional Government to help encourage return. The British required little

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<sup>207</sup> This is made evident in the records of the ITS and discussed in more depth in the following sub-chapter, as we turn to the question of DP screening.

<sup>208</sup> In the British Zone, the Control Commission for Germany (British Element) (CCG) was established with a Commander in Chief and Deputy Military Governor at its top. Their policy making body was in Berlin and in each Region there was a powerful Regional Commissioner. There were four Regions in the Zone: Hannover, Westphalia, Schleswig-Holstein and North-Rhine province. See FO 1052/361 Jewish Volunteer Societies, ‘Letter from General Fanshawe’, in which the Chairman of UNRRA describes the workings of the British Zone.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid., ‘Letter from Control Commission for Germany (British Element) to Foreign Office’, October 2, 1945.

<sup>210</sup> FO 898 405 Handling of Displaced Persons, ‘TH Freeland Colonel’, 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1945.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid.



convincing.<sup>212</sup> Such was the commitment to a policy of repatriation, that even as Allied governments decried the realities of deportations and Soviet occupation in the East on the international stage, they were at the same time explicitly promoting the spread of effectively pro-Soviet, pro-communist propaganda among DP Poles.

The appointment of Polish liaison officers to spur repatriation, ultimately, backfired entirely. With the end of winter in early 1946, British authorities had anticipated a boost in repatriation (thanks as well to Operation Carrot), however, *exposure* to liaison officers had all but cancelled out any significant spring-time bump in numbers.<sup>213</sup> Still worse, by February, it emerged that “the effect of visits by Warsaw Poles to Polish Prisoner of War and Displaced Persons camps has occasionally been to increase the resistance of Poles to repatriation.”<sup>214</sup> Similar negative effects of pro-communist propaganda were observed in the American Zone. Theresa Kurk McGinley describes a scene in which photographs of everyday life in Poland were distributed in the Wildflecken camp, to promote the idea that Polish life remained much as it always had under the Soviets. Photographs of Polish white eagles atop mailboxes were put forward as a favourite proof of the pride taken in Poland’s national symbols. Polish repatriation in the camp crawled to a halt however, as DP Poles immediately recognized that the Soviets had stripped the Polish eagle of its traditional crown, sending the reverse of the intended message.<sup>215</sup>

While this particular strategy failed to reinvigorate repatriation, propaganda was seen as a key component of an increasingly coercive administrative toolkit.

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<sup>212</sup> FO 371/47722 Position of Polish Prisoners of War and Displaced Persons in Liberated Territories, ‘Cabinet Distribution’, October 3, 1945.

<sup>213</sup> While Polish liaison officers were first appointed by Allied Expeditionary Forces (SHAEF), their numbers were more than doubled in September of 1945, from 19 to 41 officers. FO 945/364 Polish DPs in Germany, ‘From Political Adviser to Commander-in-Chief’, February 8, 1946.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid.

<sup>215</sup> Theresa Kurk McGinley, “A Cry for Human Rights: The Polish Displaced Persons Problem and United States Foreign Policy, 1945-1951,” (PhD diss., University of Houston, 1996), 110-111.

## The exceptional non-repatriation of Jews

As the German resistance collapsed in the Spring of 1945, different levels of policymaking, political planning and military planning had encountered for the first time realities on the ground. The task of controlling and directing postwar refugees fleeing the final furies of war, had fallen to the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces (SHAEF). Points of refugee collection were established to “herd”<sup>216</sup> displaced individuals towards military-run assembly centres where they were swiftly registered and funnelled into their national groups, in preparation for repatriation to their countries of origin.<sup>217</sup> So-called “screening lines” ran from North to South. Military-run screening meant, in short, a preliminary security check, a sanitary examination, a determination of nationality and subsequent segregation into a respective national camp.<sup>218</sup> This early work fell almost exclusively to Allied military machinery. UNRRA, it was reported, did not offer much help, “owing to their language difficulties among themselves, mostly being all different nationalities, and their lack of knowledge and the indifferent quality of their transport.”<sup>219</sup>

Once a site was designated as DP housing—and a variety of structures housed DPs, from former military centres to former concentration camps—it also took on a national character.<sup>220</sup> While the attempt to segregate DPs into neat, national-units mirrored the map of postwar Europe as the Allies hoped to see it, one group proved especially problematic. While statistics indicating the numbers of Jews remaining in Germany following liberation vary, they

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<sup>216</sup> Mark Wyman, *DPs: Europe's Displaced Persons, 1945-1951* (New York: 1998), 40; J. D. Steinert, “British Humanitarian Assistance: Wartime Planning and Postwar Realities,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 43:3 (July 2008): 427.

<sup>217</sup> The second half of this chapter looks in depth at the context and evolution of screening in which the Allies operated, in which the distinction between friend and foe was still essential. Screening, even in its earliest forms, was connected to denazification in its distinguishing of ethnic Germans and former collaborators from the victims of Nazi terror, on the basis of ethnicity.

<sup>218</sup> FO 945/591 SHAEF Outline Plan for DPs and Refugees, ‘Visit to Europe by D.S. Dawes’, April 24, 1945.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

<sup>220</sup> Wyman, *DPs: Europe's Displaced Persons*, 44.

represented in 1945 less than 10 per cent of the overall DP population.<sup>221</sup> In the British Zone, Jewish DPs numbered only some c.18,000, most of whom were housed in the former Bergen-Belsen concentration camp.<sup>222</sup> It is evident that military authorities were ill-prepared to address the particularities of Jewish war-time experiences and what was to be their position in the postwar period.<sup>223</sup> Until September 1945, Jews were, as one author bluntly describes, “lumped by nationality with other DPs.”<sup>224</sup> The Belsen camp, re-named “Hohne” by the British, was officially classified as “a Polish camp” and its majority Polish Jewish residents as simply, Poles.<sup>225</sup>

The British initially refused to register any DP camps as being “Jewish” in the same way as they could be labelled “Polish.”<sup>226</sup> UNRRA, under pressure from its British donors, initially stated that provisions for DPs would be worked out within each nation. Following the release of the Harrison report in July 1945,<sup>227</sup> the situation changed dramatically when the Americans implemented strict Jew/ non-Jew segregation across the DP camps of their Zone. Only in September of 1945 did “Jewish” and “Polish” become mutually exclusive categories for the British, who stubbornly held on to their principle of non-segregation until the end of the year, only introducing slow reforms.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>221</sup> Hagit Lavsky, *New Beginnings* (Wayne State University Press: 2002), 51.

<sup>222</sup> Two-thirds of the residents of the Belsen DP camp were Jewish. FO 945/384 Colonel Solomon, ORT, ‘Jewish DP numbers as at 22/3’; Lavsky, *New Beginnings*, 60.

<sup>223</sup> William I. Hitchcock, *The Bitter Road to Freedom: The Human Cost of Allied Victory in World War II Europe* (New York: Free Press, 2009), 311.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*, 245.

<sup>225</sup> FO 945/378 Jewish Matters: General, ‘Letter from Major General to Sir Arthur Street’, 24<sup>th</sup> April, 1946; Gerard Daniel Cohen, *In War's Wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 15. Following the release of the Harrison Report in June 1945, separate Jewish camps were established in the American Zone. The British Zone was slower to implement the same changes. The evolution of policy with respect to the (non)segregation of Jewish DPs will be explored further into this essay.

<sup>226</sup> Lavsky, *New Beginnings*, 75.

<sup>227</sup> The Report consisted of recommendations made by Earl G. Harrison, sent by President Truman to investigate the situation of Jewish DPs, estimated then at around 100,000 in Germany, whom he concluded should be helped emigrate to Palestine. For more on the Harrison report, see Arie J. Kochavi, *Post-Holocaust Politics: Britain, the United States, and Jewish Refugees, 1945–1948* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 294; Dinnerstein provides the full report in Appendix B of *America and the Survivors of the Holocaust* (Columbia University Press, 1982), 291-305.

<sup>228</sup> Lavsky, *New Beginnings*, 53.

Echoing the early warnings of a number of Jewish officials and commentators by mid-1945, Hannah Arendt prophesized that most surviving Jews in Germany “will regard repatriation as deportation.”<sup>229</sup> Indeed, Arendt’s prescient statements largely foresaw the surviving Jewish community’s position on repatriation. While the British were particularly hostile to the idea of Jews enjoying a supranational status, Jewish DPs were quickly distinguished as a group for whom repatriation, for the vast majority, was not envisaged and political planning for mass repatriation *after* liberation took as its prototype DP, the repatriable Polish foreign labourer. Further, the same Soviet Bloc that equated refusal to be repatriated with admission of criminal wartime activity or voluntary collaboration, saw Jewish DPs as entirely extraneous to their argument.<sup>230</sup>

It is important to note that the British DP administration, unlike the other Allied powers, did hold *some* (wildly optimistic) hope that DP Jews (of which there were comparatively still very few) would opt to return to Poland, and that classifying them as Poles would also serve to encourage their repatriation. We find evidence of this, for instance, in early reports from 1945, attempting to determine numbers of Jewish DPs, their objections to repatriation and significantly, what “degree of reliability” could be given to their concerns.<sup>231</sup> When asked directly by British soldiers what conditions they saw as affecting their re-integration in Europe, Jewish DP responses were classified into three broad categories:<sup>232</sup> 1. Anti-Semitic attitude of the public. 2. Repugnance of past memories. 3. Fear of personal violence. The report then notes that these fears are based on eyewitness accounts of personal experience, and does not determine them, consequently, as reliable, having not been substantiated by “independent

<sup>229</sup> Hannah Arendt, “The Stateless People,” *Contemporary Jewish Record* 8 (April 1945): 137–53; Cohen, *In War's Wake*, 4.

<sup>230</sup> As we shall explore in the second half of this Chapter, Jews were seen as ethnically extraneous, as well as politically.

<sup>231</sup> FO 945/590 Joint British-United States Committee to Consider Jewish Problems, ‘Numbers of Jewish DPs’, 1945.

<sup>232</sup> Along with a note; “The nature of this question does not permit of exact and statistical analysis, but oft repeated objections can be recorded.”

data”. Not all of this optimism concerning Jewish repatriation was misplaced. While the vast majority would steadfastly refuse repatriation, some *did* opt for return.

In an effort to help deflect widespread criticism of its refusal to formally segregate Jewish and non-Jewish DPs, the British Control Commission appointed its own “Jewish Advisor,” one Colonel Robert Solomon. As the Commission’s appointee, Solomon largely expressed satisfaction with the administration of Jewish DPs in the British Zone. He did however, speak of concrete experience with respect to repatriation: “first, that the classification of Jews by nationalities has completely broken down,” and secondly, that “Polish Jews will never go back to Poland.”<sup>233</sup> Similarly, reports made by volunteer workers in the first months of mass repatriation, single out the plight of the Polish Jew. One such report, includes a history and present condition of the Jews of Hamburg from a volunteer relief worker in early July of 1945, remarking:

Quite different is the task of caring for the Polish Jews and this is really a problem. The intention of the Military Government is to send all foreigners as quickly as possible back to their native countries. Of course, this is strongly supported by the German government. On the other hand there is definitely no one forced to return to Poland. If these Jews arrive in Hamburg they get 300RM and “Bezugscheine,” as mentioned before for clothes, etc., but they don’t get ration cards or billets. They have just no possibility to obtain either food or accommodation by going in the Polish camp and would therefore be lieable [misspelling in the original] to be sent back to Poland. But this is just the last thing they would like to do. Many prefer even to return to Belsen. These people, about 1000 girls and men between 18 and 35 years of age are still in good health and could be a valuable part of the Jewish society. [...] I know the same problem probably occurs in every large German town, and it is at the moment not possible to bring all these people to their ultimate destination.<sup>234</sup>

Polish Jews were described as particularly resistant to return.<sup>235</sup> This was not particular to any one Zone. A report from a Jewish soldier in the American Army from June 21, 1945

<sup>233</sup> FO 945/384 Jewish Adviser: Colonel Solomon and his Recommendations for Jews, ‘Minute Sheet; Association of British Refugees in Great Britain’, December 6, 1945.

<sup>234</sup> It is not clear what the relief worker envisages this final destination to be. The likeliest inference is Palestine, though this may not be conclusively proven. RHA, “Copy of Letter to Miss Fellner, 07/07/1945,” *Newspapers*, 44.

<sup>235</sup> Poland was perceived as comparatively very hostile to Jews already in the 1930s. While there were Jewish Hungarians, for example, Polish Jews and Poles were commonly thought to belong to different groups.

similarly hints at variation based on country of origin among Jewish survivors: “We are still waiting for help for our poor Jews. It is one thing to write and another thing to see how people are without food and all other commodities of life. Things do not improve. Of the 1500 people [Jews] in the camp nearest to my station 600 left this week for Soviet Russia. Most of the 600 could not stand it in the camp anymore and the rest too is desperate.”<sup>236</sup>

What is clear is that even considering British optimism vis-à-vis Jewish repatriation as well as some variation in attitude across countries of origin, the non-repatriation of Jews was exceptional, and “resistance” was both assumed and accepted and Jews, unlike their Soviet and Polish counterparts, were never subject to the same pressures to repatriate.

By the end of 1945 a new problem was emerging. A growing number of military reports began raising concerns over the number of Polish Jews, in particular, making their way *into* Occupied Germany. Repatriation efforts were thus having to react and respond to the new challenge of the arrival of so-called “infiltrates” from the East.

### **"Infiltrates": Events in the East and the collective identities of the camp system**

“We will not be driven back into the lands which have become the mass graveyards of our people.”<sup>237</sup>

At war’s end, Displaced Persons from Eastern Europe found themselves expected to fit into an order of ethnic cleansing and political submission that had been imposed on the region by Josef Stalin and the compliant western Allies at the Tehran, Yalta, and Potsdam conferences.<sup>238</sup> The

<sup>236</sup> RHA, “From a Report of a Jewish Soldier, 21/06/1945,” *Newspapers*, 54.

<sup>237</sup> Ben Flanagan and Donald Bloxham, *Remembering Belsen: Eyewitnesses Record the Liberation* (Great Britain: Vallentine Mitchell, 2005), 87.

<sup>238</sup> As Philipp Ther succinctly explains, At the Tehran Conference in November of 1943, the “Big Three” (Great Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union) had agreed on awarding the Soviet Union a large part of the Poland’s eastern territories. At the Yalta Conference in February 1945, the Allies set the western border of Poland at the Oder and Neisse Rivers, thus effectively rendering the country dependant on the protection of the Soviet Union. The role of the Allies, and in particular the British, as “the authors of the postwar order,” Ther is careful to stress, should not be underestimated. The British government, he notes, “was the most vocal champion of ‘population transfers’” designed to ethnically realign newly drawn borders. After the war the Allies proceeded

systematic repression of the Soviet Union's neighbouring states after 1945 was realized by mass expulsions, deportations and other forms of systematic violence, which were necessary in order to generate the amount of property confiscations that enabled state-controlled economies. A broader postwar context, upheld by the Allies, was thus created in which thousands of DPs in Germany, as well as "expellees" as forced to leave their former homes, could not return to the "home" presupposed by repatriation. Many would refuse to resettle in the territory that was assigned to them, often different from their homeland, which had been labelled as "their" nation-state but lacking the attributes of democratic state sovereignty.<sup>239</sup>

Gerard Daniel Cohen argues that a second stage in the "DP episode"<sup>240</sup> began when the "last million" were joined by so-called "infiltrates," or more generally, post-hostilities refugees.<sup>241</sup> Once uprooted from their homelands and despoiled of their property, the expelled populations did partially refuse to settle inside the new nation borders that were assigned to them and searched other destinations of migration. After the expulsions, most of the Jews and many of the Poles, Ukrainians and Balts, headed towards occupied Germany. While ethnic Germans are not typically counted among the "infiltrates" in secondary source literature, in the administrative records of the British and American Zones, they are referenced often as part and parcel of the "infiltrate" problem to emphasize the scale of overcrowding. Thus, a new wave of migrants into occupied Germany included up to 12 million ethnic Germans,<sup>242</sup> over half a

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more cautiously in order to manage the practical difficulties generated by mass expulsions. At Potsdam in August of 1945, an Agreement between the Powers included a moratorium on mass expulsions in favour of "humane and orderly" transfers. Ther concludes that mass population shifts were thus "an integral part of British foreign policy. At most, the Western powers had pragmatic misgivings, but none on principle." See Philipp Ther, *The Dark Side of Nation States: Ethnic Cleansing in Modern Europe* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2014), 144ff.

<sup>239</sup> As Ther and others have established, the Baltic States had been erased and half of Poland's prewar territory annexed to the USSR; the sovereignty of Poland and Czechoslovakia was no more than a fiction; and the national autonomy of Ukrainians, Belarusians, Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians within the Soviet Union was a façade for the systematic repression of these nations. See Ibid. Western complicity in this process remains to this day, a controversial historical question.

<sup>240</sup> Cohen, *In War's Wake*, 5-7.

<sup>241</sup> The term post-hostility refugee is preferred by some prominent scholars of the postwar period. For example, Suzanne Brown-Fleming, *Nazi Persecution and Postwar Repercussions: The International Tracing Service Archive and Holocaust Research* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 15.

<sup>242</sup> Wyman suggests this large figure over a two-year period from 1945-1947. Wyman, *DPs: Europe's Displaced Persons*, 20. For a comprehensive recent study of forced expulsions after the Second World War, see Ther, *The*

million Ukrainians, Belarusians and Lithuanians transferred out of Poland as well as over a million Poles who had been “repatriated.” In 1944, a series of treaties on population exchange were signed with Poland’s neighbouring Belorussian, Ukrainian, and Lithuanian republics. Poles, including Jews, who had resided in pre-war Polish territories now attached to these republics, were to be sent to Poland. Although the term repatriation appears widely in the literature, it is not an accurate term for former residents of Eastern Poland (now Western Belorussia and Western Ukraine) who were going to what was western Poland before 1939.<sup>243</sup> These people were not “repatriated,” but expelled from their historic homelands after annexation by the Soviet Union, with the expectation that they would settle within the newly redrawn borders of Poland, preferably in regions that were part of Germany till 1945.<sup>244</sup>

Jewish DP populations were also steadily on the rise in 1946, increasing from 50,000 approx. to 145,000 that year. By summer 1947, the number had peaked at 182,000, of which 80% were of Polish origin.<sup>245</sup> Among these numbers were those that had been repatriated from the Western Zones only to encounter antisemitism at home and return to the DP camps of Occupied Germany.

Consequently, complaints of “saturation” across Germany were rife on all fronts.<sup>246</sup> Allied governments were faced with growing concern around the increasing number of Poles

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*Dark Side of Nation-States*; Alexander V. Prusin, “Nation-Building and Moving People,” in Nicholas Doumanis, ed. *The Oxford handbook of European history, 1914-1945* (Oxford University Press, 2016): 557-575.

<sup>243</sup> Brown-Fleming, *Nazi Persecution and Postwar Repercussions*, 15; According to Kaganovitch, only some 54,900 Jews were repatriated as part of this first wave of return, due to its limitation as well as the fact that most Jews were still located in eastern parts of the USSR in 1944. Albert Kaganovitch, “Stalin’s Great Power Politics, the Return of Jewish Refugees to Poland, and Continued Migration to Palestine, 1944–1946,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 26:1 (2012).

<sup>244</sup> Some of these refugees were fleeing Soviet retribution. While some were former collaborators, the situation was complex given that the Soviet repression of East European national movements had started before the German invasion and the following collaboration. Former collaborators and former resisters often met the same measures of repression in the postwar USSR. Discussing the brutal deportation of Ukrainians from (or within) Poland, Bohdan Kordan, “Making Borders Stick: Population Transfer and Resettlement in the Trans-Curzon Territories, 1944-1949,” *The International Migration Review* 31:3 (1997): 713, mentions Ukrainian insurgents in Poland who after their defeat in 1947 were “breaking through to the west.”

<sup>245</sup> Ibid, 16. At their peak, Jews represented approximately 20 percent of the overall DP population. Yehuda Bauer, *Out of the ashes: the impact of American Jews on post-Holocaust European Jewry* (Pergamon, 1989).

<sup>246</sup> Including from local German populations at the time of refugee arrival.



entering Germany precisely at the moment when repatriation was slowing and looking to remain so. Frustratingly for the British DP administration, these new arrivals included former DPs who were repatriated and were unsatisfied with the conditions they had found in Poland. By March 1946, it was decided that “infiltratees” Poles should be segregated from repatriating Poles, so as not to “discourage the latter from returning.”<sup>247</sup> The term “infiltratee” was used by Allied administrations to distinguish Eastern Europeans who aimed to avoid settling among their national majorities and who instead emigrated west for personal, political or economic reasons.<sup>248</sup> The term was deliberately used to disassociate such arrivals from the displaced persons currently in Germany, who were defined by having been displaced by reason of war.

The British thus initially reacted to the mass movement of persons into Germany by prohibiting entirely the recognition of infiltratees as DPs, on definitional terms. As they were classified as Polish citizens and could not be considered to be displaced by reason of war, nor persecuted by foreign forces, they were to be refused shelter and care and any transportation assistance across the Zone.<sup>249</sup> By contrast, neither the American nor the French Zone of occupation adopted Britain’s self-described “logical” stance with respect to infiltratees, and instead imposed collective pressure on the British to abandon its policy.<sup>250</sup> However, while any new registration of DPs had been officially cut off in the British Zone as of July 1946,<sup>251</sup> rather than shrinking, overall Polish DP numbers were nonetheless increasing (though accurate figures were difficult to determine, as many were in fact Ukrainians claiming to be Poles).<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>247</sup> FO 945/370 Disposal of Non-Germans Entering British Zone of Germany, ‘Letter 30<sup>th</sup> March’, 1946.

<sup>248</sup> The second half of this chapter will consider individual “infiltratee” motivations, and official perceptions thereof, in more depth.

<sup>249</sup> FO 945/370 Disposal of Non-Germans Entering British Zone of Germany, ‘Letter 30<sup>th</sup> March’, 1946.

<sup>250</sup> FO 1052/394 ‘Deep UNRRA’ Conferences for Facilitating Business of UNRRA, PW and DP Division and Government Representatives, ‘Letter from Kenchington’, December 18, 1946; Königseder, Angelika, and Juliane Wetzel, *Waiting for Hope: Jewish Displaced Persons in Post-World War II Germany* (Northwestern University Press, 2001), 49.

<sup>251</sup> FO 945/731 Jewish DPs, General, ‘Food Concerns: Board of Deputies of British Jews’, Letter September 13, 1946.

<sup>252</sup> FO 1052/394 ‘Deep UNRRA’ Conferences for Facilitating Business of UNRRA, PW and DP Division and Government Representatives, ‘Letter from Kenchington’, December 18, 1946.

Concerned over stagnating repatriation rates and the mounting cost of DP care, British policy determined to make life in the DP camps as unattractive as possible, to dissuade further entry and to prevent what was considered the phenomenon of “economic dissidents” from Poland being drawn to a life of “idleness” in DP centres.<sup>253</sup> Once more, when it came to the Polish community, UNRRA was happy to play a leading role in a project of deterrence. If UNRRA helped the military to pull the DPs back to Poland by making conditions at home seem more favourable, it proved equally helpful in pushing the DPs by making conditions in DP camps seem *less* favourable. By threatening camp closures in the American Zone, and targeting—even banning, in some instances— recreational and educational activity within a number of Polish DP camps in the British Zone, UNRRA caused widespread and deliberate alarm calibrated to push repatriation.<sup>254</sup> Though the plan to close any camps was quietly abandoned, the existence and publicity of such proposals was part of a targeted crack-down on anything seen as being inimical to repatriation.<sup>255</sup>

Jewish “infiltrates” were overwhelmingly Jews who had survived the war in the Soviet Union and returned home under certain repatriation agreements.<sup>256</sup> They were not stateless.

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<sup>253</sup> FO 945/389 Future of Displaced Persons Camps in Germany, ‘Letter from Control Commission for Germany’, June 18, 1946.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid.

<sup>255</sup> FO 945/364 Polish Displaced Persons in Germany, ‘Registration of Polish students in the British Zone in Germany’, September 23rd, 1946; FO 1052/269 Administration Policy for Displaced Persons (DPs): Poles, ‘Subject: Wolski, Minister for Repatriation’, September, 1946. This included limiting the work of volunteer bodies on behalf of Polish DPs. In the British Zone, tensions erupted by May 1946 between the Polish Red Cross (PRC) and UNRRA, who wanted the former’s work liquidated in the Zone. By May 4<sup>th</sup>, they severed cooperation with the PRC and did not recognize the organization. See FO 1063/99 Polish Red Cross, ‘Letter to Colonel Todd from Polish Red Cross delegation in Germany’, May 10, 1946; FO 1032/2314 Employment of Polish Red Cross Society, ‘Move of the London Polish Red Cross’, August 12, 1946.

<sup>256</sup> There are in fact two bodies of literature that deal with this group; one that tracks the migration of repatriates from the Soviet Union in to Poland (and calls these Jews repatriates); and then a separate one that picks them up in Poland and tracks their migration to Germany as part of DP history (and calls them infiltrates). It is necessary however, to treat these two bodies of literature together if we are to understand the Jewish relationship to repatriation more generally in the period. Of the texts dealing with repatriation from the Soviet Union a number of authors stand out, including: Israel Gutman, *The Jews in Poland after World War II* (Jerusalem: Merkaz Zalman Shazar le-ha’amakat ha-toda’ah historit ha-Yehudit, 1985); Kaganovitch, “Stalin’s Great Power Politics,”: 59-94; Rebecca Manley, *To the Tashkent Station: Evacuation and Survival in the Soviet Union at War* (Cornell University Press, 2012); as well as Na’ama Seri-Levi, “‘These People are Unique’: The Repatriates in the Displaced Persons Camps, 1945-1946,” *Moresheet*, 14 (2017): 49-100.

While few studies have focused on these Jews as repatriates, their life in the Soviet Union and their return to Poland, there are several studies that focus on their reception and episodes of postwar antisemitism in Poland,

During the course of the Second World War, some three hundred thousand Polish Jews were within the unoccupied territories of the Soviet Union.<sup>257</sup> In November of 1944, Joseph Stalin ordered the limited repatriation of Polish Jews, prompting a mass exodus from the USSR.<sup>258</sup> In December, 1945, repatriation efforts were expanded to specify that all Poles and Jews who had lived on the territory of Poland up until the Germany invasion of 1939, could be repatriated from the USSR, prompting the movement of some 147,000 Polish Jews. Kaganovitch places the total number of returning Jews in both stages of repatriation at 202,000.<sup>259</sup> That the majority of these repatriates were not intending to remain in Poland, was well known to the Soviet authorities that facilitated their movement.<sup>260</sup> “On the basis of reports of antisemitic violence already sweeping Poland in summer and fall 1945—that is, even before the mass arrivals from the USSR—it was easy to anticipate the imminent departure of large numbers of Jews.”<sup>261</sup> Soviet administrators were well aware of the desire of Polish Jews, as well as the Zionist organizations who supported them, to make their way into occupied Germany in the hope of

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including especially the Kielce pogrom of July 1946. Important studies include Daniel Blatman’s, “Strangers in their Own Land: Polish Jews from Lublin to Kielce,” *POLIN* (2002): 335-358 and historian Jan Tomasz Gross’ well-known contribution, *Fear: Anti-Semitism in Poland after Auschwitz: An Essay in Historical Interpretation* (New York, 2006).

<sup>257</sup> Kaganovitch, “Stalin’s Great Power Politics,” 59. Kaganovitch relies on the figures put forward by Yosef Litvak in *Plitim Yehudiim mi-Polin be-Brit ha-Moatzot* [Jewish refugees from Poland in the Soviet Union] (Tel Aviv: Kibbutz Meuhad, 1988). While Litvak has studied what statistical sources exist, their scarcity has made precise quantification impossible.

<sup>258</sup> See Kaganovitch, *Ibid.* Although the term repatriation appears widely in the literature, it is not an accurate term for former residents of Eastern Poland (now Western Belorussia and Western Ukraine) who were going to what was western Poland before 1939. In 1944, a series of treaties on population exchange were signed with Poland’s neighbouring Belorussian, Ukrainian, and Lithuanian republics. Poles, including Jews, who had resided in pre-war Polish territories now attached to these republics, were to be sent to Poland. According to Kaganovitch, only some 54,900 Jews were repatriated as part of this first wave of return, due to its limitation as well as the fact that most Jews were still located in eastern parts of the USSR in 1944.

<sup>259</sup> He notes: “Thousands remained in the USSR, even after several later repatriations, but this remains a subject for future research.” Kaganovitch, “Stalin’s Great Power Politics,” 75.

<sup>260</sup> See these reports in Natalia Aleksun, “The Situation of the Jews in Poland as Seen by the Soviet Security Forces in 1945,” *Jews in Eastern Europe* 37:3 (1998): 57–68.

<sup>261</sup> Why he did so is beyond the scope of this thesis, but is explored in Kaganovitch, who suggests that the move is intimately connected to postwar relations with both Poland and the Yishuv (the Jewish community of Palestine): “Stalin rightly assumed that due to the close links between Great Britain and the Arab countries, a Jewish state would find itself in conflict with Britain. [...] creation of a flashpoint in a British sphere appeared advantageous to the USSR.”

eventually reaching Palestine. The subsequent movement of these “repatriates” into occupied Germany as “infiltrates,” was not only undeterred by the Soviets, but actively encouraged.<sup>262</sup>

UNRRA’s position when it came to “infiltrate” Jews was in line with Soviet policy. The same international community that was encouraging the repatriation of Poles to Poland was not willing to foster the return of its Jewish population.<sup>263</sup> The British War Office found itself scrambling in early 1946 to establish figures for new Jewish arrivals, with some 600 Jews estimated to be *en route* to the Belsen camp every month from January.<sup>264</sup> The same UNRRA that was actively applying various forms of pressure on DP Poles to repatriate, was accused by British forces—alongside Jewish relief organizations operating in the Zone—of *facilitating* the movement of infiltrate Jews into large DP camps across Germany of which “as many as 2000,” it was feared, could have reached the Hohn-Belsen camp by August.<sup>265</sup> A number of military and UNRRA reports alike, note the organized fashion in which large numbers of Jews made their way into Germany, suggesting that while the movement may have been spontaneous it was at the same time, deliberate.<sup>266</sup>

To remove Jewish “infiltrates” from DP camps by force, the British determined, would be taken as anti-Jewish policy. Although such a move, it was argued, “would be justified,” it would inevitably stir further controversy. The best policy was thus considered to be that of non-recognition and to “take steps to prevent them from being included in the ration strength of the

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<sup>262</sup> As well as organized in the Bricah framework. In his influential 1970 study, Bauer focusses on a Jewish organisation, “Bricah” (meaning “flight” in Hebrew), which helped to smuggle Jewish refugees westwards. See Yehuda Bauer, *Flight and rescue: Bricah* (Random House, 1970).

<sup>263</sup> FO 945/364 Polish Displaced Persons in Germany, ‘Response to Political Advisor’, February 10, 1946.

<sup>264</sup> FO 945/590 Joint British-United States Committee to Consider Jewish Problems, ‘Numbers of Jewish DPs’, 1945.

<sup>265</sup> FO 945/370 Disposal of Non-Germans entering British Zone of Germany, ‘Unauthorized flow of Jews to Hohn camp’, August 3, 1946.

<sup>266</sup> Malcolm J. Proudfoot, *European Refugees: 1939-52, A Study in Forced Population Movement* (London: 1957), 338. Indeed, the movement was well organized, as will be discussed further in the second half of Chapter 2, “The Push for Palestine”. Jewish volunteer bodies, notable the American Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) who worked alongside the Jewish Committee for Relief Abroad (JRA) were accused of helping to funnel infiltrate Jews into the Belsen camp. FO 945/384 Jewish Adviser: Colonel Solomon and his Recommendations for Jews ‘Recommendations put forward by Colonel Solomon’, April, 1947.

camp.” Orders that infiltrates were not to receive DP rations were put into effect and publicized in an attempt to dissuade further Jews from entering the DP camps.<sup>267</sup> Unsurprisingly in such a climate, the British Zone was not the preferred infiltrate Zone. The vast majority made their way into the British and American Zones and avoided the Russian entirely; “In comparison, in the Bergen-Belsen DP camp, where most Jewish DPs in the British Zone resided, their numbers increased by only 20% between January and August 1946.”<sup>268</sup> Nonetheless, these new arrivals shifted completely the demographics of the Zone’s DP community and most significantly, served to *reinforce* the dominant image of the Jewish DP as the unrepatriable, stateless concentration camp survivor.<sup>269</sup> The “infiltrate” label was entirely shed, and what was a demographically and biographically diverse group of Jews, instead embraced the image of the surviving remnant of European Jewry determined to leave the blood-soaked soil of Europe behind.

This large group of new Jewish arrivals were distinguished from those liberated in Germany in several important ways. At the outset, this was a group for whom nomadism was already 7 or 8 years in the making; “the unique aspect that strikes you most when you meet Jews who have returned from Russia is the fact that they are Gypsy-nomads.”<sup>270</sup> The group was additionally much more diverse in age and often comprised of whole family units, including children under the age of five, as well as elderly populations who had prior to 1946 no presence in the camps.<sup>271</sup> “The family foundation is what characterizes this population, whereas the decisive majority of those who were liberated from the concentration camps were individuals—members after members of shattered families.”<sup>272</sup>

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<sup>267</sup> See FO 1052/426 Stateless Persons: Jewish Displaced Persons (DPs) in British Zone; vol I, ‘Letter from the Office of the Deputy Military Governor’, August 3, 1946.

<sup>268</sup> Seri-Levi, “‘These People are Unique’,” 55.

<sup>269</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>270</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid.*, 62-63.

<sup>272</sup> Seri-Levi suggests that diversity was also reflected with respect to health and perhaps degrees of trauma, as well as preparedness for labour and employment, although this was never conclusively proven. *Ibid.*, 69.

Though British policy vis-à-vis Jewish DPs was explicitly designed to discourage self-organization and representation,<sup>273</sup> this is precisely what “infiltree” Jews encountered in the DP camps.<sup>274</sup> Jewish survivors in Germany established, remarkably quickly (when one considers what must have been their physical and emotional condition at the point of liberation) a network of representational bodies. In Belsen, within *days* after the arrival of British troops, camp survivor Josef Rosensaft founded the Central Committee of Liberated Jews in the British Zone.<sup>275</sup> The Committee’s leadership, drawn from the Belsen camp, presented immediate demands upon British authorities, including recognition of the Committee as representative of Jewish DPs in the Zone, whom they began to refer to as the She’erit Hapletah (Hebrew for “surviving remnant”).<sup>276</sup> By the time elected delegates of Jewish DP organizations met in Munich, in the American Zone, in February 1946, they were collectively identifying themselves as the Congress of the She’erit Hapletah.<sup>277</sup>

It is noteworthy that this formulation was chosen to represent DP Jews.<sup>278</sup> The term was inherently connected to repatriation: whatever extant repatriation policy in place, members of

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<sup>273</sup> FO 945/378 Jewish Matters: General, ‘Policy of “Equality of Right Regardless of Race or Religion” makes position of Jews in Germany untenable’, March 3, 1945.

<sup>274</sup> Samuel Gringauz, “Jewish Destiny as the DP’s See It,” *Commentary* 4 (December 1947): 502.

<sup>275</sup> Hitchcock, *The Bitter Road*, 347.

<sup>276</sup> FO 1052/283 Jewish Congress Hohne Camp, ‘Report by Major C.C.K. Rickford’, September, 1945.

<sup>277</sup> In fact, the term had a history of being used in connection to Jewish survivors that predated liberation. Ofer explains that the origins of the term “She’erit Hapletah” are biblical, specifically in the writings of the prophets: “The use of the term links the notions of destruction and redemption—for example, Micah: “In that day—declares the Lord—I will assemble the lame/And will gather the outcast/And those I have treated harshly/And I will turn the lame into a remnant/And the expelled into a populous nation./And the Lord will reign over them on Mount Zion/Now and forevermore” (Micah 4:6–7).” According to Ofer, leaders of the Yishuv began using the term “remnant” in 1943 in reference to Europe’s surviving Jews. See Dalia Ofer, “From Survivors to New Immigrants: She’erit Hapletah and Aliyah, [w:] She’erit Hapletah 1944-1948. Rehabilitation and Political Struggle,” in *Proceedings of the Yad Vashem International Historical Conference* (1990): 306.

<sup>278</sup> The term gained popular currency within and across the DP camps of Germany through its use by American-Jewish Army Chaplain Abraham Klausner. Avinoam Patt, “‘The People Must be Forced to Go to Palestine’: Rabbi Abraham Klausner and the She’erit Hapletah in Germany,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 28:2 (2014): 240-276. Following American troops as they moved further into Bavaria, Klausner compiled lists of Jewish survivors encountered along the way, recalling in his memoir: “I thought back to my seminary days and my love affair with the prophets, who agonized over the behavior of their people and prophesied ruin for their corruption, but never allowed them to be fully destroyed. There would always be a sharit ha-platah, a saving remnant, to treasure the call of the Lord. I scribbled the title on the cover of the batch of lists I left with the printer: Sharit Ha-Platah.” Abraham J. Klausner, *A Letter to My Children: From the Edge of the Holocaust* (San Francisco: Holocaust Center of Northern California, 2002), 11.

the She'erit Hapletah were not obligated to repatriate and must consider themselves free to opt for non-return. As Seri-Levi argues, "The repatriates did not present a new, alternative leadership and did not struggle against the population that had been in the camps when they arrived. Rather, they integrated with them."<sup>279</sup> Integration did not just mean cohabitation, or a slow process of coming to resemble one another through the fact of shared experiences in the DP camps of common Polish-Jewish identities.<sup>280</sup> It was active and involved the wholesale rejection of a distinction between Jewish DPs "proper" and "infiltrate" Jews. That the Holocaust was experienced by all concentration camp inmates is evident; but the term She'erit Hapletah was claimed by all surviving Jews. The case of both Polish and Jewish DPs thus saw a switch from a territorialized to a deterritorialized ethnicity, with the Zionist claim to invert this process through a reterritorialized nationhood.

### **Conclusion: Repatriation and different structures of belonging**

The challenges of characterizing postwar repatriation policy after 1945 are, in important ways, reflective of the debate on the theoretical level, around how best to define repatriation more generally. "Repatriation" evoked ideas of return to one's home in a previously existing fatherland that were strongly at variance with a reality of submission to a hostile political regime and, frequently, relocation according to redrawn borders.

Is repatriation always coerced? While some authors effectively use the term repatriation synonymously to the more general term "return migration," others distinguish between the two by pointing out that degrees of coercion are present in the former while absent in the latter. Yfaat Weiss defines repatriation as simply "a form of return characterized by coercion or duress."<sup>281</sup> Weiss, in turn quoting Russel King, argues that "the term repatriation is used when

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<sup>279</sup> Seri-Levi, "'These People are Unique'," 88.

<sup>280</sup> Ibid.

<sup>281</sup> Yfaat Weiss, "Homeland as Shelter or as Refuge? Repatriation in the Jewish Context," *Tel Aviver Jahrbuch für deutsche Geschichte* 27 (1998): 195.

return is not the initiative of the migrants themselves but is forced on them by political events or authorities, or perhaps by some personal or natural disaster.”<sup>282</sup>

While such a definition may suit various instances of historical repatriation,<sup>283</sup> it is awkwardly applied to a postwar period that witnessed the initial assisted movement of hundreds of thousands of Polish DPs, eager to reach home. Furthermore, later repatriation measures aimed at fostering the return of remaining DPs were unevenly applied across different DP communities, with DP Jews largely seen as exempt. There was an immense diversity of causes of return migration after 1945; determined by a mix of traditional push/pull factors at all times, and with degrees and forms of coercion, as well as resistance. This sub-chapter has attempted to present British repatriation policy as a set of repatriation drives that disproportionately targeted Polish DPs. What emerges is a spectrum of “voluntary” movement. Examining this spectrum requires being attentive to relations after return, intervening historical events and as well as to the return of individuals who were repatriated, and who journeyed *back* to Germany. Repatriation did not always mean the end of one cycle, but the start of new cycles of migration.

Prior to the end of the war and in its aftermath, popular legitimacy was given to the idea that the optimum and most durable solution to the problem of the 8 million foreign nationals soon-to-be liberated on German soil was swift repatriation to their countries of origin. While certainly challenging this notion, the emergence of “unrepatriable” DPs and subsequent repatriation policy constituted neither a definitive break in dominant thinking nor a clear boundary marking the end of mass repatriation efforts. While a policy of forced repatriation was eventually abandoned, the strength of the British DP administration’s commitment to repatriation as the most durable “solution” to the “DP problem” endured.

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<sup>282</sup> Russel King, Return Migration and Regional Economic Development: An Overview, in: idem, (ed.), *Return: Migration and Regional Economic Problems* (London, Sydney, New Hampshire 1986), 1-37, 5.

<sup>283</sup> Weiss for example, focuses on Jewish repatriation after 1881.



Further, as much as the administrative category of “unrepatriable” masks this ongoing commitment, it fails to capture important ways in which the considerations and priorities of individual Poles and their families with respect to repatriation, were induced in many ways by the experiences of early repatriates. Thus, as much as uncritical borrowing the administrative “unrepatriable” slang risks obfuscating complexities and degrees of resistance to repatriation, it similarly retroactively casts “repatriates” as a contradistinctive group. The same hesitancies persisted into 1946: where is my family? Will I travel alone? Is the journey safe to make? How will I be received upon return? Will my home still be there? How will I be received by new Polish authorities? This helps to account for the fact many Polish DPs did ultimately opt to return, as well as the fact that many early repatriates came *back*, to re-join the “hard core.” The themes one finds reflected in the fragments of memoirs of early returning Polish forced labourers foreshadow and bleed into both Allied and DP strategizing as concerns repatriation policy.

While for the majority of those liberated on German soil, there was in 1945 an almost instinctive desire to return to their respective places of origin in search of family. For others however, liberation was followed by a moment of absolute indertermination in which DPs were suddenly faced with a situation that requiring them to choose a geographical destination. Their situation did not correspond to the political assumptions attributing to everyone an obligatory homeland. Furthermore, a return “home” frequently went hand-in-hand with an encounter of places and properties that were familiar surroundings before the war, now reduced to rubble or confiscated by others. Especially in the case of the Jews, such experiences strongly enforced the idea of having to restart one's life. The arrival of “infiltrate” population into the DP camps from 1946, later attest the disruptive effect of the so-called repatriations and population exchanges in the eastern parts of Poland. Since uprooting and despoiling populations was

precisely what was politically intended, this could have the same effect of falling back on the individual decision of starting anew, elsewhere.

Most importantly, the “unrepatriable” label does not distinguish between those for whom return home was seen as undesirable (but still perhaps, possible) and those for whom it was considered impossible; and how such distinctions broke down on ethnic lines. The Soviet Union and Communist Poland did not demand the return of Jews as it demanded the return of their non-Jewish nationals. The question of British compliance with the demands of the Soviet Union comes into focus again: while not formally recognized as a distinct national group, Jewish DPs were never under threat of forced repatriation, as Allied governments accepted non-return in their case, distinguishing Jewish survivors from among other DP communities. The fact that there existed already a group (formerly still classified as “Polish” in the British Zone), the Jewish DPs, that was allowed to opt for non-return, lent legitimacy to the idea of the permissibility of choosing to remain outside of one’s country of origin. The hypothesis of a model character of Jewish DPs is elaborated further in the second half of this Chapter. By contrast, while not forcibly repatriated, Polish DPs were regularly exposed to coercive strategies including attempts to control the spread of accessible information, appointing pro-Communist Polish liaison officers to promote repatriation, and in the UNRRA period, presenting no alternatives seen as inimical to repatriation. A sustained comparison between Polish and Jewish communities, as well as an implicit comparison to the forced repatriation of Soviet DPs, is thus essential in representing a spectrum of possibility, coercion, and resistance.

Significantly, the comparison reveals very different structures of belonging that distinguished Polish and Jewish DP communities. Jews were seen as belonging to the diaspora, widely accepted as mobile and thus, outside of political debates around repatriated to Poland. What emerges as a consequence of repatriation policy are two different structures of ethnic communities; one territorialized and one de-territorialized. Both Polish and Jewish DPs

rebelled against these structures in a way the British were not prepared to handle and resisted the model that was meant to differentiate between their respective communities. This theme is picked up and explored in even greater depth the following sub-chapter, that moves to consider the policies and politics of DP screening.

## 1.2 SCREENING THE ‘GENUINE’ POSTWAR REFUGEE

As the numbers of DPs opting to be repatriated declined; and thousands more *sought* DP status, DP eligibility screening that had at first been simply preparing DPs for repatriation, took on whole new dimensions. After July 1947, the civilian staff of a new International Refugee Organization (1947-52) engaged in a fresh round of eligibility screening, heightened by the arrival of so-called “infiltrates” from the East, whose attempts to enter into the crowded DP camps sparked renewed attempts to cut costs and identify the “genuine” refugee deserving of international aid.<sup>284</sup>

Using examples taken from a number of individual DP files in ITS, it will be shown that screening was motivated by three interrelated—but distinct—sets of criteria. Within these criteria, Jewish DPs emerged as the quintessential asylum-seekers of international refugee politics. The first criteria was establishing individual migrant *itineraries* in the attempt to distinguish between the policy categories of politically motivated migrant (the forced, or involuntary migrant) and the so-called “economic refugee,” whose movement was, by contrast, voluntary. The second criteria was uncovering political *identifications*, with a focus on demarcating perpetrators and collaborators from the victims of Nazi Germany and its Allies; where the latter was seen as synonymous to the “genuine” refugee deserving of aid. Although this criterion was supposed to identify individual perpetrators, it operated on the assumption of collective guilt, relating directly to the third and final criteria. The third criteria was based on identifying the ethnic belonging of DPs, with different policies governing different ethnic communities. In particular, administrative bodies were faced with the problem of defining Jewishness as an ethnicity alongside state nationalities. By concentrating on DPs coming from

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<sup>284</sup> Gerard Daniel Cohen, *In War's Wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 4.

the former and present Poland, this paper spotlights the separation of German, Polish, Jewish and Ukrainian ethnic groups and the theoretical and practical meaning of these distinctions. It will be illustrated, through comparison and contrast between Jewish with non-Jewish DPs, that refugee status was granted to Jews more readily than to other DP communities.

After 1948, IRO eligibility screening shifted once more, in response and reaction to a growing Cold War climate, which altered significantly its view of anti-communists. While anti-communists had originally been treated as potential Nazi collaborators, post-1948 they were increasingly welcomed as dissidents and refugees deserving of aid. Given that the subject of DP screening lies at the very nexus of research on postwar displacement, international humanitarianism, citizenship, statelessness, human rights and the Cold War,<sup>285</sup> it is surprising that it has received little systematic analysis. Gerard Daniel Cohen's work is a notable exception. Cohen is perhaps the first author to investigate in depth, the political motivations of postwar screening. His work attempts to provide an overarching narrative, situating the history of the International Refugee Organisation (IRO) as "a seminal case in the study of post-1945 international history."<sup>286</sup> Cohen argues that the particular example of the "battle of refugees"—international political negotiations over the fate of DPs—was the first direct confrontation over political dissidents between the two emerging superpowers: "Human rights politics did not only hasten the end of the Cold War, as commonly assumed, but also led to its outbreak."<sup>287</sup>

However, whilst this broader narrative of international politics makes an important contribution to our understanding of the screening processes that took place in the DP camps and of the postwar period more broadly, a number of important gaps remain. A focus on screening itself, utilizing a broader base of primary source documentation, allows for a richer understanding of the chronology and intent of screening, its procedural aspects and its

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<sup>285</sup> As shall be briefly discussed at the end of this essay, the subject also has significant contemporary relevance.

<sup>286</sup> Cohen, *In War's Wake*, 8.

<sup>287</sup> Ibid, 19.

evolution under the IRO. In particular, it draws attention to the gendered aspect of the ITS files and the ways in which the screening of women and children departed from that of their male counterparts. Furthermore, while DPs were constrained in the screening process, by very real structural factors, there was limited possibility for displaced *subjects* to seek to modify their status and to push back against its standardization and bureaucratization.

### **Screening shifts to determine who *remains***

As a reaction to the arrival of “infiltrates” and the subsequent growth of numbers of Poles and Jews in DP camps, the purpose of DP screening shifted from preparation for repatriation, towards matters of economics, or more bluntly: from traffic control to crowd control. The vetting of Displaced populations that occurred in earnest in 1946 under UNRRA was motivated in large part by obvious, pragmatic concerns around cost of care.<sup>288</sup> Reducing the numbers of registered DPs was argued to be not only desirable but achievable simply by denying more DPs the coveted DP status and effectively forcing the rejected onto the German domestic labour market. Across the Allied Occupied Zones, a policy of physically removing or arresting individuals and families deemed to be ineligible was already in place by April '46.<sup>289</sup>

Relief was radically reorganized in 1947, when the IRO took over the management of the DP camps, spelling the end of UNRRA's work with DPs.<sup>290</sup> From the outset, disputes concerning the mandate of a new International Refugee Organisation (IRO)—and significantly, who should be entitled to its aid—were fraught; with early cleavages emerging between East and West. The Soviet perspective continued to insist that the very category of “unrepatriable”

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<sup>288</sup> Cohen, *In War's Wake*, 35.

<sup>289</sup> Wolfgang Jacobmeyer, *Vom Zwangsarbeiter zum Heimatlosen Ausländer: Die Displaced Persons in Westdeutschland 1945–1951*, vol. 65 (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht: 1985), 103; Laura June Hilton, “Prisoners of Peace: Rebuilding Community, Identity and Nationality in Displaced Persons Camps in Germany, 1945–1952,” (PhD diss., The Ohio State University, 2001), 191.

<sup>290</sup> Jessica Reinisch, “‘Auntie UNRRA’ at the Crossroads,” *Past & Present* 218:8 (2013): 82.

not be formally recognized by the IRO.<sup>291</sup> The IRO's Constitution, eventually approved by the United Nations Assembly on December 17, 1946,<sup>292</sup> ultimately rejected the Soviet position in barring the forced repatriation of any DPs under its care.<sup>293</sup> The Constitution of the IRO however, as we shall see in what follows, remained greatly concerned with identifying the presence of any "illegitimate" DPs in the camps it inherited from UNRRA. IRO screening of unrepatriable DPs as the search for "genuine" recipients of aid was motivated by a number of different factors that evolved in response to the winds of an early Cold War.

The "last million" inherited by the IRO was made up of 400,000 Poles (almost 50% of the total DP population in 1946); approximately 200,000 individuals from the Baltic states; up to 150,000 ethnic Ukrainians and a Jewish population that grew from approximately 40,000, to a quarter of a million at its height, in 1947. As well as responding to economic strain, preparations for renewed rounds of eligibility screening under the IRO were based on the fear that illegitimate DPs, including especially "infiltrates," having been given DP status under UNRRA. As we have seen, during the UNRRA period, authorities had faced the unexpected challenge of setting up assembly centres, *by nationality*, until the problem of what to do with unrepatriable DPs could be solved. Repeated screening served the purpose of making life increasingly unpleasant for DPs as concerned turned away from who should be allowed into DP camps, to who should be able to *remain*.<sup>294</sup> In concrete terms, this involved rigorous interviewing and the filling out of lengthy "eligibility questionnaires" in order to divorce the "genuine," authentic DP from the ineligible.<sup>295</sup> Unsurprisingly in the postwar economic climate, the DP category quickly became a status, entitling its holder to claim both special need

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<sup>291</sup> The Eastern Bloc insisted that all DPs be treated as full nationals. See Linda McDowell, *Hard Labour: The Forgotten Voices of Latvian Migrant 'Volunteer' Workers* (London: UCL Press, 2005), 87-88.

<sup>292</sup> United Nations, *Constitution of the International Refugee Organization*, December 15, 1946, United Nations, Treaty Series, 18:3; available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3ae6b37810.html>. [accessed September 10, 2019].

<sup>293</sup> Cohen, *In War's Wake*, 19. As a result, the Soviet Bloc promptly withdrew from the organization altogether.

<sup>294</sup> Wyman, *DPs: Europe's Displaced Persons*, 57.

<sup>295</sup> A discussion of the politics and tradition of sorting "good" from "bad" DPs will be developed later into this essay.

and support, and was thus fiercely contested. The search for illegitimate recipients of aid, which had been chaotic under UNRRA, was swiftly transformed into a complex bureaucracy best seen through the lens of the International Tracing Service.

### **Screening in the International Tracing Service (ITS)**

Every Displaced Person, upon registration into a DP camp, was issued a Care and Maintenance File (CM/1) along with their DP Registration card (which was subsequently filed and included in their CM/1 File).<sup>296</sup> As Suzanne Brown-Fleming explains, “CM/1 forms can include lengthy testimonies about the applicants war-time experience, notes by IRO interviewers [...] photographs; internal IRO correspondence on the merit of the application; health records; marriage certificates; employment affidavits and applications; emigration information; and other often unexpected documentation.”<sup>297</sup>

What, then, does eligibility screening look like in ITS? The first form to be filled out by DPs was a standardized double-sided registration form (known as a DP2 card) filled in upon arrival in an assembly centre and kept in CM/1 files. As explained in the Introduction, CM/1 forms contain the longer standardized questionnaires, the same across all the Allied Zones, that were mandatorily filled out for every single DP under or applying for IRO welfare and support. IRO personnel, not the DP themselves, were charged with completing the relevant paperwork and conducting an initial interview on the basis of information offered by the DP. Questionnaires were written in English,<sup>298</sup> in correspondence with the dominant language of most of the IRO’s civilian staff. Much supplementary documentation however is in multiple languages (petitions and biographies frequently appearing in DP’s mother-tongues); with German becoming more prevalent from the administrative side over time. IRO workers

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<sup>296</sup> Dependants were often registered in the same file.

<sup>297</sup> Brown-Fleming, *Nazi Persecution and Postwar Repercussions*, 17.

<sup>298</sup> There was variation in the across Zones: In the French Zone, one can find more instances of French-language questionnaires.



unfamiliar with the language of the interviewed DP made frequent use of translators, often drawn from the DP camps themselves. As DPs could be summoned for multiple interviews, depending on how unsure IRO staff were of their eligibility status, resultant files abound with duplicate records of biographical details recorded by multiple interviewers at different times. While the details of some case files can be meticulously typed onto the relevant forms in detail, others are hurriedly scrawled—sometimes in almost illegible handwriting—, while others still, contain a mix of both.

It was not unusual for DPs to submit their own short biographies, typically written in their native languages and often subsequently translated. Documentation written directly by individual DPs appear more frequently in highly contested cases, where the DP is more likely to write a petition to the IRO on their own behalf. With respect to content, all DPs had to answer biographical questions relating to their biographical history and activities and associations pre-war and during the war as justification for DP status as granted by IRO. These records are particularly fascinating as lengthy records of previous activities found across CM/1 forms provide the ultimate testament to the range of individuals who were both perpetrators and victims. ITS indicates that much was dependent on the individual interviewer. Required to juggle historical facts, testimony and a certain amount of intuitive feeling (and individual bias), IRO Eligibility Officers were responsible for weighing each case individually on its own merits. Undoubtedly, this was a great responsibility, given what was at stake. DPs however, were not required to provide evidence supporting their claim for status where a “favourable” impression had been made on the interviewer. As we shall see, only in cases where an “unfavourable” impression was made, did the burden of proof shift to the DP applicant. A supposedly collaborative process of investigation would then take place, in partnership with the DP under question. As we shall see, a number of factors hindered collaboration between

DPs and administrative bodies, whose driving sets of criteria ultimately determined outcomes for DPs on the ground.

### **Screening under the IRO: Examining different sets of criteria**

What ITS reveals is that eligibility screening under the IRO had effectively three interrelated sets of criteria: 1) biographical itinerary, attempting to demarcate the refugee from the ‘economic migrant’; 2) political identification and past activity, classifying applicants as either victim or perpetrator; 3) ethnic belonging, significantly with different policies for the four ethnicities of the former or present Polish territories, i.e. Poles, Germans, Ukrainians, and Jews.

1) Biographical itinerary: Establishing the first criteria, that of biographical itinerary, was first and foremost dependent on individual DPs’ ability to furnish proof of their personal history. It was however, not uncommon for DPs to struggle to establish—sometimes in their own mind—their pre- and war-time trajectories at interview. ITS reveals immediately the key role that paperwork played in questions of eligibility. A lack of documents or proofs of identity almost certainly guaranteed re-interview and was often a decisive factor determining individual cases. Unfortunately for Polish DP Bolesław Baran, his total lack of corroborating paperwork resulted in his DP status remaining in question for over three years. According to Bolesław, he had come to work in Germany as a farmer in 1941. After the German surrender, he claimed to have given all his papers to an American soldier. Being unable to offer any proof of his itinerary, the case was immediately deemed “a doubtful [word is underlined by the Eligibility Officer in the file] case until other papers are produced”. After what appears to be multiple rounds of review, the case was decided in favour of DP status in 1948, following re-interview at which Bolesław pledged to be able to procure documents from former employees as evidence

backing up his statements.<sup>299</sup> His file prior to re-interview notes ominously: “If not [without any documentation], in the re-interviewing a decision can be made accordingly.”<sup>300</sup>

Being able to affirm one’s individual biographical itinerary was crucial in distinguishing oneself as a refugee entitled to aid, and not as an “economic migrant,” undeserving of care and maintenance. “Infiltrates,” or post-hostilities refugees, were unsurprisingly, the most suspect and any DP who was thought to have, or who openly admitted to, having left their country of origin on the basis of economic motives was consistently likely to have DP status denied. Halina Golebiowska’s file offers a representative case in point. The interviewer notes, in uncompromising language, that Halina “came to Germany because she did not like the life 'actual' in Poland and would not have what she was fed”. Her case is “not favourable [...] she is not properly a refugee, she came for reasons of personal convenience.”<sup>301</sup> The latter comment proved damning: Halina was declared ineligible shortly after interview.

Testament to the IRO’s determination to identify, and strike off the strength of DP camps, the “economic refugee” was the fact that Jewish “infiltrates”—who, as we shall see, were otherwise considered as the quintessential postwar refugee—were subject to the IRO’s renewed rounds of eligibility screening. While there were comparatively few cases of individuals registered as Jewish being called into question, so intensive was IRO screening by 1948, that thousands of Jews entering Germany through Poland—whose experiences of war-time, and postwar antisemitism were well known and documented—were asked to furnish proof of having valid objections to returning ‘home’: their being Jewish, at least in theory, no longer sufficient in and of itself, to escape the possibility and taint of “economic migration”.

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<sup>299</sup> The language of files is hyper-legalistic. “Deemed eligible” is reminiscent of the court room and indeed, eligibility screening could be seen as a system of legal jurisdiction.

<sup>300</sup> ITS, ‘Boleslaw Baran’, Doc. No. 78905276\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1)

<sup>301</sup> ITS, ‘Halina Golebiowska’, Doc. No. 79130027\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1)

The so-called cleansing of DP camps of its ineligible was, as the renewed interest in Jewish eligibility belies, closely related to emigration.<sup>302</sup> Along with a number of other benefits (access to camp quarters, camp life etc.), with DP status came resettlement opportunities. It was widely acknowledged, on the administrative side, that the DP camps contained individuals and families, almost exclusively arriving at a DP camp after '45 from the Central and Eastern Europe, who applied for DP status explicitly in order to use the DP camps as a springboard to a third country of origin, including access and eligibility for the various recruitment and resettlement schemes offered through, and in partnership with, the IRO. Accusations such as these were not unfounded. Indeed, as has been very well established in the literature: Jewish DPs were in the majority, extraordinarily vocal concerning their *precise* destination of choice: Palestine.

Screening, in short, was designed to identify an economic rationale. While most applicants were careful to downplay any such strategizing, others were not as fortunate. Czech applicant Karel Horatscheke made—retrospectively—the mistake of openly admitting at eligibility interview, his desire to gain DP status in order to emigrate with his family. His German wife having been forced out of the Czech Republic as part of a program of mass ethnic cleansing after '45, they were forced to come to Germany where they were unable to find employment, Karel claimed, because of their Czech nationality. With repatriation out of the question (given the political circumstances), Horatscheke optimistically—or perhaps out of sheer lack of options—applied for DP status to, in his own words “enable him and his family to emigrate to Great Britain or some other country.” He unknowingly damaged his chances, by detailing still further his thinking: as he had been recognized for helping British soldiers during

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<sup>302</sup> John George Stoessinger, *The Refugee and the World Community* (University of Minnesota Press, 1956), 190.

the war, he had purposefully made his way to the British Zone, as the likeliest Zone to accept him as a DP. The family was ultimately found to be not within the mandate of the IRO.<sup>303</sup>

Jewish Displaced persons, by contrast, could risk being much more forthcoming about their desire to use DP status for the purposes of emigration. There are many cases of biographical notes taken at interview with Jewish DPs that would have proved damning were the DP in question part of another DP community. For example, 49-year-old Auschwitz survivor Hans Happ and his wife Gertrud, applied for DP status together in 1948. Having returned to Berlin after three years in concentration camps, Hans established his own dental practice in 1945. “But as he wanted to emigrate,” he left his practice and moved to the Belsen DP camp. The desire to use the resettlement services of the IRO was made explicit; and the Happ couple were swiftly granted DP status.<sup>304</sup>

No other group could afford to be as candid. Interestingly, even if it was found that a non-Jewish DP had a *history* of “economic” migration, this might count against him/her. The notes taken from the final eligibility interview of Franciszek Tomczyk reveal some of the contradictions of the IRO’s focus on economic motives. The file notes, “Petitioner is a Pole who in 1922 emigrated to France and lived there for 22 years [...] He states that in July 1940 he was ordered to work for the Germans in France, and in 1944 claims to have been forced to go to Germany [...] Petitioner would now like to return to France [...] petitioner was an economic migrant in 1922 and although possibly forced to go to Germany, even in September 1944, does not qualify under IRO constitutional definitions as a bona fide refugee or displaced person. In addition, he unreasonably refuses to return to Poland, his country of nationality.” It concludes that Franciszek is “Not within the mandate of this Organization. (Neither a refugee nor a DP).”<sup>305</sup> In other words, the fact of his not having been displaced from his country of

<sup>303</sup> ITS, ‘Karel Horatscheke’, Doc. No. 79188941\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1)

<sup>304</sup> ITS ‘Hans Happ’, Doc. No. 79165416\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1)

<sup>305</sup> ITS, ‘Franciszek Tomczyk’, Doc. No. 79848968\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1)

origin was sufficient to disqualify him from aid: though he remained Polish enough for his refusal of repatriation to be deemed a repeat attempt at economic migration.

Indeed, IRO eligibility officers were confronted directly with the difficulty of maintaining the distinction between “forced” and “voluntary” migration on the ground. Screening is the result of a broader postwar debate that questioned whether individuals could be refugees given a strategy. The sharp distinction between political and economic emplaced by the IRO is a real turning point in history of asylum.<sup>306</sup> In the 1940s the “refugee” concept was being construed in its still prevalent form in contradistinction to the migrant. Screening conducted by Allied administrative bureaucracies post-1945, was hostile to migrants suspected of following a purposeful economic rationality. At the same time, they and the new international organizations of which they were part, empathized deeply with the “refugee”. The latter’s migration was seen as constrained, with their movement imposed by external events over which they had no control. This normative construction in the service of administrative policy thus characterized refugee movement by a lack of agency and strategy. The period represents a kind of turning point in which we can observe, perhaps for the first time, a distinct shift in the prevailing attitudes of the powers towards the conjunction of a distinct pro-asylum, anti-immigrant position; in contrast to that espoused during the Evian conference, at which refugee status was not considered apart from that of migrant status.

2) Political identification: Beyond the desire to simply reduce the numbers of DPs dependent on, and—in the official mindset—underserving of IRO services, the constant screening of DP camps was also a large-scale political endeavour with retributive aims. This brings us to the second criteria of IRO screening. As much as “refugee” was supposed to correspond to “forced migrant,” it also reflected the status of *victim*. If DP status meant access to goods and services, it also meant a de-facto stamp of innocence free from any taint of war-

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<sup>306</sup> Cohen, *In War’s Wake*, 52.

time guilt; a kind of formalization of victimhood separating the “good” kind of displaced person from the “bad” (i.e. “guilty”). Screening operated on the widespread assumption that the DP population included a strong collaborationist component, the exposure of which was said to be the primary motivator of the entire process. The period of mass-repatriation in the immediate months following liberation, had seen the largely unchecked movement of people into, and out of, assembly centres in the immediate months following liberation. After this mass movement of peoples, doubt emerged as to how many that remained sought shelter from justice at home.

Logistically, screening’s search for war-time collaborators was helped enormously by the fact that by the end of 1945, the DP camp network was essentially mapped out with the structures in place to carry out mass screening procedures. Cohen quotes the IRO’s own archive on the subject: “Interviewing people on the spot had many advantages [...] the main one being that witnesses could be produced... people who knew the DP and could give information as to his activities before the war.”<sup>307</sup> Indeed, while individuals could also inform on cases of fellow DPs, the steady bureaucratization of DP life and interaction between various authorities also played a large role in determining individual, suspicious cases.<sup>308</sup> Russian-born DP Alexander Gerebtzoff had spent the war in Belgium where he had worked in a factory until June 1940. Following the closure of his factory after the arrival of the Germans, he came *voluntarily* to Germany to work in a German armament factory as an engineer (where he earned some 425RM per month). He was employed there until the end of the war, whereupon he applied for readmittance to Belgium and was denied by the Belgian security forces. When Gerbetzoff petitioned for DP status in the British Zone, the fact of his already having been refused by

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<sup>307</sup> Cohen, *In War’s Wake*, 38.

<sup>308</sup> There is evidence to suggest that DPs built up a paper trail over time in the DP camps: which could be advantageous or disadvantageous, depending. On the one hand, a DP could theoretically (and many did) apply for DP status in another camp if they were rejected in the first, but on the other hand – the fact of having been rejected elsewhere (if/once the paper trail follows you) was damning.

Belgian authorities was weighted heavily against him and he was almost immediately deemed ineligible, having been considered to have voluntarily assisted enemy forces.<sup>309</sup>

Once more, Jewish DPs were uniquely affected by eligibility criteria. While for other DP communities, the ongoing process of screening and the threat it posed—having one’s status revoked was always a possibility—could cast a permanent shadow over any sense of security felt while in a DP camp. Although, as we have seen, the IRO recognized that the movement of Jewish infiltrates could in measure be motivated by economic considerations, the victimization of Jews was treated as exceptional. Consequently, having “Jew” or “Jewish” noted on a questionnaire—either under ‘religion’ or ‘ethnicity’, or both—was almost always sufficient to remove the threat of ineligibility for assistance under UNRRA and the IRO entirely.<sup>310</sup>

As we have seen, while the Soviet Bloc equated refusal to be repatriated with admission of criminal wartime activity or voluntary collaboration, Jewish DPs were entirely extraneous to the argument.<sup>311</sup> While other DP groups were subject to varying degrees of suspicion, Jewish refugees met no such antagonism and *were the least problematic category of refugees*: representing a sharp reversal of pre-war conditions. This is made explicit across the CM/1 files of Jewish DPs, particularly where interviewers were supposed to register “valid reasons for not returning” (which is to say, valid reasons for non-repatriation). Kaethe (née Kopper) Hohmann’s interviewer has simply noted under this section; “Does not apply; applicant Jewish.”<sup>312</sup> Often, the entire section was left blank, or interviewers would write the same formulation of simply “Persecuted Jew.”

Although not unequivocally equated with *bona fide* refugee status in the same way as their Jewish counterparts, Polish DPs (who made up the majority of the DP population) were

<sup>309</sup> ITS, ‘Alexander Gerebtzoff’, Doc. No. 79115722\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1), Decision made under IRO Constitution Part II.2.b.

<sup>310</sup> UNRRA regulation stipulates: “that all Jews were automatically considered eligible [for support] unless positive proof to the contrary is produced,” see Cohen, *In War’s Wake*, 136.

<sup>311</sup> They were seen as ethnically extraneous, as well as politically.

<sup>312</sup> ITS, ‘Hermann Hohmann, Doc. No. 79184849\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1)



also not generally suspected of collaboration. Though subject to continual pressure to repatriate to Poland (being seen by both Army and relief officials as having the weakest basis for rejecting repatriation, among all DP nationalities), as Laura Hilton notes, it was generally accepted that any Polish individual found in German uniform had been forced into military service.<sup>313</sup>

Nevertheless, there remained the possibility that DPs hoping to escape repatriation and/or prosecution had attempted to pass themselves off as a member of a national group to which they did not belong. Where such cases were suspected, but not conclusively proven, eligibility decisions could take years. Kazimierz Windler, born in Łódź, Poland, remained under question for over 4 years, highlighting the level of suspicion individual DPs could be subjected to. Kazimierz's wife was a Pole of German descent, with whom he had two sons, both born in Germany in 1936 and 1950 respectively. As a consequence, Kazimierz's connections and relationship with Germany was deemed suspect. Interviewed yet again in March of 1949, Kazimierz explained that he had registered himself as a Pole but was not in possession of documents to prove his citizenship. Problematically, Kazimierz had admitted to having always been registered in Germany as German. Astoundingly, part of Kazimierz's own case for DP status was that he was in Auschwitz from January 1941 till February 1942 and wears on his left arm a tattoo- with the number 37834. He further explains that he was arrested and imprisoned because of his political activities as a member of a Resistant Movement group which had the purpose distribution of Anti-Nazi propaganda. While there is clear suspicion of Kazimierz having being registered and even self-declaring at one time as German, he is also able to provide a number of different kinds of evidence (both in the form of his tattoo and his political activities during the war) that would appear to exonerate him from any claim of collaboration. Most significantly, he claims that he is willing to repatriate back to Poland, a clear indicator that Kazimierz did not believe he had any cause to fear a return to a communist

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<sup>313</sup> Hilton, "Prisoners of Peace."

Poland: something any ‘quisling’ could not claim. Nevertheless, his case was deemed inconclusive and there is no record of Kazimierz having been eventually granted IRO status.<sup>314</sup>

As Kazimierz’s file shows well, despite being tasked with targeting suspect *individuals*, having the wrong political association was intimately connected to ethnic group belonging. DP individuals were consistently categorized and dealt with along ethnic lines. The simplistic binaries of “good” vs “bad” DP that was foundational to DP eligibility screening broke down on ethnic lines. Just as the Soviet Union had been willing to collectively indict all DPs refusing repatriation, so too did the IRO operate on the basis of blanket criminalization of certain DP ethnic groups. A rejection of forced repatriation did not entail any disinterest in collective war guilt: to the contrary, the IRO was explicitly designed to pursue a more systematic and bureaucratic approach to uncovering it than its predecessor, UNRRA. In order to successfully do so, establishing the ethnic belonging of individual DPs was paramount. To illustrate this, the following will focus on DPs coming from the former and present territory of Poland, who made up the majority of the DP camp population.

3) Ethnic belonging: The distinction between ethnic Germans (not of UNRRA responsibility) and non-Germans is from the outset at the basis of the entire eligibility system: a DP is, by definition, not a German. Just as under UNRRA before it, under the constitution of the IRO, no German nationals could receive its aid; including expelled ethnic Germans.<sup>315</sup> Paradoxically, many of the same expelled ethnic Germans consequently attempted to claim the nationalities of the countries from which they were forced to flee, in order to gain DP status in an attempt to hide their incriminating forced expulsion on basis of being German. In short, the IRO screening procedures formally established the idea of collective German guilt.<sup>316</sup>

<sup>314</sup> ITS, ‘Kazimierz Windler’, Doc. No. 79920356\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>315</sup> United Nations, *Constitution of the International Refugee Organization*, 3.

<sup>316</sup> Proudfoot, “The Anglo-American Displaced Persons Program for Germany and Austria,” 409.

Even the most well-documented anti-Nazi credentials were insufficient to consider exception. German national Otto Jahn had refused to divorce his Jewish wife and, most probably, saved her life and that of his daughter as a consequence. He had lost a son to forced labour in Russia, and what remained of the impoverished family was determined to remain together in a DP camp. Nevertheless, “as a German gentile residing in Germany” Otto was refused DP status. Otto’s case additionally pinpoints the nation-state logic behind the policy. Not being outside of his country of nationality, he was therefore not the concern of the organization, despite the fact of any victimization.

As described already in the first half of this Chapter, only in September of 1945, did “Jewish” and “Polish” become mutually exclusive categories; although the British stubbornly sought to dissociate Jewish DPs from Palestine and to weaken Zionist claims against their migration policy, under the veil of equality.<sup>317</sup> The breakdown of the official Polish national category, broke down still further, when the Allies were forced to recognize another non-official nationality: that of Ukrainian. Until mid-1946, Ukrainians had been counted largely as “doubtful Poles” or Soviets, but were separately counted from autumn in the American Zone and from the Spring of 1947 in the British.<sup>318</sup> As Anna Holian describes, while the numbers of Ukrainian DPs in Occupied Germany had dropped dramatically through repatriation, their number remained at approximately 178,000 (with 104,000 in the US Zone alone) in November of 1946. While officially, most registered themselves as “Polish Ukrainian,” a great number of these were assumed to be Soviet Ukrainian, disguising their origins for fear of forcible repatriation.<sup>319</sup>

ITS files illustrate well how difficult it was to make a determination of nationality in cases where Ukrainian nationality was in question. The file of Nicolas Golicki, and his mother,

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<sup>317</sup> See Lavsky, *New Beginnings*.

<sup>318</sup> Anna Holian, *Between National Socialism and Soviet Communism: Displaced Persons in Postwar Germany* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011), 40.

<sup>319</sup> Ibid.

Aleksandra (née Nawrocka) is littered with references to “Polish,” “Ukrainian” and “USSR,” written and crossed out, only to be written again, only to be crossed out once more. Different factors were noted as “proofs” for each national unit. Nicolaus was born in Krakow, supporting his claim to be a Pole. His mother however, was born in Russia. Eligibility officers seem determined to cast them both as Soviet Ukrainians. Both DPs claim to be Roman Catholic, again, supporting their case for a Polish designation. Aleksandra however, speaks only Russian, which radically reduces her chances of being categorized as Polish. As cases such as these indicate, the recognition of “Ukrainian” as a distinct national category by both UNRRA and the IRO thus had implications for the suspicion of collaboration and war crimes and repatriation to the USSR. This leads us to an important development in the chronology of screening, which sees the interest in the political identifications of DPs shift from separating pro/anti-Nazi activity to establishing instead individuals’ anti-communist credentials.

### **Anticommunist credentials in ascendancy**

ITS reveals that a political turn from the Nazi-Soviet war of 1941-1945 to the Cold War, affected screening by altering the administrative view of anti-communists. As we have seen, while these are first treated as collaborators with the Nazis; they were increasingly welcomed as dissidents and refugees. Sparked by the Prague Coup in February of 1948, potential refugees who would have been targeted as impostors during the UNRRA period, were now to be offered the chance to acquire DP status and emigrate abroad.<sup>320</sup> In short, if collaborators were handed over to Soviet retribution before 1946, they were protected from it later.

ITS documents can help with the reconstruction of the chronology of this change. It provides numerous examples of cases in which an individual applicant is deemed eligible that even a year before might not have been: of which a few will be presented here. Albin Kwasnik

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<sup>320</sup> Cohen, *In War's Wake*, 72.

did not wish to return to Poland because of his “fear of the regime” established there. According to his CM/1 file, Albin’s objections weigh strongly in his favour in 1948, despite *openly declaring* to have been a member of a radical “right wing organization” before the war. Albin hoped to emigrate abroad as soon as he is able to marry his partner and was deemed eligible for both DP status and resettlement opportunities.<sup>321</sup> As well as shifting attitudes towards political identification, so significant became proof of anti-communism that it affected views on the “economic” migrant as well. While uncommon, there certainly were cases in which, providing a DP exhibiting severe disapproval or fear of a communist regime at home, even the fact of your being largely what was defined by the IRO as an “economic migrants” may be overlooked.

One such applicant arrived in Germany as late as 1949, crossing the border illegally and claiming to be escaping domestic terror in the hopes of, with IRO help, joining an in-law in Canada. Never having been politically organised, he had been pressed—following the communist overthrow in his native Czech Republic, to join the Communist Party, but had refused. From September 48, the applicant attended the preparatory courses in the military academy but was expelled in early 1949 because of his negative political attitude and unfavourable recommendations from the workers committees of his places of employment. From that time on, he claims to have used every opportunity available to speak against “the regime of discrimination and power” and was questioned several times by the police. As a consequence, he became afraid he could be denounced for instigation against the new regime and on those grounds imprisoned. He therefore decided to flee from. There is suspicion concerning this case and one interviewer doubts whether someone as politically unreliable as these individual claims to be, could have in fact joined the military academy in September 48. Furthermore, his decision to flee coincided with the news that he may be dismissed as a clerk

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<sup>321</sup> ITS, ‘Albin Kwasnik’, Doc. No. 79373527\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

and employed further only as a labourer—belying less genuine fear for life, as fear for economic standing (or as his file puts it: “premature escape”). Nevertheless, the fact that the individual was evidently so vocal in their opposition ultimately weighed in his favour. Noting that he could only be accepted based on his word, the eligibility officer dealing with the case stresses that “At the time of interview, the applicant gives the impressions of a person telling the truth. Evidences of individual political persecution are rather rare, but the applicant is given the benefit of the doubt as he was discriminated as a non-CP member. Fear of imprisonment is believable.”<sup>322</sup>

Perhaps the best evidence however of the relaxing of IRO’s focus on war-time activity was the fact that a number of high-profile collaborators were emboldened, in the Cold War climate, to apply for DP status and through it, resettlement services. Among these “high-ranking” officials was the December 1948 application—eventually denied—of Admiral Miklos Horthy, former regent of Hungary. The fact that an Axis-aligned ex-leader considered Allied anti-Soviet sentiment to have grown to such proportions as to allow for DP candidacy is truly revealing.<sup>323</sup>

Nonetheless, as much as ITS sources confirm a palpable shift from 1948 onwards, they also suggest a number of important correctives. To this author’s knowledge, the ITS repository has not yet been systematically analyzed from a gendered perspective. However, even a tentative attempt to compare and contrast the individual files of men and women suggests a number of significant conclusions and challenges to any clear-cut, overarching narrative.<sup>324</sup> Primary among these is the observation that the collaborationist crack-down, as described here, disproportionately targeted men. In some senses, this may seem intuitive and unsurprising;

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<sup>322</sup> ITS, ‘Josef Kopper’, Doc. No. 79315972\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>323</sup> Cohen, *In War’s Wake*, 47.

<sup>324</sup> Undoubtedly, more comparative work needs to be done along gendered lines across ITS case files. In particular, the ways in which the language and commentary of interviewers differs with respect to female applicants, is a promising line of future enquiry.

after all, men made up the majority of active combatants during the Second World War. This instinct however, reduces DP women—who represented over half of the overall DP population—to a-political agents. Indeed, the structure of CM/1 forms and eligibility questionnaires therein, indicate that women's identities were in large measure, symbolically subsumed by that of their male partner. The details of married couples, and families with children, were recorded together.

Returning to the question of eligibility, while ITS shows instances of wives being deemed eligible on the grounds of their husband being eligible, this author has seen no instances in which this occurred the other way around. Amanda Sulkowska was declared ineligible in 1950 and successfully petitioned her case. Although they had moved to Poland when Amanda was still young, her family originated from Germany: she recalls having spoken German as a child as a first language, but later on she went to Polish schools and spoke both languages. She states that she was not known as "Volksdeutsche" during the war because she married in 1931 a Pole who died in 1937 leaving her with two children. In November 1945, somebody told her that there were camps in Germany where Poles were housed and fed and given work; and she openly admitted to deciding to come over with her children for these reasons, eventually settling in a DP camp in Marienthal. Having both admitted candidly that she could have been registered as *volksdeutsche* and that her motivations for coming to Germany were entirely economic, an unattached Amanda was, in line with IRO policy, deemed to be neither a refugee nor a DP under its constitution. However, a second marriage to Polish labourer and construction worker Jan Starukowicz in 1951 appears to have secured her DP status, in spite of the fact that evidently, neither her ethnic background nor motivation had changed.<sup>325</sup>

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<sup>325</sup> ITS, 'Amanda Sulkowska', Doc. No. 79800424\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

As well as married women, it is worth mentioning that officials were significantly more careful with cases that dealt with children, indicated an important bias with respect to age, as well as gender. ITS contains extensive records in particular of children who have gone missing, or who have been denied—or have themselves rejected—DP status. In the case of Ottoman Juns, for example, IRO officials worked with local German police and known family members over the course of four years, to document Ottoman's postwar life and ensure his wellbeing. In this case, it meant travelling to remote villages in Germany to track down a sister or brother. IRO investigators compiled lengthy testimonies, contact lists and conducted several interviews in order to establish that 15 year-old Ottoman was content to remain in Germany working and living in the home of his employer. The case was went back and forth several times to Child Welfare services before finally—Ottoman was able to convince authorities that he was taken care of by his older—now German—brother and sister after which time he was, very reluctantly, declared to no longer be the concern of the IRO.<sup>326</sup>

### **Finding DP agency in ITS**

A question can be posed, legal and arguably 'moral' in nature, about whether or not during this time, both UNRRA and the IRO stepped outside of their mandate with their respective screening processes. Was DP status granted by authorities, or claimed by the individual migrant? As we have seen, eligibility screening was in many ways, more explicitly a case of political and ethnic classification. What ITS is uniquely placed to show us, is that DPs could minimally question on what authority they were being demanded to answer the questions posed interview—although ultimately, they were relatively powerless to resist the process itself. The records of Josef Rosensaft's<sup>327</sup> eligibility interview highlights the leadership role that some

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<sup>326</sup> ITS, 'Ottoman Juns', Doc. No. 79240208\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>327</sup> Josef's file is replete with a number of different spellings of his name, including Josef, Józef, Rozenaft, Rosensaft and Rozensaft.



DPs took on in the camps. Perhaps one of the best-known and certainly one of the most prominent leaders of the Jewish DP community organized in Bergen-Belsen camp after liberation,<sup>328</sup> Rosensaft strongly critiqued the system adopted by IRO upon interview. His major point of issue with the standardized questionnaires DPs were confronted with, was the popular addition of “racial objections” as the automatic answer as to why Jewish DPs would not wish to be repatriated.

As a Jew liberated in Germany, as discussed, Rosensaft was almost automatically eligible for care and maintenance, though was required to submit to an eligibility interview again as late as 1949. At this late date, having already lived in Belsen for four years, he was required once again to give a short record of his movements during the war, where he was liberated (in this case, Belsen) and any movements up until that point. When asked, “why do you not return to Poland?” he stated: “I am going to Palestine. I do not want to have anything to do with Poland anymore. I lost everything there, my family and my properties. Poland offered me a passport, but I refused it.” He was then asked: “You then have political objections to repatriation?”—to which he responded: “No, I have nothing against the politics in Poland.” Clearly puzzled, his interviewer reacts: “You were persecuted during the war, so I will write on my report your refusal to repatriate or to remain in Europe for fear of racial persecution?” to which Mr. Rosensaft strongly objected. He did not agree to have any such statement on his form, and he considered the wording “Fear of racial persecution” as being of “political” nature, which he resented to have in writing on his documents.

When he was asked to sign the subsequent form, he refused to sign “racial objections to repatriation,” crossed out the objection and changed himself into “personal objections” and *then* signed his form. He then commented that the interviewer had no right to ask such question - that he had no right to request from *any* person in this Camp [Belsen] this personal question.

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<sup>328</sup> See for example, Hitchcock, 347.

(regarding the nature of their objections to repatriation). His explanation was: "you are a civilian [emphasis is underlined in the source] Organisation—not a Church." A priest can request from a person to consider him as his confidant and to answer every question. Not you, as a civilian Organisation. You cannot oblige the people to come to you."<sup>329</sup>

While Josef's case is interesting, it cannot be said to be representative. Rosensaft was one of few who complained directly to authorities—or at least, whose complaints were registered on file—this fact alone also highlights how little DPs could actually do, whether inclined to or not, to protest any question posed to them under “official” circumstances. When he was asked "Why do you report to me today for interview?" - he said, he did it for the good of his people - because he was informed by IRO that persons who do not report for interview will be struck off and will have to leave the Camp. His statement reads (underlined in his form) "I only want to set the good example. I am not doing it for my own interest. I am not in need of IROs assistance. I am not going to Palestine on an IRO ship. I have been in Palestine already, have been in the USA and everywhere without the IROs help." Despite the fierce objections Mr. Rosensaft clearly had and his interviewer's own surprise<sup>330</sup> where it concerned the IRO, as a Jew, he was quickly stamped as a refugee and promptly declared "Within the mandate of IRO". It is not so surprising, given the status of Holocaust survivors in the international classifications of displaced persons, that any recorded protest on the part of the DP would come from within the Jewish DP community. While Rosensaft is free to comment upon the nature of the questions he was posed, and the right of the IRO to pose them: other DP communities would not have been able to do so as easily, without potentially risking their status. While the interview process was based on DP cooperation, and thus hostile to the uncooperative or

<sup>329</sup> ITS, 'Jozef Rosensaft', Doc. No. 79662259\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>330</sup> Ibid. Rosensaft was interviewed at this time by a Mr. L. Van Conthem.

unwilling applicant, as Eugene Kulischer notes, “the Jewish refugees met no such antagonism.”<sup>331</sup>

The fact that Rosensaft’s interviewer was puzzled by his unwillingness to stress political objections to return to Poland, indicates that doing so was an established norm. A more thorough investigation of the potential ways in which DPs learned to downplay their economic thinking and stress aspects of their biographies in line with dominant definitions of the refugee in the postwar period lies outside of the scope of this study. There is ample evidence in the form of repeated phrasing across CM/1 forms, that suggests that DPs may have known the ‘right’ answers to give at interview. UNRRA worker George Woodbridge (and later, the organization’s official historian) argues as much in his biography, noting that DP communities themselves are “training DPs” for interview.<sup>332</sup>

Certainly, DPs attempted to dictate outcomes and exercise control even in the restrictive environment of the DP camp. In approaching Eligibility questionnaires, one cannot assume that these are a literal truth. Rather, they should be approached as what can reasonably be interpreted as records bearing different degrees of relationship to the truth and always in the service of optimizing an individual’s chances of acquiring and maintaining DP status.

Resistance to eligibility screening, from the perspective of a DP applicant, could thus take two possible forms. Once again, these options illustrate the place of the Jewish DP atop the hierarchy of eligibility with the new international humanitarian definition of the refugee. The first was to alter, stress, or downplay aspects of one’s individual biography. As already explored above, Jewish DP applicants were not seen as the potential targets of screening. Only in exceptional cases, does one find in ITS instances of a Jewish DP raising suspicion. Alter Abramowitz’s case for example, initially raised some alarm when it was discovered that he had

<sup>331</sup> Eugene M. Kulischer, “The IRO and the Jewish Refugees,” *Rescue* 4 (April 1947): 4.

<sup>332</sup> George Woodbridge, *UNRRA: The History of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration*, vol. II (New York: 1950), 522.

registered under an alias with the IRO. Having registered initially under his real name in 1945, Alter had returned to the DP camps in 1948 following his expulsion from Canada, to where he had illegally emigrated under the false name he then used to re-register himself with. When this came to light, Alter appears to have been retroactively denied his status. However, he was able to swiftly petition his case successfully.<sup>333</sup>

Indeed, petition was the second and most prominent avenue of protest. Despite a reported atmosphere of fear around screening in the DP camps, relatively small percentages were ultimately declared ineligible. In the American Zone, just over 12% of DPs were deemed to be not within the mandate of the IRO.<sup>334</sup> Numbers in the British Zone were slightly less, sitting at around 10 percent. Screening ultimately reduced the DP population by about 3 percent.<sup>335</sup> One factor that helps to explain why—despite on-going, intensive screening—there were relatively few rejections is the fact that many decisions were successfully contested by the DPs themselves. In conjunction with intensifying screening, a Review Board for Eligibility Appeals was created in November, 1947.<sup>336</sup> All refugees were supposed to be made fully aware of their right of appeal, and of the relevant procedure of appeal. This Review Board met frequently in Geneva and had delegates from various countries, designed so as to be as independent as possible. The Board was to have the required independence to assess individual appeals—including having a separate budget—but administratively it was linked to the IRO. This machinery was semi-judicial and had to function in accordance with the over-all policy on eligibility originally laid down by the Preparatory Commission of the IRO. The Appeal process was hampered in many cases by false documentation or claims.

As Alter's case above illustrates, the ability to appeal one's case represented a kind of power that DPs had to control outcomes. Alter himself wrote a lengthy petition on his own

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<sup>333</sup> ITS, 'Alter Abramowitz', Doc. No. 78863658\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>334</sup> Cohen, *In War's Wake*, 40.

<sup>335</sup> *Ibid*, 10.

<sup>336</sup> Maurice Grimaud, *Je ne suis Pas Né en Mai 68: Souvenirs et Carnets (1934-1992)* (Tallandier, 2007), 60-67.

behalf, explaining the reasons behind his having two names registered with the IRO, and stressing that he was “sincerely sorry for my misleading statements.”<sup>337</sup> In all cases, petitioning took time, with some cases lasting years before a decision was made. This in turn affected DP morale and multiple recommendations were made from IRO workers themselves, to cease screening; “as generally the best way to raise DP morale.”<sup>338</sup>

While this subsection has attempted to engage with some of the ways DP own agency and voice is reflected in the eligibility questionnaires produced on the ground, more work remains for the historian. Indeed, the most fruitful avenue for future research, both with regard to DP screening and DP history as a whole, is to engage further with the DP voice as it is represented in primary source documentation. In particular, further systematic analysis of the ways in which DPs adapted their own self-image to fit dominant constructions of the refugee in the period, how stressing lack of choice in order to correspond with administrative understandings of the “the refugee” is evidenced in DP interviews as well as in the public image that different DP communities created, would greatly further our understanding of postwar refugeedom.

### **Conclusion: The challenges of defining the DPs**

While the International Refugee Organization was established in response to declining rates of repatriation and the unanticipated costs of growing DP numbers in camps across Occupied Germany, its screening procedures were motivated by a mixture of both economic and political concerns. Drawing on examples taken from the ITS archive, it has been argued that renewed screening under the IRO operated on the basis of three sets of criteria designed to demarcate those deserving of international humanitarian assistance and those who were not. A genuine

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<sup>337</sup> See Abramowitz file.

<sup>338</sup> FO 945 398, Refugee Defence Committee, “Problem of the Irrepatriate refugees,” October 3, 1946.

recipient of aid was a “political” refugee, had a history of persecution by Germany and its Allies, and belonged to the right ethnic group. By contrast, those deemed ineligible for DP states were declared “economic” refugees, collaborators of members of the wrong ethnic group, of which German was the most consistently damning. Importantly, the fact of one’s being a Jewish DP, was almost always enough to guarantee DP status: with Jews emerging in the postwar period as the quintessential refugee.

As the Soviet Union solidified its control over large swathes of East-Central Europe, screening responded to shifts in the international political order by re-examining the possibility of collaborators being considered as refugees. Anti-communists, who had been targeted under screening pre-1948, could after be considered eligible for DP status and resettlement abroad. This chronology, while grounded in the source body of the ITS, was however, not always equally applicable. Important variations in outcomes across gendered and age-based lines may be observed in a number of cases: suggesting that screening procedures and their evolution over time, targeted disproportionally male applicants: to the potential benefit of other groups. Nonetheless, DPs themselves had very limited options for pushing back against the screening process. Eligibility Appeals represent the main way in which a DP could push back against the bureaucracy of the IRO.

## 2.1 THE WORKER'S WAY OUT: BRITISH LABOUR RECRUITMENT SCHEMES

The following subchapter aims to contextualize the various DP labour recruitment schemes that first emerged in late 1946 historically within successive political alliances and compromises. While labour recruitment after 1945 can be seen as exploitative, it also represented a first step towards the idea of mass resettlement of refugees. The recruitment schemes developed in Western Europe demonstrate a sophisticated procedure of garnering domestic consensus for a limited form of refugee absorption. They similarly highlight the difficulty of convincing a democratic society of the emotional, ethical or economic yields of investments into refugee care.

While those countries most in need of extensive rebuilding at war's end—and facing acute manpower shortages—were those to the East, the project of reconstruction, as we have already seen, was not enough to call all DPs “home.” In September of 1947 there remained approximately 230,400 DPs in the British Zone of which the Polish DP community, at nearly 100,000, was the largest national group.<sup>339</sup> What follows considers the emergence in 1947 of British, Belgian and French labour recruitment schemes that offered DPs the first possibility of organized mass emigration out of Germany.<sup>340</sup> It focuses on Britain as the lead destination for DPs up until 1948.<sup>341</sup>

It is striking how rapidly pressure on DPs to repatriate shifted to pressure to emigrate, with CM/1 forms increasingly covered from 1947 onward, in bolded comments reading “unreasonable refusal to emigrate,” or noting DPs as “without scheme [meaning as yet

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<sup>339</sup> FO 938 117 Handover to IRO, ‘DPs in the British Zone of Germany’, September 15, 1947.

<sup>340</sup> Manpower shortages to the West were widely publicized, for instance, one piece, “Migration Merry-go-Round,” *The Economist*, February 15, 1947, stated that Britain is short at least “70,000 workers in coal, textiles, building and agriculture.”

<sup>341</sup> Gerard Daniel Cohen, *In War's Wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar order* (Oxford University Press, 2012), 106.

unassociated with any recruitment or resettlement schemes that had become available]”<sup>342</sup>

DPs were admitted to Britain under a variety of labour programmes collectively called the European Volunteer Workers (EVW) schemes (1946-1949), of which Operation *Westward Ho!* was the most significant. While a small literature has treated this exceptional period of recruitment,<sup>343</sup> it has overwhelmingly done so in a silo that fails to situate recruitment within the broader context of DP history and neglects DPs’ own itineraries and perspectives. It will first be shown that early efforts established an enduring, highly selective model that crippled recruitment’s dual aim of radically reducing DP numbers in the Zone and of bolstering labour force in Britain.

It will be argued that the recruitment of Polish DPs was ultimately hampered by political intentions that clashed with the priorities, strategies and itineraries of the DPs themselves. While the British emphasized on the international stage the humanitarian goal of finding a home for uprooted refugees, domestically, recruitment was sold to British unions as the limited movement of individual labour migrants to fill positions British workers were not willing to take. British social engineering thus developed a radically individualized, almost monastic image of the migrant worker, male and female, at odds with DPs’ own prioritization of family life and family reunification.

Strict ethno-national criteria were imposed on the DP's eligibility for labour permits. While Polish DPs were encouraged to apply, Jewish DPs were deliberately excluded. Beyond the ethnic criteria, the profile of a “desirable” EVW was young, able-bodied and unattached; and consequently, did not match the desire of the majority of Polish DPs to be resettled in

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<sup>342</sup> See for example: ITS, ‘Boguslaw Szydlowski’, Doc. No. 79723919\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>343</sup> A handful of authors still dominate the discussion of the EVW Schemes, in particular: J. A., Tannahill, *European Volunteer Workers in Britain* (Manchester University Press, 1958); as well as the Clin Holmes’ broader *John Bull’s Island: Immigration and British Society, 1871–1971* (London 1988). Wendy Webster and Linda McDowell have made more recent, important contributions to the subject with a focus on its gendered dimensions, see Wendy Webster, “Defining Boundaries: European Volunteer Worker Women in Britain and Narratives of Community,” *Women’s History Review* 9:2 (2000): 257-276; Linda McDowell, “Narratives of Family, Community and Waged Work: Latvian European Volunteer Worker Women in Post-War Britain,” *Women’s History Review* 13:1 (2004): 23-55.



family units that would include and shelter more vulnerable members.

While DP cooperation with recruitment often meant the active creation of a “file-self,” any Polish DP *resistance* to labour schemes could only take the form of non-application; in rare instances, anti-recruitment propaganda; and for some recruits, a return to the DP camps of Germany.

### **Recruiting aliens: From “Balt Cygnet” to *Westward Ho!***

British recruitment efforts formally began in October of 1946, when Baltic women were targeted for the aptly named “Balt Cygnet” scheme, aiming to swell numbers of domestic female workers. By January 1947, it was expected that up to five thousand women should be recruited under the scheme, and Balt Cygnet was presented to eligible DP candidates as an opportunity for the elite of the DP populace to enjoy the possibility of life and work and in Britain.<sup>344</sup> However, rough domestic labour awaited these women, most of whom were sent to work in various tuberculosis (TB) sanatoria across England. Furthermore, all recruited Baltic women could initially reside in the UK for a limited period of only one year.<sup>345</sup> As a consequence of the scheme’s stringent selection criteria, its quota was never reached. Indeed, even though the programme was formally merged with the later *Westward Ho!* scheme, it had by 1951 only recruited 3,891 of the intended 5,000. Despite its evident shortcomings, Balt Cygnet scheme provided the model character for all subsequent recruitment out of the Zone. Most significantly, it was Balt Cygnet that first belied a racialized hierarchy that elevated Germanic, above Slavic or Jewish origins. For the British Ministry of Labour, Baltic women, as opposed to Polish and Jewish women, simply represented a higher quality “stock.”<sup>346</sup>

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<sup>344</sup> Kay and Miles, *Refugees or Migrant Workers?*, 42.

<sup>345</sup> There was also a significant moral dimension behind recruitment. Rounds of medical checks were designed to also screen for pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. See Tannahill, *European Volunteer Workers*, 74.

<sup>346</sup> Tannahill, *European Volunteer Workers*, 20. Linda McDowell argues that a belief in the superiority of Baltic women was shared by the women themselves. One Baltic woman, interviewed by McDowell, recalled: “My mother didn’t like all these foreigners, like Yugoslavs and especially the Poles; she thought they were inferior to

The Ministry of Labour moved slowly and with extraordinary caution when it came to foreign male labour.<sup>347</sup> Any proposed mass movement of men, in particular, prompted an increase in tension between growing political support for bolstering a depleted labour force and domestic Union interests.<sup>348</sup> The first Polish foreign workers to be considered were not DPs but Polish veterans, whose contributions to the Allied victory fostered a feeling of moral obligation towards their care in Whitehall. Few however were expected to enter “essential industries.”<sup>349</sup> Consequently, there was significant cross-party parliamentary support for the recruitment of DPs on the continent, for positions largely in agriculture and mining. After a year of protracted negotiations, the General Council of the Trades Union Congress (TUC) eventually approved in early 1947 the employment of foreign labour in certain industries only and under strict terms and conditions.<sup>350</sup> *Westward Ho!* was, by April of the same year, to be coordinated by the Displaced Persons Operations Committee set up in London by the Ministry Of Labour,<sup>351</sup> which swiftly drew up a list of essential industries (see Table 1 below) requiring labour.<sup>352</sup> An ambitious initial target was set at 100,000 DP recruits of mixed genders and

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us but we also felt sorry for them. The women, especially the Polish women were treated very badly, you know.” Linda McDowell, “Workers, Migrants, Aliens or Citizens? State Constructions and Discourses of Identity Among Post-war European Labour Migrants in Britain,” *Political Geography* 22:8 (2003): 874.

<sup>347</sup> Kay and Miles, *Refugees or Migrant Workers?*, 53.

<sup>348</sup> This debate was played out in both the British press. An editorial on January 17, 1947 in *The Times* for instance, made the case for selective immigration and bemoaning fact that government had not thought about it. The main Parliamentary debate on Displaced Persons of 14 February, 1947, was characterized by widespread unity on both sides of the House. The main opposition to expanding DP recruitment thus came from the TUC and the British public itself. As one Parliamentarian put it: “Unfortunately, it is so common in this country for people to like dirty news that displaced persons, as a whole, have a bad reputation here, and are constantly being referred to as vagabonds and thieves.” See 1947 (House of Commons, Vol. 433, Cols 749-766, available online at: <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/volumes/5C/index.html>

<sup>349</sup> Hywel Gordon Maslen, “British Government and the European Voluntary Worker Programmes: The Post-war Refugee Crisis, Contract Labour and Political Asylum, 1945-1965,” (PhD diss., University of Edinburgh, 2011), 172. Legally speaking, the Aliens Order of 1920 did not apply to this group given their military status. In May of 1946, the War Office formed the Polish Resettlement Corps (PRC) with the intention of disbanding the Polish forces. A subsequent Polish Resettlement Act of 1947 was designed to assist some 120,000-125,000 former members of the Polish armed forces and their dependents currently living in Britain to resettle in Britain..

<sup>350</sup> Robert Miles, “Nationality, Citizenship, and Migration to Britain, 1945-1951,” *Journal of Law and Society* 16 (1989): 430; Kathleen Paul, *Whitewashing Britain: Race and Citizenship in the Postwar Era* (USA: Cornell University Press, 1997), 68.

<sup>351</sup> Kay and Miles, *Refugees or Migrant Workers?*, 55.

<sup>352</sup> There were a number of other smaller schemes, including “Blue Danube,” that recruited Austrian women with no dependants, and “North Sea,” for German and Italian women, that will not be treated here in any detail as beyond the scope of study. For information on these schemes see, Paul, *Whitewashing Britain*, 75.

nationalities, to be taken in the course of one year. Unsurprisingly, the British preferred to recruit out of their own Zone of occupation, seeing an obvious advantage in reducing the numbers of DP's under their responsibility. Moreover, the Ruhr was the main industrial area of Germany, and it was believed that the most "useful" types of labourer could still be found there, having been imported by the Germans for work in the factories of the Reich. Recruits were collectively known as EVW's and required to sign a contract under which they accepted a job that was selected for them by the Minister of Labour.<sup>353</sup> While placement conditions varied slightly, key requirements included that work only be given to an EVW where British labour was unavailable and that EVW's be the first victims of any redundancies. Beyond such stipulations, EVW's should work under the same conditions as British labourers and join their respective British trade unions.<sup>354</sup>

**Table 1: First Industrial Placements of EVW's up to 1949<sup>355</sup>**

<b>Industry</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>
<b>Agriculture</b>	29,360	65
<b>Army Depots</b>	1,595	0
<b>Brick Industry</b>	2,630	2
<b>Coal Mining</b>	10,967	0
<b>Cotton</b>	1,057	6,753
<b>Domestic Staff</b>	3,692	8,487
<b>Iron and Steel</b>	1,328	1
<b>NSHC (hostels)</b>	1,458	917
<b>Nursing</b>	166	623
<b>Pottery</b>	703	0
<b>Quarry</b>	550	0
<b>Rayon</b>	97	877
<b>Woolen</b>	1,092	3,327
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	2,051	1,012
<b>Total</b>	56,746	22,064

\* Includes boot and shoe, cement, clay, clothing, flax, gas, gypsum, hosiery, hydroelectricity, jute, laundry, refectories, textiles (finishing) and timber. Source: NA, LAB 26/231.

<sup>353</sup> Miles, "Nationality, Citizenship and Migration," 430.

<sup>354</sup> Ibid., 431.

<sup>355</sup> From first arrivals in the UK in April of 1947. Reproduced in Maslen, "British Government and the European Voluntary Worker Programmes," 33.

Establishing the mechanisms of recruitment was relatively straightforward. From Whitehall's perspective, one of the main benefits of recruitment out of DP camps was the possibility to be as selective as desired, free from external constraint or pressure. Potential applicants, already living in camps, could be directly targeted for selection.<sup>356</sup> The EVW schemes were neither those of UNRRA<sup>357</sup> nor the IRO, but singular that of the British government. Nonetheless, in their targeted search for suitable "human material,"<sup>358</sup> recruitment teams<sup>359</sup> worked in close cooperation with CCG and IRO workers.<sup>360</sup>

The Ministry of Labour based its central office in Lemgo and with the help of the IRO, transit "collecting centres" were swiftly established across the Zone at Wentorf, Diepholz, Fallingbostal, Buchholz and Lintorf; as well as a transit camp in Seedorf.<sup>361</sup> There was initially however, some confusion as to the division of responsibility between the British DP Division and the IRO in regard to the EVW schemes. Officially, the selection and processing of DP recruits was operated at all levels by the DP Division without any supervision by the IRO. In practice however, and in view of the inevitable impact of the scheme on IRO resettlement operations,<sup>362</sup> recruitment teams kept IRO officers fully informed of the progress, practical

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<sup>356</sup> Inge Weber-Newth and Johannes-Dieter Steinert, *German Migrants in Post-war Britain: An Enemy Embrace* (Routledge, 2006), 68.

<sup>357</sup> Helping to resettle DPs was outside of UNRRA's official mandate and as we have already seen, UNRRA workers were (officially at least), prevented from presenting alternatives to repatriation.

<sup>358</sup> Cohen, *In War's Wake*, 108.

<sup>359</sup> The teams were composed of approximately twenty Ministry of Labour officials in Germany and six in Austria. Elizabeth Stadulis, "The Resettlement of Displaced Persons in the United Kingdom," *Population Studies* 5:3 (March 1952): 213.

<sup>360</sup> The IRO was subsequently unable to claim any responsibility for this migration. Only on August 20, 1948, was the IRO mandated to resettle DPs formally. As Cohen explains, "the IRO was now empowered to promote the resettlement of displaced persons throughout the world." While the British steadfastly opposed any interference, the IRO did attempt to be retroactively associated with the scheme, largely because returnee labourers could re-claim IRO assistance. A number of commentators have noted the apparent paradox of an international organization claiming to protect DPs for humanitarian reasons, but simultaneously promoting recruitment schemes that were designed to exploit DP labour.; Cohen, *In War's Wake*, 108; Jacques Vernant, *The Refugee in the Post-War World* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1953), 330-35.

<sup>361</sup> There was one collection centre in each administrative Land in the Zone. FO 1052/160 Resettlement of Displaced Persons (DPs): general; vol I, 'Numbers in IRO Resettlement Camps', October 25, 1947

<sup>362</sup> To be explored in Chapter 3.

application, and planned developments of the scheme.<sup>363</sup> Furthermore, it is evident from ITS records that the IRO apparatus shared information on prospective recruits. The CM/1 forms of individual EVW applicants contain detailed records of DP labour recruitment processes, interviews, medical examinations as well as (where the files of those recruited were concerned) record of individual DP industry preference (where noted), employment conditions, transportation arrangements and reception.<sup>364</sup>

As Steinert explains, the process of recruitment involved several steps. A first step was to try to attract volunteers by spreading information about the scheme across the various DP camps; of which the “four-page brochure *Westward Ho!* was certainly the most widely distributed publication.”<sup>365</sup> Information evenings held in the camps would go over the information available in the brochure and gather the names of interested DPs. Once a quota was reached, the volunteers were interviewed and medically examined for fitness to work. Successful candidates were then moved to collection camps for further medical checks and a final security check, before being cleared for transportation to Britain.<sup>366</sup>

*Westward Ho!* made a good start, and there was initially no lack of volunteers. To begin with, more women were taken than men, and most of these went into the textile and domestic industries.<sup>367</sup> The first arrivals landed on British soil in April 1947 and recruitment continued steadily until the end of the year. As Table 1 indicates, however, the 100,000 DP quota was never met, and by the end of 1948, the numbers of DPs who volunteered for *Westward Ho!* had diminished to almost insignificant proportions. As we shall see, the scheme's failure to recruit as many labourers as it intended can largely be explained by its restrictively defined

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<sup>363</sup> FO 1052/160 Resettlement of Displaced Persons (DPs): general; vol I, ‘Numbers in IRO Resettlement Camps’, October 25, 1947.

<sup>364</sup> These sources have not yet been considered with respect to DP recruitment.

<sup>365</sup> First published in English and German, and later in several eastern European languages. See Weber-Newth and Steinert, *German Migrants in Post-war Britain*, 68.

<sup>366</sup> Ibid.

<sup>367</sup> Lydia Morris, “Migrants and Migration,” *Work Employment Society* 7:3, (1993): 479. A Foreign Labour Committee (FLC) was created in February 1946 which oversaw the recruitment of DPs coming from Germany. Paul, *Whitewashing Britain*, 69.

field of recruitment that targeted only specific kinds of persons, the potential for which was rapidly exhausted.<sup>368</sup>

In order to understand the limitations and inherent contradictions of labour recruitment after 1946, recruitment schemes must be situated within a wider legal context governing the migration flow of aliens (as opposed to British *subjects*) into Britain. The entry of aliens was controlled by the British state under the Aliens Act of 1905, amended in 1914 and 1919, and extended in the Aliens Order of 1920.<sup>369</sup> Under this legislation, immigration officers could deny entry to prospective alien migrants on a number of grounds including lack of medical fitness and inability to provide for himself/herself after arrival. In order to work legally in Britain, aliens were required to obtain a work permit; typically issued to an employer by the Ministry of Labour.<sup>370</sup> The active recruitment of DP labour for Britain, which formally began in October of 1946 under Balt Cygnet, thus legally cast DPs as a group of alien migrants subject to the regulations and restrictions of the Aliens Order.

As Wendy Webster notes, despite their legal position, “and in direct opposition to the notion of ‘undesirable immigrants’ in the Aliens Act, EVWs were officially characterised as ‘suitable immigrants’.”<sup>371</sup> As several authors have argued, “the decision to recruit DPs was also a conscious decision against the migration of non-white persons into Britain.”<sup>372</sup> Indeed, before the first DPs even landed on British soil, it was commonly understood that DP recruitment was tantamount to recruiting future Britons, and that mass recruitment was de facto resettlement.<sup>373</sup> EVWs were to be admitted under contract labour for a 12 month period, but were eventually permitted to permanently settle: “All were restricted in the work that they

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<sup>368</sup> In view of this, it was decided at the end of 1948 to contract the scale of operations and to do away with regional collecting centres.

<sup>369</sup> Miles, “Nationality, Citizenship, and Migration,” 429.

<sup>370</sup> Ibid.

<sup>371</sup> Wendy Webster, “Defining Boundaries: European Volunteer Worker Women in Britain and Narratives of Community,” *Women's History Review* 9:2 (2000): 259.

<sup>372</sup> Weber-Newth and Steinert, *German Migrants in Post-war Britain*, 27.

<sup>373</sup> Ibid. As Weber-Newth and Steinert argue, the British military government in Germany would never allow the return of DPs to Germany *en masse* following the expiry of recruitment contracts.

could do by contract until January 1951 when it was announced that, after three years of residence, all restrictions would be lifted.”<sup>374</sup> Historians Kathleen Paul, Johannes Dieter-Steinert, Inge Weber-Newth and Linda McDowell all point to the paradox of a postwar British immigration policy that preferenced the recruitment and resettlement of aliens over British subjects in the Commonwealth.<sup>375</sup> Postwar Britain was distinguished by its ongoing use of “race,” over and above nationality (or subjecthood) that understood white persons as the only “suitable” future Britons.

The racialisation of migrants inherent in British postwar immigration policy—while resulting in a comparatively positive discrimination towards the displaced persons of Germany—nonetheless applied strict ethnic categorisations *within* the collective DP group.<sup>376</sup> DP recruitment was practiced through a demographic lens that saw DP Poles, despite representing the majority of DPs, as some of the least suitable candidates, both in terms of productive and “ethnic value.”<sup>377</sup> As we shall see in what follows, the records of the ITS underscore the point that ultimately, the profile of the desired workers did not match those to be resettled.

### **The “suitable” European Volunteer Worker and the inherent limitations of recruitment**

In the course of the DP screening procedure, humanitarian priorities had been developed for the admission to the camps in occupied Germany under military government, but the same criteria could not be transferred to admission into Britain. Where recruitment was concerned, migration policy was based on political and economic interest, rather than on humanitarian

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<sup>374</sup> Miles, “Nationality, Citizenship, and Migration,” 431.

<sup>375</sup> Britain deployed “race” over and above that of “nationality.” Kathleen Paul’s work has described in depth, an informally constructed national identity that considered a “real” Briton to be white. See Kathleen Paul, “The Politics of Citizenship in Post-war Britain,” *Contemporary British History* 6:3 (1992): 462.

<sup>376</sup> Johannes-Dieter Steinert, “British Post-War Migration Policy and Displaced Persons in Europe,” in Jessica Reinisch and Elizabeth White, eds., *The Disentanglement of Populations: Migration, Expulsion and Displacement in Postwar Europe, 1944-49* (Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2011), 233.

<sup>377</sup> Cohen, *In War's Wake*, 108.

considerations; on the illusion that humanitarian help should be in line with economic gain and ethnic compatibility. As a consequence, the hierarchy of “genuine” refugee, established through screening and explored in the previous chapter, was effectively inverted when it came to recruitment. In order to see this inversion, the comparison is also crucial. From the outset, Jews were explicitly excluded from volunteering for Britain’s *Westward Ho!* and were consistently excluded from all labour recruitment schemes.<sup>378</sup>

The rationale for the exclusion of Jewish DPs from EVW schemes was based on contradictory formulations. On the one hand, the British consistently argued—supposedly on the grounds of breaking with Nazi tradition—against any “discrimination” of Jewish DPs on national grounds. On the other hand, the Ministry of Labour was more than happy “for the time being [...] to concentrate on certain nationalities,” when it came to recruitment and resettlement.<sup>379</sup> Jews were explicitly cast as an undesirable nationality whose long-term presence would serve only to foster a “wave of anti-Semitic feeling” in Britain.<sup>380</sup> While Nazi-style racism was to be abhorred, Britain’s exclusionary external immigration controls were

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<sup>378</sup> Steinert, “British Post-War Migration Policy,” 235. As we shall see into Chapter 3, most immigration authorities that eventually offered programmes of DP resettlement applied policies of discrimination against the DP Jewish population, even though such practice lacked foundation in state laws. As shall be explored later, strong opposition to Jewish immigration was most overt in non-European destinations. As one Australian news bulletin put it: no “dumping” of Europeans “without regard to race or religion” would be tolerated. See FO 945/474 Resettlement in Australia, ‘Letter from High Commissioner’, ‘Extract from Australian News Bulletin’, August, 1946.

<sup>379</sup> Anthony Julius, *Trials of the Diaspora: A History of Anti-Semitism in England* (Oxford: 2010), 340. Even had there been no formal discrimination, as we shall see, selection criteria were framed in such a way that any Jewish candidate would invariably be rejected. Jane Carey, *The Role of Uprooted People in European Recovery* (Washington: 1948), 59; Cohen, *In war’s wake*, 115. There were for instance, comparatively very few industrial and agricultural worker among Jewish refugees. FO 371/72068 Representation of Jewish Displaced Persons in Germany, ‘Jewish Refugees’, July 27, 1948.

<sup>380</sup> A number of significant studies, part of the “new school” in British Jewish Studies, has examined this intolerance within a broader liberal British tradition. Tony Kushner reflects: “it was something about the nature of the minority that created the racism of which they were the victims, and that therefore nothing could be done to counter hostility within Britain other than to keep out the cause of the ‘problem’.” The postwar years this saw a continuation of a self-interested approach towards persecuted Jews since 1933. Tony Kushner, “Remembering to Forget: Racism and Anti-Racism in Postwar Britain,” in Bryan Cheyette and Laura Marcus, eds., *Modernity, Culture and ‘the Jew’* (Cambridge: 1998), 226, 237.



nonetheless grounded in the antisemitic proposition that Jews cause antisemitism wherever they appear in larger numbers.<sup>381</sup>

Even more so than the case of Jews, perhaps the most striking inversion of the ethnic criteria that governed the screening process, was the selection of a discreet number of ethnic *German* labourers through the EVW scheme.<sup>382</sup> The forced expulsion of German communities from states to the East had resulted in the presence of large numbers of German refugees in the British Zone (larger than its DP population) at around 3.3 million, or 14.5 per cent of the Zone's overall population.<sup>383</sup> As Table 2 below indicates, among EVW recruits were included 1,378 ethnic Germans who had been expelled from Eastern Europe, as well as 1,304 "Sudeten" ethnic German women from Czechoslovakia.<sup>384</sup> As former enemy nationals, these individuals were not eligible for DP status. Somehow, within a context of recruiting DPs, however, dozens were granted the status of EVW and subsequently granted exit permits. Johannes-Dieter Steinert and Inge Weber-Newth's comprehensive study of German migrants in postwar Britain contains excerpts from a number of different interviews including with several Germans who travelled to Britain as part of the EVW scheme. In one striking recollection, a German woman recounts her relief around political checks at interview: "I feared that my membership [in the Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (NSDAP)] would destroy my plans but that was not the case. I was waiting and waiting but no one asked me these questions. [...] politically they didn't really bother us."<sup>385</sup> This extraordinary "relaxation of the rules"<sup>386</sup> as compared to

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<sup>381</sup> Louise London, *Whitehall and the Jews, 1933-1948: British Immigration Policy, Jewish Refugees and the Holocaust* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 271.

<sup>382</sup> Louise London incorrectly claims that ethnic Germans were excluded from the EVW schemes. She correctly notes however that many confirmed collaborators successfully immigrated to Britain after 1945: "Over four decades later Britain would launch war crimes legislation, investigations and prosecutions against murder suspects amongst their ranks." *Ibid.*, 270. In ITS one can find the records of such cases, many of whom stress their anti-communist credentials proudly. See for instance the CM/1 file of known Chetnik General Nikola Bojović; 'Nikola Bojovic', Doc. No. 81315860\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>383</sup> Weber-Newth and Steinert, *German Migrants in Post-war Britain*, 13.

<sup>384</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>385</sup> As desirable applicants were the young, in some cases a political examination may not have made sense, where individuals were legally children during the war. *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>386</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

those that governed DP screening was, once again, grounded in the British determination to recruit only certain nationalities that suddenly elevated the category of “German” towards the top of a race-based recruitment pyramid that preferenced white European labour, while similarly distinguishing within various white populations.<sup>387</sup> In short, political pasts, appear not to have been one of several established prejudices guiding recruitment.<sup>388</sup>

**Table 2: European Volunteer Workers and Dependants by National Origin and Gender in United Kingdom as at 31 December 1950<sup>389</sup>**

Nationality	Male	Female	Total	Dependants
Latvian	9,675	3,244	12,919	1,322
Lithuanian	4,790	1,396	6,186	741
Estonian	2,919	2,235	5,154	503
Polish	9,094	4,538	13,632	99
Polish-Ukrainians	10,131	2,762	12,893	474
Ukrainian	6,063	1,956	8,019	389
Yugoslav	8,848	778	9,626	30
Hungarian	2,110	429	2,539	15
Greek	59	16	75	0
Czechoslovak	1,106	157	1,263	0
Volksdeutsche	744	634	1,378	0
Sudeten Germans	0	1,304	1,304	0
Stateless	256	133	389	84
Undetermined	535	164	699	23
Others	774	137	911	35

<b>Total Arrivals</b>	57,104	19,883	76,987	3,715
<b>Returned to Europe</b>	2391	931	3,322*	0
<b>Remaining in 1950</b>	54,713	18,952	73,665	

\* Including 602 deportees. Source: HO 213/596.

<sup>387</sup> There was a separate scheme directed precisely at German women; the “North Sea” scheme. In contrast, the 9,713 German women recruited through the North Sea scheme had their work and residency permits restricted to a specific duration. They found employment mainly in the health sector or as domestic workers. see, Paul, *Whitewashing Britain*, 75.

<sup>388</sup> J.A. Tannahill was personally involved in the recruitment schemes and wrote the first account of the EVW schemes, touching on issues of racism and cultural preferences as part of selection criteria. The work was subsequently heavily censored. Anna Holian, “Anticommunism in the Streets: Refugee Politics in Cold War Germany,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 45:1 (2010): 135-136.

<sup>389</sup> Reproduced in Kay and Miles, *Refugees or Migrant Workers?*, 43. This table offers a more comprehensive list of EVWs. It is significant to stress however that statistics vary from source to source, depending on which groups are included or excluded as EVWs. Kay and Miles have sourced these figures official British Home Office records, thus reflecting the categories of EVWs as officially broken down by British recruiters.

The recruitment maxim of the postwar period was very much, “we act quickly, get the best of the pick.”<sup>390</sup> As Table 2 indicates clearly, Balts<sup>391</sup> were, once again, disproportionately targeted as some of the most “suitable” candidates for resettlement. The same troublesome category of “Polish-Ukrainian” was now a boon for recruitment, with Polish-Ukrainian men seen as a pool of labour especially suited for agricultural work.<sup>392</sup> A report from an EVW Holding Camp in England describes the national composition of the DPs there; “The Balts have been found to be the most intelligent and the most suitable for the skilled mechanical trades and the Ukrainians, who are mostly of peasant or yeoman stock, for agriculture.” By comparison, the same report notes that only a few Poles have passed through the selection process.<sup>393</sup> There were significant percentages of rejections of Polish DPs at the interview stage alone, as much as 42 per cent.<sup>394</sup> The “best of the pick,” then, precluded most of the DP population. A focus on the experience of Polish DPs volunteers highlights the fact that the very notion of selection meant that the majority of DPs would not fit the desired criteria. Before it even began, labour recruitment was not going to solve the resettlement task.

It is significant to stress that alternative recruitment criteria could result in a discrimination on the basis of nationality. That is, a social and economic interest could be the motivation of a migration policy conceived within the grid of ethnic stereotypes. As well as reinforcing the categorization of DPs according to nationality, resettlement schemes made criteria including physical fitness, age and especially gender, more significant than they had ever been before. First and foremost, preference for selection was to be given to DPs who were

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<sup>390</sup> Miles, “Nationality, Citizenship, and Migration,” 433.

<sup>391</sup> The term “Balts” is used here in accordance with how individuals from Baltic countries were described in official sources as well as in much of the secondary source literature dealing with EVWs.

<sup>392</sup> On the history and experiences of Ukrainian EVWs, see Graham Smith and Peter Jackson, “Narrating the Nation: The ‘Imagined Community’ of Ukrainians in Bradford,” *Journal of Historical Geography* 25:3 (1999): 367-387.

<sup>393</sup> FO 938/117: Handover to IRO, ‘Visit to a European Voluntary Workers Holding Camp’, 1947.

<sup>394</sup> FO 945/502: Recruitment of Displaced Person Labour for UK in British Zones of Germany and Austria, ‘Westward Ho’, August, 1947.

both young and able-bodied.<sup>395</sup> The same CM/1 forms that had previously included comments about individuals' political oppositions with respect to repatriation, were now littered with personal remarks that either aided or abetted chances of resettlement. For older DPs, like the widow Czykieta, who hoped to emigrate with her son, it was enough for medical examinations to conclude that she "appeared highly senile" and any chance of possible resettlement was completely neutralized.<sup>396</sup> Neither falling within desired age brackets nor being able to prove relevant and desirable work experience was a guarantor of selection for recruitment. Medical rejections were some of the most common. A trained and experienced miner, 35-year-old Józef Ciejak represented precisely the kind of worker one might expect selection committees to preference.<sup>397</sup> However, Ciejak was eventually deemed ineligible by a medical board as physical unfit for hard labour and consequently returned to unemployment in a DP camp in Hannover. Thus, through the lens of recruitment, policy shifted to re-organize camps "in order to separate the various categories of DPs," along certain physical and age-based lines. It also sought to break down DPs along gendered lines, in ways which, as we shall see, remained tied to ethnicity in significant ways.

While the post-1945 image of a demobilized workforce is typically male, it was the domestic labour of *women* that was seen as one of the key components in the process of reconstruction. Unattached, single women were the most desirable recruits.<sup>398</sup> "Balt Cygnet" had exclusively targeted single Latvian, Lithuanian and Estonian women, and *Westward Ho!* similarly scoured the DP camps in search of "suitable" female labour.<sup>399</sup> Careful attention was paid to the biological implications of immigration from the Continent and the selection of

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<sup>395</sup> CM/1 forms make this explicit: you *had* to be medically cleared to qualify for recruitment.

<sup>396</sup> Apolonia Czykieta, like most elderly DPs, was deemed "unfit for work." As such, elderly DPs were entirely overlooked. See ITS, 'Stanislaw Czykieta' Doc. No. 79014931\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>397</sup> 35-year-old Józef Ciejak volunteered for labour in France or Belgium. See ITS, 'Jozef Ciejak', Doc. No. 79000348\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>398</sup> McDowell, "Workers, Migrants, Aliens or Citizens?" 873.

<sup>399</sup> Linda McDowell, "Narratives of Family, Community and Waged Work: Latvian European Volunteer Worker Women in Post-War Britain," *Women's History Review* 13:1 (2004): 23.

postwar immigrants was guided by “the consciousness that recruiting for the labour market in the short term was tantamount to recruiting for the population of Britain in the long term.”<sup>400</sup>

While Baltic women were seen as having long-term demographic potential, Polish DP women were approached much more cautiously. While Poles were formally considered demographically “acceptable” and thus able to “become British in both title and substance,” ITS offers important examples of discrimination against Polish women specifically.<sup>401</sup> One Polish applicant, Maria Grabowska, was required to produce a “Certificate of good conduct,” in order to evidence her ability to “conduct” herself in a befitting manner that typically belied the way in which recruitment was instilled with moral virtues and perceptions of sexual morality.

Relative to their numbers in the DP camps, very few Polish women applied for *Westward Ho!*. Given the stringency of the category of potential Briton, of those that did apply, large percentages would not make it to Britain. While female labour was much sought-after, the reality on the ground was that male DPs were significantly more prepared to emigrate. The issue of dependants was decisive in this respect. From the recruiter’s perspective, the ideal was to bring to Britain the lone productive worker.<sup>402</sup> When it became clear that the Ministry of Labour would not make arrangements for any dependants to travel with EVWs to Britain, DP volunteers with dependants frequently dropped their applications. As a result, it was eventually decided that DPs with dependants could apply together; though those without dependants or willing to travel in advance were given priority.<sup>403</sup> This policy proved short-lived: “As problems of transport and accommodation mounted, the backlog of dependants waiting in

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<sup>400</sup> Paul, *Whitewashing Britain*, 65.

<sup>401</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>402</sup> The Balt Cygnet scheme had made no provision for dependants. See Diana Kay and Robert Miles, “Refugees or Migrant Workers - The Case of the European Volunteer in Britain (1946-1951),” *Journal of Refugee Studies* 1:3-4 (1988): 222.

<sup>403</sup> Provision for dependants were “initially defined as wife and children under 16, with husbands and parents only qualifying if infirm.” Ibid. Once again the gendered dimension of this policy is interesting, though not developed by the authors here. One might conclude that recruiters may have feared political mobilization among the immigrants, a risk equated to the male migrant.

Germany to join the family member in Britain grew. In view of this, the government decided as from July 1947 to revert back to recruiting single persons only.”<sup>404</sup> In the end, less than 4000 dependants made it to Britain with less than 100 in the case of DP Poles. Many more were left waiting indefinitely.<sup>405</sup>

As a group anxious to reconstruct family life, the files of individuals affiliated with the *Westward Ho!* scheme stand out for the sheer volume of cases in which concerns over dependants is made explicit. Anna Dyszel complained of her distress in an interview in 1948. She had an “illegitimate” child with a man who had left only a week prior as part of *Westward Ho!* Unable to return home for political reasons, Anna was begging to join her partner in England as soon as possible.<sup>406</sup>

The same Maria Grabowska whose “good conduct” was in question, was distraught at interview that she was unable to join her fiancé in England during his one year “time trial.”<sup>407</sup> For many, the issue of dependants came pre-departure. Kazimierz Mechula, for instance, was in many respects the ideal EVW, as a trained and experienced farm worker. His only condition on application, was that he be able to go “anywhere he can go with his family.” With a wife and baby in the camps, he was rejected.<sup>408</sup>

In other instances, dependants left behind were encouraged to apply for different schemes, despite objecting to separation: “any DPs concerned are advised, therefore, to volunteer for some other resettlement scheme forthwith if they so desire.”<sup>409</sup> Czesława Lasiewicka’s fiancé and the father of her young child, Józef Kaoniak, had left for Hereford, England on June 8, 1948. Prior to departure, he had signed a certificate of fatherhood as well

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<sup>404</sup> Ibid.

<sup>405</sup> See Table 2 above.

<sup>406</sup> ITS, ‘Anna Dyszel’, Doc. No. 79055640\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>407</sup> ITS, ‘Maria Grabowska’, Doc. No. 79131681\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>408</sup> ITS, ‘Kazimierz Mechula’, Doc. No. 79467905\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>409</sup> FO 1006/575: Emigration Bulletin, ‘Bulletin No.18’, 1947. To some extent, it is beyond the scope of the research here to investigate the ways in which transnational kinship in his context was characterized by gendered differences in power and status: and the extent to which it undermined traditional understandings of these. In this case, as in many, kinship networks were mobilized exploitatively (waiting for your husband to settle) by DPs.

as a promise of marriage in order to strengthen the case for family reunification in England. For the next two years, Józef attempted and was unable to successfully nominate his family for emigration, having no accommodation to offer them upon arrival and in no financial position to keep them, having been paid so poorly. After such a lengthy separation, Czesława grew increasingly anxious and claimed at interview to be “very upset at the idea that she shall never be able to get out of Germany nor give her child a good start.” As one interviewer remarked, Czesława “looks very well after the child, but the camp conditions are getting worse and worse.” Out of desperation, mother and child agreed—at the urging of the IRO—to apply for emigration to Australia, where they were told they might find refuge as part of a “Mother without wage earner” scheme. In the end, Czesława refused to emigrate without her future husband, at which point she was informed that the family would be subject to “certain sanctions” including the immediate “withdrawal of any further resettlement assistance by the IRO.”<sup>410</sup> Dependants were frequently left to the poverty of the DP camp, separated from EVW family members in too precarious a position to facilitate their path out of displacement.

Gender and the issue of dependants was thus tied to ethnicity in significant ways. Indeed, the expansion of recruitment to include women of German origin was rationalized on the basis of having exhausted the demographic of single women among the DP population.<sup>411</sup> By the end of 1948, *Westward Ho!*, having accepted some 37,000 from the British Zone, reduced its rate of acceptance of DPs as “suitable” candidates dwindled. As for other resettlement schemes, it was complained that “their physical standards exclude most of the residue.”<sup>412</sup>

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<sup>410</sup> ITS, ‘Czesława Lasiewicka’, Doc. No. 79387252\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>411</sup> Recruitment was expanded beyond the Zone and into the American in March of 1949, in order to source single Sudeten women. McDowell, “Narratives of family,” 26. The British took the lead in the recruitment of German labour, though only young women aged up to 28 or 30 were to be considered. See Weber-Newth and Steinert, *German Migrants in Post-war Britain*, 31.

<sup>412</sup> FO 1052/577 International Refugee Organisation: DP Programme in British Zone, ‘Age and Gender Break-downs’, April 20, 1948.

## Rival schemes: French and Belgian recruitment

A number of actions were taken to bolster recruitment, including efforts to streamline the recruitment process itself. With the help of the IRO, registers of trades were drawn up and matched with individuals and family groups; and explanatory leaflets were circulated around the DP camps in attempts to clarify recruitment criteria and attract new volunteers.<sup>413</sup> Outside of the DP camps, Ministry of Labour officials were attempting to coordinate domestic and international media campaigns calling attention to what was described as the problem of an “idle” DP labour force.<sup>414</sup>

Interest in DP labour mounted, and agreements were negotiated with other Western states who were encouraged to source DP labourers from the British Zone. Battered French and Belgian economies looked to Germany for labour under the “French Metropolitan Scheme,” which aimed to recruit some 50,000 DPs in total, and the Belgian Operation “Black Diamond” seeking 35,000 male recruits for work in the mines.<sup>415</sup> British, French and Belgian officials made frequent trips to national DP camps to assess “public opinion” therein and competed to attract the best DP labour. For eligible DPs, various recruitment options suddenly offered for the first time a choice of destination.<sup>416</sup> In reality however, all recruitment schemes were biased in similar ways; preferencing young, unattached able-bodied DPs within a hierarchy of ethno-nationalities.

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<sup>413</sup> FO 1052/556: DP History Various Papers, ‘Brief for Parliamentary Sub Committee’, October, 1947.

<sup>414</sup> Silvia Salvatici offers a comprehensive overview of Allied policy with respect to DP labour in Germany (a subject returned to in Chapter 3 of this study). The ways in which DPs were compelled to seek employment while in the DP camps mirrored certain aspects of recruitment policy. For instance, labour in the camps was, as under the EVW schemes, strictly gendered. “Female employment” saw women confined to work within the camps themselves, filling gaps in domestic services resulting in the “sex-stereotyping of jobs.” Silvia Salvatici, “From Displaced Persons to Labourers: Allied Employment Policies in Post-War West Germany,” in Reinisch and White, *The Disentanglement of Populations*, 221.

<sup>415</sup> Cohen, *In War’s Wake*, 105; Eileen Egan, *For Whom There Is No Room: Scenes from the Refugee World* (New York: Paulist Press, 1995), 143.

<sup>416</sup> Kay and Miles, *Refugees or Migrant Workers?*, 62. Opportunities to work in France and Belgium were introduced after British schemes. According to Kay and Miles, the British happily estimated a lead of 1-2 months on the French and Belgians and hoped this would be enough to secure the “best” of DP labour for itself.



Among the recruitment schemes on offer, the Belgian was marked by its deliberate reservation of the hardest labour for the foreign displaced persons. The Belgium Black Diamond scheme succeeded only in recruiting 32,000 in total; of which an astonishing 8,000 opted to return to DP camps in Germany.<sup>417</sup> One Polish DP— Władysław Grudninski— volunteered for Black Diamond in order to provide for a wife and two children in a DP camp in the British Zone. The conditions in the mines quickly exacerbated Grudninski's chronic tuberculosis. Seeing no alternative, Władysław returned to Germany where he was subsequently declared ineligible for any further resettlement. Jaroszenko Mykola went to work in a Belgian mine in May 1947, where he described conditions of life as simply "very difficult." Due to struggling and rapidly declining health as a consequence of ongoing hard labour, he was eventually released from his contract and went on the dole in Belgium for 6 months where he was unable to find employment anywhere except the mines. Eventually returning to a wife and three children in Germany, the Mykola family was similarly denied further access to resettlement programs and similarly saw no other option but to remain in Germany.

The French recruitment scheme proved equally unattractive and was perhaps marred most by stringent nationality-based criteria. In the spring of 1947, the French government were claiming to be ready to accept as much as 400,000 foreign labourers, with a strong preference for ethnic Germans.<sup>418</sup> Such was the French appetite for German labour rather than that of the DPs, that the Control Commission in the British Zone was forced to enter into a weeks'-long bargaining with French recruiters to secure a "one-for-one" deal in which for every German worker selected from the Zone, the French would be required to take one DP. The French pushed for access to German workers in the British Zone over and above a number of 25,000,

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<sup>417</sup> Cohen, *In War's Wake*, 105.

<sup>418</sup> The French preference for the labour of ex-enemy nationals, including Italian workers, was justified on the grounds that in the case of "trouble," such persons could be repatriated at short notice. See FO 371/66673: Disposal of Displaced Persons: Welfare and Resettlement Measures, 'Displaced Persons', June 10, 1947.

after which they argued the “one-for-one” rule should cease to apply.<sup>419</sup> British negotiators noted that French teams appeared to have in mind the recruitment of some 50,000 Germans in total; 25,000 Germans for 25,000 DPs, plus a further 25,000 Germans as a “reward” for taking displaced persons. This, it was noted, was unacceptable to British and the British Manpower Division instead attempted insert the figure of 25,000 as a ceiling in any technical agreement. Negotiations were prolonged for weeks, with the French countering that the figure of 25,000 was too low, and that they simply “do not want displaced persons.”<sup>420</sup> For the British, “to lose so many German producers for such a slight ceasement of the displaced persons problem,” was seen as a very poor bargain indeed; affirming an opinion on the productivity of workers that saw them fear losing German, over DP labour.<sup>421</sup>

The initial reluctance of the French to consider DP labour was eventually overcome, Cohen argues, by mounting fear of losing valuable DP labourers to the British, as more and more DPs were selected under the EVW schemes.<sup>422</sup> The resultant French Metropolitan Scheme, however, had an extremely high rejection rate, at 50%.<sup>423</sup> The French Scheme was hugely unpopular, and refugees themselves seemed to have very little interest in France—evidenced in the negligible amount of DPs noting the country as even one of three possible destinations they would consider in IRO forms. This was not particular to the British Zone. Hilton notes similar disinterest for the scheme in the US Zone among Polish DPs, with only 62 out of 7,369 Polish DPs registered in Hessen, US Zone, eventually applying for positions in France.<sup>424</sup>

As with its Belgian counterpart, for many of the recruits, the French scheme secured,

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<sup>419</sup> FO 945/495: Emigration of German citizens to France, ‘From Military Governor Berlin to Foreign Office’, November 6, 1947.

<sup>420</sup> Ibid.

<sup>421</sup> Ibid.

<sup>422</sup> Cohen, *In War's Wake*, 106.

<sup>423</sup> Ibid., 107.

<sup>424</sup> Laura June Hilton, “Prisoners of Peace: Rebuilding Community, Identity and Nationality in Displaced Persons Camps in Germany, 1945-1952,” (PhD diss., The Ohio State University, 2001), 416.

at best, a temporary living and at worst a lasting invalidity. Tadeusz Slaski, who moved with his whole family (wife and three sons) to France<sup>425</sup> on November 2, 1947, worked first as a forest-labourer and then as a farmer where he was able to earn a steady living. He was dismissed by his employer without notice however when it was felt he was no longer needed. The entire family was left with little option but to return to Germany to unemployment.

What ITS cases demonstrate, across the various recruitment schemes, is that the ultimate concern and goal of most DP migrants was family reunification. The recruitment schemes however, basically tried to resist this common effort. Many DP males, in particular, had left partners and children behind in DP camps, whom they hoped would soon join them. Recruitment schemes were wary of individuals who might exploit recruitment schemes for the purposes of family reunification abroad, and actively discouraged it. In one such case, a Mrs. Mahul hoped to join her husband, along with their three children, presently working in a mine in France. In Brunswick DP camp, her interviewer notes that the “applicant” is “a simple stout woman, looking older than she is,” clarifying in so many words that she herself was an undesirable candidate for recruitment. The file notes that Mrs. Mahul had married her husband only a few weeks before he left for France, presumably in order to maximise her claim to join him there. The husband, the interviewer claims, writes very seldom and does not mention that he wants them—his family—to join him in France. Mrs. Mahul and the family were never allowed to travel to France.

Measuring the relative success of recruitment schemes can only be done so in reference to different aims. Recruitment was ultimately governed by conflicting political intentions: the humanitarian goal of finding a home for the uprooted; population policies by which white immigrants should blend into Western nations and help solve demographic problems; and finally, social concerns for domestic workers that limited immigrant recruitment to niche

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<sup>425</sup> France in fact, had the most liberal policy when it came to dependants. See Cohen, *In War's Wake*, 107.

occupations where no one else wanted to work.

### **A hybrid: Labour migration or refugee resettlement?**

The *Hull Daily Mail* was the first British newspaper to report on the arrival of Displaced Persons on Monday April 21, 1947, in a telling piece entitled “DPs Will Not Displace British Labour.” It explained: “Sixty-three displaced persons from Europe, advance party of the thousands to follow, arrived in Hull this morning. [...] they were taken to the Wymersley-rd. reception centre, pending definite decisions as to their disposal.” Further descriptions of the DPs as young, Baltic and educated<sup>426</sup> were clearly calculated to paint them in some a light as to be as attractive as possible to a British public. The article continues, describing a similar contingent of DP arrivals that same morning, composed principally of women, at Tilbury Docks, London. These women, the article stresses, were told to “abide by the rules” in order to be happy in England and to “forgive any shortcomings” of the EVW program in a brief welcome address. “They are in no way going to displace British labour,” claimed Mrs Spilman to a representative of the *Hull Daily Mail*. “They are only going to industries where British labour is unobtainable. That is very definite.”<sup>427</sup>

This report highlights precisely the need to assuage the concerns of a domestic public with respect to foreign labour and its impact on employment in Britain. While all recruitment drives were pitched internationally as an effort to clear the DP camps and offer their inhabitants

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<sup>426</sup> Education related also to language: applicants for *Westward Ho!* were made aware that they would be required to learn English upon arrival. There was an interesting tension between seeking DPs best suited to physically demanding work while simultaneously being able to boast of recruits’ education and adaptability with respect to language-learning. Waclaw Matuszewski for instance, prima facie presented an ideal candidate for recruitment with 5 years of labouring experience prior to the Second World War, including 2 years as railway worker, and 5 subsequent years of slave labour on a farm in the Reich. Waclaw however, spoke only Polish—a fact noted regularly in his file— and could only read and write when “forced” to do so; which was seen as inhibiting his future recruitment prospects. Needless to say, highly experienced, unattached, young (preferably Baltic) and well-educated labourers were far from the majority of DPs. FO 1006/575: Emigration Bulletin. ‘Bulletin No. 18, 1947; ITS, ‘Waclaw Matuszewski’

<sup>427</sup> *Hull Daily Mail*, “DPs Will Not Displace British Labour,” Monday April 21, 1947, Issue 19164. Sourced from the British Library: Gale Document Number GR3223258286. Sikorski Institute file reference KOL. 9/6 includes record of prominent articles concerning Polish EVWs in the British Press.

hope of a future in the West, recruitment was consistently cast domestically—and in particular, to trade unions—exclusively as a form of labour migration whereby individual *workers*—not refugees—would be distributed and settled by ones and twos, and not in large groups or holdings. While the TUC had agreed to foreign labour in the UK, local union branches had the final say with respect to how many workers they were willing to allow. In order to satisfy the various branches of the TUC, government officers had to factor in the extent of union resistance to the schemes in a given area as well as ensuring that DPs were hired for work for which no British labour was available—to minimize opposition to DP recruitment.<sup>428</sup> As part of a strategy of union appeasement, workers were to be separated and sent to various sites across the UK.<sup>429</sup> “Female” labour, in hospitals and in particular, in private homes<sup>430</sup> necessitated atomization much than work in mines or agriculture.<sup>431</sup>

McDowell describes recruitment as an “exceptional period of labour migration when economic migrants from war-torn Europe were admitted to the UK as a group rather than as individuals.”<sup>432</sup> That this characterization refers to the very same DPs who underwent screening is striking. In fact, the DP case once again exemplifies precisely the limitations of the categories of “labour” (vs political) migration; “economic migrant” (vs refugee) and even McDowell’s distinction between group and individual migration. As sociologists Diana Kay and Robert Miles have noted, the question of labour recruitment out of the DP camps of occupied Germany presents a fascinating case within which to explore<sup>433</sup> the distinctions between so-called free and unfree migration and political versus labour migration. As Kay and

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<sup>428</sup> Maslen, “British Government and the European Voluntary Worker Programmes,” 172-173.

<sup>429</sup> Ibid.

<sup>430</sup> McDowell, “Narratives of Family,” 29.

<sup>431</sup> Hywel Gordon Maslen has uncovered discussions between the government and the TUC revealing that the TUC had actually offered “tentative support” for an EVW union, although the state had been less enthusiastic, “because it believed that a separate union would detract from worker harmony and have wider social, industrial and political implications.” See HO 352/151, ‘Minute’, April 19, 1949 cited in Maslen, “British Government and the European Voluntary Worker Programmes,” 244-245.

<sup>432</sup> McDowell, “Workers, Migrants, Aliens or Citizens?,” 865.

<sup>433</sup> Kay and Miles discuss 3 broad themes, 1. Migration theory. 2. Gender. 3. Wage labour in economy.

Miles argue, Displaced Persons recruited for the various labour schemes after '45 could not be neatly classified either as political nor labour migrants. While the previous chapter of this thesis discussed the process adopted by the Allies to screen and effectively “weed out” so-called economic migrants, this sub-chapter explores a British administration now actively working towards transforming Displaced Persons into *exactly* this category of migrant.

Furthermore, definitional boundaries were *deliberately* blurred. Inconsistency in government policy reflected British policy makers' desire to maximize on the ambiguities of the DP case in order to serve conflicting political intentions. The Labour government's recruitment policy both saw and characterized DPs as labour migrants when this served their interests and application of the “refugee” or “migrant” label thus shifted dependent on the perceived interests of the British government. The Labour government positioned DPs as wage-labourers in the postwar economy while simultaneously distinguishing them from traditional wage-labourers by restricting, under their conditions of employment, their freedom of movement.<sup>434</sup> While certainly not offered as an official reason for barring Jews from recruitment schemes, it is worth noting that any Jewish recruitment would have made fluctuation between categories of refugee and labour migrant more challenging. Even had there been political interest in doing so, making labour migrants of Jewish refugees, as opposed to DP Poles, would have been significantly more challenging, having established the category of Jewish as an effective benchmark status for refugeehood.

Polish DPs, in their strategies, were ready to accept living and working conditions that were unattractive to domestic British workers. The Polish DP case demonstrates that any distinction between political and economic migration is a practical and/or academic one, which did/does not correspond to different categories of Displaced Persons. Political vulnerability

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<sup>434</sup> The scheme did develop; under pressure to make it more attractive, the 12-month clause was briefly taken away in November 1947 and DPs were able to apply for naturalization after 5 years. However, the government was slow to announce publicly that these schemes were not like the resettlement schemes offered by other receiving countries such as the United States.

and lack of an alternative brought DPs to accept highly unfavorable working arrangements. One and the same DP was submitted to political “pushes,” while also necessitating the development of economic strategies in order to make a living. Through the ITS records, one can more clearly innovate and overcome this kind of schematicism. What follows concentrates in particular on the ways in which Polish DPs assessed recruitment, weighed it against existing and future alternatives, and finally resisted certain recruitment practices, as evidenced in individual ITS case-files.

### **Self-fashioning and resistance**

Everyone who had ever sewed on a pants' button was a master tailor.<sup>435</sup>

When the EVW schemes first began recruiting individuals from within the British Zone, the gamut of choices and perspectives presented to DPs was severely limited and focused on repatriation. The situation was changing in 1948 however and as recruitment for *Westward Ho!* was ongoing, Western European labour migration schemes became but one of a growing number of resettlement schemes on offer. By mid-1948 a total of fourteen countries were offering resettlement opportunities for DPs, of which America was by far the most popular destination of choice among Poles. As Gerard Cohen explains, by August 20 of 1948, the IRO was officially empowered to promote the resettlement of DPs to extra-European destinations around the globe and became increasingly dedicated to the promotion of resettlement as a long-term solution to the DP problem.<sup>436</sup> Chapter 3 of this dissertation turns to explore these developments in depth, the fact that dozens of governments, particularly the American, Canadian and Australian, conducted their own search for what they perceived to be valuable

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<sup>435</sup> Kathryn Hulme, *The Wild Place* (Boston: Little and Brown, 1953) 199.

<sup>436</sup> Cohen, *In War's Wake*, 108.

DP migrants, with the help of the IRO. While this subsection focuses on earlier recruitment drives, the prospect of emigration to America, and overlapping chronologies had significant bearing on DP itineraries and strategizing.

Polish DPs' trans-Atlantic migration hopes, made clear in ITS,<sup>437</sup> were assessed alongside labour schemes to the West and potential Polish recruits for *Westward Ho!* often held out in hopes of eventually going to America. British recruitment teams were increasingly forced to emphasize the benefits of the EVW schemes in comparison with prospective and actual alternatives as they presented themselves: many of which made more explicit and attractive commitments to permanent settlement and family reunification. Both these factors were decisive from the DP perspective. In answer to DPs' questions about possibilities of permanent settlement, prepared answers were often deliberately evasive. As a consequence, British labour schemes were seen as temporary: a movement of "free labour" conceived of as non-permanent settlement. DPs were very much aware of the possibility of deportation if found to be in violation of their employment contract.<sup>438</sup>

There were several Polish EVW volunteers for whom possible non-settlement in Britain was not a deterrent, but who rather saw the scheme as representing a speedy exit out of the DP camps guaranteeing at least interim temporary employment and a potential springboard to their ultimate destination of choice. Indeed, perhaps the best evidence for such strategizing from the DP side is the fact that a quarter of EVW recruits decided to emigrate again once

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<sup>437</sup> To be explored in depth in the following Chapter. One can find corroborating evidence of the fact that a majority of DP Poles hoped to emigrate long-term to America in the records of political polls conducted in the DP camps and more generally in postwar Germany. One such poll conducted on March 20, 1947 among 298 DPs in Hesse and Bavaria, of which the largest DP group therein was Polish, found that 53 per cent of the overall group aimed to move to another country. DP Poles, however, were found to be most resistant to repatriation and the likeliest to name the United States as their destination of choice, with the majority of Polish respondents doing so. See A. J. and R. L. Merritt, *Public Opinion in Occupied Germany. The OMGUS Surveys* (Urbana: IL, 1970), 148, 154-55.

<sup>438</sup> Kay and Miles, *Refugees or Migrant Workers?*, 130-131. Sikorski Institute, KOL. 23B/I 'Central Polish Resettlement Office Correspondence', 1947-1949, 1951 indicates that Polish EVWs were also concerned about losing their Polish citizenship after signing labour contracts; and that doing so would serve as the pretext for depriving them of their citizenship.



restrictions were lifted.<sup>439</sup> Furthermore, as while the issue of dependants—and the prioritization of family reunification generally—was a major deterrent to application, one can find in ITS instances of successful chain migrations. While patterns in family separation and re-composition were largely unfavourable to DP family units, there was hope (and in unique cases, evidence) that the EVW schemes could represent a collective migration.<sup>440</sup> Herygorij Barlowskyj,<sup>441</sup> a Polish-Ukrainian salesman, his wife Marija (both unemployed in a DP camp in Rendsberg) and their new-born daughter Polis were eventually sponsored to immigrate to the UK in 1949. Marija's parents, Petro and Anna Borysenko, as well as her brother and his wife had already moved to the UK under *Westward Ho!* And were all working in the same textile factory. The family was doing relatively well: their collective earnings amounted to £24.00 per week and “they have a house of their own in a settlement belonging to the factory and have 5 rooms for personal use.” Accommodation and employment in the same factory was thus available for the Barlowskyj family.<sup>442</sup> Their recruitment officer notes: “Very pleasant family, both keen and there is no doubt that Mr. Barlowski [spelling in the original] is capable of working.”<sup>443</sup> For the most part however, EVW recruitment schemes were attractive to a select group of Polish DPs; the majority of which prioritized earning a living outside of the DP camps, were attracted by the relative ease and speed of labour recruitment, and were without dependants.

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<sup>439</sup> Tannahill, *European Volunteer Workers*, 60, 68

<sup>440</sup> John George Stoessinger, *The Refugee and the World Community* (University of Minnesota Press: 1956), 117.

<sup>441</sup> Hryhoriy is the current Ukrainian spelling of Gregory. In the CM/1 records, the name is (mis)spelled inconsistently throughout. The file may be found at: ITS, ‘Grigory Barlowskij’, Doc. No. 78908659\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>442</sup> The issue of accommodation was significant. According to Kay and Miles, “Dependants were housed in one of three dependants' hostels and the volunteer was responsible for their maintenance.” Kay and Miles, “Refugees or Migrant Workers,” *Journal of Refugee Studies* 1:3-4 (1988): 222. In the case of Polish refugees in particular, the government was concerned that competition for housing would generate tension with local populations and thus involved itself in the provision of hostel accommodation. EVWs started life in hostels administered by official British bodies such as the National Service Hostels Corporation. As Colin Holmes notes however, most Poles had left these hostels by the 1950s, which subsequently fell into decay. See Colin Holmes, *John Bull's Island: Immigration and British Society, 1871-1971* (Routledge, 2015), 234.

<sup>443</sup> ITS, ‘Grigory Barlowskij’, Doc. No. 78908659\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

Broadly speaking, the support, or the “capital,” that individual migrants could mobilize in support of resettlement could include a number of factors from collective self-organization, individual property, professional skills, language proficiency, family and ethnic networks, as well as natural advantages (gender, age, health, strength). It was thus clearly in the interest of DPs to present biographies in the most favourable light.<sup>444</sup> Inevitably, this would involve concealing or editing information as part of a broader process of reinvention necessitated by displacement. Frequently, this meant not offering literal truth in the construction of their individual files, but rather what can reasonably be interpreted as records bearing different degrees of relationship to the truth; and always in the service of optimizing one’s chance of finding a way out of displacement. As Sheila Fitzpatrick recently observed: for DPs, mastery of Foucault’s “little tactics of the habitat”<sup>445</sup> was crucial.<sup>446</sup>

Not all “identities” were open to self-fashioning of course: no DP claimed, for instance, a different gender. However, assuming identities to be the “classifications that a person accepts as applicable to him/herself and expects the outside world to recognize in him/her,”<sup>447</sup> a single DP could embrace and or (de)emphasize the identities of, say, Polish, female, able-bodied, young, labourer, anti-communist, wife, mother. In this way, “file- selves” were as much reflective of the DPs self-fashioning as of what the state wanted to learn about that DP.<sup>448</sup> Polish DP applicants sought to adapt themselves specifically for recruitment, in a process of

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<sup>444</sup> Sheila Fitzpatrick makes a similar point in the Soviet context. See Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Tear Off the Masks! Identity and Imposture in Twentieth-century Russia* (Princeton University Press: 2005) Introduction.

<sup>445</sup> Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge. Selected Interviews and other Writings, 1972-1977* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980) p.149.

<sup>446</sup> “It’s a matter of learning the ‘little tactics’ that this particular environment requires, constantly responding to changing circumstances with new plans, keeping your head above water until finally, [...] the period of turbulence is over and you find yourself able to swim ashore.” Sheila Fitzpatrick, “‘Determined to Get On’: Some Displaced Persons on the Way to a Future,” *History Australia* 12:2 (2015): 123. As we shall see in the next Chapter, DPs were more willing to try to manipulate their biographical data to facilitate immigration to more popular destinations of choice, particularly the United States, as opposed to worker schemes in Western Europe.

<sup>447</sup> Ibid.

<sup>448</sup> On the use of the term “file-selves” see Fitzpatrick, *Tear Off the Masks!*, 14; Rom Harré, *Personal Being: A Theory for Individual Psychology* (Cambridge, Mass., 1984), 26. Certainly, the officials who worked for UNRRA and the IRO saw themselves as making the DP population known to the Allied governments that sponsored them through the creation of individual CM/1 forms. James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (Yale University Press, 1999), 76-83.

self-fashioning aimed at satisfying the various national selection committees. This process, worthy of exploration and evidenced for the most part solely in the collection at ITS, can be seen both as a means of cooperation with the administration charged with DP care, as well as a clear manipulation of it.

Recruitment questionnaires invariably focused on the occupational and educational history of the individual applicant and these represented some of the most malleable and manipulated aspects of individual biographies. A former UNRRA and later IRO official, Kathryn Hulme, claimed that displaced persons regularly stressed previous occupations they devised were most desirable from the recruiter's perspective. Other memoirs note that DPs often went further, in claiming occupations they did not have in the hope that they would eventually return to their fields of expertise after having taken alternate—typically manual—positions abroad.<sup>449</sup> ITS documents can help us to see what such file manipulations *might* have looked like more generally—although, this inevitably necessitates some reading between the lines. There are for instance, multiple examples of DPs suspiciously claiming proficiency in widely different fields of expertise. 30-year-old Michał Abramow, for instance, claimed at interview to be simultaneously a professional baker, farmer, labourer and mine worker.<sup>450</sup>

Other files indicate significant changes over time in biographical data. Bronisława Czereszko<sup>451</sup> first declared she had been an unqualified labourer in Germany during the war, though in a later interview for recruitment, she portrays herself as a qualified domestic help. It is perhaps one of the cruelest ironies of the postwar period that a DPs' best credentials were often the kind of forced labour they were required to undertake for the Nazi regime. 25-year-

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<sup>449</sup> Rudolf Heberle and Dudley S. Hall, *New Americans. A Study of Displaced Persons in Louisiana and Mississippi* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: DP Persons Commission, 1951), 40. Complaints about workers after arrival also hint at this practice. In order to meet the DP law's agricultural criteria, some DPs either manipulated their own biographical data and "this situation quickly became a source of dissatisfaction, both for DPs and their sponsors," with a number of reports noting complaints from employers. See Anna D. Jaroszyńska-Kirchmann, *The Exile Mission: the Polish Political Diaspora and Polish Americans, 1939-1956* (Ohio University Press: 2004), 226.

<sup>450</sup> 'Michał Abramow', Doc. No. 78863560\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>451</sup> 'Bronisława Czereszko', Doc. No. 79012254\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

old Polish DP Waclaw Matuszewski had labored on a farm in the Reich for 5 years: his youth and agricultural “background” recommended him for recruitment. It is worth noting that women, generally, had a tougher job proving their physical capability for labour than their male counterparts. Husband and wife Zakamarok were both medically examined and interviewed for recruitment as agricultural labourers. While both were diagnosed with latent syphilis and pulmonary tuberculosis, the husband was found to suffer from an additional litany of ills, including traumatic lesions of nose and throat, a fracture of the nasal bone, traumatic palsy and atrophy of the muscles of the left hand, as well as a number of old war injuries from 1916. Medical recruitment teams nonetheless declared him to be fit for “light labour,” while his wife was declared entirely unfit.<sup>452</sup> Evidently, Polish DPs attempted to dictate outcomes and exercise control even under the restrictive conditions of the various recruitment schemes.

However, “little tactics of the habitat,” as we have already seen, were not always enough to secure selection, with as much as half of Polish EVW applicants rejected. Scope for pushing back against the selectivity and biases of schemes was severely limited. Effective resistance<sup>453</sup> (impacting the success of schemes) could ultimately take only two forms: non-application (including efforts to dissuade further application) and return. By mid-1948, the British were so incensed by eligible Polish DPs failing to apply for EVW schemes, that they were openly holding lectures in DP camps disparaging other recruitment and resettlement schemes, of which they claimed: “nothing definite is known.” Polish DP camps—containing the largest numbers of Displaced Persons and those least likely to apply—were targeted for numerous lectures in DP camps often held by Polish officials of the Ministry of Labour who claimed to have “first-hand knowledge of the prospects and conditions of volunteers in England.”<sup>454</sup> All Polish DPs, whether eligible or not at the present time, were encouraged to

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<sup>452</sup> Ibid.

<sup>453</sup> Resistance must be considered here in its loosest possible sense.

<sup>454</sup> A Mr. Kobryner was a particular favourite. See FO 1006/575: Emigration Bulletin, ‘Bulletin No. 15’, April, 1948.

attend lectures, though fewer and fewer were swayed.<sup>455</sup>

Of greater concern for the British was the emergence of voices actively dissuading application. Domestic (British), international and the DP press itself often reported on mass recruitment schemes. A propaganda battle between East and West emerged, as various parties fought to both claim and control the dominant publicly voiced opinion of the Polish DPs. The British policy for newspapers and literature in the British Zone was however, unclear. While in the American Zone, anti-communist literature was increasingly encouraged, the British DP administration as explored in Chapter 1, aimed to suppress any publications deemed to be potentially anti-repatriation and thus “suppressed democratic papers amongst the DPs.”<sup>456</sup> As an unintended consequence of encouraging “Communitic literature”<sup>457</sup> however, a growing number of fierce criticisms of the EVW schemes began appearing in Polish papers in the British Zone.<sup>458</sup> The Polish paper *Ślowo Polskie* that circulated the Zone, for example, began running reports detailing the unfavourable and often miserable conditions of the various recruitment schemes.

One particularly vivid article, translated from the original Polish, “Let’s End the Nightmare,” recounted one DP’s terrible journey to and from Belgian mines and pressed the IRO to withdraw any aid for labour recruitment. In the particularly damning article in question, Polish DPs across the British Zone were able to read a republished letter from DP Wiktor Szlegiel, reprinted in its entirety as a “striking warning to candidates who would wish to emigrate to Belgium.” The letter stated that Poles received little food and shivered all night on the journey to Belgium, nor were they given water. “The view to the camp and of the huts, to which we came, had such an effect on us that we did not want to get off the cars. Finally, realizing that we are at the mercy of our ‘guardians’, we had to put up with our fate.” Wiktor

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<sup>455</sup> Ibid.

<sup>456</sup> FO 1052/110 Licensing of Newspapers and Periodicals, ‘Anticommunist Press’, March 8, 1945, Point 5.

<sup>457</sup> Ibid.

<sup>458</sup> Ibid.

continues, “There are words lacking to describe the shameless extortion to which we were subject.” Wiktor had to pay for food and horsemeat and as for work, the stress is laid on the production of coal, but not on the necessity to keep the mine in a proper state, guaranteeing the safety of the workers. “A foreigner, should he become unable to work, is deported without an indemnity”; “the worker is exploited to the limit. [...] To illustrate the way we were being treated, I may say that it is not uncommon to be called “cochon polonais.” The beating of Poles, he notes, was not uncommon.

The British, it appears, were content to lay blame on the IRO, and any real concern was centred on the possible effect such pieces might have on recruitment figures.<sup>459</sup> In reality, it was difficult to gauge how much of an affect this kind of media had on the EVW programme. Polish DPs themselves were very sceptical about such reports and wary that these may have been exaggerated for political purposes. Indeed, as such stories spread, petitions from within various Polish DP camps for censorship of what was believed to be Soviet propaganda emerged. In the camp Sande, Poles took “the liberty to beg the British Authorities to agree: 1. To edit of Polish independent newspapers and periodicals in the British Zone of Germany 2. To hawk off [meaning, to sell/distribute] other Polish newspapers and periodicals edited in the countries of Western Europe.”<sup>460</sup> *Słowo Polskie*, published in Wrocław, was viewed as an organ of propaganda of the Government in Warsaw and for that reason, untrustworthy. Furthermore, Poles were very much aware of the Soviet desire to present an unfavourable image of emigration—in contrast with the desires of camp inmates who actively sought information about emigration and vocational training that could be useful for them.

Nonetheless, unfavourable articles in which recruits themselves claimed that previous reports on the conditions of the schemes had not been exaggerated, continued to find their way

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<sup>459</sup> Ibid.

<sup>460</sup> Ibid. The file includes a number of similar petitions for independent Polish newspapers, free from Eastern political points of view from Polish DP camps Haren-Maczkow, Westrhauderfehn and Jägerslust.

into the Polish camps. One article from early 1947 published in Latvian in *Cina* (Fight), originally published in Riga but distributed in the DP camps, was penned by a DP from the British Zone.<sup>461</sup> The article claimed that “Hitlerite Camp Leaders” refused to hear of anyone wanting to go home: “Having let the unhappy people into moral depression or to passive inertness, the men of power at the camps entice them better to go as slaves to Belgian coal miners and English collieries, to the overseas plantations or Canadian primeval forests but not to go back to its nation, to the home country.” In reference to emigration to Britain, the article’s language was especially damning: “Did I study medicine for the purpose to brush floors in the English TBC Sanatory?” It continues, “of course the conscience of the modern-day slave traders is hard [...] The English of course, required only the most fit physical workers. Their love of mankind is widely known over the world, especially among the natives in their colonies—and therefore they allowed for fit workers—parents to take with them also their children only... if only they were over 16 years of age and if they would sign separate contracts for work in the following “light branches” such as mines, metal industry and agriculture.”<sup>462</sup> It concludes by stressing that DPs would be better off returning home, where at least there, they would have the chance to “become human again.”

The few DP recruits that published such reports in newspapers outside of Germany and England were active in resisting the schemes and evidently hoped their words would be disruptive to their success. The British DP administration certainly felt the need to respond and to minimize the potential impact of this kind of bad publicity. Their own use—and perhaps, abuse—of the DP voice indicates they also gave weight to the influence of such testimony. A counter-narrative was pushed in the camps aimed at distributing *positive* statements from DP recruits in monthly Bulletins. It is telling that these were typically from Baltic DPs

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<sup>461</sup> Ibid. The article was subsequently translated for the English reader.

<sup>462</sup> Ibid. It is also a clear call to the international community—and in particular Americans, packed with references to designed to trigger American concern. “It is a pity, really it is a pity that the DP slave traders who sell out their own people had been born too late.” Their time, the author writes “should have been Uncle Tom’s Cabin.”

transparently standardised, despite being translated into Polish to be read by Polish DPs. As this example illustrates, such micro-narratives were strikingly contrived:

V.P. Age 23 Latvian, Arrived in England 14.11.1947

I am settled in England and in the coalmining industry. I am new on Grade I pay, which is as much as is earned by the fully skilled English Coalface worker. In my leisure time I play Table Tennis and billiards in the hostel, also I like to watch Football matches. I like to go out into the country and visit English Inns. I read and have my own English books. The hostel food and accommodation is good and I would recommend other EVWs to England.<sup>463</sup>

Beyond individual attempts to criticize the schemes through international media, there was very little avenue for DPs to protest the schemes. Return to the DP camps was the strongest indictment of the labour recruitment as a solution both to a depleted British workforce as well as crowded DP camps. While it is true that the outcome for the vast majority of EVWs was permanent settlement,<sup>464</sup> many did choose to return to Germany. As Table 2 above indicates (see “Less Returned to Europe” figures), over 3000 EVWs returned to occupied Germany. Of course, return could happen for a tapestry of different reasons and did not always have necessarily to be motivated by opposition to the labour or scheme. Czesław Gasiorowski for instance, had three sons to care for—all born in camps— and had opted to apply for work in England to earn money to support his family. He had only ever intended to go for one year and then return to Germany where he had always hoped to emigrate, with his family, to the United

<sup>463</sup> FO 1006/575: Emigration Bulletin, ‘Emigration Bulletins,’ No. 14-19. Other examples are almost identical, offering insight into the concerns it was thought DPs might have in light of exposure to negative press:

J.K. Age 39 Latvian, Arrived in England 1.11.47

I have been coalmining for four months and am now settled to coalmining and the English way of living. I have had no worries or troubles since I arrived in England. The Hostel food and accommodation is very good. I spend most of my leisure in reading English books and on Sundays I have 1 ½ hours tuition in the English language. I also like to go to the Cinema and walk in the country. I have friends at Horsforth Nr. Leeds whom I visit fairly frequently. I would recommend other EVWs to Coalmining because I got on very well with the English people.

L.K. Age 24, Hungarian, Arrived in England 4.2.48

I arrived in England on 4.2.48 and commenced coalmining training in March. I like coalmining and I consider the pay very good with the prospect of earning as much as the skilled English Miner when more proficient. I like England better than Europe and would not go back. My parents are in Hungary. I like English people but wonder if they like me. The Hostel is very good and also the Welfare arrangements. I shall take more interest in the English way of life when I can speak more of the language. I would recommend other EVWs to coalmining.

E.O. Age 29 Latvian Arrived in England 1.11.47

I have been in coalmining for the past four months. The pay is good and I am getting more coalface yardage each month – so increasing my wage. I speak eight languages which is very useful amongst the different Nationalities in the Hostel. The Hostel food, accommodation and Welfare is very good with leisure time spent in reading English books, the Cinema and communal Hostel life. I would recommend other EVWs to coalmining in England.

<sup>464</sup> Paul, *Whitewashing Britain*, 64.



States. Indeed, the records of most returning DPs, required to fill in an “Application by a European Volunteer Worker to Return to Europe,” indicate that most had never been prepared to avail themselves of the facilities settling in Britain.<sup>465</sup> Czesław’s file states clearly; he “is prepared to give up job and return to insecure future.”<sup>466</sup> Other applications from EVWs asking to return to Europe cite a variety of different reasons. In one case, the claim is made that the poor climate affected one worker’s health. For many more others, wives or husbands wished to return to Germany and the family would not separate.<sup>467</sup> ITS includes several examples of DPs returning to marry, those begging compassionate leave and more rarely, employees who were *forced* to apply for return having been found to be unsatisfactory workers. The few deportations that did occur sent a message to the EVW community that they would be treated firmly.<sup>468</sup>

### **Conclusion: Labour schemes as inevitably short-lived**

Introduced to confront the problems of domestic manpower shortage and the costs of maintaining large numbers of DPs in Germany, Western European labour recruitment schemes were inevitably short-lived. Although British labour recruitment teams publicly denied any accusations of “skimming off the cream,”<sup>469</sup> in the DP camps of Germany “country after country [was] reaching in for its pound of good muscular workingman’s flesh.”<sup>470</sup> Acting on

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<sup>465</sup> Kay and Miles, *Refugees or Migrant Workers?*,

<sup>466</sup> In reality this often proved a very poor strategy, as returning DPs were typically found ineligible for later resettlement through the IRO. DP administrative authorities were aware of such strategizing and actively attempted to block it by granting returnees “Legal and Political Protection Only – on present facts.” See ‘Czeslaw Gasiorowski’, Doc. No. 79109736\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>467</sup> When it came to return, it is evident that EVWs maintained a variety of ties both to their homelands but also to Germany and were thus simultaneously embedded in multiple sites; their social life taking place across borders, particularly where family remained in the DP camps and employment conditions were uncertain.. On this aspect of transnationalism more generally, see Peggy Levitt, and B. Nadya Jaworsky, “Transnational Migration Studies: Past Developments and Future Trends,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 33 (2007): 130.

<sup>468</sup> Kay and Miles, *Refugees or Migrant Workers?*, 108

<sup>469</sup> As did the IRO. The expression was drawn from contemporary press polemics. See Jaroszyńska-Kirchmann, *The Exile Mission*, 105.

<sup>470</sup> This was a relief worker’s assessment of the impression of recruitment during the period. See Hulme, *The Wild Place*, 187.

behalf of domestic capital, the British government presented DPs to British employers as a captive labour force who could be disciplined through threat of deportation and to and Union interests as non-threatening to domestic jobs and labour. While the individuals with sufficient vitality for hard labour were selected, the aged, the sick, the infirm were all cast as undesirables.

At the same time, permanently resettling large numbers of white European DPs was considered beneficial from the demographic point of view. As a result, highly selective, prejudicial recruitment drives marred immigration efforts that precluded the selection of most DPs; who failed to fit the profile of those to be resettled. While DP Poles were considered to have the potential to become “suitable” Britons (in direct contrast to Jewish DPs), the process of passing various recruitment tests was often a lengthy and humiliating experience that tore families apart and left dependants to the poverty of the camps.

Neither the social concerns that resulted in limiting immigrant recruitment to niche occupations where no British labour could be found, nor the preferencing of underrepresented national groups and unattached individuals in the camps, could ultimately be reconciled with the supposed overarching (humanitarian) goal of finding a home for DPs nor the practical goal of alleviating the mounting costs of their care. While a more humanitarian approach to unrepatriable DPs was argued for on an international stage, the various resettlement and/or employment schemes, of which *Westward Ho!* was the largest, turned the DP camps of the Zone into battle grounds for labourers. Introduced to confront a particular crisis growing international pressure increasingly opposed to “slave labour”<sup>471</sup> mounted; calling into question the principles of liberty and freedom laid down in various statements of the prominent leaders of the Western Democracies. More significantly, the supply of eligible recruits dried up.

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<sup>471</sup> This polemical metaphor was common to media within the Soviet region of influence, which complained of the unfreedom of the various schemes by pointing to state sponsored absence of freedom of movement and poor wages in particular.

Given the restrictive nature of mass recruitment Polish DPs themselves had limited scope for action; either in cooperation with selection bodies or in resistance to these. Motivated by a swift exit from the DP camps and the possibility of a better future in Britain, Polish DP applicants sought to master the “little tactics of the habitat” that would secure them a spot as a “European volunteer worker.” Life in a DP camp necessarily meant some degree of self-reinvention and DPs learned how to self-fashion; to stress different or even new aspects of their personae to suit the preferences of a destination country. Still others protested mass recruitment largely indirectly through non-application, frustrating hopes of filled DP quotas. The fact that many DPs chose to *return* to the DP camps of Germany was yet another indication of the failure of recruitment drives to present a viable, long-term solution to the “DP Problem.”

While much of DP literature has focused on the experiences of Jewish DPs, scholarly considerations of DP labour recruitment are in this respect completely anomalous. Prominent studies on recruitment, while noting that Jews were ineligible for recruitment schemes, largely do not, subsequently, incorporate this exception *back* into their analyses and are content to, as DP recruiters themselves, ignore Jewish DPs entirely as extraneous to the subject. However, the deliberate Jewish exclusion is critical to any full understanding of recruitment’s *raison d’être* in the postwar period; its subsequent internal contradictions, limitations and failures; as well as the relationship between ethnicity and the state more generally.

The following subchapter turns to consider the migratory preferences of Jewish DPs with respect to Mandatory Palestine. As shall be shown, British foreign policy in the postwar period was fostered by the same conditions after peace and imperial retreat that had governed the domestic recruit of labour. In many respects, the Jews of occupied Germany shared with the British ideas around the strength of states with an exclusive national identity and that

played up a core ethnic identity. The problem of course, was the state that Zionists were aspiring to.

## 2. 2 THE PUSH FOR PALESTINE

The same Jewish DP group that had successfully resisted repatriation after 1945 swiftly evolved into a population actively pressing its own migratory agenda against staunch British refusal. The present subsection turns to consider the enrolment of Jewish DPs in a major political project, in which a highly motivated and organized Jewish minority among Gentiles proved remarkably successful in imposing a Zionist state-building agenda on the global stage. It seeks however, to complicate and test any politicized Zionist narrative with an emphasis on private migration strategies.

A second instalment of Holocaust survivor Ruth Minsky Sender's autobiography, entitled, *To Life*, recounts her movements following liberation in Germany and eventual settlement in New York.<sup>472</sup> Having already been compelled to cross and re-cross the German border in search of relatives, Ruth and fellow returnee Jewish DPs in DP camps across Germany were forced to ask themselves in 1946: "Who wants us?"<sup>473</sup> One DP, Ruth recounts, was swift to reply: "The Jews of Palestine want us."<sup>474</sup>

Indeed, most Jewish DPs expressed a strong preference for resettlement in Palestine. Before April 1948 however, when a British White Paper was still in force, Palestine was not a legal migratory destination, but rather a goal of political militancy. Those committed to resettlement in Palestine either campaigned in the DP camps of Germany or risked internment on the island of Cyprus. While this fraction's strong ideological motivation increasingly challenged British policy in the DP camps, feelings of national belonging were not enough to persuade many others to risk a journey to Palestine. Alluding to the dangers of illegal immigration, Ruth's husband explained to her his own position in 1946, "Were I alone I would

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<sup>472</sup> Ruth Minsky Sender, *To Life* (New York: Puffin, 1990), 41.

<sup>473</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>474</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

gladly risk my life for a homeland. For a place where no one could shout, *Jew, get out*. But I must think of you, of our unborn child. You are all I have. I cannot risk losing you.”<sup>475</sup> Even after April 1948, when DP Jews were able to freely immigrate to the new State of Israel, the facts of an ongoing war with neighbouring Arab states and an economy under a severe regime of austerity often cast Israel as a last resort.

Thus, while commitment to Palestine was, for some, an exclusive choice, it was not for many more. While some migration choices were formed instantly, many more developed over time. Expressed desires were responsive in large part to a lack of alternatives: or a refusal to accept those, like repatriation, that were available. a significant proportion of the DPs who went to Palestine did so without Zionist convictions, although someone who, in 1947, believed that there was no other alternative to European Jews but to found a state in Palestine was certainly a Zionist. Further, the wider geo-politics of the period meant that certainly before Israel’s foundation, and even afterwards, the desire to emigrate to Palestine was *conditional* on different factors including but not limited to perceptions of safety and economic wellbeing.

The Bergen-Belsen DP camp provides an important micro perspective on the confrontation between DPs and British authorities and subsequent understandings of the emergence of a post-catastrophe Zionism. What follows attempts first to characterize the debate within DP scholarship on the origins of DP Zionism and the present subchapter’s aim of examining and situating different levels of analysis and source bodies, including the records of the ITS, within a large, existent historiography. It then moves to consider British Jewish DP policy, its engagement with DP Zionism and its development in the Bergen-Belsen camp after 1945, based on systematized official administrative source records. Respective insights from the records of the Rose Henriques archive, David Boder’s postwar interviews with Jewish DPs, as well as the official Jewish DP newspaper of the Belsen camp, *Unzer Sztyrne* [Our Voice]

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<sup>475</sup> Ibid., 81.

offer important nuance and evidence especially well the positions of Zionist activists, some of whom would try to reach Palestine illegally and be detained in camps on Cyprus. This subchapter focuses on whether DP Zionism grew out of a continuity with pre-war activism, whether it responded to the trauma of persecution during the war, or whether it emerged in the framework of postwar self-organization. It will be shown that (while singularizing their peculiar perspective) the records of the ITS draw important attention to oft-neglected evolutions in individual Jewish DPs' Zionist ascriptions, personal and household strategies and ultimately, biographical trajectories.

### **DP Zionism: Consensus, debate and perspectives**

We still do not have a sense for the Zionist pulse of the general DP population.<sup>476</sup>

Studies of the “surviving remnant” (She’erit Hapletah), as the Jewish DPs came to call themselves, emerged as early as 1947 with Koppel Pinson’s study “Jewish Life in Liberated Germany.”<sup>477</sup> As Avinoam Patt has recently noted, there has since been “general historiographical consensus over the fact that the Jewish DPs gave enthusiastic support for Zionism in the years following the war.”<sup>478</sup> The source(s) of this apparent enthusiasm, however, have been attributed to different origins in the Jewish DP literature, generating an important question around whether Zionist enthusiasm in the DP camps was reactive to war experience or induced by political propaganda. On the one hand, several notable scholars<sup>479</sup> have largely

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<sup>476</sup> Avinoam J. Patt, "Stateless Citizens of Israel: Jewish Displaced Persons and Zionism in Post-War Germany," in Reinisch and White, *The Disentanglement of Populations*, 177.

<sup>477</sup> Koppel Pinson, “Jewish Life in Liberated Germany,” *Jewish Social Studies* 9, no. 2 (April 1947).

<sup>478</sup> Patt, "Stateless Citizens of Israel," 163.

<sup>479</sup> Ibid. Patt cites in support of this view a number of authors including Ze’ev Mankowitz, “Zionism and She’erit Hapletah,” in Yisrael Gutman and Avital Saf, eds., *She’erit Hapletah, 1944-1948: Rehabilitation and Political Struggle: Proceedings of the Sixth Yad Vashem International Historical Conference: Jerusalem, October 1985* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1990); Judith Tydor Baumel, *Kibbutz Buchenwald: Survivors and Pioneers* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997); Angelika Königseder and Julianne Wetzell, *Waiting for Hope: Jewish Displaced Persons in Post-World War II Germany* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2001).

characterized DP Zionism as a direct and spontaneous response to the experiences of war and thus testament to DPs' astonishing reconstruction of political life in the aftermath of the Holocaust.<sup>480</sup> On this model, widespread DP Zionism was a result of the collective experience of the Second World War and was singularly able to politically empower what remained of Europe's devastated Jewish community after 1945.<sup>481</sup>

An alternative trend however, attributes comparatively more weight to external factors that are argued to have carefully and purposefully manipulated DPs towards a Zionist commitment, to great effect. As the British government was politically opposed to Jewish immigration to Palestine, Zionist propaganda and activism were part of a transnational network structure and a process of forming public opinion that escaped state control and needed to develop an appeal of some kind. Zionists exploited one of the few sources of power that they had, the moral authority of the camp survivors, and the DPs had various motivations to claim this authority for themselves and become the actors that postwar revival ideology wanted them to be. This body of literature stresses in particular the role of the *Yishuv* (the Jewish community of Palestine) in instrumentalizing DPs,<sup>482</sup> as well as growing international sympathy for the

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<sup>480</sup> The emphasis of this line of thinking is to highlight that while the Zionist project itself was a deeply political one, Jewish DP ascription was reactive; representative of an instinctive desire, as a community of survivors, to search for continuity of Jewish life and community. Abraham J. Peck thus emphasizes a distinctive, even apolitical DP Zionism after 1945: "Among the survivors, therefore, there was no place for party dogma when it came to matters of Jewish security and the Jewish future. They understood the need for the unity of the Jewish people, and this understanding became one of the distinguishing features of its Zionist orientation." In her influential study of 2007, Atina Grossmann argues that widespread Zionist sentiment should be viewed from a "regenerative" angle through which Jewish DPs collectively underwent a complex rehabilitation process. Citing Grossmann, Gerard Daniel Cohen has later asserted that DP Zionism was "therapeutic," and not "staunchly ideological." Zionism, for the She'erit Hapletah, these authors conclude, was naturally gravitated toward after 1945, as the only available language of unity and hope. See Abraham J. Peck, "'Our Eyes Have Seen Eternity': Memory and Self-Identity Among the She'erith Hapletah," *Modern Judaism* 17:1 (1997): 62; Atina Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007); Gerard Daniel Cohen, *In War's Wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 127.

<sup>481</sup> Patt, "Stateless Citizens of Israel," 164. Support for this view is typically drawn from the diaries and reflections of contemporary observers. Cohen for example, buttresses his argument: "'The yearning for Palestine,' explained the chief rabbi of Poland to Anglo-American visitors in 1946, 'was a basic human instinct and had nothing political in it.'" Cohen, *In War's Wake*, 127.

<sup>482</sup> See in particular, Irit Keynan, "The Yishuv's Mission to the Displaced Persons Camps in Germany: The Initial Steps, August 1945-May 1946," in Gutman and Saf, eds., *She'erit Hapletah*, 231-248; Anita Shapira, "The Yishuv's Encounter with the Survivors of the Holocaust," in *She'erit Hapletah, 1944-1948: Rehabilitation and Political Structure* (1990): 80-106.



plight of the Holocaust survivors,<sup>483</sup> as tools in service of the goal of the creation of a Jewish state.<sup>484</sup> Both support for the illegal immigration movement (the Aliyah Bet) out of the DP camps prior to the foundation of the State of Israel, and the active conscription of DPs for military service (the *giyus*), are offered as the most notable instances of the degree of dominance that could be exerted over the DPs.<sup>485</sup> Such analyses have highlighted the impact of early and ongoing interactions between, for example, DP survivors and emissaries of the Jewish Agency in Palestine.<sup>486</sup> On this interpretation, Zionism—Jewish DPs became convinced—was the only solution capable of meeting the present and future needs of the Jewish people; a message that was successfully transmitted in the camps by invested outside interests.<sup>487</sup>

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<sup>483</sup> The DP plight was being amplified at the same time as a publicity campaign aimed at bringing the horrors of the Holocaust to the knowledge of the world. See Zeev Tzahor, "Holocaust Survivors as a Political Factor," *Middle Eastern Studies* 24:4 (1988): 433–434.

<sup>484</sup> This trend represents part of larger project within Israeli historiography in particular, to reinvestigate and demystify the history of the Zionist movement and the early policies of the Israeli state. Yosef Grodzinsky, a psychologist, claimed the position of an outsider attacking the idea of a spontaneous embrace of Zionism in the DP camps. "Though most of us were taught that the survivors of the Holocaust, living in Displaced Persons Camps, were hungering to get to the land of Israel where they could start a new life," (xii) the reality was much that Zionist organizers worked assiduously in the DP camps to try to persuade survivors of the Zionist cause. Under external pressure, schisms and divisions developed against the Zionists and within the DP community. Crucially, Grodzinsky argues that rather than representing the therapeutic needs of Jewish DPs, Zionist ideology was often imposed over the needs of survivors. Yosef Grodzinsky, *Homer Enoshi Tov* [Good Human Material] (Israel: Hed Artzi, 1998), later translated into English and published under the title: *In the Shadow of the Holocaust: The Struggle Between Jews and Zionists in the Aftermath of World War II* (Common Courage Press, 2004).

<sup>485</sup> These events will be considered in further detail later into this subchapter.

<sup>486</sup> Yoav Gelber's work for instance, gives comparatively less weight to DPs' own political consciousness in the early postwar months. Yoav Gelber, "The Meeting Between the Jewish Soldiers from Palestine Serving in the British Army and 'She'erit Hapletah,'" in Gutman and Saf, eds., *She'erit Hapletah*, 450–481. By contrast, Ze'ev Mankowitz argues that survivors had often reached a Zionist conclusion even prior to liberation, and a determination to reach Palestine played a crucial role in the swift establishment of representational bodies only weeks after liberation. Ze'ev Mankowitz, "The Formation of She'erit Hapleita: November 1944–July 1945," *Yad Vashem Studies* 20 (1990): 337–370.

<sup>487</sup> A number of studies have discussed the ideological impact of the Holocaust and its role in speeding the Zionist timetable. See Dalia Ofer, "The Dilemma of Rescue and Redemption: Mass Immigration to Israel in the First Years of Statehood," *YIVO Annual* 20 (1991): 185–210. Dan Diner however draws important attention to the role of postwar political realities in contributing to the Yishuv's fostering of national identity among the DP population. Zionist functionaries were not always as concerned with the immediate consequences of the Holocaust so much as political upheavals in Eastern Europe at war's end and in particular, the project of homogenization that saw populations ethnically cleansed under euphemistic "transfers," as well as the consolidation of Soviet power in the region. Wider political constellations, it was thought, "held out little promise for the remaining Jews." Dan Diner, "Jews in Germany after the Holocaust: An Interpretation," in Michael Brenner, ed., *A History of Jews in Germany since 1945: Politics, Culture, and Society* (Indiana University Press, 2018), 9.

Patt concludes that while “these historiographical contributions provide a number of noteworthy reasons for DP Zionist affiliation following the war,” they ultimately neglect the DP voice itself.<sup>488</sup> Margarete Myers draws a similar conclusion in her analysis, arguing that most DP studies have concentrated on issues of policy and the nation-state system, on the systems and bureaucracies that managed the DP camps, to the detriment of attention to the priorities of the Jewish DPs themselves.<sup>489</sup> Both Myers and Patt attribute this neglect largely to a matter of documentation, with authors focusing on readily available accounts of DP political life overwhelmingly produced by military officials, governments, international bodies and welfare agencies that collectively comprised the “refugee regime” of the postwar period.<sup>490</sup>

A growing body of literature has thus attempted to better incorporate evidence of a plethora of individual perspectives, drawing on primary sources including Jewish DP newspapers, private correspondences, interviews and memoirs.<sup>491</sup> The result, Patt argues, draws important attention to the “pragmatic concerns of the Jewish DPs, which may have been best addressed by the Zionist choice.” What emerges is a position that has characterized Zionist ascription in the DP camps as a practical, functional response reflecting the unifying power of the past, as well as the present needs of DPs and their future goals.<sup>492</sup> A model of functional Zionism argues that DPs made the choice, in their collective identification as the She’erit

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<sup>488</sup> Patt, “Stateless Citizens of Israel,” 164.

<sup>489</sup> Margarete L. Meyers, “Jewish DP’s: Reconstructing Individual and Community in the U.S. Zone of Occupied Germany,” *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 42 (1997): 303.

<sup>490</sup> Yehuda Bauer, “The Initial Organization of the Holocaust Survivors in Bavaria,” *Yad Vashem Studies* 8 (1970). Myers adds that the relative neglect of the DP perspective may also be attributed to the concurrent focus on “significant” events or groups, whereby Jewish DPs are regarded as significant only insofar as they reflect broader truths concerning the nation-state system and emergent Cold War. Ibid. Since Meyer’s article however, much work has been done seeking to illuminate the ways in which the DP camp experience shaped the perspectives of Jewish DPs.

<sup>491</sup> Interestingly, as concerns quantity of available such documentation, Patt and Meyers differ dramatically. While Myers claims “evidence for these [attitudes] is relatively scarce,” Patt argues that “an abundance of sources does reflect the DP position.”

<sup>492</sup> Allusions to aspects of this kind of practical Zionism are often layered atop the positions described. Cohen notes, “With the Old World and the New closed off to Jewish resettlement, the state of Israel was indeed the only safety valve for postwar Jewish migrants, regardless of their sympathy for Zionism.” Cohen, *In War’s Wake*, 117.

Hapletah, to identify “in a Zionist manner,” based on the belief that Zionism and a Jewish state could best secure a future for the Jewish people and a path out of the DP camps.<sup>493</sup>

A necessary and careful consideration of various layers of source bodies affirms what the historiographical discussion suggests: DP Zionism had multiple meanings within the Jewish DP community. Most significantly, as will be shown, ITS evidences the contingent nature of DP Zionism at the individual level and the ongoing need to historicize Zionist commitment on the background of DP camp conditions. As CM/1 forms illustrate, political and social factors were continually being balanced with respect to emigration. The immediate postwar priority of the survivors had been family location and wherever possible, reunification; and in the DP camps, Jewish DPs concentrated on re-establishing and forming new family units. Different conceptions of the origin of DP Zionism might also be reflective in the literature on an emphasis on different periods of time in which the *immediate* postwar months were indeed characterized by a broad thrust for unity as a result of “the shared experiences during the war years and which overrode former political and ideological differences.”<sup>494</sup> Only later however, did this post-catastrophe Zionism more explicitly translate into a sincere migratory goal of resettlement in Eretz Israel. Through external effort, such aims became the “perceived political desire of She'erit Hapletah,” with shifts in the political orientation of the survivors brought about by the work of Jewish soldiers' in the camps especially.<sup>495</sup> While Jewish leaders in Palestine, internationally and in the DP camps argued that collectively, Jewish survivors should emigrate to a Jewish state, household units established individual migratory preferences and choices.

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<sup>493</sup> Patt, “Stateless Citizens of Israel,” 178.

<sup>494</sup> Gelber, “The Meeting Between the Jewish Soldiers,” 17.

<sup>495</sup> Ibid.

## Britain, the Jewish DP “Problem,” and the Palestine “Question”

As Kochavi notes, Britain’s pretensions of Great Power status at war’s end were, in short, history.<sup>496</sup> Nonetheless, British interest in the Middle East was seen as vital for its economic recovery, the area being particularly rich in oil reserves. Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin was adamant that the flailing Empire’s strategic interests were best served by retaining British status in the region. Palestine however, proved to be especially troublesome, and relatedly, the thorny issue of Jewish immigration.<sup>497</sup>

At the Evian conference in July 1938, Palestine was purposefully not put forward as a potential “home” for Jewish refugees fleeing Hitler’s Europe: with both Britain and the US unwilling to examine their immigration policies and risking the goodwill of Arab states. Though, to pacify international opinion, the British did allow the immigration of several thousand Jews to Britain itself until 1939. In May of 1939, on the eve of war, a White Paper restricted Jewish immigration to Palestine still further, to secure Arab support. This White Paper allowed for 75,000 Jewish migrants over a five-year period.<sup>498</sup> At war’s end; “more than ten thousand immigration certificates of the seventy-five thousand allocated by the White Paper would remain unused.”<sup>499</sup> In the postwar period, London’s guiding principles under a new

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<sup>496</sup> Four key works, published within a few years of each other in the early 2000s, have explored different facets of policy formation and implementation with respect to migration to Palestine and points of friction between British authorities and Jewish DP representational bodies over the Palestine “question.” Angelika Königseder and Juliane Wetzel, *Waiting for Hope: Jewish Displaced Persons in Post-World War II Germany* (Northwestern University Press, 2001); Zeev W. Mankowitz, *Life between Memory and Hope: The Survivors of the Holocaust in Occupied Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Arie J. Kochavi, *Post-Holocaust Politics: Britain, the United States, and Jewish Refugees, 1945-1948* (Univ of North Carolina Press, 2003); Hagit Lavsky, *New Beginnings: Holocaust Survivors in Bergen-Belsen and the British Zone in Germany, 1945–1950* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2002).

<sup>497</sup> During the first three years following Hitler’s rise to power in Germany in January of 1933 the Jewish population in Palestine had increased by 80%, sparking revolt among its Arab population from 1936-1939. During this period, immigration to Palestine was limited, with fewer than 24,000 Jews making it to Palestine in 1937-1938. Kochavi, *Post-Holocaust Politics*, 7. Kochavi provides a figure of 62,000 Jews entering Palestine in 1935 alone.

<sup>498</sup> Unsurprisingly, this generated bitterness in the *Yishuv*, feelings which only grew as the war progressed and news of the systematic murder of Europe’s Jews spread.

<sup>499</sup> Kochavi, *Post-Holocaust Politics*, 7.

labour government vis-à-vis Jewish immigration did not change: the Jewish DP “problem” should be kept separate from the Palestine “question.”

The official records of the administration of the British Zone of occupation pertaining to the care and maintenance of DPs—and specifically Jewish populations therein—, can be broadly broken down into four main, chronological groups, reflecting key developments in the management of Jewish DPs on the ground. As we shall see, it was evident that from the outset, the British were convinced that recognition of Jewish DPs and representational bodies needed to be opposed, since it would help consolidate broad Zionist sympathies in the Belsen camp and empower a Zionist agenda.

The first group of files contains documentation on what might be called the pre-1945, “planning phase.” British war-time planning for displacement, even *rhetorical* planning, failed to adequately account for the position and probable movement of Jewish refugees following liberation. Nominally, the British government was “firmly resolved to continue, in co-operation with all Governments and private authorities concerned, to rescue and maintain, so far as lies in their power, all those menaced by the Nazi terror.”<sup>500</sup> While the Reich’s targeting of Europe’s Jews was a fact well known to British policy makers, pre-planning for a postwar refugee policy did not reflect the status of Jews as a specific victim group. The unique position of Jewish DPs, as stateless individuals, was largely ignored in military pre-planning for mass repatriation with British intelligence estimating only a Polish majority, ready and willing to return “home.”<sup>501</sup> As we have seen in Chapter 1 however, a policy of repatriation was never going to provide a long-term solution for the Jewish DP community.

<sup>500</sup> FO 660/170 Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, ‘Persecution of Jews’, April, 1944. Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden in response to a question in the House of Parliament.

<sup>501</sup> An early lack of realism may be attributed to the short-sighted British policy of attempting of hoping to avoid problems associated with the presence “of stateless groups for whom no country will accept responsibility,” by simply denying the category of “Jewish” formal recognition. WO 219/2564 Operation Rankin: Problem of Displaced Persons, ‘Measures for dealing with the situation in the field’, 13<sup>th</sup> December, 1943.

Only half of those liberated from the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp were Jewish, with a second half comprised mostly of Polish DPs. Following reports of early incidents of antisemitic violence between the two groups, the camp was reorganized in October of 1945. While still nominally one camp according to the British, two large sections were turned into de facto Jewish camps with a remaining two housing some 10,000 Poles. Ongoing friction between the two communities however, ultimately led the British to transfer all non-Jewish inhabitants of the camps to other DP camps across the Zone, while denying such a move was tantamount to recognition of Jews as a distinct national group, with the result that by August of 1946, the entire Belsen camp was almost exclusively made up of Jewish inhabitants. The camp attracted a further approximate 3,000 “infiltratee” Jews by the end of 1946. By April of 1947, 10,346 of the 12,232 registered Jewish DPs in the British Zone lived in the Belsen camp, which constituted constituting the largest, by population, Jewish DP camp in occupied Germany.<sup>502</sup> A second category of official files on Jewish DPs, the “General Jewish DP policy” files of 1945, relate specifically to policy around Jewish self-representation and segregation in the Zone. Secondary source scholarship is united in identifying the disingenuous reasons behind Whitehall’s official non-segregation policy.<sup>503</sup> The Harrison report’s preliminary recommendation that Jews be separate from other DP national groups and that 100,000 be allowed into Palestine sparked fear in London that such a move would de facto legitimize Jewish nationalism: where segregation would strengthen the hope of reaching Palestine. Official files reflect the British determination to distinguish themselves from the American

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<sup>502</sup> Kochavi, *Post-Holocaust Politics*, 56; Rainer Schulze, “‘A Continual Source of Trouble’: The Displaced Persons Camp Bergen-Belsen (Hohne), 1945–1950,” *Post War Europe: Refugees, Exile and Resettlement, 1945-1950* (Gale Digital Collection, [www.gale.com/DigitalCollections](http://www.gale.com/DigitalCollections)): 4-5.

<sup>503</sup> Supposedly done, as discussed in Chapter 1, on the basis of not wanting to follow in the footsteps of the Nazis, in racially segregating Jews.

Zone, where Jewish volunteer bodies, alongside Jewish DPs themselves, formulated military policy with respect to Jewish camp inhabitants.<sup>504</sup>

Problematically from the British perspective, Jewish DPs themselves were demanding segregation.<sup>505</sup> Almost immediately following liberation, DP Jews in Belsen established a Belsen Committee,<sup>506</sup> which was amalgamated in June of 1945, along with a Bavarian Committee in Munich, into the Central Committee of Liberated Jews of Germany.<sup>507</sup> While not recognized by the British as the official representative body of Jewish DPs in the Zone,<sup>508</sup> it nonetheless played a prominent role in advocating for the segregation of Jews in the DP camps in Whitehall.<sup>509</sup> As a compromise, Jews were declared to have been given the option of “self-segregating.”<sup>510</sup> General policy with respect to Jewish DPs was thus defined by attempts to deny requests made by the Central Committee, whose unequivocal demands were seen as preventing the smooth management of the Belsen camp in the manner of other camps in the Zone.

Meanwhile, bleak reports emerging from the Belsen camp in the international press, continued to embarrass the British.<sup>511</sup> In order to appear responsive to the needs of the Jewish DPs, a Colonel Robert Solomon<sup>512</sup> had been appointed in April of 1946 as the “Jewish adviser” in the Zone.<sup>513</sup> Three weeks after his appointment, Solomon submitted his recommendations

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<sup>504</sup> FO 945/378 Jewish Matters: General, ‘Policy of “Equality of Right Regardless of Race or Religion” makes position of Jews in Germany untenable’, March 3, 1945. As one DP was noted to have remarked: “We have not the impression that the British Military Government really wants to help us.”

<sup>505</sup> Kochavi, *Post-Holocaust Politics*, 36.

<sup>506</sup> Josef Rosensaft and nine other survivors had established the Temporary Committee of Liberated Jews only a few days following liberation. See Königseder and Wetzell, *Waiting for Hope*, 79.

<sup>507</sup> Pinson, “Jewish Life in Liberated Germany,” 120.

<sup>508</sup> The Central Committee was the strongest indicator of the strength of DP Zionism in the Belsen camp: it called upon Britain to designate Palestine as a Jewish state and of course, to recognize Jewish DPs as Jews.

<sup>509</sup> There is evidence that some military officials on the ground did begin to also support change in Jewish policy, for administrative reasons, arguing that separating those that want to return from those who did not was a matter of convenience.

<sup>510</sup> Kochavi, *Post-Holocaust Politics*, 39.

<sup>511</sup> Schulze, “‘A Continual Source of Trouble’,” 3.

<sup>512</sup> Solomon was an attorney by trade, and a former chairman of the Jewish National Fund in Britain. See Norman Bentwich, *They Found Refuge* (London: Cresset Press, 1956), 95–6.

<sup>513</sup> Arie J. Kochavi, “The Politics of Displaced Persons in Post-War Europe, 1945-1950’ Post-war Europe: Refugees, Exile and Resettlement, 1945-1950,” *Thomson Learning EMEA Ltd, Reading* (2007): 4.

for the 16,000 Jewish residents of British Zone (this number including German Jews not residing in DP camps).<sup>514</sup> As Kochavi explains

In his assessment, most of those whose country of origin was Germany, about five thousand in number, would agree to be resettled there. Of the remaining eleven thousand DPs, one thousand would need to be placed in retirement homes or in welfare institutions. Another thousand could be given immigrant visas to various places, and some of them were ready to leave Germany immediately. Ninety percent of the remaining nine thousand wanted to go to Palestine; of these more than half (65 percent) would not agree to a compromise, while the others, if offered the opportunity to go elsewhere, would do so. Thus the problem of the Jewish DPs in the British Zone could be solved by issuing eight thousand immigration certificates to Palestine. Implementation of his program would make it possible to shut down all camps in which Jewish DPs were located, particularly Bergen-Belsen, which Solomon, too, realized was a magnet for Jews arriving from Eastern Europe.<sup>515</sup>

The issue with Solomon's proposals was, predictably, the certificates for Palestine, with Britain at this time only allocating a monthly quota of fifteen hundred.<sup>516</sup> As Solomon predicted, the situation was to change in 1946. A third category of official files, the "Infiltree" files of 1946, evidences the fact that incoming Jewish DPs were viewed by the British administration as Zionist pawns. From the first wave of arrivals across the German border, Bevin recognized no other aim behind their movement than a concerted effort to reach Palestine.<sup>517</sup> On this assumption, new steps were taken to dissuade any further "infiltrators" from seeking a home in the Belsen camp. Rations became an important tool of administrative control. While British authorities refrained from forcibly removing the 3000 or so infiltrators

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<sup>514</sup> While the appointment of Solomon was seen as useful for the British administration, his initial favourable view of British policy vis-à-vis Jewish DPs made unpopular with the Board of Deputies of British Jews (BDBJ), whose Chairman suggested that Solomon "ought to resign and to make public his reasons for taking this action." Solomon's appointment thus failed to buy the goodwill of British Jewry, "a factor of some importance." FO 945/384 Jewish Adviser: Colonel Solomon and his Recommendations for Jews 'Jewish Advisor', January 13, 1947.

<sup>515</sup> Kochavi, *Post-Holocaust Politics*, 46-49. The original recommendations may be found as well in FO 945/384 Jewish Adviser: Colonel Solomon and his Recommendations for Jews, 'Proposal for the Resettlement of Jews at Present Residing within the British Zone, Germany', May 1946.

<sup>516</sup> Kochavi, *Post-Holocaust Politics*, 50.

<sup>517</sup> Ibid., 46. Bevin was not mistaken: the movement of the 1945-1946 "infiltrees" (She'erit ha-Pletah on their own term) from Poland to Germany was directed by various co-operating committees with the help of the Haganah and members of the Jewish Brigade in the British army, the plan being to bring to Palestine as many young people as possible. They had started moving prospective immigrants from Poland to Romania, and later via Budapest and Graz to Italy in late 1945, but because of the Palestine blockade decided to direct them to Germany. Yehuda Bauer's, *Flight and Rescue: Brichah* (New York: Random House, 1970) treats the undercover activities of these activists among the DPs and within the army



in the Belsen camp, they assigned rations without taking these numbers into account. Rations were to be distributed by welfare agencies only for those who had arrived prior to July 1, 1946. UNRRA was mandated to follow all protocols within the Zone: however, this zonal variation in infiltree policy—particularly as related to the distribution of rations—saw mounting tensions between UNRRA and Jewish welfare bodies, and Whitehall.

Official records highlight the relative power of Jewish DP elites in the emergent rations debate. Josef Rosensaft, the leader of the Central Committee for the British Zone was in a quite a unique position in having direct access to the British Foreign Office. Rosensaft, according to British personnel, insisted on handling all supplies himself, and it was noted early on that all supplies were “run his way and not ours [British]; they are run by him and not us.”<sup>518</sup> To break the impasse between the British and UNRRA, Rosensaft suggested that “infiltree” Jews be given the same rations as the German population, which was less than that allocated to DPs, but be allowed to remain in the Belsen camp. While Division leaders complained that Rosensaft was known to exploit his position, it was agreed that “it would have been quite unjustified to have lost his good will for the sake of administrative advantage, particularly since the repercussions would not have been confined to Germany.”<sup>519</sup> On April 23, 1947, the British endorsed Rosensaft’s proposal, although by this time, their policy had already helped to limit new arrivals in the Zone to negligible numbers.<sup>520</sup> Exceptionally, it was agreed that Belsen camp would continue to run “his [Rosensaft’s] way until it ceases to exist or until he is deposed, whichever is the sooner.”<sup>521</sup> “Infiltree” files in particular, illustrate a British perspective that consistently aimed to delegitimize any efforts towards further Jewish immigration to Palestine,

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<sup>518</sup> FO 1052/247 Hohne Belsen, ‘Response to Audit Report from A.C. Clarke, Commander’, July 7, 1949.

<sup>519</sup> Ibid. ‘Memorandum from K. W. Matthews, Deputy Chief Displaced Persons Division’, October, 1949.

<sup>520</sup> Kochavi, *Post-Holocaust Politics*, 55. Evidently given the comparatively small numbers of Jews in the British Zone, the American Zone was the preferred Zone of choice. This was largely thanks to the American policy of segregating Jewish DPs and recognizing DP camp leadership, in contrast to the British Zone. As a consequence, by the fall of 1947, almost 90 per cent of Jewish DPs in Germany were in the American Zone.

<sup>521</sup> FO 1052/247 Hohne Belsen, ‘Memorandum from K. W. Matthews, Deputy Chief Displaced Persons Division’, October, 1949.

while paradoxically being made to respond to pre-state Zionist organizations (including especially the Central Committee) as political actors with the power to affect policy, and whom they saw as representing a fact of Jewish DPs' and inflexible commitment to emigration to Palestine. At its core, the Jewish DP "problem" was paradoxical insofar as it represented both profound disagreement between parties over the question of emigration to Palestine, but at the same time, resounding agreement on wider ideas around postwar stability which all parties agreed came from a return to the national fold. The problem was the state the Jewish DPs were claiming.

A fourth category of administrative files, "Jewish DP emigration" files from 1946-1947, focuses on illegal immigration to Palestine and specifies directly the enduring British view of Jewish DPs migratory hopes: "With regard to the future, the Jewish DP's are interested only in emigration. Their hopes are centred on Palestine."<sup>522</sup> Jewish illegal immigration had begun before the advent of the Second World War. After 1945, as mentioned above, over 10,000 certificates had not been issued under the White Paper quota. In preparing to counter the inevitable arrival of illegal ships into Palestine, the British were willing to go to extreme lengths, but were cautious of reprisals from within the *Yishuv* and of further escalation of conflict. Consequently, the British foreign office ended up deciding to deduct illegal immigrants from the official 10,000 quotas. This band-aid fix quickly lost its stick: by the end of 1945 the quota was almost up, and no new policy had been introduced, despite efforts from the British to introduce a new, monthly quota of 1500.<sup>523</sup>

New recommendations called for the establishment of immigrant detention camps in the British colony of Cyprus on August 13, 1946, which ultimately proved impotent to limit

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<sup>522</sup> FO 945/723 Jewish DPs in Hohn Camp, 'The Jews in the British Zone of Germany', April 10, 1947.

<sup>523</sup> The British faced mounting pressure on all fronts facing pressure on all fronts, including with the Arab press which issued a number of reports ridiculing seeming British inability to control the borders of Palestine. WO 169/23021 Fortnightly Intelligence Newsletter, no.5, January 4, 1946.

the illegal immigration of Jews from the European continent.<sup>524</sup> British attempts to regulate movement to Palestine out of the Zone were part of a policy ironically named “Grand National.” Of 1,500 certificates for emigration to Palestine, the British aimed to reserve 275 for those with relatives in Palestine and a further 375 certificates would be made specifically available each month for Jewish DPs in British Zone of Germany, beginning January 15, 1947.<sup>525</sup> While the original plan had estimated the detention of some 10,000 illegal migrants on Cyprus, figures continued to rise steadily. Cyprus detainees, numbering 51,530 in total, represented 67 percent of emigrants to Palestine from November of 1946 to mid-May 1948, of which a majority (60 percent) came from the DP camps.<sup>526</sup>

As a result of its failure to stem illegal immigration, by 1947 the British cabinet, Kochavi argues, had lost the willpower to deal with both the Jewish DP “problem” and the Palestine “question.”<sup>527</sup> While the British continued to reject American recommendations that the immigration quotas be upped, February 1947 alone had projected a thousand more illegal immigrants obtaining passage to Palestine, all of them being deported, stretching the capacity

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<sup>524</sup> David Schaary, “The Social Structure of the Cyprus Detention Camps: 1946–1949,” *Studies in Zionism* 3:2 (1982): 273. Schaary explains: “the immigrants were located in twelve camps, concentrated in two areas about forty kilometres from each other.” (274) “The camps were surrounded by barbed wire and watchtowers, and carefully guarded by 2,500 British soldiers.” (275) This article is adapted from a chapter of the author's book, *The Deportation to Cyprus: The Illegal Immigration, Deportation Camps and the Society of Immigrants, August 1946-February 1949* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem, 1981). On Cyprus, see also Schaary, *Gerush Kafisin: 1946-1949: ha-ha'apalah, ha-mahanot ve-hevrat ha-mapilim* [The Cyprus Detention Camps for Jewish Illegal Immigrants to Palestine] (Tel Aviv: Ha-Sifriya ha-Tsionit, 1981); Nahum Bogner, *The Deportation Island: Jewish Illegal Immigrants' Camps on Cyprus, 1946-1948* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1991) [Hebrew].

<sup>525</sup> FO 945/467 Migration to Palestine of Jews (Grand National Immigration Scheme), ‘Foreign Office Memorandum’, January 10, 1947. An additional total of 360 certificates would be made available for Jewish DPs in British Zone to cover period the period from the 15 November of 1946 to 15 January 1946. These persons had to provide evidence of having a relative who could support them in Palestine. In stark contrast to the selection criteria of the mass recruitment schemes discussed in the first half of this chapter, priority was given to children under the age of 12, as well as the elderly and infirm. As historian Idith Zertal has convincingly argued, prior to declaration of the State of Israel, immigration authorities in Palestine tried to limit immigration to persons unable to work or fight, with the result that a number of complaints were made in Jerusalem regarding the “poor profile” of DP arrivals. Idith Zertal, *From Catastrophe to Power: Holocaust Survivors and the Emergence of Israel* (Berkeley: 1998) 216; Lavsky, *New Beginnings*, 208.

<sup>526</sup> The rest of the detainees came from the Balkans and other East European countries. A very small group of Jews from Morocco was also in Cyprus. See Dalia Ofer, “Holocaust Survivors as Immigrants: The Case of Israel and the Cyprus Detainees,” *Modern Judaism* (1996): 3, footnote 6.

<sup>527</sup> As Kochavi notes, the British reluctance to engage further in the impasse in Palestine must also be seen within a broader context of their transferring authority in India in 1947 and ending their economic and military support to Greece and Turkey at the time. See Kochavi, *Post-Holocaust Politics*, 75.

of the Cyprus camps. Clearly, Cyprus had proved an unmitigated failure from the point of view of deterrence with the British increasingly deporting illegals back to their ports of embarkation. On July 11, 1947, the *Exodus* embarked with 4,530 Jews onboard.<sup>528</sup> Bevin decided to make an example of the ship (in a move that proved controversial in Britain itself and even within the Labour Party): to take it over by force, with subsequent loss of life, and to return it to France and ultimately Hamburg. The scenes in Hamburg on September 7, 1947 and the internment of the Exodus passengers in Poppendorf and Am Stau are certainly the most mediatized events of the DP camps of the British Zone.<sup>529</sup> The international scandal that followed was the final nail in the coffin of any British hopes of halting or reducing illegal immigration to Palestine. Three weeks after the *Exodus* was forced back, the British cabinet decided to evacuate Palestine.<sup>530</sup>

The records of the British DP administration as concerns the Jewish DPs, and subsequent secondary analysis focusing on the evolution of British policy vis-à-vis Jewish survivors, point to important points of friction between British authorities and DP Jews and where this affected policy formation and implementation. It does however, have a tendency of presenting the British government as a political actor and, while acknowledging some DP activism, casting the majority of DP Jews as demographic quantities. Alternative source bodies, particularly those evidencing the work of Jewish volunteer workers in the Belsen camp, draw attention to the specific political dimension around the intense and purposeful pressure that members of the *Yishuv* and Jewish diaspora organizations undertook after 1945 in order to enhance Jewish national sentiment in the DP camps as well as increase refugee pressure at the coasts of Palestine. Unlike the British administration (which relied on the demands of the Central Committee as a barometer of collective Jewish demands) such pressures did not take

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<sup>528</sup> Arie J. Kochavi, "The Struggle Against Jewish Immigration to Palestine," *Middle Eastern Studies* 34:3 (1998): 161.

<sup>529</sup> A British soldier charged with control of Exodus migrants in Hamburg later expressed his sympathy for their cause. Peter Absolon, "The Exodus Affair: Hamburg 1947," *Journal of Holocaust Education* 6 (1997): 65-79.

<sup>530</sup> Kochavi, "The Struggle Against Jewish Immigration," 161.

as a given the assumption that all Jewish DPs hoped to make their way to Palestine (and would do so were it not for British intervention). Rather, they offer a more nuanced picture of how significant migratory pressure was applied on the ground in the Belsen camp.

### **Welfare workers' perspectives**

A key finding of the Harrison report was the following: “For reasons that are obvious and need not be laboured, most Jews want to leave Germany and Austria as soon as possible. *That is their first and great expressed wish* [italics my emphasis].” There are important caveats to this however, as the report hastens to note: “Some wish to return to their countries of nationality [...], Some [...] wish to emigrate to the United States where they have relatives, others to England, the British Dominions, or to South America.”<sup>531</sup> There is, then, an unanswered question within the report: if Palestine is the greatest wish, how and why do family connections have impact? What role does network have to play in the migratory preferences of Jewish DPs and where (and why) does it support, or act against a stated Zionism?

The following continues to explore the evolution of the migration project to Palestine after 1945 in a consideration of alternative sources beyond the official British record. A collection of reports from British volunteer workers in the DP camps of the British Zone in 1945 concludes that the main complaint of volunteers at the end of the year was “that those so far responsible for Displaced Persons have been an ‘impersonal military machinery, which regards Displaced Persons as numbers and categories rather than people.’”<sup>532</sup> Indeed, records generated by volunteer workers on the ground, differ in important respects from official documentation generated by the British bureaucracy.

<sup>531</sup> RHA, “Copy of Earl J. Harrison Report,” *Newspapers*, 81.

<sup>532</sup> RHA, “Extracts or Summaries From Reports, Letters, etc.,” *Newspapers*, 51.

Welfare workers in the British Zone were among the first to meet and interact with Displaced Persons. Of the many relief organizations that would work in the British Zone after 1945, the most significant for Jewish DPs was the Jewish Relief Unit (JRU), which was eventually granted access to survivors in the Zone at the end of June 1945.<sup>533</sup> Under the leadership of Leonard Cohen and Lady Rose Henriques, JRU units were the first volunteer units to have access to the Belsen camp outside of the British military and remained the major volunteer provider of workers and resources for the camp thereafter.<sup>534</sup> The records of the Rose Henriques archive (RHA) contain numerous reports from JRU workers on the ground, as well as volunteers from other Jewish and non-Jewish relief organizations coming into contact with the DPs of occupied Germany. While RHA records are essentially a collection of loosely indexed correspondences between welfare workers and welfare organizations, those gathered under the “Newspaper” sub-section are the most pertinent to the immediate postwar period and the interactions with Jewish DPs on the ground. While the desire of most DPs to emigrate to Palestine is repeatedly noted as early as weeks following liberation, careful examination of welfare workers’ reports highlight several significant trends to be outlined in what follows.

On June 27, 1945, a handwritten letter from British Zone volunteer Leslie Moffat notes a recent interaction with DPs: “a group of ex-slave workers asked me to get in touch with a Jewish organization. They were Polish Jews, mostly, whose families had been killed by the Germans and thus said they had no wish to return there and seemed very desirous of emigrating to Palestine.”<sup>535</sup> These brief sentences touch upon a number of key themes that emerge across volunteer reports and break down a general “push for Palestine” into distinct and intersecting motivations that speak to the specificity of Jewish strategizing out of displacement, and at the same time, its comparable aspects or universality. These themes are three-fold. Firstly, the role

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<sup>533</sup> Dan Stone, *The Liberation of the Camps: The End of the Holocaust and Its Aftermath* (Yale University Press, 2015), 122.

<sup>534</sup> Ibid., Stone notes that by the summer of ‘46, the JRU has 92 workers in the British Zone.

<sup>535</sup> RHA, “Letter from Leslie A. Moffat, 24/6/1945.,” *Newspapers*, 43.

that family—or lack thereof—played in (pre)determining Palestine as a destination of choice among Jewish DPs; the distinction between Jewish DP individuals “waiting” for legal entry to Palestine—and susceptible to alternatives over time—, and those determined to seek entry through *any means necessary*; and finally, the distinct Zionism of Polish Jewish DPs.

While the fact that most Jewish DPs hoped to emigrate to Palestine is corroborated in the reports of the RHA, the notion that this is the *priority*—even with respect to migration—is not well supported. RHA records evidence well the fact that in the immediate months following liberation, Jewish movement in and out of DP camps and across the new German border, was dictated primarily by a desire to determine the fates of relatives. “The first and great expressed wish” of those who had survived the Holocaust, was to determine what remained of their pre-war social fabrics. With few resources at their disposal, DPs reached out to welfare workers most often to access immediate resources—rather than emigration aid—including access to information, or possibility to establish contact with, any surviving relatives. Relief workers’ reports are replete with the persistent requests of DP Jews to help establish efficient means of acquiring information on family abroad. One worker notes; “There is another grievance which is felt very much indeed, viz. the lack of any facility of contacting relatives and friends abroad. [...] Many are longing for that kind of news, as every family has been scattered all over the world since 1933. A provisional solution should be found [...] with a view to exchanging addresses of surviving relatives and friends until a normal postal service can be started.”<sup>536</sup>

As concerned their priorities, DPs themselves were perfectly capable of stating these clearly to welfare workers. One such letter (translated from the original Polish) from a group of Jewish women, “Gruppe Juedischer Frauen,” in Schleswig-Holstein in the British Zone, thanks a volunteer for their “interest in their fate.” It continues;

We are here 42 Jewish women and one man. Most of us from Litauen (Kaunas) Polen and Lettland (Riga) [spelling as in original]. Until the end of April we were in the

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<sup>536</sup> RHA, “Copy of a Letter sent to Dr. Breslauer, despatched August 18,” *Newspapers*, 58.

concentration camp Stulthof [Stutthof] near Danzig and then we were evacuated to this place [These women were currently living in a house in Eckernförde]. In July 1944 we were parted from our husbands at Stulthof [Stutthof] who were deported to an unknown destination and since we are without news from them. We are now completely alone without a home, family, we are physically and mentally exhausted without financial means or hope for the future. We approach you as the only Jewish organization who can help us. The most important thing for us at present: 1. News about the fate of our families. 2. To be able to send news to our families abroad (Palestine, Africa, America and Russia) 3. Emigration abroad (Palestine, America, Africa). We anticipate your reply.<sup>537</sup>

Geographical destinations were less important than maintaining or recomposing kinship structures.<sup>538</sup> The post-Holocaust situation in which surviving Jews found themselves constituted a peculiar moment in social history. Most survivors, particularly those that were liberated in German camps, were young people who had lost their relatives in the Holocaust and were desperately searching for a substitute family. At the same time, a considerable amount of collective pressure from various Zionist organizations was being exerted on DPs. Collectivist projects need not be pitted against individualism, however. The majority of Jewish DPs attempted to affiliate themselves with family units as well as with imagined communities, without necessarily seeing any conflict between the two. Further, a postwar decade boiling with nationalism and other collective myths could in fact offer a sense of community and new solidarity networks that often purposefully sought to *replace* family.

A number of scholars<sup>539</sup> have explored the role of various Zionist organizations, external to those established by the DPs themselves, in fostering DP Zionism. The various dimensions of the covert transfer of DPs from Germany to Palestine during the three and a half years (1945-1948) between war's end and the establishment of the state of Israel, has been well

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<sup>537</sup> RHA, "Copy Translation, 12/06/1945.," *Newspapers*, 24. This short list of priorities suggests that "locating" families meant both establishing the fates of immediate family in Europe (and typically physically re-joining in countries of origin or in the DP camps) as well as establishing a wider kinship network that might extend beyond outside of Europe and for which establishing contact might mean only having a postal address to write to.

<sup>538</sup> As Margarete Feinstein argues, "The need for family preoccupied most Jewish DPs to the exclusion of everything else." Margarete L. Myers, "Jewish Displaced Persons: Reconstructing Individual and Community in the US Zone of Occupied Germany," *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 42:1 (1997): 306.

<sup>539</sup> Zertal, *From Catastrophe to Power*, explores DP Zionism as having been imported from Palestine.



documented in the literature. Historian Idith Zertal, in particular, has stressed the ways in which the “unique power of the helpless Holocaust survivors,” was mobilized by Zionist leadership in the Diaspora and *Yishuv* toward the goal of establishing a sovereign Jewish state in Palestine. Zertal concentrates in particular on the small Zionist group that organized the illegal immigration of DPs during the period: Ha'mossad Le'aliya Bet, known as the Mossad.<sup>540</sup> The Mossad, she argues, persisted both in sending DPs to the Palestinian coast as well as ensuring that their voyages and subsequent internment in the detention camps of Cyprus resulted in political demonstrations and dramatic media productions that would continue to apply pressure aimed at breaking British quarantine and resolve.<sup>541</sup> In this project, Zionist emissaries were aided by the work of the Central Committee, who attested to the underlying enthusiasm for Zionism in the DP camps.<sup>542</sup>

Not all DPs were willing to risk illegal immigration, with all its perils.<sup>543</sup> What factors determined who left for Palestine before 1948? If one considers the demographic profile of the

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<sup>540</sup> Zertal, *From Catastrophe to Power*, 2. This small Zionist group that organized the clandestine immigration of Jews to Palestine from 1945-1948 is not to be confused with the intelligence services of the State of Israel which were founded at a later date. There were a number of *Yishuv* institutions and organs as well as American Jewish volunteers operating predominantly in the American Zone of occupation. These included the Jewish Agency Executive, the Haganah, and the Bricah. The latter was responsible for directing DPs towards gathering points established by the Mossad for departure to Palestine. Yehuda Ben-David, *The 'Haganah' in Europe* (Israel: TAG Publishing House, 1995). Much work has been done in recent literature examining the American role in facilitating illegal immigration, and in particular, the Mossad's ties with the American Joint Distribution Committee (colloquially known as the Joint), that funded the Mossad's activities. As Kochavi explains, Joint leadership was initially opposed to the representatives of the *Yishuv* directed Jews from the East to the DP camps and onto Palestine but was later convinced that resettlement in Palestine could alone solve the Jewish DP problem. By the beginning of 1946, emissaries of the *Yishuv* were reporting on the steady co-operation of the Joint. See Arie Kochavi, “British Response to the Involvement of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee in Illegal Jewish immigration to Palestine,” *Immigrants & Minorities* 8:3 (1989): 223-234.

<sup>541</sup> In order to maximize the political propaganda value of illegal immigration, Zionists fostered resistance by the DPs on the ships, which became Zionism's symbolic battlefields. As Bergman remarks, the decision on illegal immigration was but a first step: accomplishing it meant mounting major international publicity campaigns, based especially where support was most critical. See Elihu Bergman, “Adversaries and facilitators: The unconventional diplomacy of illegal immigration to Palestine, 1945–48,” *Israel Affairs* 8:3 (2002): 1-46.

<sup>542</sup> Avinoam Patt evidences well the ways in which collective pressures from within and external to the DP camps cooperated by taking the example of the *giyus* (conscription) campaign in DP camps. He argues that the implementation of the *giyus* operation represented the interplay of “Zionist emissaries (of the Haganah, Jewish Agency, and Mossad le-Aliyah Bet) from the Yishuv active in postwar Europe, and the organisation and enthusiasm of the pro-Zionist leadership of the Central Committee, with the support of its subsidiary regional and local committees.” Patt, “Stateless Citizens of Israel,” 173.

<sup>543</sup> 2 *Exodus* passengers for example, had died of gunshot wounds, dozens more were injured during the forcible boarding of the ship and around 200 treated for various maladies and illnesses onboard. See Ninian Stewart, *The Royal Navy and the Palestine Patrol* (London: Frank Cass, 2002), 125.

Cyrus detainees, it is evident that age and lack of immediate family were significant criterions. Ofer explains that the profile of illegal immigrants was overwhelmingly those between the ages of 15-38, with no dependants at the time of departure. Significantly, “among the 8,000 young people aged 12-18,” Ofer cites, “were 6,000 who had lost both parents.”<sup>544</sup>

Relief reports attest to the particular desperation to reach Palestine, at all costs, on the part of young orphan Jewish survivors. One such reports remarks: “They are deeply disappointed that liberation has not fulfilled the hopes which it had raised. [...] They are still a stricken minority, unrelieved and uncared for by anybody, which is rapidly nearing the limits of human endurance.”<sup>545</sup> That indefinite internment had an especially demoralizing effect on young Jews is a recurring theme, one volunteer explains:

They are waiting. Waiting interminably for some ray of light as to what is to happen to them in the future. It is well known that hope deferred maketh the heart sick. Nothing seems to them to be really worthwhile, they are waiting. Their personal existence is merely an existence, not a life. [...] They do not want to plant the garden because they hope to have left by the time the seeds will have born fruit, and they live entirely on hope. Hope that next month, in two months’ time, three months’ time they will have gone to Palestine. [...] I think amongst a number of them, particularly the younger groups that hope is hardening into a resolution that come what may they will go to Palestine. They will take their fate and their lives in their own hands and I am firmly convinced when the Spring comes they will start to trek; that by devious means they will make their way down into Italy where they will hope to be able to persuade some boat to smuggle them illegally into Palestine [...] There is no question about it, and really it scarcely needs me to repeat it, that the vast majority in the Camps generally only envisage their future in Palestine.<sup>546</sup>

The same report notes however, that “those having relatives would, in my mind, probably be very glad to go to America, but the main impulse moving all these people is the same. Get out of Europe! We must get out Europe, and then we want to go to a land of our own.”<sup>547</sup> Evidently, it was younger DPs with no surviving relatives or family network beyond Europe that were most willing to risk illegal crossings prior to 1948.

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<sup>544</sup> Ofer, “Holocaust Survivors as Immigrants,” 5.

<sup>545</sup> RHA, “Jewish Central Information Office: A Talk with the Chairman of the Berlin Jewish Community, Mr. Erich Nehlans, 25/09/1945,” *Newspapers*, 64.

<sup>546</sup> RHA, “Lady Reading’s Report, January 18-30, 1946,” *Newspapers*, 118.

<sup>547</sup> Ibid. The draw of America, in particular, will be discussed further in the following Chapter.

One finds evidence of this in alternative source bodies as well. In the summer of 1946, psychologist David Boder secured passage to Europe where he interviewed some 130 DPs in camps in Germany (as well as France, Switzerland and Italy).<sup>548</sup> In the view of one interviewee, Helen Tichauer, “everyone has only one single aim in view, to leave the country which once was hell for him.” This, according to Tichauer, was what bound Jewish DPs, in response to which Boder was prompted to ask, “Are there many who want to go to Palestine?” Tichauer responds, “Of course. There are people, young . . . mainly youth, who want to readjust, want to learn, and who [would] feel at home, let us say, in a national Jewish State. Mostly the youth.”<sup>549</sup>

The importance of family, or lack thereof, emerges again in the Boder interviews. Among those interviewed by Boder were a handful of relief workers, including Judah Golen, a representative of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, who was asked by Boder the following; “What percentage of the DPs and which age groups long for Palestine and which one would want to go to America, South America, Australia, South Africa and other places?” You couldn't say that everyone wants to go to Palestine?” Golen responded, “Well I'll [tell] you exactly how it is—I'll tell you. Immediately after the war and during the war, as far as I know in my conversations with various Jews in various camps, Palestine was the only light which really gave them some energy to . . . stand and to wait until victory comes.” Crucially, Golen adds this caveat: People move for South Africa where they have relatives there, people move for America—especially the United States [...] I consider that all those Jews who do want to go to places outside of Palestine are Jews who have some relatives in there and some hope that they would be able to enter a new life in those countries. As far as I see prospects are not very large.”<sup>550</sup> For many, the Zionist project would have undoubtedly represented the only possible

<sup>548</sup> As noted in the Introduction, the interviews cited here are those conducted with DPs who had been liberated in the British Zone, consistent with this dissertation's contained focus.

<sup>549</sup> Helen Tichauer, interview with David Boder, Feldafing, 23 September 1946, online at: <http://voices.iit.edu>.

<sup>550</sup> Judah Golen, interview with David Boder, Wiesbaden, 26 September 1946, online at: <http://voices.iit.edu>.

replacement of family, providing them a network of solidarity as well as a definitive objective. The example of these illegal immigrants subsequently became part of the earlier pioneer ideal, which was spread beyond the initial group.

Such examples echoed the findings of the earlier referenced Harrison report. As well as noting that family connections would draw some Jewish DPs to and away from Palestine as a destination, the Harrison report also hinted at different degrees of desire for Palestine along *national* lines. Harrison writes, “Some wish to return to their countries of nationality, but as to this there is considerable nationality variation. Very few Polish or Baltic Jews wish to return to their countries.”<sup>551</sup> Along with the young, RHA records certainly repeatedly single out Polish Jews as being a distinct group within the more general category of “Jewish DPs” who were most committed to Palestine as a primary destination of choice. The reasoning, however, was often less forward-looking as it was backward, or present-looking, having as much to do with Poland as Palestine.

Interviewed in November of 1945 by Jewish Relief Workers, Rabbi E. Munk was asked in Celle where he had observed fellow Jews had chosen to go.<sup>552</sup> Munk’s reply stresses that Polish Jews were distinct from their fellow Jewish counterparts in having especially poor relations with their non-Jewish countrymen. He elaborates, “The relations between Poles and Polish Jews were unsatisfactory. That is probably the reason why the Jews had a special Jewish Committee in the Polish camp and not in the camps of the other nationalities.”<sup>553</sup> Munk does not single out Polish Jews, then, as particularly committed to emigration to Palestine: but as the least likely to consider repatriation and the group with whom “fellow countrymen” were least likely to cohabit without friction.<sup>554</sup> When asked if it was true that the wish to go to

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<sup>551</sup> RHA, “Copy of Earl J. Harrison Report,” *Newspapers*, 81.

<sup>552</sup> RHA, “Interview with Rabbi E. Munk,” *Newspapers*, 91.

<sup>553</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>554</sup> According to Marrus’ estimate, 1,500 Polish Jews were murdered in Poland between liberation and the summer of 1947. Michael Robert Marrus, *The Unwanted: European Refugees in the Twentieth Century* (New York:

Palestine is general, and what he thought about the prospect for emigration to Palestine, Munk responded: "The wish is certainly general and genuine. That does not mean [...] that people will not easily change their minds as soon as other prospects come in sight. But it is only too obvious that people who have gone through what these people have gone, should be longing to get "home" and live and die amongst Jews."<sup>555</sup>

It is important to note that for the DPs of Belsen, as for the majority of Eastern European DP Jews in occupied Germany, Zionism was not an unfamiliar political force. Interwar East-Central Europe had witnessed the "dramatic and unexpected triumph of the national principle," resulting in the formation of new states such as Poland, Czechoslovakia, Latvia and Lithuania.<sup>556</sup> For the Jewish populations of these new states, the period was characterized by a growing antisemitism. In Poland particularly, where the vast majority of Belsen's Jews hailed, both Jewish and gentile populations underwent a process of politicisation and nationalization that saw their relationship with each other rapidly deteriorate. With one third of its population being non-Polish, political boundaries according to ethnic criteria were not so easily drawn, and extreme nationalism, "which may be regarded as the ruling ideology of East-Central Europe between the wars,"<sup>557</sup> unsurprisingly led to conflict between Jew and non-Jew.<sup>558</sup> "New

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Oxford University Press, 1985), 336-337. The worst incident occurred on 4th July 1946, in the Polish city of Kielce in which 41 Jews were murdered and dozens wounded during a pogrom. Myers, "Jewish Displaced Persons," 321.  
<sup>555</sup> RHA, "Interview with Rabbi E. Munk," *Newspapers*, 91. The particular commitment of Polish Jews to non-repatriation and resettlement in Palestine was not specific to any one Zone. A report from camps in US Zone from Chaplain Judah Nadich notes clearly: "The Poles loathe the return to Poland. They all want to go to Palestine." Although it cannot be conclusively proven, there is evidence to suggest that Zionism was particularly strong within the infiltree Polish DP community. One report from the Zeilsheim Polish-Jewish camp remarks: "I also met quite a few Jews who had come there from Poland during the last few weeks. All of them told more or less the same story. Their lives were not safe there and they preferred to leave Poland." See RHA, "Copy Letter October 6," *Newspapers*, 87.

<sup>556</sup> Ezra Mendelsohn, *The Jews of East Central Europe Between the World Wars* (Indiana University Press: 1983) 1.

<sup>557</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>558</sup> *Ibid.*, 18, 30. A hostile environment was not necessarily detrimental to a flourishing Jewish political culture. In Poland, both Zionism and Jewish socialism thrived alongside changing Jewish leadership and growing support from within Jewish communities. While the extent to which Zionism was a dominant political ideology is difficult to measure, a census of Jewish populations in 1931 revealed a large number of Jews claiming to be "Jews by religion," but also a large number claiming to be "Jews by nationality."

Jewish politics”<sup>559</sup> of the interwar period, with its origins in the late nineteenth century Russian empire, was built around the principle that Jews were a distinct nation, whose lack of defined territorial possession was not impediment to their legitimacy and enjoyment of national rights, as a national entity no less legitimate than Poles in Poland.<sup>560</sup> While the vibrant interwar political Jewish culture was characterized by much disunity of political opinion, the collective Jewish experience of the Holocaust would provide the break in a significantly more unified Jewish political landscape in the postwar period.

Among Boder’s interviewees were a number of staunch Zionists. One such, Jacob Schwarzfitter, interviewed in the summer of 1946, in the epoch of the first detentions on Cyprus, explains: “Poland is, of course, out of the question. Besides, there can not be any argument. [...] I understand very clearly that we enter a very hard struggle. The English Empire is surely stronger than we are. But we have a single weapon, the general satisfaction which is thus: that every people that rises against us Jews meets an evil end. [...] We have the satisfaction, the historical satisfaction, that everything that impedes us must go. And besides, we have old rusty weapons. And the weapons of today, the sharpest weapon is called despair [word not clear]. We are desperate.”

Significantly, Jacob picks up on this language of repatriation and illegality and attempts to turn it on its head. He argues that Jews were expatriated originally from Israel, and so should be *repatriated* there in the present. Consequently, he claims that “We do not recognize any

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<sup>559</sup> Zvi Y. Gitelman, “A Century of Jewish Politics in Eastern Europe: The Legacy of the Bund and the Zionist Movement,” in Zvi Gitelman, ed., *The Emergence of Modern Jewish Politics: Bundism and Zionism in Eastern Europe* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2003), 3-19.

<sup>560</sup> Mendelsohn tracks this evolution with a focus on the emergence of various Zionist “pioneering” youth movements, aiming to equip young members of the Jewish community with the skills required to move to Palestine and consequently build the new Jewish society there. “For young Polish Jews [like Rosensaft], particularly in the 1930s, joining a political youth movement or party was the norm, the expected thing to do.” He argues that Jewish nationalism flourished “as nowhere else in the diaspora,” within the interwar (highly nationalistic) new Polish state. Mendelsohn, *The Jews of East Central Europe*, 48, 49. Yablonka explains that Zionist youth movements enjoyed similar popularity in the DP camps in the postwar period. See Hanna Yablonka’s chapter “The Kibbutz and Youth Aliya” in *Survivors of the Holocaust: Israel after the War*, first published in Hebrew as *Foreign Brethren: Holocaust Survivors in the State of Israel, 1948–1952* (Jerusalem: Yad Yitzhak Ben-Zvi Press, 1994), 199ff.

illegal Aliya; that means we go to the Land of Israel legally. [...] We were repatriates [at present]. Just as Germany has dragged away Frenchmen, Poles, Czechs, and they do repatriate them to their countries, so do we want [to go] to our own country. Only there is our country. [...] For this reason, for instance, I understand that for England we are considered 'illegal'. [...] But I shall enter my country legally. I do not come to take away [anything] from anybody. I come only to help, build, work. I am, thanks God, still well. I can work.”<sup>561</sup>

### **“Post-catastrophe” Zionism in *Unzer Sztyme***<sup>562</sup>

Collective pressure was applied from within the DP camps as well as without. In the British Zone, the Central Committee was reduplicated with a Yiddish-language newspaper, *Unzer Sztyme*, (Our Voice) under Josef Rosensaft, whose authority in the Zone, Yosef Grodninsky writes, “would prevail to the very end.”<sup>563</sup> Through the paper, the Central Committee (CC) proclaimed to articulate the present needs and future goals of the Belsen camp inhabitants and claimed an unquestioning Zionist enthusiasm on their behalf.<sup>564</sup> The paper itself is staunchly ideological. What follows highlights key aspects of the propagandistic character of *Unzer Sztyme*. It stresses the paper’s dual imperative: to propagate a narrative of prolonged liberation that proposes the ideal of the illegal immigrant to the DPs and, at the same time, to apply moral pressure on British opinion.

Much has already been said about the astonishing clamouring of Jewish DP survivors especially, to regain and retain their voice in the DP camps, as evidenced in the impressive amount of DP Jewish newspapers that appeared across occupied Germany so rapidly in

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<sup>561</sup> Jacob Schwarzfitter, interview with David Boder, Tradate, 31 August 1946, online at: <http://voices.iit.edu>.

<sup>562</sup> While the spelling of publication’s title varies across the literature, *Unzer Sztyme* (Our Voice) was the preferred transliteration of its authors and is thus used here.

<sup>563</sup> Yosef Grodninsky, *In the Shadow of the Holocaust: The Struggle Between Jews and Zionists in the Aftermath of World War II* (Common Courage Press, 2004). 124. 124.

<sup>564</sup> Hagit Lavsky, provides a neat overview of the central figures associated with the paper, including its two main cofounders, Rosensaft and Rafael Gershon Olevsky. The latter was a teacher and journalist who had been a member of the Central Zionist Party in Poland before 1939 and helped to organize illegal immigration to Palestine after 1945. See Lavsky, *New Beginnings*, 67-68.

1945.<sup>565</sup> Most of these were published in Yiddish (sometimes Latin script, sometimes Hebrew typeface, depending on availability), the common language of the survivors, but also symbolic given the targeting of Yiddish language publications in Germany under the Third Reich.<sup>566</sup> Published monthly, the paper was the self-described official organ of the CC and appeared for just over two years with a final issue on October 24, 1947.<sup>567</sup>

By the end of 1946 certainly, *Unzer Sztyme* had a relatively consistent blueprint. While some issues of the paper went as long as 45 pages, the first few were always devoted exclusively to Zionist propaganda, before turning to accounts of former ghettos and camps, news from the DP camps of occupied Germany—"Around us" (including developments with respect to relief and emigration, as well reports on cultural activities therein)—and later, poems and letters written by DPs themselves. Even these latter items were selected for their propaganda value. Selected poems featured the longing for Palestine, "To a Single Home," and descriptions of celebrations of Jewish holidays in the Belsen camp were reported with the tagline: "next year in Jerusalem."<sup>568</sup>

The *language* of *Unzer Sztyme* was consistently uncompromising in its making Zionist propaganda for Palestine. Its editors frequently stated this intention at the outset: "what do mean by Zionism, a call for redemption!"<sup>569</sup> Powerful language was matched by imagery. Issue

<sup>565</sup> Dozens of Jewish DPs newspapers and periodicals eventually appeared during the duration of the life DP camps. In the British Zone, the most significant was *Unzer Sztyme* (Our Voice) in Belsen, which was the first of the Jewish newspapers to appear already in July of 1945. October 24 1945, *Unzer Veg*, the organ of the Central Committee, came off the press and was circulated throughout the US Zone. Other camps in the American Zone followed suit with papers of their own.

<sup>566</sup> Nicola Schlichting's 2005 investigation of the camp Bergen-Belsen includes analysis of *Unzer Sztyme* and *Wochenblatt* another Jewish, smaller periodical appearing in the British Zone. Schlichting stresses that the focus of reporting was on Palestine policy throughout the duration of the paper's existence. See Nicola Schlichting, *Öffnet die Tore nach Erez Israel. Das jüdische DP-Camp Belsen 1945-1948* (Nürnberg 2005), 8, 16-23, 32.

<sup>567</sup> As noted, the paper served as the main tool for communicating the wishes of the survivors and to bring national aspirations to the attention of the DPs. The paper was overtly and unapologetically Zionist position and aimed to provide Jewish DPs with reviews of events in Palestine in particular.

<sup>568</sup> *Unzer Sztyme*, 'Númer 8' [Number 8] 17.3.1946, 3, 7. It is clear that the editors of the paper were caught between needing to mobilize DPs to risk illegal immigration and also awareness that many would not opt for this and thus, the need to foster ongoing commitment to the Zionist cause during a period of prolonged stay in the camps. In this sense, the paper reflected precisely the broader concerns of the Central Committee.

<sup>569</sup> *Unzer Sztyme*, 'Númer 9' [Number 9] 15.4.1946, 2.



8 of the paper from mid-March 1946 has Theodor Herzl's image on its cover, inside the same issue one finds a striking sketch of concentration camp survivors marching toward Palestine with Herzl's profile juxtaposed in the background and written in a banner above the words: "in the new world" in Hebrew.<sup>570</sup> The paper was not unique in this respect. The Zionist language of the Jewish DP Press in the American Zone was equally striking, with editors unafraid to purposefully stoke fear among survivors: "Jewish folk, if you will not liquidate the diaspora, the diaspora will liquidate you."<sup>571</sup> *Unzer Sztyme* similarly had an aggressive interest in preventing any forms of complacency among survivors. A key theme one finds repeated time and time again is the perceived need to remind its readers that the "Nazi is not dead."<sup>572</sup> Subsequently, reporting often stoked fears of antisemitism in Europe and focused particularly on recurrences in Germany. "The Nazi has not been destroyed, the storm trooper is still alive, the spirit of Hitler lives and all the rottenness in the German soul ferments and bubbles."<sup>573</sup> The paper repeatedly criticized the British for failing to recognize the strength of Nazism and the ongoing vulnerability of Jews in Germany: "In the synagogue in Diepholz there is a locksmith's workshop in one corner and some laundry is being dried in another. This is not only a blasphemy on the part of God, but also a disgrace to our English caretakers. [...] And the German locksmith is content and humming to himself: 'Heil, Victory Comrades.'"<sup>574</sup> In this way, the motif of ongoing liberation was put to a dual audience.

What sets *Unzer Sztyme* apart from other publications was the degree to which its editors attempted to communicate directly with British authorities as well as sustaining enthusiasm for the Zionist project among the She'erit Hapletah. The tendency to adopt and re-

<sup>570</sup> *Unzer Sztyme*, 'Numer 8' [Number 8] 17.3.1946, Herzl's image appears several times in different editions. It appears again on page 7 of Number 8.

<sup>571</sup> *A Heim* (A Home), a Yiddish paper based in Leipheim first issued on February 19, 1946, no.16, 3,

<sup>572</sup> *Unzer Sztyme*, 'Numer 9' [Number 9] 15.4.1946 commemorated a full year since the "day of our liberation" and repeatedly stressed the continuation of the German threat. The editorial on the final page expands: "German armed force is being pitted against us once more. [...] They gloat once again when they have a Jew in their power."

<sup>573</sup> Ibid. "Letter to Bernard Montgomery."

<sup>574</sup> *Unzer Sztyme*, 'Numer 7' [Number 7] 20.2.1946, 15-16.

appropriate the language of repatriation for the Zionist cause, evident in Jacob's interview above, was also common to *Unzer Sztyme*. This is made most evident in the concluding page of every issue, typically written in English and explicitly for the British administration. These concluding open letters took the forms of extended and repeated pleas for the British to reconsider their position vis-à-vis the Jewish DPs and Palestine. The majority of the feature editorials, even though written in Yiddish, also simultaneously address a British audience; demanding some form of action from both the DPs and administrators. One issue from March of 1946, concerning illegal immigration, spoke directly to the British Labour Party and "to fellow Jews: "don't stand silently by [...] stand with those heroes fighting for your future and for your faith."<sup>575</sup>

As well as highlighting the ongoing plight and vulnerability of Jewish DPs in Germany, the paper routinely stressed the debt that is owed the Jews by the British. This maxim "forget not your debt!"<sup>576</sup> is reiterated again and again. The editors pander a surprising amount to what they image are British sensibilities, especially British pride: "We Jews the most horrible victims of the war are not allowed to Hope! [...] By only one act can the British Government show us that they have the welfare of the Jewish DPs in the British Zone at heart. That they are still imbued with the classical graces surviving from the Golden Age of the British Rule. Let us go back to our Home in Palestine, where there are no Germans, where there are no preparations for the next war, where we will hear no more poison propaganda, and where no master race crack a whip on our bnumbed bodies. We cry out in anguish, hearken to this our prayer, and let us go in peace."<sup>577</sup>

A focus on themes of enduring antisemitism and Nazism in Europe belied concern that after protracted stay in the DP camps, Zionist fervour might be, and was already, waning. The

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<sup>575</sup> *Unzer Sztyme*, 'Numer 8' [Number 8] 17.3.1946, 1.

<sup>576</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>577</sup> *Unzer Sztyme*, 'Numer 9' [Number 9] 15.4.1946 editorial final page.

Central Committee and the newspaper were especially concerned with the idea of any Jewish DPs intermarrying and/or settling long-term in Germany, as well as considering emigration to alternative destinations, a concern confirmed in large measure by the records of the ITS, which by definition, indicated that for some DP individuals and families, Zionist ascription was contingent upon a number of different factors.

### A “Wait-and-See” approach in the ITS

The same Jacob interviewed by Boder, who declared that “Only there [Palestine] is our country regretfully acknowledged that “there has been some disappointment among many Jews because of external difficulties—we cannot ignore the various political difficulties existing in Palestine and outside. The Jews are not the only masters of Palestine and they could not bring over so many Jews as they wanted. [...] There may be quite a number of Jews who now, after seeing these difficulties, try to find another place to [?] and to have some peace—peace of mind and peace of body.”<sup>578</sup>

What the ITS records make clear is that Jewish DPs who did not opt to attempt illegal passage to Palestine continuously weighed their options. In contrast to other source bodies, ITS records were not taken with internees in Cyprus or with repatriates in Poland; and thus, one cannot find evidence of many ideologically-minded Zionists or Communists in them; just as there were few hesitant or sceptical voices in the pages of *Unzer Sztyme*, or the memoirs edited by the Jewish Agency. While one selective source should not replace another no less selective one, ITS offers an opportunity to establish a fuller picture of Jewish DP attitudes. Crucially, ITS highlights that while before 1948 a *firm* strategy had been required to go to Palestine, the meaning of going to Palestine (Israel) changed over time.

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<sup>578</sup> Jacob Schwarzfitter, interview with David Boder, Tradate, 31 August 1946, online at: <http://voices.iit.edu>.

Upon registration in a DP camp, all DPs were required to fill out a short standardized “DP2” card, with personal data along with their date of registration in the Assembly centre. It is clear that during the period of mass repatriation in 1945, there was already a widespread desire to emigrate to Palestine among Jewish survivors. DP2 cards included a space in which the DP could identify their “Desired Destination.” For the “last million” of non-Jewish DPs this section was almost always left blank, indicating only hesitancy or rejection of repatriation and not a clear migratory agenda. Singularly in the case of Jewish DPs however, even in the few short days and weeks after the German capitulation, some DP2 cards clearly have “Palestine” written under “Desired Destination.”<sup>579</sup>

However, having Palestine written under ‘Desired Destination’ in a Jewish DP’s DP2 card was not common. Finding the records of those determined to enter Palestine after 1945 and risking illegal crossing is challenging in ITS. One can find several instances in which a file ends abruptly however, which may indicate departure for Palestine. Can see perhaps some who might have gone illegally: where files end abruptly for instance, or when euphemistic language such as the “disappearance” of a Jewish DP is recorded. One such case, Dora Milberg was registered in Belsen Camp II, Block 69/10 on September 25, 1945. Her present location, the file notes, is unknown “and from her social history we learn that she wanted to emigrate.” Last seen in Diepholz on October 1, 1945, UNRRA subsequently lost all trace of Dora.<sup>580</sup>

Individual CM/1 forms establish well the restrictions of British policy on those Jews seeking to emigrate legally before 1948. As we have seen, vetting for the few available certificates for Palestine worked on the exact counter-logic to that of *Westward Ho!* in purposefully attempting to prevent the emigration of able-bodied men of working/fighting age.

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<sup>579</sup> Unfortunately, the DP2 card collection at ITS is not indexed with respect to “desired destination,” making large, quantitative analysis almost impossible. This conclusion is arrived at on the basis of the cards consulted for this study which offer a rough statistical idea about the frequency of “Palestine” mentions in comparison with other countries.

<sup>580</sup> ITS, ‘Dora Milberg’ Doc. No. 84391896\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

The British were aided in their selectivity by the fact that most young Jewish survivors were unable to claim the possibility of family reunification in Palestine pre-1948. Indeed, CM/1 forms illustrate a frequent pairing of responses across the files of single Jewish DP survivors aiming for Palestine. 38 years old at war's end, Isak Plotek only ever expressed a desire to authorities to emigrate to Palestine (despite having established family connections in Chile, Luxembourg and Brussels): under the standard questionnaire section "Desired country of choice" is written only "Palestine." Under the immediately following section however; "Do any factors exist which might facilitate your emigration to this country?" the answer is, as was most often the case, "nein" [no].<sup>581</sup> While Isak does not make explicit his reasons for wanting to emigrate solely to Palestine,<sup>582</sup> he was evidently committed to the destination; though his age and lack of connection made the prospect of legal emigration slight.

Others opted for what might be called a "wait and see approach," and made migratory decisions based on evolutions both of policy and family life. Sima Anker provides an example of one such case. From the beginning of her interaction with UNRRA and later, the IRO, Sima has stated her wish to emigrate to Palestine as her destination of choice. Sima had spent the war from 1940 until 1944 in the Łódź ghetto from where she was sent to the concentration camp Auschwitz before being transferred to an *arbeitslager* in Czechoslovakia, from where she was liberated in May 1945. She returned to Łódź in search of relatives and remained for some months, until renewed fears of persecution in Poland prompted a crossing to Germany where she was registered in Belsen as "awaiting transport for Palestine."<sup>583</sup> While "waiting," Sima kept busy, working first in a children's creche and later in the Glyn Hughes DP hospital. Sima

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<sup>581</sup> ITS, 'Isak Plotek', Doc. No. 79603564\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>582</sup> One can, however, venture some hypotheses based on additional information in individual files. There may have been a significant professional motive, for example, in Isak's case. Having a registered profession of Yiddish troupe actor, it would also follow that if Isak had any aim of maintaining his profession in the Yiddish theatre, destinations of choice would need to reflect demand.

<sup>583</sup> ITS, 'Sima Anker', Doc. No. 78880599\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1). Sima's case is representative of a pattern across similar files, see for example: ITS, 'Eugin Indig', Doc. No. 79209400\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

became engaged to a fellow Jewish DP and only in 1949 did they together decide to move to the US Zone to attempt a crossing to Israel, after-which point her DP card was withdrawn.<sup>584</sup> While it is difficult to distinguish among those Jews who did not attempt illegal immigration, whether or not a lack of physical strength or conviction was more dissuading, it seems plausible that many Jewish DPs, like Sima (who would otherwise most probably could have been selected by the Mossad for passage), were committed to Palestine but only conditionally, with family remaining intact.

A number of factors could either weaken or strengthen initial preferences over time. ITS records suggest that Jewish DP families were extremely reluctant to emigrate to Palestine incrementally.<sup>585</sup> As a consequence, in cases where one relative appears not to want to emigrate, this effectively trumped the Zionist aspirations of any other family members. As the various Zionist organizations had feared, this was especially true of intermarried couples. Although Pola Berkensztedt wished to go to Palestine, where she had family, her new husband (a Pole by the name of Max Kelmanowski) did not wish to do so. When Max acquired a job in Marburg, the couple moved, and Pola was immediately “struck off the strength of camp.”<sup>586</sup>

The presence of family anywhere outside of Germany was a significant pull factor, particularly as time wore on and prospects for exiting the DP camps remained limited. Expressing a desire for Palestine could in certain situations act as a default position resulting in eventual resettlement, or not, based on external family support. For example, Polish Jewish DP Chaskiel Orenbach,<sup>587</sup> his wife and young daughter registered themselves as awaiting

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<sup>584</sup> Ibid., ‘Sima Anker’.

<sup>585</sup> This is in contrast to those Polish DP families willing to consider separation for work abroad under schemes such as Westward Ho, most probably due to an even greater lack of surety as to whether families would be able to eventually reunify. This author found no cases in which a Jewish family in the Zone was willing to emigrate separately prior to 1948 and only a handful afterwards, only in instances where one member required medical treatment. See for example: ITS, ‘Jehuda Gross’, Doc. No. 78897104\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>586</sup> ITS, ‘Pola Berkensztedt’, Doc. No. 78927028\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>587</sup> ITS, ‘Chaskiel Orenbach’, Doc. No. 79549267\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1). Chaskiel survived the liquidation of the Lvov ghetto by hiding for years in the sewers. His life until he came to Bergen-Belsen is described in various books including: Jack Pomerantz and Lyric Wallwork Winik, *Run East: Flight from the Holocaust* (University of Illinois Press, 1997); Robert Marshall, *In the Sewers of Lvov: A Heroic Story of Survival from the Holocaust* (A&C Black,

emigration to Palestine. As his file notes, Chaskiel's wife had an aunt and two uncles in the United States who were unable to assist the family in emigrating there. While they were registered for Palestine, the collective family CM/1 forms suggests a strong preference for the States, prevented by a lack of assistance. Indeed, as more options became eventually available to Jewish DPs—to be explored in the following Chapter—we see a number of files beginning to actually cross out Palestine to be replaced with alternative destinations; indicating that “Palestine” acted as a placeholder for some until another, more desirable option appeared.<sup>588</sup> In one case, Leon Goldscheid (as well as his wife and their infant daughter, born in 1948 in the Belsen camp, treated in the same file) had relatives in both Palestine and in America and thus noted both as his desired destination(s), until such a time as one or both became viable.<sup>589</sup>

Even after 1948, with the possibility of legal immigration, Palestine remained most attractive to the young, the single and to those without dependants. Genia Steier, a young widow who lost her husband in the concentration camps, was adamant that only in Palestine could she see a future.<sup>590</sup> Uniquely in the CM/1 files of Jewish DPs,<sup>591</sup> are references to DP depression: “Applicant is very much depressed,” as well as the formulation of the desire for Palestine as a “last hope.” Franziska Mandelbaum's file states that she was increasingly depressed and desperate to get to Palestine.<sup>592</sup> In the case of one Russian Jew whose entire family was murdered in the gas chambers, a welfare officer notes that the “applicant is very much depressed and begs for help to get out of Germany.”<sup>593</sup> Only rarely did welfare officers make note of any abstract, more impersonal motivations on the part of Jewish DPs, or explicitly

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2012); Krystyna Chiger and Daniel Paisner, *The Girl in the Green Sweater: A Life in Holocaust's Shadow* (St. Martin's Press, 2008).

<sup>588</sup> One finds a number of examples in which welfare officers have physically crossed out Palestine, to be replaced with a new destination. See for example, ITS, ‘Jerzy Gajner’, Doc. No. 79126734\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>589</sup> ITS, ‘Leon Goldscheid’, Doc. No. 79129384\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>590</sup> ITS, ‘Genia Steier’, Doc. No. 79810297\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>591</sup> As indicated by the research conducted for the present study.

<sup>592</sup> ITS, ‘Franziska Mandelbaum’, Doc. No. 79445181\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>593</sup> Such phrasing is markedly absent in the files of Polish DPs in the Zone.

political reasoning for hoping to emigrate to Palestine.<sup>594</sup> Jacob Kuperberg, a German Jew, stated his country of preference as Palestine-Israel, a choice based on “motives of democracy.”<sup>595</sup> Such additions were very rare however.

Evidently, the biases of different source bodies will either (intentionally or no) inflate, or to some extent, deflate ideas of Jewish self-containment. While the records of *Unzer Sztyrne* presented a simplistic narrative of heroism that focusing on the trajectories of the illegal immigrants, ITS records necessarily highlight a more “privatist” narrative centered on those who remained into and after 1948. These narratives need not be presented counter to one another, but rather suggest that a more multi-layered presentation of DP Zionism is necessary if we are to arrive at a fuller picture of Jewish migration after 1945.

### **Conclusion: For a multi-layered presentation of DP Zionism**

For the Jews of Belsen, adversity *strengthened* their resolve. Certainly, the constitution of an autonomous Jewish collective is one of the most striking consequences of the postwar European refugee crisis. Empowered by its recent past, representatives of the She'erit ha-Pletah demanded a single and united national-political attitude, “This is the basic foundation of the Zionism of the survivors.”<sup>596</sup> The Jewish people, they argued, could best fulfil the great task of Jewish revival in a *country of their own*.<sup>597</sup> Undoubtedly, the Jewish attitude toward emigration in the postwar periods was overwhelmingly coloured by the push for Palestine; and Zionism quickly became the dominant philosophy (rather than culture) of Jewish life in the DP camps. This was especially true of Belsen, where a conflictual relationship with the British attitudes

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<sup>594</sup> Which is not to say that these did not exist, only that they were either not expressed at interview or else not recorded.

<sup>595</sup> ITS, ‘Jacob Kuperberg’, Doc. No. 79364769\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>596</sup> Samuel Gringauz, “Jewish Destiny as the DP's See It,” *Commentary* 4 (December, 1947): 502.

<sup>596</sup> Ibid.

<sup>597</sup> Ibid., 507.



toward emigration was most acutely felt. Non-Zionists in Belsen were almost completely silenced and almost absent from the historical record.

This subchapter has attempted to explore the desire for Palestine, as it emerged in the postwar period. It has been shown that different source bodies shed light on the issue of Jewish migration to Palestine from 1945 until the establishment of the State of Israel. While the desire to reach Palestine was widespread, the desire (and ability) to physically do so, was severely restricted. Before 1948, settling in Palestine required a firm strategy, in a way that it did not after 1948, when Palestine was often opted for as a last resort. While the widespread determination of most Jewish DPs to reach Palestine as their destination of choice is evidenced in the primary source literature, ITS records, in particular, draw important attention to the fact that commitment to Zionism existed on a spectrum reflecting the determination of Jewish DPs to rebuild lives and families, which had different and varying degrees of impact on strategizing Palestine over time. A clear correlation is evidenced between the loss of family members and the readiness for political commitment in an ethnonationalist sense, with a much more circumspect attitude among those whose family relations were still in place. The ITS archive is thus an important source body that both corroborates but also complicates the established narrative around Jewish DPs and immigration to Palestine, suggesting that yet more work remains to be done within this already crowded field of inquiry. These themes are picked up and explored still further in Chapter 3, which moves to further consider the impact of new migratory possibilities from 1948.

### 3.1 THE “NEW WORLD”

This sub-chapter continues the treatment of alternatives to repatriation. It shifts from a focus on the opportunities presented by the manpower shortage in Western countries, to those opened up by extra-European destinations: which similarly revolutionized the outlook for DPs. As touched upon in the previous chapter, by mid-1948 a total of fourteen countries and independent territories were recruiting and accepting Displaced Persons. By 1948, the IRO had thirty vessels in operation. “From “staging camps” set near the ports of Bremerhaven and Hamburg, the agency was already moving “19,000 persons per month at a daily cost of just under \$160,000” in November of 1948.<sup>598</sup>

More DPs went to America than any other country in the IRO period, following the US’ adoption of the 1948 DP Act. What follows focuses predominantly on the United States as the main destination of choice for both Polish and Jewish DPs who would not consider repatriation nor emigration to Israel. It will also touch upon the recruitment schemes of the Canadian and Australian governments as the next largest states of resettlement, and how these destinations figured into the strategies of DPs.

It is important at the outset to offer a brief overview and explanation of relevant statistical data. While most authors<sup>599</sup> agree that the DP Act of 1948 provided for the admission of 202,000 European refugees over two years, establishing precise figures of Jewish and Polish DPs who resettled in America during this period is firstly complicated by the fact that official statistics often provide figures for the entire period of DP immigration to the US until 1952, during which time the Bill was amended, allowing for the entry of still thousands more DPs (to be addressed in Chapter 4). The most significant problem however in determining accurate

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<sup>598</sup> Arthur Rucker, “The Work of the International Refugee Organization,” *International Affairs* 25 (January 1949): 66–73 as referenced in Gerard Daniel Cohen, *In War's Wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 108.

<sup>599</sup> More general studies frequently cite this figure, see for example Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* vol. 105 (Princeton University Press, 2014), 236.

numbers concerns the registration of Jewish DPs by nationality and not as “Jewish.”<sup>600</sup> A further difficulty concerns the fact that while the IRO kept meticulous record of the numbers of DPs that made use of its assisted emigration, official IRO statistics do not include those who emigrated without the help of the IRO. According to the official webpage of the United States Holocaust Museum, over 80,000 Jewish DPs (overwhelmingly from the American Zone of occupation) resettled in the States, as compared to 136,000 in Israel and 20,000 in other nations including Canada. It is extremely difficult to precisely determine what percentage of these rough estimates emigrated at which time and whether or not through the IRO. In order to establish *total* numbers of DPs migrating under the American DP Act, one must rely on the statistics provided by the Displaced Persons Commission, established a few months following the passage of the DP Act and by October of 1948, charged with putting the new law into effect.<sup>601</sup> The Commission’s figures similarly do not distinguish percentages of Jewish DPs from Polish figures, but registered entrants according to country of birth. Nor do they indicate the Zone of departure from within occupied Germany. Consequently, statistics vary widely in the literature and may even appear in contradiction with each other.

The following Tables present the official statistics of both the IRO and American immigration authorities. While not formally registering Jewish DP migrants as a separate

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<sup>600</sup> As Grossmann explains in an extended footnote, the statistical data concerning Jews is especially inexact and bewildering, a fact she attributes to “change over time, inconsistencies in categorizations among those collecting data, and the difficulties of counting a highly mobile and sometimes illegal population.” Most figures concentrate exclusively on the American Zone, where Jews were being registered as Jews. While volunteer bodies reported certain figures, current estimates are often higher. Grossmann concludes that, “at a minimum, a quarter million Jewish survivors lived in or passed through the American Zone.” Atina Grossmann, *Jews, Germans and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 316-317. See also Jacqueline Dewell Giere, “Wir Sind Unterwegs, Aber Nicht in der Wüste: Erziehung und Kultur in den Jüdischen Displaced Persons-Lagern der Amerikanischen Zone im Nachkriegsdeutschland, 1945–1949” (Ph.D. dissertation, Goethe Universität, Frankfurt/M, 1993), 102; Lavsky, Hagit, *New Beginnings: Holocaust Survivors in Bergen-Belsen and the British Zone in Germany, 1945–1950* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2002), 27-36. Grodzinsky’s figures represent the highest estimates at 330,000 Jews passing through Germany, Italy and Austria between 1945-1951. Yosef Grodzinsky, *In the Shadow of the Holocaust: The Struggle Between Jews and Zionists in the Aftermath of World War II* (Common Courage Press, 2004), 118.

<sup>601</sup> Anna Dorota Kirchmann, “‘They are Coming for Freedom, not Dollars’: Political Refugees and Transformations of Ethnic Identity within Polish American Community after World War II,” (PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 1997): 89.

category, the former inaccurately appears to suggest that even among Jews, more individuals went to America than to Israel. This was not the case, as figures do not account for passage unassisted by the IRO. IRO statistics indicate 110,566 as the number of Polish DPs resettled through the IRO in the US, between July 1, 1947 and December 31, 1952. Table 2 indicates the more complete figures provided by the Displaced Persons Commission, according to which a total of 154,556 visas for entry into America were issued to DPs from Poland by December 31, 1952.

Table 1: Official IRO statistics<sup>602</sup>

	<i>Refugees departed for resettlement from specified IRO areas, 1 July 1947- 31 December 1951</i>		
	Germany		
	British Zone	French Zone	US Zone
	<b>224,261</b>	38,087	450,163
The United Kingdom	36,175 (16.1%)	2,770	16,506 (3.7%)
<b>The United States</b>	<b>62,639 (27.9%)</b>	10,542	200,320 (44.5%)
<b>Australia</b>	<b>58,657 (26.2%)</b>	9,789	67,803 (15.1%)
<b>Canada</b>	<b>32,297 (14.4%)</b>	3,284	47,850 (10.6%)
Israel	6,585 (2.9%)	19	63, 447 (14.1%)
	<i>Refugees of specified country of citizenship, last habitual residence, or ethnic group departed for resettlement, 1 July 1947-31 December, 1952</i>		
<u>Country of destination:</u>	<u>Poland:</u>		
<b>US</b>	<b>110,566</b>		

\*Bolded destinations are the focus of this subchapter and results referenced above

<sup>602</sup> These statistics are taken from two separate tables provided by Louise W. Holborn, *The International Refugee Organization, A Specialized Agency of the United Nations: Its History and Work, 1946–1952* (London: Oxford University Press, 1956), 434, 438.

Table 2: Displaced Persons Commission official statistics<sup>603</sup>

<i>Immigrants admitted under DP Act, as of June 30, 1952, by class of admission</i>		
<u>Class of admission:</u>	<u>Percent:</u>	<u>Number:</u>
All immigrants	100%	393,542
<b>Displaced Persons</b>	<b>85.7%</b>	<b>337,244</b>
<i>Distribution of immigrants admitted under DP Act, as of May 31, 1952, by country of birth</i>		
<u>Country of birth:</u>	<u>All immigrants:</u>	<u>Displaced Persons:</u>
<b>Poland</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>37%</b>
<i>Visas issued to displaced persons by December. 31, 1951</i>		
<u>Country of origin:</u>	<u>Percent:</u>	<u>Number:</u>
All	100%	339,520
<b>Poland</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>154,556</b>

\*Bolded results are those referenced above

### The domestic lobby, DP Act and resettlement “pipeline”

If the United States had opened its doors from the beginning to the persecuted and outcast Jews of Hitler’s Europe, the pressure on Palestine as their only refuge would certainly have been diminished.<sup>604</sup>

As a consequence both of mounting critiques of DP labour recruitment schemes and the position of Jewish DPs remaining in camps in Germany years after liberation, increasing pressure was concentrated on the United States, the largest financier of the IRO and the most reluctant member state to consider itself as a destination for mass resettlement. Pressure was arguably most pronounced *within* the US itself. Although an Executive Order from President

<sup>603</sup> These figures are taken from tables 2, 3 and 30 in US Displaced Persons Commission, and United States. Displaced Persons Commission. *Memo to America, the DP Story: The Final Report* (US Government Printing Office, 1952), 366, 376. The original figures were supplied by Stuart Portner, its chief historian. 34% of immigrants admitted under the DP Act, as of May 31, 1952, indicated Poland as their *country of birth*, which sets the total at around 134,000. A total number of visas issued to DPs *from Poland* by December 31, 1951, is registered at 154,556.

<sup>604</sup> Anne O’Hare McCormick, “Abroad: The DPs and Palestine, Footnote to the Chapter,” *The New York Times*, May 3, 1948.

Truman at the end of December 1945—known as the Truman Directive—had been introduced to accelerate immigration to the United States, the domestic lobby pushing for liberalizing American immigration law only had its first major break-through just over 3 years after the end of the war.<sup>605</sup>

Domestic debates in the American context mirrored those that were had in Britain. Those who opposed immigration of DPs relied on the traditional argument that foreigners would take work away from American citizens. There was significantly more emphasis placed however on two problematic associations that would dog much of the lobby for a new DP Act. Firstly, lobbyists had to contend with the prevailing assumption that most DPs were Jewish. Secondly, and relatedly, was the further association of Jews with communism, or rather, the prevalent belief that most Jewish DPs were communists.<sup>606</sup> Haim Genizi notes that by the end of December 1946, pro-immigrationists were frustrated by the average Americans' equation of DP as being synonymous to Jew; which in turn made them apathetic or even hostile to resettlement.<sup>607</sup> The American Jewish Committee (AJC), who had been busily conducting a

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<sup>605</sup> Issued on December 22, 1945, the Directive required that, within existing laws, American consulates give preference to displaced persons in Europe. About 40,000 people benefited from this order before it was abrogated by the Displaced Persons (DP) Act of 1948, to be discussed in what follows. See Leonard Dinnerstein, *Ethnic Americans: A History of Immigration* (Columbia University Press, 2009), 99. Roger Daniels explains that Truman's decision was bold, considering the fact that public opinion was not for such legislation at the time, citing a Gallup poll in which only 5% of those asked responded in favour of allowing more people into the US. He concludes that Truman could do this is evidence of the greater power that had accrued to the American presidency during World War II. See Roger Daniels, *Guarding the Golden Door: American Immigration Policy and Immigrants Since 1882* (Macmillan, 2005), 117.

<sup>606</sup> A number of authors have discussed this association. Fred Silberberg offers another brief analysis of polls conducted during the period as well as noting the presence of a number of openly antisemitic organizations and their impact in furthering such associations. See Fred Silberberg, "American Attitudes Toward the Displaced Persons in the Era of World War II," (BA Dissertation, University of Illinois, 1982), 52ff; Gerard Daniel Cohen, *In War's Wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 66; Leonard Dinnerstein, *America and the Survivors of the Holocaust* (Columbia University Press, 1982), 114. Dinnerstein argues however, that the tide was turning in the postwar period; with almost every survey of antisemitism taken after 1946 showing its decline in the American context. See Leonard Dinnerstein, *Antisemitism in America* (Oxford University Press, 1995), 151.

<sup>607</sup> Haim Genizi, *America's Fair Share: The Admission and Resettlement of Displaced Persons, 1945–1952* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1993).

series of opinion polls in the postwar period were consistently finding strong anti-immigration sentiment across the country.<sup>608</sup>

Those in favour of immigration stressed that any incoming DPs would represent only a minute increase in total working populations and (as in the British case), care would be taken to distribute migrants evenly across the country. More positively, proponents presented DP labour and skills as both desirable and required. Under any proposed mass migration scheme, private companies would take steps—including individual sponsorship—to ensure that no DP would represent an economic drain or burden on any American business or individual. Importantly, a strict screening procedure would help prevent the entry of any DP representing any political threat to the United States government or its people. Nevertheless, the hostility of the American Congress towards Jewish DP migration, in particular, proved difficult to overcome; indeed, “The Truman Administration was more sympathetic than Congress to the DP cause.”<sup>609</sup>

The AJC remained undeterred.<sup>610</sup> With Irving Engel at its head, it began to openly lobby for new legislation with a goal of seeing 100,000 Jewish DP immigrants safely to America.<sup>611</sup> While the lobby for liberalizing immigration law in the States was driven, organized and funded

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<sup>608</sup> As Dinnerstein argues, growing antisemitism had been bolstered by the fact that the majority of immigrants who had come to America under the 1945 Truman Directive had been Jews (15,478 out of 22,950 as of June 1947). Kirchmann states that Jews were granted a total of 28,000 of the 40,000 available visas; an evidently larger proportion as compared to the percentage of Jews making up the overall DP population. See Anna Dorota Kirchmann, “They are Coming for Freedom,” 75.

<sup>609</sup> Genizi, *America’s Fair Share*, 67. On August 16, 1946, the President declared the intention of asking Congress for the authority to let in a fixed number of DPs, including Jews, into the US, in a move that was widely met with criticism in Congress.

<sup>610</sup> Dinnerstein makes clear that the AJC They did see the conflict between Zionist insistence on Palestine as the only viable option for large scale Jewish resettlement (and concern over any potential weakening of commitment, such as it was, on the part of the US government), and American immigration reform aimed at bringing over large numbers of Jewish DPs. He argues that the AJC was convinced that only major legislative reform could ease the plight of Jewish DPs in Europe considering the British attitude, which could not mean solely pushing for entry to Palestine but had to include the possibility of mass resettlement in America. He writes: “The exodus from Eastern Europe, combined with the failure of the American and British governments to reach an accord in regard to Palestine, necessitated major decisions in the White House.” While some Zionists argued that DP presence in Germany buttressed the case for Palestine, “this minority did not undermine the efforts” of those lobbying for America. Dinnerstein thus, perhaps rather neatly, characterizes the AJC as a non-Zionist organization. Dinnerstein, *America and the Survivors*, 117ff.

<sup>611</sup> Genizi, *America’s Fair Share*, 69.

in large measure by Jewish organizations, there was general awareness of the strength of coalition and the particular need to attain domestic Catholic backing. In an attempt to appear as non-sectarian as possible and to secure crucial support from the Polish American community, the desired quota was upped to 400,000.<sup>612</sup> The new figure was thus presented as better representative of America's "fair share" of the DP populace who presence, it was stressed to the public, was a *humanitarian* and not a singularly Jewish problem. To help promote the DP cause, a Citizens Committee on Displaced Persons (CCDP) was established in 1946: "Like the 'non-sectarian' refugee committees of the 1930s, the CCDP was essentially a Jewish committee operating for DPs, four-fifths of them Christians."<sup>613</sup>

In promoting the DP cause in America, both the CCDP (spearheaded by American Jewish organizations) and Polonia (the Polish American community) adopted comparable strategies that significantly, made use of DPs themselves in different ways. Anna Kirchmann's work highlights Polonia's efforts to promote Polish DP immigration, which she argues had a subsequently profound impact on the relationships between established Polish immigrant waves from before the outbreak of war, and newly arrived DPs.<sup>614</sup> Significantly, this included funding the journeys of prominent individuals to tour DP camps and report back on the situation therein, prompting widespread calls to action.<sup>615</sup> One such tour in the fall of 1946 of Polish DP camps in the American and British Zones of prominent members of the Polish American community and importantly, Polish American press, was (Kirchmann argues) something of a

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<sup>612</sup> This in spite of the widespread concern that doing so would increase the risk of former collaborators entering the US. A number of scholars have turned important attention onto the subject of the entry of war criminals to the United States. See for example Alan S. Rosenbaum, *Prosecuting Nazi War Criminals* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993); Allan A. Ryan, Jr., *Quiet Neighbors: Prosecuting Nazi War Criminals in America* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984).

<sup>613</sup> Genizi, *America's Fair Share*, 71.

<sup>614</sup> See Kirchmann, "They are Coming for Freedom."

<sup>615</sup> As early as June 1945, the President of Rada Polonii Amerykarskiej (Rada) toured several DP camps in Germany, after which Rada published his report in brochure form, in both Polish and English for wide distribution. Reminiscent of the infamous Harrison Report, such brochures stressed the urgent need for improved living conditions as well as moral support in the form of viable options for a future outside of the DP camp universe. Ibid., 71.



watershed moment in the history of Polonia's commitment to DP emigration to the States.<sup>616</sup> The Polonia delegation met with DP representatives and key members of the Polish DP press in occupied Germany who detailed for them aspects of life in DP camps and in particular what they saw as the flawed workings of what was then, the UNRRA administration in providing adequate care for Polish refugees.<sup>617</sup>

Polish Displaced Persons took advantage of such visits to display as forcefully as possible their desire to emigrate to America. Polonia representatives were greeted in camps by Polish DPs chanting "Long live the United States! Long live American democracy! Long live American Polonia!"<sup>618</sup> Reports from DP camps and the impressions that Polish DPs themselves helped to solidify, echoed back through the American press, highlighting the plight of Polish DPs at the mercy of UNRRA and an uncertain fate in Germany.

When it came to the lobby for America, Polish and Jewish DPs deployed comparable tactics, albeit with some differences. As well as interacting with the various delegations from American Polonia and Jewry that visited the Zone, DPs also reached out from beyond the DP camps. In the Jewish case this went beyond appealing to individual family members remotely, to physically sending representatives of the Belsen DP camps to America to vamp up support for Jewish survivors. In her memoir, Josef (Yossel) Rosensaft's wife, Hadassah, describes how her husband was invited by Dr. Joseph Schwartz and Edward Warburg of the AJDC to attend the first postwar conference of the United Jewish Appeal (UJA) in the United States and represent DP survivors to American Jewry.<sup>619</sup> During his trip, Josef delivered an 80-minute

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<sup>616</sup> The delegation was made up of Charles Rozmarek (the president of the Polish National Alliance) accompanied by Frank Januszewski from Detroit, vice president of the Polish American Congress and publisher of the Detroit *Polish Daily News*, Ignacy Nurkiewicz, also vice president of the Polish American Congress, and Charles Burke, representative of the United Polish Press of America. Their inspection of the Polish UNRRA-run DP camps lasted thirteen days. Ibid., 78.

<sup>617</sup> Ibid.

<sup>618</sup> Ibid. Kirchmann cites such responses as being reported in New York daily *Nowy Świat*, September 27, 1946, 1; September 28, 1946, 1.

<sup>619</sup> While the British were reluctant to allow Mr. Rosensaft to leave the Zone, they eventually granted him an exit visa on the proviso—ignored entirely by Josef—that he never returns to the DP camps. Hadassah Rosensaft, *Yesterday: My Story* (Washington, D.C., 2004) 99.

address to dozens of prominent Jewish leaders from the United States. Described in the American press as the “Jewish Lincoln,” his speeches and subsequent interactions over the period of several weeks, helped secure a resolution to render “all possible assistance to the Jewish DPs in Germany.”<sup>620</sup> Maurice (Moshe) Eigen, the AJDC director in Belsen, described Josef’s many speeches as having “shaken” American Jews. The Yiddish poet H. Leivick wrote of the galvanizing effect of his visit in America; “You are going back to the camps and we all remain here in peaceful America. There is undoubtedly a feeling of guilt amongst most Jews in America. Those who do not feel it, woe to them.”<sup>621</sup>

As the activities of the CCDP gained momentum, disseminating the DP voice gained even greater significance. Both Polish and Jewish American communities solicited direct correspondence from the DP camps. This tactic however, targeted largely the Polish DPs; it being generally seen as more politically expedient by the CCDP to stress the advantage that resettlement would have for Catholics, most of whom were Polish, to deflect away from prominent antisemitic attitudes. Propaganda thus centred on the humanitarian aspects of the “DP problem” to evoke widespread compassion.<sup>622</sup> Appealing to the hearts of its readers, the Polish American press, by the fall of 1948, included a steady stream of personal stories and letters sent from Polish DP camps in Germany.<sup>623</sup> The portrayal of the Polish DP voice was selective, insofar as it preferred correspondence that emphasized the victimization of DPs and the powerlessness of their situation; while at the same time stressing that DPs were ready and willing to improve their lives if and when opportunities became available to them. For their

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<sup>620</sup> Ibid., 100.

<sup>621</sup> Ibid.

<sup>622</sup> Kirchmann, “They are Coming for Freedom,” 83.

<sup>623</sup> *Nowy Świat* initiated a regular section “Letters from the Abyss.” A small body of literature has investigated the history and culture of letter-writing and petitions among Polish immigrants to America. Katarzyna Nowak’s recent article offers an important analysis of 300 petitions, written by DPs, to representatives of American Polonia (considered further into this subchapter). See Anna D. Jaroszyńska-Kirchmann, “‘Don’t Be Mute!’ The Culture of Letter-Writing to the Press Among Polish Immigrants in America.” *Cultural and Social History* 10:3 (2013): 397-417; Katarzyna Nowak, “‘To Reach the Lands of Freedom’: Petitions of Polish Displaced Persons to American Poles, Moral Screening and the Role of Diaspora in Refugee Resettlement,” *Cultural and Social History* 16:5 (2019): 621-642.

part, Polish DPs were content to use all possible methods available to them to vie for improved prospects of reaching America. Personal stories from DPs also stressed their fervent desire to emigrate to the States and their enthusiasm to work upon arrival and a willingness to accept any work offered in exchange for sponsorship.<sup>624</sup> Mobilization for the DP cause in America reached its height in 1948. Leonard Dinnerstein describes the CCDP as one of the largest and most impressive lobby bodies in the US between 1947-48. DPs had to be presented as victims of communism and especially, as Christians fleeing its spread. In a growing Cold War climate that saw communism, not Nazism, as the greatest existential threat to America, any proposed legislative changes were going to have include a rigid “screening” provision.<sup>625</sup>

The outcome of the CCDP’s strategy was limited. After a great deal of debate and amendment, the Senate eventually adopted in June 1948 what became known as the DP Act of 1948. The Bill was considered to be a failure by many in the CCDP, particularly on the Jewish side, who saw it as viciously antisemitic, some members even urging President Truman to veto the Bill. The DP Act of 1948 allowed for 200,000 DPs to immigrate in the space of a 2-year period. These DPs had to be comprised of 30% agricultural workers and 40% had to have come from territories annexed by the Soviet Union. The CCDP was openly hostile to these provisions. It saw the Bill in many respects as a mockery of justice, insofar as its restrictions were designed to restrict Jewish emigration and potentially make it easier for Nazi collaborators to find a home in the US. Indeed, the Bill allowed for the emigration of a certain number of *volksdeutsche*, in a clause that was universally opposed by all Jewish CCDP members.<sup>626</sup>

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<sup>624</sup> In a sudden shift away from emphasis on DP passivity, Polonia was being encouraged to support and welcome the DPs by portraying them as enthusiastic, honest, pious achievers working hard in the DP camps of Europe. Importantly, DP letters from the DP camps had to counter accusations of black-market activity which had begun to circulate in American media: this often meant stressing how grateful DPs were for material aid, that prevented them from participating in illicit activities in the camps. DPs who had reached America before 1948 also played a part in campaigns, shedding light “on the DP matter from the point of view of the DPs themselves.” Kirchmann, “They are Coming for Freedom,” 106, 111.

<sup>625</sup> Genizi, *America’s Fair Share*, 77.

<sup>626</sup> Ibid.

As Haim Genizi argues however, retrospectively the DP Bill of 1948 was perhaps not as bad as Jewish leaders thought it at the time of its being signed into law. Certainly, it was a landmark in American immigration policy. It represented a growing trend in US immigration law offering sanctuary to people persecuted in their homelands for their politics or their religion—especially during the Cold War era. According to Genizi, “Contrary to alarmed predictions, the number of displaced persons admitted to the United States “as of December 15, 1950, under the DP Act of 1948 was 201,664 including 40,218 Jews,” representing roughly 20.4% of the total; a representative percentage of the numbers of Jews in the DP camps of occupied Germany.<sup>627</sup>

These numbers were in no small measure a result of the fact that the US DP Commission in *practice* interpreted the DP Act very liberally. Reminiscent of the problems that the British had filling labour quotas, the Americans were faced with similar dilemmas. Representatives of the US scheme began their work in earnest in August of 1948, tasked with filling the 200,000 DP quota. The most troublesome of all the Act’s provisions proved unsurprisingly to be a cut-off date of December 22, 1945 (prospective DP applicants had to have acquired DP status before this date to qualify, indicating an awareness of stages in migration into the DP camps, discussed in Chapter 1) and an agricultural provision that preferenced manual labourers.<sup>628</sup> Taken together these clauses significantly hampered recruitment from the outset; the arbitrary cut-off date often meaning that those most skilled were ineligible. The Commission also had to develop a relationship with the IRO, who in turn had to adjust its operations to meet the needs of the US scheme. What developed was paradoxically a system flexible enough to allow a very liberal interpretation of the DP Act and at the same time, a deeply bureaucratic, lengthy and disheartening process towards eventual resettlement.

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<sup>627</sup> Genizi, *America’s Fair Share*, 66–80.

<sup>628</sup> Victoria M. H. Eastes, “The Illusion of Peace: The Fate of the Baltic Displaced Persons, 1945-1952.” (PhD diss., Texas A & M University, 2010): 75.

The time between acquiring one's refugee status under IRO and resettling abroad could take as little as a few weeks, or years of living in a DP camp. The IRO acted as an employment agency. It offered DPs consultations on available schemes, as well as skill certification and training and finally, travel documentation and access to IRO ships. As well as managing living centres where most DPs were housed, the IRO additionally established resettlement, staging and embarkation centres.<sup>629</sup> Central offices for a growing number of recruitment schemes were established, where DPs could meet with IRO officials to learn more about a mission and officials attempted to match a DPs skill set to a desired destination, in a process requiring first eligibility screening, medical check-ups and a full professional biography. In resettlement centres, personnel from destination states worked side-by-side with IRO personnel and often conducted their own set of testing; particularly when it came to medical and background checks. Only after successfully navigating these offices, centres and tests, could a DP finally apply for a resettlement visa.<sup>630</sup> Successful DPs were then sent to a "staging centre" where they were to exit Germany; but not before yet another medical check was conducted. This was the final step in the "pipeline:" "Camp Grohn near Bremen served departures to the UK, Canada and United States. A port near Naples served those leaving for Australia, New Zealand and South America."<sup>631</sup>

This IRO resettlement "pipeline" was a daunting bureaucratic process for any DP to have to go through. Every new destination that opened up (resettlement opportunities in Canada and Australia will be considered further into this subchapter) brought with itself a host of unanswered questions, the most important of which was, what kind of DP are they looking for? DP camps circulated with rumours about the various recruitment schemes, unaided by the fact

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<sup>629</sup> Andrew Paul Janco, "Soviet 'Displaced Persons' in Europe, 1941-1951" (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Chicago, 2012): 312.

<sup>630</sup> Ibid.

<sup>631</sup> Holborn, *The International Refugee Organisation*, 374; US Displaced Persons Commission, *DP Story*, 72-76, describes a processing "pipeline" of no less than sixteen steps.

that many DPs were often rejected at various stages of the pipeline without explanation. DPs were faced with the additional challenge of having to navigate the relationships between not only the IRO and the various states in partnership with it, but also the work of the dozens of volunteer agencies that coordinated their efforts with the IRO and whose volunteers were often part of the resettlement process. Many volunteer organizations—as we have seen in the case of Jewish DPs in particular—offered help to certain DP communities only, or else to those wishing to immigrate to a particular destination.<sup>632</sup> Help was available to all DPs in some form, though some communities were significantly more likely to receive assistance than others.<sup>633</sup>

Added to this was yet another aspect for DPs to navigate: the particularities and prejudices of the personnel they would encounter, whether IRO, volunteer or governmental. This was pronounced in the case of emigration to the US for example, where the same domestic suspicion on anyone from Eastern Europe—and Jews in particular—as being potential communists, heightened by a mounting Cold War climate, was transported to the DP camps. Certainly, DPs had to be aware of American concerns and fears surrounding any attachment to the Soviet Union or to communist ideals. The onus lay on the individual DP to convince their prospective host country both of the safety of allowing them entry but also to establish the credibility of their enthusiastic embrace of the political ideals of their future home. Learning to understand how they were, or could be perceived as a prospective citizens, was yet another burden placed on DPs.

Related to this was of course, the issue of skills and education. It was well known that manual labourers were in highest demand universally across receiving countries; as were the

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<sup>632</sup>The largest volunteer organizations working with the IRO included the YMCA, World Council of Churches, World Student Relief, World Health Organization, Confederation des Travailleurs Intellectuels, Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, American Joint Distribution Society, United Service to New Americans, International Rescue and Relief Committee, Sociedad Fraternal Hutteriana among others.

<sup>633</sup> “In January 1948, for example, the PCIRO listed 710 employees of thirteen voluntary agencies in Germany for that month. [...] More than 60 percent of both agencies and workers were Jewish.” Dinnerstein, *America and the Survivors*, 200-201.

young and healthy. Class thus played an important role: DPs who were highly educated were very unlikely to practice their profession abroad.<sup>634</sup> They thus had often to either downplay their skills, sell themselves as low-skilled labourers, retrain entirely; or a combination. It was not uncommon for example, for DPs to claim farming background where there was none.<sup>635</sup> A neglected aspect of this concerns language: realistically, DPs had often to prepare for a life of menial work abroad thanks also to the fact that they, in most cases, did not have the linguistic skills to command higher positions.

The resettlement system—unlike the process of acquiring DP status—was not only cumbersome, repetitive and time-consuming; it was also extremely difficult to manipulate, given that unlike screening for DP status, it required things like medical testing and skills demonstration.<sup>636</sup> Additionally, while UNRRA staff were confronted with DP populations for the first time, the IRO by this time was significantly better informed about the individuals in the camps it inherited. Not only did it continue to employ a great deal of UNRRA staff, it also took the time to crosscheck DPs biographical claims against the historical record and verifiable documentation, and to follow up on any inconsistencies. Frequently, this meant calling forward witnesses who could confirm a DPs story; individual CM1 files are laden with sworn statements by others confirming the identity of individual DPs.

To the benefit of DPs, the IRO was committed to relocating DPs to wherever possible. While its pipeline was a grim picture of a dense and highly selective bureaucratic process, thousands of DPs were still successful in navigating and acquiring all the necessary

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<sup>634</sup> The resettlement of intellectuals (considered in the following subchapter in more depth) remained one of the unsolved problems of the IRO, see John George Stoessinger, *The Refugee and the World Community* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1956), 139. Genizi includes a discussion of DPs changing their sponsor once they arrive as well as the mobility post-arrival, with DPs gravitating to the cities. He notes, “one-third of the DPs questioned in the summer of 1951 had left their original sponsors.” Genizi, *America’s Fair Share*, 124.

<sup>635</sup> Although as Andrew Paul Janco affirms, “free living” DPs were more likely to work in agriculture in Germany or have regular contact with farmers with whom they might trade goods in exchange for services. See Janco, “Soviet ‘Displaced Persons’ in Europe, 1941-1951,” (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2012): 108

<sup>636</sup> DPs were often forced to present their muscles or callouses. Kathryn Hulme, *The Wild Place* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1953), 187.

documentation that enabled them to leave the DP camps of Germany behind. They actively sought out affidavits; help from volunteer organizations; training in various skills and trades as well as employment in the DP camps. This took a great deal of determination and time in all cases, as well as no small amount of flexibility on the part of the DP. The fact that a DP eventually arrived in a destination of choice was often testament itself to DP ingenuity and patience. It is worth bearing in mind that for DPs, mastering a new system was made somewhat easier by the fact that they had already encountered and confronted screening procedures before. Many DPs, as we have seen, had by 1948 years of experience in adaptation.

### **Eyes and hopes on America**

The eyes of the “last million” were directed towards the United States Congress.<sup>637</sup>

In the most prominent works on Displaced persons of the last decade, the fact that America represented an alternative homeland in the minds of both DPs and American Jewish organizations is often neglected. Gerard Daniel Cohen dedicates a chapter of his book *In War's Wake* to Jewish DPs and describes how American Jewish leaders of the postwar era advocated for the resettlement of Jewish DPs on a mass scale to “countries willing to receive them in addition to Palestine, which was ‘ready and best suited for Jewish colonization’.”<sup>638</sup> He does not attempt to further investigate why it was that so many American Jewish leaders, even Zionists, lobbied so powerfully for the States as a destination of mass emigration of Jewish DPs.<sup>639</sup> Hagit Lavsky includes only a cursory note in her conclusion; “Quite a number of

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<sup>637</sup> Kirchmann, “They are Coming for Freedom,” 197.

<sup>638</sup> Cohen, *In War's Wake*, 132.

<sup>639</sup> Anna Holian similarly concludes on the basis of DP political pronouncements, that for Jewish DPs “the dominant political orientation was defined by a rejection of diaspora life and an embrace of Zionism,” and does not work into mass Jewish resettlement in America into her analysis. Anna Holian, *Between National Socialism and Soviet Communism: Displaced Persons in Postwar Germany* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011), 267.



devoted Zionist leaders ended up in America. Nevertheless, in Bergen-Belsen, Zionism reigned supreme.”<sup>640</sup> The authors do not stress that the migration result was clearly not always in accordance with the intention. As we have already seen in Chapter 2 of the present study, there was also the case of individuals who focused on Israel for reasons other than ideological conviction, as well as the fact of Zionists who settled in the US. Atina Grossmann’s conclusion gives a brief nod to the determination of so many Jewish DPs to resettle in America: “many individual DPs continued to dream about crossing the ocean to the United States,” in a clear move to distinguish emigration to America as personal, non-ideological movement in contrast with emigration to Palestine. In the following sentence however, Grossman refers to America as a “promised land”: “whose geography—organized by states—was enshrined in the street names in Föhrenwald.”<sup>641</sup> Just how and why America was considered to be a promised land for so many Jewish DPs in the postwar period remains to be further explored.

The small but growing body of literature that considers the postwar emigration of Poles out of the DP camps, affirms the desire of the majority of DP Poles to resettle in the States. Among the most prominent works on the subject, and certainly the most oft-cited within the DP literature, is that of Anna D. Jaroszyńska-Kirchmann whose body of work broadly explores the relationship between “old” and “new” Polish American communities after World War II, centred on patterns of conflict and cooperation within distinct but connected Polish communities in the States.<sup>642</sup> To Kirchmann and others, it seems to be a given that Polish DPs who would not be repatriated would want to go to the US. The varied and multiple reasons as

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<sup>640</sup> Hagit Lavsky, “A Community of Survivors: Bergen-Belsen as a Jewish Centre after 1945,” in David Cesarani, Tony Kushner, Jo Reilly and Colin Richmond, eds., *Belsen in History and Memory* (Routledge, 2013), 174.

<sup>641</sup> Grossmann, *Jews, Germans and Allies*, 251.

<sup>642</sup> See Anna D. Jaroszyńska-Kirchmann, *The Exile Mission: The Polish Political Diaspora and Polish Americans, 1939-1956* (Ohio University Press, 2004).

to *why* this might be so, have not been systematically considered or contextualized within the wider framework of available options.<sup>643</sup>

That America was by far the most popular destination of choice for DPs, of which the majority were Polish, is clearly evidenced in ITS files. As alluded to in Chapter 2, so fervent was the desire to resettle in the States that it was not uncommon for potential recruits for alternatives such as the EVW schemes, to actively hold off on immediate employment opportunities abroad in the hopes of going to America at an undefined time in the future. For Polish-Jewish DP Bernard Birken, who was approached by several labour recruiters as a young, able-bodied, single qualified tailor, this DP strategy proved frustrating. While he himself was inclined to accept offers of immediate work, his mother, brother and sister refused to consider any alternative to the US, leaving Bernard with little option but to wait with his family, with whom he did not wish to be parted.<sup>644</sup>

For both Polish and Jewish DPs, the desire to prioritize going to America was primarily dictated by the desire to join family, or as we shall see, “community” in a wider sense.<sup>645</sup> The search for surviving relatives—near or distant—often ended in the United States. Locating family could, for some, mean locating individuals as close as a sibling or child, who had left Europe before the outbreak of war. This was the case for Natan Berlinski—who hoped only to be able to join a surviving brother living in the Bronx.<sup>646</sup> While German Jewish DP Friedrich

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<sup>643</sup> Nowak for example, notes that “some of the 250,000 Poles who still remained in the Displaced Persons (DP) camps felt that they had a chance to start a new life in the United States. [...] Those who did not have relatives or friends across the ocean relied on the aid of diaspora organisations.” Nowak, “To Reach the Lands of Freedom,” 2. This is not to say that there has been no work taken in this direction. Both Kirchmann and Nowak have taken important steps towards reconstructing in particular, the economic and ideological factors that drew DP Poles towards the US, and the ways in which diaspora communities were mobilized to assist individual emigration. Even the title of Kirchmann’s dissertation is telling in investigating the claim: “They Are Coming for Freedom Not Dollars.”

<sup>644</sup> ITS, ‘Roza Birken’, Doc. No. 78938697\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>645</sup> In principle, this motivation could draw DPs to other destinations as well. The larger population of America however made it significantly more likely that relatives were found there than say, in Palestine. “Family” is meant here in its loosest sense and could be applied to individuals with whom a DP had enjoyed limited, if not zero contact with, in the past.

<sup>646</sup> ITS, ‘Natan Berlinski’, Doc. No. 78927726\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

Herz had spent the last five years in some of the Third Reich's most notorious concentration camps, his daughter and son-in-law had escaped a similar fate by moving to New York in the late 1930s. Shortly after liberation, Friedrich met and married fellow DP Maria-Helene Maurer, whose former husband had perished in Auschwitz. She too had a daughter who had left Germany for America before the outbreak of war. Waiting to re-join what family remained to them in America was the only strategy out of the DP camps the pair were willing to consider.<sup>647</sup>

Having immediate family members in the States however was largely exceptional and most DPs with relatives in the US registered more distant family connections. The word “cousin” in particular, was used loosely—and widely—as an umbrella term across CM/1 files to cover any individual with whom the DP shared at least one blood relative. It is clear that in individual ITS records, welfare officers were not invested in either confirming or detailing the exact relationships between DPs and any claimed relatives, but were satisfied to take DPs at their word. DPs were encouraged to name and to contact anyone abroad who might serve as a point of connection towards sponsorship and eventual resettlement.<sup>648</sup>

Hope was kindled in both the Polish and Jewish DP communities with the passing of the DP Act of 1948.<sup>649</sup> The possibility of IRO-assisted immigration to America especially, was enough to draw many DPs back to the camps: even so-called “free living” DPs were often enticed to (re)enter a DP camp.<sup>650</sup> Polish DP Tadeusz Glab had left a DP camp in the British Zone in Celle and was employed in a German firm as a labourer. After the DP Act of 1948 was passed, Tadeusz applied to re-enter the DP camp system (hoping to find employment therein)

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<sup>647</sup> ITS, ‘Friedrich Herz’, Doc. No. 79177179\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>648</sup> The standardized CM/1 forms include a section “15. Relatives,” in which any family members known to the DP outside of the DP camp system were recorded, with names frequently added over time.

<sup>649</sup> The range of options for Jewish DPs at this time was now significantly more promising, with the cancellation of the “White paper” on May 16, 1948 by the provisional Council of Israel and only weeks afterwards, the passing of the American DP Act.

<sup>650</sup> “Free liners” was the UNRRA term for unregistered DPs. “These unregistered D.P.s continued to live more or less like Germans. Some were legitimately employed on German farms or in various trades and industries. Others have been making a living largely by playing the black market.” Marvin Klemm, *The Inside Story of UNRRA, An Experience in Internationalism; A Firsthand Report on the Displaced People of Europe* (New York: Lifetime Editions, 1949), 281.

with a view to emigrating to the US as soon as possible. Like a great many Polish DPs after 1945, Tadeusz had been happy to seize upon any opportunity to emigrate abroad. His plans to emigrate were frustrated by the selection criteria of the Western European schemes (he had lost a fist during the war and was thus rejected as unfit for manual work), but hope was now rekindled in reaching a cousin in America, through whom he applied for an affidavit.<sup>651</sup>

A preoccupation with family reunification is well evidenced in the ITS files.<sup>652</sup> *Prima facie*, this observation lends support to significant micro-level sociological theories of migration that represent migratory aspiration primarily in terms of family reunion and economic benefit.<sup>653</sup> “Place-utility” theory argues that individual migrants calculate the cost versus benefit of a given destination in terms of perceptions of potential advantage and prospect of satisfaction.<sup>654</sup> Family reunification often tipped the scales of presumed net migratory gain. Julian Wolpert thus characterizes a behavioural model in which “migration is viewed as a form of individual or group adaptation to perceived changes in environment [...] a flow reflecting an appraisal by a potential migrant of his present site as opposed to a number of other potential sites” Wolpert defines place-utility as “a net composite of utilities which are derived from the individual’s integration at some position in space.”<sup>655</sup> “Family migration theory” similarly stresses the idea of calculated net gain: where individuals or households will migrate where total returns are seen as likely to be positive.<sup>656</sup>

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<sup>651</sup> ITS, ‘Tadeusz Glab’, Doc. No. 79157419\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>652</sup> Common in micro-level studies. A 1983 study of Vietnamese-Chinese refugees in Canada showed that the resettlement process often involved downward occupational mobility, fatalistic attitudes, a preoccupation with family reunification, and a profound desire to escape dependency. See Kwok B. Chan and Lawrence Lam, “Resettlement of Vietnamese-Chinese Refugees in Montreal, Canada: Some Socio-Psychological Problems and Dilemmas,” *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 15:1 (1983): 1.

<sup>653</sup> For a useful overview of “micro” sociological theories of migration, see Anthony H. Richmond, “Sociological Theories of International Migration: The Case of Refugees,” *Current Sociology* 36:2 (1988): 7-25.

<sup>654</sup> Julian Wolpert, “Behavioral Aspects of the Decision to Migrate,” *Papers and Proceedings of the Regional Science Association* 15 (1965): 159–172

<sup>655</sup> *Ibid.*, 161.

<sup>656</sup> As the second half of this chapter explores in more detail, the optimal decision for family units did not always translate into being optimal for each individual family member. Kubursi argues that with respect to family migration, migration decisions “should not be based on whether a particular member of the household is better off at the destination than at the origin, rather whether the family as a whole (nuclear and even extended) will benefit.” See Atif Kubursi, “The Economics of Migration and Remittances under Globalization,” *Full and*

Although powerful, such accounts tend to overlook a number of factors; including the influence of “significant others” in decision-making processes, as well as important forms of constraint that limit the range of options for refugees.<sup>657</sup> As we have already seen, in the DP case, degrees of freedom varied significantly over time and across communities, and DP autonomy (either individually or collectively expressed) was to a large extent situationally determined. While there were cases in which the desire to emigrate to the US may be characterized as purely driven by the desire for family reunification, or a DP household’s rational calculation of maximum net advantage, a *multivariate* approach can better account for a spectrum and hierarchy of “needs,” that together drove the desire for America. Although family reunification was often decisive, individual and household needs also included socially determined factors such as group inclusion and feelings of security (both physical and psychological). In a postwar context in which states, international organizations and community leaders were involved in the political decisions that affected DPs, subsequent immigration of large numbers of people out of the camps was always a complex mix of determinants in which the personal, social, economic and political were inextricably linked.

Certainly, one could characterize, based on CM/1 forms, DP migration to America within a kind of means-end schema in which DPs made proactive choices. In the postwar period, chains of migration to the States were rapidly developing. It was not uncommon for families to separate for a short period, with some members travelling ahead and sponsoring the departure of family back in the DP camp at a later date, indicting a rationalisation that saw the optimal decision for the family as not necessarily translating to optimal for each individual

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*Productive Employment and Decent Work* (2006): 9. That migration decisions were taken as a family unit was often in conflict with labour power distribution within the unit, sometimes driving separation (often in line with administrative preferences) in order to secure the economic stability of the family. As the second half of this chapter explores in more depth, DPs were especially resistant to separation.

<sup>657</sup> Giddens's concept of “structuration,” for instance, stresses that not all determinants of social action are conscious. Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (University of California Press, 1984), 174.

family member. Edmund Sulikowski, his brother and his sister had all survived the war as forced labourers in Germany. Edmund and his sister managed to immigrate to the USA in 1951 from Camp Grohn in Bremen Haven. His brother, who was unfit to travel at that time, joined the family 5 years later.<sup>658</sup> Chaim Meisels' wife Julia, went on to Michigan ahead of him; leaving her ill husband behind in the hope that they would be reunited in the future.<sup>659</sup> Nonetheless, such cases cannot be fully considered in isolation from the influence of other social forces, including the impact of prevailing value-systems, external pressures and even non-rational goals that meant that emigration to America was often as much reactive as proactive.

America was not only a destination in which finding family was more *likely*, this was widely seen as more *desirable*. This is best evidenced in cases where DPs had family in multiple locations. Artur Sachs, a German Jew, was fortunate enough to have both close and distant family across the Anglophone world. While his brother and sister had left the DP camps for England and could have sponsored his movement there, he opted to remain in Germany and wait for an affidavit from more distant relatives in the States.<sup>660</sup> Polish DPs with close family back in Poland were often encouraged to reunite instead with family members in America. Ignacy Zawada explains: "My mother writes and tells me that people starve in Poland. I do not want to return, especially as I might find myself in the 'Red Army'."<sup>661</sup> Having married in a DP camp fellow Pole Kalinina Zenia, Ignacy and his family all hoped that he would be able to join an uncle living in the USA as soon as possible. There were thus several factors that saw America emerge as the destination of choice for so many thousands of DPs, even before the passing of the DP Act made emigration there possible.

<sup>658</sup> The first contingent of the family travelled to the US aboard the ship "General Taylor," the brother came later on "General Langfitt" in March 56. ITS, 'Edmund Sulikowski', Doc. No. 111618583\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>659</sup> ITS, 'Chaim Meisels', Doc. No. 100411284\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>660</sup> ITS, 'Artur Sachs', Doc. No. 79684291\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>661</sup> ITS, 'Ignacy Zawada', Doc. No. 79949280\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

“Family” also represented community in a wider sense. Rogers Brubaker has discussed the concept of ethnic affinity as a pull factor with respect to migration, as a principle capable of organizing and even generating migration flows.<sup>662</sup> The manner in which “ethnic unmixing” and official and unofficial understandings of ethnic affinity helped to solidify America as a destination of choice has received little scholarly attention. The significance of pre-existing patterns of migration cannot be overstated. In the Jewish case especially, there existed by 1945 a very well-established diaspora network. 1881 had marked the beginning of a major trend of Jewish emigration to the west from the Russian state.<sup>663</sup> Jewish migration from the Russian Empire to the United States in the years 1881-1914 was one of the most intense migration movements in history: A quarter of the Jewish-Russian population was resettled abroad over the course of a single generation. For DP Poles as well, America represented a land with an established Polish community. There was a lively Polish American immigrant life at the outbreak of the Second World War, defined by a well-developed network of organizations and associations promoting and aiding American Polonia. Some 6 million Polish immigrants and their American-born children represented the largest Polish community outside of Europe.<sup>664</sup>

Thus, continuation of both Polish and Jewish life was seen as especially possible in America. This is particularly well evidenced in the memoirs and testimonies of DP migrants. Recently, Harry Perkal described his DP parents’ situation: “When my parents finally came to America, they spoke only Yiddish and were overwhelmed by this new society. What saved

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<sup>662</sup> Rogers Brubaker, “Migrations of Ethnic Unmixing in the New Europe,” *International Migration Review* 32:4 (Winter 1989): 1048.

<sup>663</sup> This was the beginning of the first modern Jewish settlement in Palestine, known as the First Aliyah. See Leon Pinsker and André Neher, *Auto-emancipation* (Zionist Organization of America, 1944).

<sup>664</sup> According to a 1940 census, Poles constituted the third largest group of foreign-born European-Americans at between 6-7 million. The population was concentrated in north-eastern states including New York, Illinois and Michigan. James S. Pula, *Polish Americans: An Ethnic Community* (VNR AG, 1995), 85. Under the Truman Directive between June 30, 1945 and 1946 a total of 4,806 immigrants born in Poland were admitted. See United States Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service. *The Annual Report for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1945-1956*, Table 6.

them was settling in a cloistered, still mainly Jewish enclave, in Brownsville, Brooklyn.”<sup>665</sup> This recollection draws attention to the close relationship between ethnic and religious affinity. Indeed, that America was widely seen as a viable alternative to Palestine as a destination for Jews is most pronounced when we consider the strategies of religious Jewish figures in the DP camps, committed to the preservation of Jewish culture, religion and traditions. Chaim Goldman had returned to Germany in 1946 from Lezajsk, Poland, with his wife Brucha and his mother-in-law Rachel.<sup>666</sup> In the Belsen DP camp, Chaim was registered as a “religious teacher” and was said to be an active member of Orthodox religious organizations in the camp. Although registered on a transport to Palestine in 1948, Chaim opted to remain in Belsen and subsequently, in Jever DP camp until 1949 to continue his religious work before eventually emigrating to America to join a brother, Maks Goldman and a sister, Fryda Burnsztaj living in Michigan.<sup>667</sup> Henry Lustiger Thaler, in his discussion on Orthodox Jewish experiences in the Belsen camp, argues that DP camps represented different and new spiritual challenges for Orthodox DPs. Thaler quotes a DP from Belsen as observing:

The mainstream Jew of the Bergen-Belsen displaced persons camp was interested in getting on, [but] others were interested in the writing of history. The secular Jewish Central Committee was conscious of history, at every step, particularly with the creation of the State of Israel looming on the horizon. We, the Orthodox, were not focused on history. Our interest was in rebuilding our traditional religious foundations: drawing on a rich Jewish European past that had been destroyed, the uncertain present, and the hoped-for future of yiddishkeit [religious Jewish life].<sup>668</sup>

Significantly, the future of yiddishkeit was seen as possible in the States.<sup>669</sup> While it is difficult to establish the relative weight given by individual migrants to religious considerations

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<sup>665</sup> Harry Perkal, “Confessions of a Chaim Berlin Yeshiva Graduate,” *The Forward*, November 20, 2017, <http://forward.com/life/faith/388028/confessions-of-a-chaim-berlin-yeshiva-graduate/>.

<sup>666</sup> ITS, ‘Chaim Goldman’, Doc. No. 79129122\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>667</sup> Ibid. The family were in fact rejected from the US scheme for reasons of his wife’s ill-health.

<sup>668</sup> Henri Lustiger Thaler, “History and Memory: The Orthodox Experience in the Bergen-Belsen Displaced Persons Camp,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 27:1 (2013): 38. It is probable that the fact that the Zionist movement and the state of Israel was staunchly secular at the time was relevant. Yiddishkeit among the Orthodox generally refers to an Orthodox world associated with the observance of religious Jewish Law.

<sup>669</sup> The examples given highlight also the significance of language, particularly for those who did not speak English and thus may have been attracted to the US as a destination in which there was already a substantial



within ITS, it is clear that America, with its established religious communities, was considered to be a place where religious Jewish life could flourish; or minimally less threatened than elsewhere. Indeed, America frequently represented confidence in a political climate that would enable different ethnic communities to establish themselves securely and free from threat. In the Jewish case, while the desire to leave the blood-soaked soil of Germany behind had elicited unprecedented support for the establishment of a Jewish State, for others, conflict *avoidance* was cited as part of reasoning that both rejected the idea of living in the Jewish state and embraced hopes of a new life in America. Wolf Opatowski was one among many Jews who were consistently clear at interview about their desire to never again experience war. Wolf claims that he had thought about staying in Germany but at the time of interview, 1949, he perceived again the possibility of a European war and did not want to shed any blood in Germany once more. Both he and his wife set their sights on the States, far from Germany—the couple’s files giving no indication they considered joining Wolf’s brother in England or beginning a new life in Palestine.<sup>670</sup>

Distance from Germany and a perception of relative safety was thus certainly a factor for Jews hoping to reach America. Even for some of the most prominent Zionist DP figures; the realities of life in Israel dissuaded them from resettling there themselves, as much as they actively fought for the right of—and actively encouraged—other Jewish DPs to do so. This was the case for the most prominent Zionist and DP leader of the British Zone, Josef Rosensaft. His wife Hadassah recounts Josef’s first visit to Israel in April 1949, coinciding with the arrival of a transport of Jews from Belsen, whom he greeted upon their arrival in

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Yiddish-speaking community (the largest in the world at that time, being in New York city). See Anna Lipphardt, “Yiddish after the Holocaust. A Case Study,” *Europa Ethnica* 68:3-4 (2011): 83. Hungarian Jewish DP Armin Grunfeld’s interviewer in 1948 remarked: “He is very religious and spends all his time studying Talmud. To my question where he also learns English [in order to prepare for emigration], he answered that he cannot go to the courses because the attendance is composed of men and women and his religion doesn’t allow it.” ITS, ‘Armin Grunfeld’, Doc. No. 79143407\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>670</sup> ITS, ‘Wolf Opatowski’, Doc. No. 79548551\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

Haifa.<sup>671</sup> Accompanying them to transit camps set up to house them, Josef saw first-hand the “terrible conditions” that awaited the newcomers, made worse by recent flooding and their seeming abandonment to the elements by surrounding populations. The delegation told him “they wanted to go back to Belsen.” As a consequence, Josef decided he would never personally live in Israel: “After his return from Israel, Yossel delivered a powerful speech to the Jews of Belsen. He told them that Israel was a wonderful but difficult country and urged them to make Aliyah [...] as long as they were prepared for the harsh living conditions they would encounter there. He also told them they would be on their own.”<sup>672</sup> America for the couple, was reactive to Israel.

For DP Poles as well, a growing Cold War climate and the perception of America as the home of democracy in the postwar period made America extremely desirable as a destination of choice. What follows will explore this political dimension in the Polish case, as well as turning to the thus-far undiscussed role of economic factors. More so than the perceived sanctuary of America’s political system, the idea of America as representing a land of economic possibility was forefront in the minds of both Polish and Jewish DPs. Overwhelmingly, where DPs ventured to explain or hint at their motives for applying for a visa to the States after 1948, economic considerations were paramount. Indeed, underscoring the desire to find relatives, to join established ethnic communities and to follow both old and new migratory chains; was the calculation that these elements laid the foundation for a greater possibility of a brighter economic future. ITS officials thought in much the same way, taking careful care to note down the details of family members with the financial means to support a DP and secure sponsorship; focusing greater energies on locating and recording male family members in employment, helping to cement links between DPs and their respective family or diaspora communities.

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<sup>671</sup> Rosensaft was accompanied from Hannover by Norbert Wolheim and Sigmund Fischel.

<sup>672</sup> Josef stayed in Germany until the till the last DP camp is closed and migrated to America, where he remained for the rest of his life, in 1958. Rosensaft, *Yesterday: My Story*, 124.

### The ideal candidate in the ITS

America had, and continues today, to enjoy a reputation as a land of settler opportunity. The DP Act of 1948 gave preference to workers; particularly agricultural labourers. Both DPs and IRO workers worked together to emphasize wherever possible the “value” of individual DPs on economic terms. Individuals like Antoni Glowacki were painted as the very picture of the economically valuable migrant, determined to contribute to the American economy. Antoni’s file contains several dedicated testimonials from volunteer and IRO employees attesting to his skill set. Born in Poland and having completed 7 years of elementary school education, he began to work as a turner's apprentice with the Polish Airplane manufacturing Company in Rzeszów and studied simultaneously at the technical school the theoretical side of the trade. He completed his studies in 1939 and became a master fine mechanic-turner. He was called to the Army by the outbreak of war and fought against the Germans. As a prisoner of war, he was transferred in February 1941 to a civilian workers camp for detail in a German airplane factory as a metal-turner. When liberated in May of 1945, Antoni registered as a DP in the British Zone and was subsequently employed as a telephone operator, maintenance man, store clerk and supervisor of the registry.<sup>673</sup>

With such a *résumé*, Antoni received glowing reports to accompany his and his wife’s application for an American visa. One such recommendation notes, “He has shown during this time that he is an adaptable intelligent worker, capable of doing any kind of work. Mr. Glowacki is a very fine type of a skilled worker. He is a master mechanic, and metal-turner. He has also very good theoretical technical background; can draw and read blueprints and understand technical specification. He is considered to be technically capable of doing independent work such as the making of new metal parts requiring precise work and accurate

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<sup>673</sup> ITS, ‘Antoni Glowacki’, Doc. No. 79123427\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

operation of manifold machine tools. He speaks very good English, fluent German and Polish. He wife is a first-class linen good factory worker and she is most eager to work as such or even as a domestic.”<sup>674</sup> Yet another stresses, "He is intelligent beyond average and has a good working knowledge of the English language. I feel confident that he will give satisfaction to any future employer.”<sup>675</sup> It continues with yet *more* of Antoni’s selling points, “Mr. Glowacki is easy in approach, optimistic in his nature, courteous, and no doubt understanding in dealing with other people. There is no doubt that he would make an exemplary worker able to lead or train semi-skilled people. His wife has also been classified as a first-class worker which altogether makes the picture of this family as a happy working Unit, a good asset to any country willing to accept them.”<sup>676</sup>

While Antoni and his wife were clearly considered the model applicants for American visas, other DPs could not enjoy as much promotion from the IRO and had to stress their own credentials as workers. As the second half of this Chapter will explore in detail, DPs were encouraged to work on their professional skills with a view for emigration through training programs and courses offered in the camps. The most frequent response given by both Polish and Jewish DPs in answer to the question of why they wanted to go to the States was that they wanted to go there to work. Interestingly, while this was one the most common answers given, this would rarely appear in the ITS files of women but almost exclusively in those of men. When it came to resettlement, ITS exclusively highlights the fact that with respect to both economic value and political stances, the attitudes and capabilities of women were considered: but not nearly to the same extent as those of men. To return to the glowing recommendations received by Antoni Glowacki; it is clear that the abilities of his wife were stressed, but only as a compliment to those of Glowacki himself and serving to illustrate only that his wife not be

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<sup>674</sup> Ibid.

<sup>675</sup> Ibid.

<sup>676</sup> Ibid.

considered a burden but an additional asset to be considered as part of *Antoni's* application. Resettlement officers condensed couples into the same file, concentrating on the man as the head of the unit. As a consequence, where CM1 forms cited work as the motivation to emigrate to the US, this was overwhelmingly in the files of male applicants.

If the vast majority of DPs applying to the US cited the possibility of finding work as a primary motivator; after 1948 a growing number of these added to this the statement “in a free country” which can be found across thousands of files with America as a stated preference. It is of course, an open question concerning whether or not such additions to ITS files are reflective of what a DP actually stated at interview or whether or not this was something added by an interviewer. The consistency of phrasing would lend credibility to the idea that the addition arose less out of spontaneous anti-communism and more a tacit understanding that this would help mark the subject as an anti-communist. References to the US as a free country are most likely to be found in the case files of Poles who are well qualified and already working in a DP camp. This suggests that in all likelihood, both the interviewer and the interviewee felt that stressing an appreciation of America as democratic and free, in contradistinction to Communist Poland, was beneficial to a visa application. Indeed, most DP Poles were fervently against the postwar Polish communist regime and were well used to stressing this opposition. That Polish DPs would thus emphasize a desire to resettle in “free” America was likely both reflective of a genuine desire to settle in a democratic country as well as recognition of the fact that this emphasis would be appreciated by American immigration authorities given the evolving geo-political climate of the period. While liberally included in the files of Poles, the expression was totally absent from those of Jews. Most probably, the distinction was reflective of the differences between the two communities’ relationship to the past. DP Jews saw themselves first and foremost as victims of National Socialism whereas DP Poles were much more likely to see themselves as the victims, in the postwar period, of Soviet communism.

With a greater chance to immigrate to the States based on their labour than their Jewish DP counterparts, Polish DPs were especially sensitive to the language and criteria of the DP Act. America, they knew, was looking for qualified manual labourers and they therefore sought actively to sell themselves as such, working with recruitment officers to highlight wherever possible their economic potential. Polish DP Feliks Aleksandrowicz's file is a classic case of what was typically stressed in the case files of strong Polish DP applicants for America. Feliks was the son of a farmer with 120 acres before the war. He had training in two desirable trades: mechanics as well as agriculture. His wartime "story" cleared him of any accusations of collaboration and confirmed his propensity towards disciplined work even under extreme conditions. He had served in the Polish Army from 1933-35, was sent to Germany in 1939 where he remained until liberation, working as a forced labourer. He then entered a Displaced Persons camp in Fallingbommel and evidenced his employability as a driver for UNRRA there and in Bergen-Belsen until 1947. He married in December 1947 and was transferred to Marienthal DP camp where he continued to drive for an IRO senior medical officer. Feliks is described as a great worker: an auto-mechanic, driver, and agricultural labourer. His file states that he "wants to go the USA in order to work and live in free country." He has no news of any family in Poland, opposes communism and is determined to resettle abroad.<sup>677</sup> Felix's file is representative of a wider pattern across the files of young Polish DP men aiming to emigrate to the US: stress wartime credentials, detail marketable skills and highlight the desire to live in a "free democratic country."<sup>678</sup>

<sup>677</sup> ITS, 'Feliks Aleksandrowicz', Doc. No. 78871338\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>678</sup> The ITS includes several such examples, see for instance the files of Jan Chmielewski (ITS, 'Jan Chmielewski', Doc. No. 78993862\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1)) and Mieczysław Janiak (ITS, 'Mieczyslaw Janiak', Doc. No. 79218352\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1)). Both young men in their early 30s, the former was a soldier in the Polish army and a farmer the latter a locksmith. Both are unattached and hope to emigrate to America in order to "work and to live in a free, democratic country," synonymous with the US. The case of America is the only time in CM/1 forms where one can find this phrasing, which does not to this author's knowledge recur for any other destination.

There were of course, limits to one's anti-communist credentials. Józef Jablonski tried to register with the IRO in order to emigrate to the US—emphasizing his emphatic opposition to the communist government in Poland. He had however, joined a *volksliste* during the war and been evacuated from Poland as *volksdeutsche* in 1945. Most damningly, he had since been living in Germany as a German and had even changed his name to the more German-sounding Apfler. Józef had registered with the IRO for the sole purpose of joining relatives in the USA, emboldened by the anti-communist rhetoric of the American resettlement scheme.<sup>679</sup> Rejections for America on political grounds were not uncommon and in rare instances even affected DP Jews. Simon Goldner, a Hungarian Jew, applied for IRO resettlement services with his wife and two children, emphasizing his skills as a qualified locksmith. Unfortunately for Goldner, he had been conscripted for labour service in the Hungarian Army in the beginning of October 1940 and sent to a Jewish labour camp in Kisvards, Hungary. The inmates of the camp were, under armed guard, directed to labour for the Hungarian army in different places in Hungary, Serbia, Romania and Czechoslovakia. Simon did not hold military status and was only issued with a worker's uniform without military badges and was wearing a yellow armband to indicate his Jewish origin. While both UNRRA and the IRO had granted him and his wife DP status, the fact of his having “served” with the Hungarian Army merited continuous questioning, in light of his intention to emigrate to America. There is no record of Simon having ever been granted an American visa.<sup>680</sup>

Resettlement however, once again, made stressing one's economic value of primary importance: a situation which favoured Polish DPs, many more of whom had backgrounds in

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<sup>679</sup> The file notes that the candidate was apparently proudly *volksdeutsche*. ITS, ‘Jozef Jablonksi’, Doc. No. 78882321\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1). Precisely because the DP Act allowed for ethnic Germans to immigrate to the US, some were emboldened to apply for DP status. One can find these cases exclusively in the ITS; for instance, German POW Gunther Fieguth, who served in the German Army in Russia. Gunther came to the DP camps looking to try to receive financial aid towards emigration, having located family in both the US and Canada. It is highly probable that he expected not to be granted DP status, but he evidently tried his luck anyway. See ITS, ‘Gunther Fieguth’, Doc. No. 79082762\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>680</sup> ITS, ‘Simon Goldner’, Doc. No. 79129257\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

desirable fields such as agricultural labour. Gerhart Rosendahl, a German Jew who re-entered Germany from France in 1949, had his economic value assessed in an extraordinary balance sheet in which he is given the low overall rating of “+4.” Not being considered employable meant almost no chance of immigrating to the US.<sup>681</sup> Health and fitness were undoubtedly the great equalizers among DP communities: regardless of any other affiliations, if you were ill you were always, universally, unlikely to be able to emigrate. 25-year-old Hanna Braun was single, fluent in English and a qualified corset maker. Of German-Jewish origin, she had a brother, sister and cousin all residing in New York able to “fully assist” her in joining them by offering private assurance of employment and housing as well as a sponsored voyage. She was rejected from the US scheme however on medical grounds, based on the discovery of active tuberculosis.<sup>682</sup>

If one member of the family unit was unwell, the chances of immigration were rendered virtually nil for the entire group. Stanisław Czykieta, his wife and their two children applied for the US in 1948 but were deferred thanks to a minor problem with Stanisław’s leg. His mother, Apolonia, suffered from diminished vision and a weak heart. As a consequence of there being no opportunity for Apolonia to join them, the family opted to remain in Germany.<sup>683</sup> In this way, prioritizing family reunification could work against emigration. The second half of this chapter explores in more detail the clash between administrative priorities that effectively saw family as detrimental to migration, versus DPs who conversely, often asked rather whether or not *migration* was detrimental for the family. Nonetheless the administrative

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<sup>681</sup> ITS, ‘Luise Rosendahl’, Doc. No. 79682884\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>682</sup> ITS, ‘Hanna Braun’, Doc. No. 78963277\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>683</sup> ITS, ‘Stanislaw Czykieta’, Doc. No. 79014924\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1). As will be explored in the second half of this Chapter, it was more common for infants and young children to be considered a “problem” from the administrative perspective with respect to migration. Jeremia Rawski, for example, a Polish Jew who wanted to join an uncle in the US, had a child in the DP camps who was unstable and ill with an infection. ITS, ‘Jeremia Rawski’, Doc. No. 79645311\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).



perspective was clear: the young and unattached were preferable and over 50% of those admitted into the US until 1952 came as individuals.<sup>684</sup>

Unsurprisingly (and in accordance with its intended purpose) the DP Act's cut-off date was yet another cause of rejection across all ethno-nationalities. As previously stated, the US DP Act of '48 only made provision for the immigration of DPs who had applied for DP status before the end of 1945. Jozef Kramer, a German Jew who had lost his entire family to ghettos, concentration camps and suicide, applied for IRO emigration services only in 1950.<sup>685</sup> Hoping to avail himself also of the opportunity to leave Germany, Jozef registered himself with the IRO in February of 1950 explicitly to access resettlement services on offer to DPs. He was swiftly informed that thanks to the cut-off date, he was ineligible for the US Scheme and furthermore, for any IRO scheme whose own cut-off date for aid was the end of August 1949. Although Jozef was among those who appealed his case, cut-off dates stood firm. His case concludes: "It has been further ruled that the date-line policy should be strictly adhered to and no exception, unless specifically mentioned in the General Council resolution, can be granted. It is the opinion of this office that your case does not warrant any exceptional treatment [...]. The decision of the eligibility Officer in Celle is therefore confirmed."<sup>686</sup>

The late adoption and inherent restrictions of the 1948 US DP Act ultimately forced thousands to consider destinations they might otherwise never have. As we shall see, strategizing for destinations such as Canada and Australia, the next largest resettlement hubs for DPs, both mirrored and diverged from the US example in important respects.

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<sup>684</sup> US Displaced Persons Commission, *DP Story*, 368, provides the age and gender breakdowns of incoming migrants. The median age for women was 29, and 30 for men.

<sup>685</sup> ITS, 'Jozef Kramer', Doc. No. 79338814\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1). After being liberated in Berlin, Józef had moved to the US Zone where he registered himself with the AJDC and received regular assistance from them. In 1949, he had travelled to the British Zone to see his cousin, Arthur Horditsch, who was preparing to emigrate to Israel.

<sup>686</sup> Ibid. There are a number of cases that illustrate just how rigid the American scheme could be. In one instance, a candidate was rejected for failing to provide an adequate photo on time. See ITS, 'Julian Gronek', Doc. No. 79139452\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

## Oh Canada

As historians Irving Abella and Harold Troper have documented, the postwar scramble to locate surviving relatives, “the first steps taken by survivors to reorder shattered lives,” similarly saw individuals seek out family in Canada that, in many cases, they had never known. Focused on Jewish DP survivors, the authors include portions of several written pleas to “faceless relatives,” hoping to “fill the void” left by murdered family members. One young Jewish boy wrote to an Uncle in Canada:

you now are our parents, our entire family [...] I, therefore, beg you dear uncle not to forget me now. I am now 16 years of age, I still can have a future in life. I beg you my dear ones that you try and take me out of the cursed land where every piece of ground is soaked with blood. I conclude my writing and beg you to answer me so that I can rejoice again in receiving a letter from you. At present when I receive a letter I feel that I am no longer lonely that you will be my father and mother.<sup>687</sup>

Another young Jewish man implored his Canadian in-laws: “You don't know me and you don't know you are now the only relative from my wife's family to whom I can write [...] What will be with me after this time—I don't know. I will not go back to Poland. I have there no home anymore and there is no place for Jews. I would like to emigrate to America. Europe is a damned earthpart. Here will be still wars.”<sup>688</sup> Such examples confirm an order of priorities that focused on family. At the same time, they also evidence the significance of the role of the geographical choice between the US and other destinations, of which Canada was significant.

ITS files themselves were structured in such a way as to encourage DPs to diversify their options by registering interest in as many “desired destinations” as possible. While many required little prodding, Polish DPs were especially pushed to demonstrate their willingness to go *anywhere* that would accept them and to write down the names of two, three, or more

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<sup>687</sup> Irving Abella and Harold Martin Troper, *None is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe, 1933-1948* (University of Toronto Press, 2012), 191.

<sup>688</sup> *Ibid.*, 193.

popular recruitment states.<sup>689</sup> Canada was consistently high on the list as an option available to DPs particularly before the passing of the US DP Act.

Much like the British, the Canadian government had hoped to fill a domestic labour shortage through DP resettlement while at the same time, declaring euphemistically a determination not to “change the fundamental composition” of the Canadian population.<sup>690</sup> General Maurice Pope of the Canadian Military Mission in Berlin toured the DP camps in the fall of 1946 and included an assessment of the “popularity” of various ethnic groups from the perspective of the Allied administration. He witnessed the fact that the British administrators preferred Balts, and the Americans Ukrainian DPs, and subsequently ranked the DP communities in order of preference: “émigré Russians, Mennonites, Ukrainians, Balts, Poles and Jews, the last two about equal.”<sup>691</sup> Yet again, the idea that individual refugees should be assessed, at least in large part, based on their ethnicity prevailed: once more to the detriment of both Polish and Jewish communities. The inclusion of certain occupational criteria was the mask behind which ethnic screening could hide.<sup>692</sup> A bill introduced to the Canadian House of Commons on May 1, 1947 outlined which of the DP communities could be considered the best future Canadians. That same month, the cabinet committee on immigration policy recommended that 5,000 of the “best” DPs be immediately recruited to ensure both that Canada would benefit by acting swiftly and, simultaneously, (paradoxically) securing a reputation as a humanitarian nation.<sup>693</sup>

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<sup>689</sup> The most common trio was the United States, followed by Canada and a third destination of choice. See for example, ITS, ‘Marian Rapkowski’, Doc. No. 79641676\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1); ITS, ‘Waclaw Chomiczewski’, Doc. No. 78995980\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>690</sup> Julie Frances Gilmour, “‘The Kind of People Canada Wants’: Canada and the Displaced Persons, 1943-1953,” (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2006): 72.

<sup>691</sup> Ibid., 86. Gilmour cites a confidential memo to the Department of Labour that notes candidly: “The very act of selection results in discrimination.” (p.12).

<sup>692</sup> Danys argues the Canadians modelled their scheme on that of the English. Milda Danys, *DP: Lithuanian Immigration to Canada After the Second World War* (Toronto: Multicultural History Society, 1986).

<sup>693</sup> Gilmour, “The Kind of People Canada Wants,” 91.

The 5,000 DPs in question would be required to sign 10-12-month contracts with the possibility to become Canadian citizens after this residency period. When questioned as to why so many Jewish applicants had been rejected from the Canadian scheme, Deputy minister for Labour Arthur MacNamara stressed that Jewish applicants were not discriminated against but were simply unskilled in the requisite fields, which favoured migrants with a background in logging, agriculture and domestic service. The result was the same: an officially non-discriminatory immigration policy that was, nonetheless, hugely efficient in minimizing Jewish emigration and limiting that of Poles.<sup>694</sup>

Canada's one major draw over hopes of reaching America, was the simple fact that it offered opportunity for resettlement sooner. By April of 1947, the forestry industry was requesting up to 9,000 DP labourers.<sup>695</sup> By February 1948, 11,000 DPs had arrived in Canada (of which 8% only were Jewish). Recruiters were wary however, of DPs' motivations for application and whether individual applicants were committed to Canada as a final destination, or as a steppingstone on the way to America. The Canadian Cabinet was recommended to reject applicants who had already applied for, and been denied entry into the States, concerned that "their ultimate objective would be to enter the United States."<sup>696</sup> Indeed, ITS documents confirm that where both Polish and Jewish DPs were rejected visas for America, Canada was often seen as the next best thing. Majer Miedzygorski and his family all hoped to get to New York city to join family living there. Having been declared ineligible under the '48 DP Act, the family appealed to Canada instead. Jewish DP Jerzy Gojner was rejected for resettlement to the US thanks to his wife's illness and tried his luck for Canada next, where the couple was rejected for the same reason.<sup>697</sup>

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<sup>694</sup> Gilmour explains that postwar opinion polls indicated that the average Canadian preferred German immigrants over Jewish. Poles by contrast, were considered "Northern" enough to be assimilable. *Ibid.*, 113f.

<sup>695</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>696</sup> *Ibid.*, 116.

<sup>697</sup> ITS, 'Jerzy Gojner', Doc. No. 79126734\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

Evidently, the Canadian scheme was plagued by many of the same issues that affected the British. As with *Westward Ho*, the ITS includes many instances of separation thanks to strict family criteria. Stephan Woloszezuk ended up going to Canada with his brother, after having received an affidavit from family who had made arrangements to help them. His wife and 7-month-old baby remained in Germany, awaiting paperwork confirming the legality of their marriage, which they had been informed would take some 2-3 weeks. Stephan had been transferred to the Fallingbostal camp, from where he was not allowed to leave while awaiting transport to Canada. After his departure, the marriage was found to be illegal under German law, based on an issue with the Marriage certificate. As a consequence, wife and baby were unable to join Stephan in Canada and remained in Germany for several more years.<sup>698</sup>

As the Woloszezuk family case indicates, external pressures placed on DPs to arrive at a migratory destination, even where this clashed directly with the DPs own prioritizing of family, was significant. Stephan's wife, Ewa, was told that her case would be submitted to the Zonal Counselling Office for action to Canada but that otherwise, the IRO strongly recommended submitting her name for emigration to Australia. Pushing DPs to consider multiple destinations was a firm IRO strategy and may be evidenced in cases where a destination of choice has been noted, where it subsequently becomes apparent that the DP individual in question has no desire to emigrate to that particular location. Alfred Drygula for example, appears committed to resettlement in America, together with his wife and three sons, born 1946, 19747, and 1949 respectively. The family applied for Canada most probably at the urging of the IRO; brief notes of an interview conducted in 1951 record frustration with the fact that Alfred "refused to go to Canada after having been accepted."<sup>699</sup> The IRO were

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<sup>698</sup> ITS, 'Stephan Woloszezuk', Doc. No. 79931690\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1). Ewa's interviewer remarks: "She is a good farm-type with normal intelligence, and both are quite healthy." For similar cases of family separation, see ITS, 'Jozef Patynowski', Doc. No. 79571371\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1); ITS, 'Franciszek Atanowski', Doc. No. 78888108\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>699</sup> ITS, 'Alfred Drygula', Doc. No. 79047269\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

especially determined to recommend those it new were qualified for work in Canada. Roman, it was emphasized, was “a strong and healthy man. Forester by profession. Fit for any kind of physical employment.” “Mrs Onuferko is an excellent typist and takes shorthand in English and has performed her duties satisfactorily and efficiently.”<sup>700</sup>

Given the restrictions imposed by the Canadians, pressure from the IRO to consider Canada as a destination was concentrated on Polish DPs. In the Jewish DP case, desperation and depression resulting from rejections, lack of options (severely constricted in the Jewish case, particularly prior to the founding of the State of Israel) and protracted stays in crowded DP camps often drove DPs to plead for assisted emigration. Eugin Indig, a Romanian Jewish DP and trained Goldsmith, had only one surviving brother who had managed to resettle in Canada. While Bernard hoped to join him, he grew increasingly desperate for any opportunity to leave the DP camps. His file notes: “applicant is very much depressed, begs for help to get out of Germany.”<sup>701</sup>

### **Waltzing Matilda**

Even where DPs declared a willingness to go *anywhere*, one still finds often a family strategy. One Polish couple, an interviewer noted: “will not emigrate unless it is together, they do not seem to care where. He doesn’t want to go to Poland because of the Russians nor stay in Germany in case there is a Third World War and he will be new member of “Katin” [Katyn]. The couple claimed to want to go as geographically far away from Europe as possible. Having heard that “2000 or so” people would emigrate to New Zealand, they continued

You may send us there if you wanted [...] We have cardinal two wishes - a) to emigrate from Europe and b) to marry. I assure, we are doing all what it is possible to attain our intentions since July 1948. We are doing all what it is possible to emigrate from Europe as marriage, or to emigrate from Europe to the same land and to marry there. There are

<sup>700</sup> ITS, ‘Roman Onuferko’, Doc. No. 79547397\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>701</sup> ITS, ‘Eugin Indig’, Doc. No. 79209400\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

these two possibilities only for us. [...] I ask you, Sir, for your aid in matter of our emigration from Europe. I suppose, you understand well that in case of your refusal we shall be condemned to death.<sup>702</sup>

After 1948, declaring a willingness to emigrate “anywhere” grew increasingly common.<sup>703</sup> The IRO, for its part, was more than willing to push DPs in the direction of any potential resettlement states willing to have them. As the Canadian case has already indicated, resettlement schemes for the “New World” was not inherently so different from Western European labour recruitment schemes and in fact, were depressingly familiar. The Australian DP recruitment scheme has gained a certain degree of notoriety thanks to the work of numerous Australian scholars and historians.<sup>704</sup> The vast majority of work on the subject has concentrated on whether or not the scheme itself was motivated by humanitarian considerations, whether or not Jewish DPs were formally excluded and why, and the conditions of recruitment—in particular, the “exchange” of labour in return for the accommodation provided on arrival.<sup>705</sup>

The Australian position from the outset regarding DP emigration was clear. Being a signatory of the IRO does not inherently mean committing to large-scale immigration, “our

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<sup>702</sup> ITS, ‘Tadeusz Bajer’, Doc. No. 78915550\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1). Tadeusz was rejected from the Australian scheme.

<sup>703</sup> It was not uncommon for desperate DPs rejected from multiple schemes to claim to be willing to consider “anywhere.” Waclaw Chomiczewski for instance, originally declared three preferences for resettlement: Canada, USA and Argentine. After being rejected for Canada, the US and the Brazilian scheme, he declared a willingness to “resettle anywhere,” though was effectively forced to remain permanently in Germany due to medical reasons. ITS, ‘Waclaw Chomiczewski’, Doc. No. 78995980\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1). “Anywhere” however, often came with the caveat “with family.” Adam Luczak for example, was “willing to emigrate anywhere with his family.” ITS, ‘Adam Luczak’, Doc. No. 79422803\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1). Ludwik Danielewski’s record of interview notes his willingness to emigrate “anywhere” and immediately below, registers a “wife and young son” as a “potential problem.” ITS, ‘Ludwik Danielewski’, Doc. No. 79019173\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>704</sup> Jayne Persian offers a neat overview of the DP literature as pertaining to the Australian case. See Jayne Persian, “Displaced Persons (1947-1952): Representations, Memory and Commemoration,” (PhD diss., The University of Sydney, 2011), 14ff. First ground was broken with the publication of Jean Martinbroke’s *Refugee Settlers: A Study of Displaced Persons in Australia* (Canberra: The Australian National University, 1965). Egon F. Kunz, a former DP, published *Displaced Persons: Calwell’s New Australians* Australian National University Press, 1988) twenty years later. Since then, scholars including Persian have continued to explore the particularities of the Australian scheme, with a keen focus on the administrative/political perspective and Australia’s humanitarian record during the period. Jayne Persian remains the foremost expert on the Australian DP experience. See particularly Jayne Persian, “Bonegilla: A Failed Narrative,” *History Australia* 9:1 (2012): 64-83; Ibid., “‘Chifley Liked Them Blond’: DP Immigrants for Australia,” *History Australia* 12:2 (2015): 80-101; Ibid., *Beautiful Balts: From Displaced Persons to New Australians* (New South Publishing, 2017).

<sup>705</sup> See for example, Klaus Neumann, *Refuge Australia: Australia’s Humanitarian Record* (Thomas Telford, 2004); Ann-Mari Jordens, *Alien to Citizen: Settling Migrants in Australia, 1945-75* (Allen & Unwin, 1997).

freedom in this regard being unimpaired.”<sup>706</sup> By April of 1947 however, Arthur Calwell, Australian Minister for Immigration, declared that membership in the IRO meant accepting at least some of the burden of resettlement.<sup>707</sup> Consideration would not be given however to those who had already emigrated from any DP camps.<sup>708</sup> Desirable age groups capped female applicants at 38 years of age, men up to 45 years of age.<sup>709</sup> With respect to trade, building trades were preferred, as well as “domestics, textile workers, mechanics, railway builders and coal miners.”<sup>710</sup> Even as early as August 1946 (before formally committing to recruiting out of the DP camps) the Australian High Commissioner requested that Australian immigration authorities suspend visas enabling travel by Jews from Germany and Austria to enter Australia. The Australian media was quick to assure its readership that “no dumping of Europeans will be tolerated [...] The Australian government will not tolerate the wholesale dumping in Australia of Europeans without regard to race or religion”<sup>711</sup> As Rutland argues, most Australians, including Australian immigration officials, regarded the term “Displaced Person” as euphemistic for “Jews in Europe,” and Jews ultimately made up a very low 2.3% of IRO migrants recruited for Australia.<sup>712</sup>

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<sup>706</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>707</sup> Suzanne D. Rutland, “Subtle Exclusions: Postwar Jewish Emigration to Australia and the Impact of the IRO Scheme,” *The Journal of Holocaust Education* 10:1 (Summer 2001): 54.

<sup>708</sup> RHA, “Emigration possibilities Australia, Aug 30, 1948,” *New Zealand and Australia*, 7.

<sup>709</sup> Ibid. In the case of those arriving with young children, parents were not to be more than 52 years of age.

<sup>710</sup> Ibid.

<sup>711</sup> FO 945/474 Resettlement in Australia, ‘Extract from Australian News Bulletin’, December 10, 1946. As with the American context, the Australian public was widely thought to hold the impression that all DPs were predominantly Jewish.

<sup>712</sup> Suzanne D. Rutland and Frances Leslie, *Edge of the Diaspora: Two Centuries of Jewish Settlement in Australia* (Sydney: Brandl & Schlesinger, 1997), 405; “The Australian experience in regard to postwar Jewish immigration mirrored attitudes and responses elsewhere,” Suzanne D. Rutland and Sol Encel, “No Room at the Inn: American Responses to Australian Immigration Policies, 1946–54,” *Patterns of Prejudice* 43:5 (2009): 518. Persian explains that even of those Jews who did make it over, they were required to sign a special work contract, declaring their willingness to work in remote parts of Australia. This, she highlights, was in contradistinction to German citizens were thought to be more assimilable with some 5,000 German-born wives of DPs eventually emigrating under the scheme. See Persian, “Displaced Persons (1947-1952),” 88.



A much larger contingent of Polish DPs ended in Australia (see Table 1 at the beginning of this Chapter) from September 1947.<sup>713</sup> In this respect, the scheme was successful and indeed, by the time the DP camps were closing across Germany in 1951, 1 out of every 45 people in Australia had formally been a DP.<sup>714</sup> While much has been written on the impact that DPs had subsequently in and on Australian postwar society, considering why it was that Polish DPs would choose to migrate to Australia remains underexplored. Most authors chalk the migration up the fact that “most of them were penniless. They had little or no other choice.”<sup>715</sup> The answer is, as ever, more complex. Undoubtedly, propaganda played a significant role. Australia’s Information Department was busily producing thousands of pamphlets enticing DPs to consider Australia, as well as screening promotional films in the camps.<sup>716</sup> As Egon Kurtz has noted, propaganda was divided between the domestic and DP fronts. Domestically, DPs were case as willing to accept any available work.<sup>717</sup> Kathryn Hume quotes a DP in Australia as being struck by the various articles published about DPs in which “one gets the impression that we are the most beautiful and best people in the world.”<sup>718</sup> One Polish DP, J. Birman, was astounded to find that the DP was “considered to be a ‘strange animal’, to be sent to the bush to work while the Australians stayed in the cities.”<sup>719</sup> The Soviet press commented bluntly of the scheme: “not one of the DPs knew they were doomed to slavery.”<sup>720</sup>

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<sup>713</sup> Kunz, *Displaced Persons*, 45. Opinion polls were also showing by 1947 that if DPs were the “right” kind of migrants, Australians were happy to welcome them.

<sup>714</sup> *Ibid.*, 242.

<sup>715</sup> Donald Horne, *The Lucky Country* (Ringwood, Vic: Penguin Books Ltd, 1971), 85.

<sup>716</sup> For a representative example of Australian propaganda, see Migration Heritage Centre NSW, ‘Objects Through Time’, Emigration Poster c. 1948, accessible at: <http://www.migrationheritage.nsw.gov.au/exhibition/objectsthroughtime/postwar-migration-poster/index.html>.

<sup>717</sup> Kunz, *Displaced Persons*, 144.

<sup>718</sup> Hulme, *The Wild Place*, 188-189.

<sup>719</sup> J. Birman as quoted in Persian, “Displaced persons (1947-1952),” 88, originally published in the article “Migrant Pool: Britain's Shortage of Labour,” *West Australian*, January 12, 1949, accessible online at: <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/page/3836484> The full quote: “Mr. J. Birman, a Pole, said he did not think the foreigner had had a fair deal in Australia and that he was considered to be a “strange animal,” to be sent to the bush to work while the Australians stayed in the cities. There should be a policy of give and take between the Australians and the foreign migrants,” 10.

<sup>720</sup> “Migrants as ‘slaves’,” *Sydney Morning Herald*, June 20, 1949, accessible online at: <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/18119756/1027374> The damning piece continues: “Moscow Radio said yesterday that Australia was using displaced persons from Europe as slave labour. [...] ‘not one of them knew

That DPs imaginings of conditions in Australia did not match realities was evidenced by reactions post-arrival. Reports of miserable DPs circulated began to circulate within Australian media.<sup>721</sup> Jayne Persian claims that certainly by 1951 it was evident that a majority of DPs had left their allocated jobs, “with up to 5,000 in New South Wales alone having broken their contract.”<sup>722</sup> A number of DPs went so far as to demand deportation, complaining they had been brought to Australia under false pretences. Mirroring emigration to Britain, hundreds of DPs who had served their two-year contracts in Australia subsequently attempted to migrate to America from Australia.<sup>723</sup>

The impact and influence of chain migrations undoubtedly drew some to destinations such as Australia. The fact that one member of a family, or friend or acquaintance had been accepted for resettlement created its own kind of incentive for those remaining in the camps to consider the same trajectory. Ludwika Kostek’s file for instance, notes that while she was still in a DP camp in the British Zone in 1950, she was increasingly anxious to emigrate: “my friends have left [...] and I want to emigrate as well.”<sup>724</sup> Sheila Fitzpatrick recent study of three Latvian DP immigrants alludes to similar pulls; one of the DPs, Andrejs, left for Australia along with his wife, sister, brother-in-law and mother. Following the recommendation of Andrejs’ brother-in-law, “who functioned as the head of the family, had been to Australia as a ship’s doctor and recommended it.”<sup>725</sup>

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they were doomed to slavery and a hideous life and that they would be separated from their wives and children.’ Australia’s welcome was a prison. The white slaves from Europe were dispersed among employers and were used for the heaviest manual labour. ‘They are bereft of all human rights.’” 3.

<sup>721</sup> Ivan Orlov, “Married Migrants are Unhappy Living Hundreds of Miles Apart- Migrants are in Despair,” *Sun*, Sydney, January 27, 1950, 13.

<sup>722</sup> Persian, “Displaced Persons (1947-1952),” 143. Persian quotes a DP who was jailed for refusing to work as complaining that “This is not democracy. It is Russia,” in “Displaced Persons Gaoled for Refusing to Work,” *Argus*, March 22, 1949, 3.

<sup>723</sup> Persian, “Displaced Persons (1947-1952),” 144.

<sup>724</sup> ITS, ‘Ludwika Kostek’, Doc. No. 79322602\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>725</sup> Sheila Fitzpatrick, “‘Determined to Get On’: Some Displaced Persons on the Way to a Future,” *History Australia* 12:2 (2015): 116-117.

Further, the Australian Migration Heritage Centre<sup>726</sup> includes a number of interviews with DP migrants that confirm the significance of rejections for America with respect to decision-making. Alina Paczynski (a German woman married to a DP Pole) offered only the briefest of descriptions as to why she came to Australia: “In 1950, we had to make up our minds whether we stayed in Germany or went back to Poland. My husband did not want to go back to Poland with the Communists and so we decided to go to America. But it just didn’t work out so we then went to Schweinfurt where there was an Australian Commission [...] and a few weeks later, we emigrated.”<sup>727</sup>

Polish DP Stella Lakomy’s recollection indicates that while she had strong ideas about Poland, she was content to move with her family to an unknown destination

I met my husband in a DP camp. His name was Leon Lakomy and he was Polish. We were married in Germany in 1946 and I was 19 years old. Our daughter was born on 3 May 1947. After the war, my family wanted to go back to Poland but I didn’t want to go back. I knew there was nothing back there for young people. [...] I didn’t know where we were going when they sent us out here to Australia. I didn’t know what Australia was or where Australia was. During the war, I saw men with big hats and some other people said they were Australian soldiers. But nobody knew where they came from.<sup>728</sup>

The quintessential criterion in the selection of a destination was once again, family reunification.

## Conclusion: Anywhere but here?

The scramble of the DP's to get out of Germany was at once heart-breaking and humorous. The camp bulletin boards listing all the current avenues of escape made you think of some kind

<sup>726</sup> Migration Heritage Centre project, “Belongings” based in Sydney, Australia. Details concerning the project may be found here: John Petersen, “Though This be Madness: Heritage Methods for Working in Culturally Diverse Communities,” *Public History Review* 17 (2010): 34-51.

<sup>727</sup> Alina Paczynski interview, accessible online at:

<http://www.migrationheritage.nsw.gov.au/exhibition/belongings/paczynski/index.html>

<sup>728</sup> Stella Lakomy interview, accessible online at:

<http://www.migrationheritage.nsw.gov.au/exhibition/belongings/lakomy/index.html>

of macabre stock market that dealt in bodies instead of bonds.<sup>729</sup>

This subsection has made several important claims. That America was the destination of choice for the majority of Polish DPs and a large percentage of Jewish DPs is well evidenced. The lobby for liberalizing American immigration policy to enable the resettlement of Displaced Persons *en masse*, is testament to DP agency in attempting to navigate and alter the system governing international migration in the postwar period. Significantly, it reveals the ways in which DP communities interacted and engaged with, as well as relied upon, diaspora communities. The CM/1 forms of those who emigrated to the US help bring us closer to understanding the motivations, priorities and needs of DP individuals and household units. What becomes evident, is the centrality of family reunification. DP migration to America does not fit neatly, however, into taxonomies of migration flows that concentrate solely on this aspect. America as a geographic destination had wider (albeit, related) appeal. The American labour market and economic considerations were centrally important to almost migration decisions, with America particularly associated with as a land of economic opportunity. Those without direct or even indirect family connections appealed to wider ethnic communities for help. Ethnicity and ideas about returning to community in a wider sense, engendered and patterned migration from the DP camps to America, promising better social ascension. Intimately connected to both the image of the US as a land of settler opportunity and return to ethnic community was the political image of America as a land of security and a bastion of democracy, in which different ethnic communities could live peacefully. Such a mental image may be traced in individual records but simultaneously suggests that political motivations were married to, and were fostered by, the discursive strategies adopted by the International Refugee Organization, tasked with the resettlement of DPs, whose representatives helped to encourage

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<sup>729</sup> Hulme, *The Wild Place*, 199.

certain lines of argumentation in order to promote DP migration and favourable representations of DP migrants. DPs aiming for America, thus negotiated their circumstances in several different ways that necessitated consideration and balancing external influence, self-representation and networks and structures of belonging.

The United States considered its resettlement of DPs to be a success story. Certainly, the DP Act of 1948 was the most significant piece of legislation affecting immigration to the US since the Immigration Act of 1924. While the historian is not generally in the business of asking “what if?” if it clear that if the gates to America had been opened sooner and more fully, significantly fewer DPs would have opted for alternative resettlement options including the Canadian and Australian schemes. While DPs who chose to resettle in these destinations were ultimately willing to prioritize exiting the DP camps over remaining (even where this meant locations of which little to nothing was known) they were typically inflexible with respect to any potential family separation. The following subchapter considers further the primacy of family reunification, the role of gender in migration and the ways in which DPs priorities frequently clashed with those of the DP administration to generate was frustratingly viewed as “delayed migration.”

### 3.2 WHILE WE WAIT

The following subchapter attempts to explore in more depth, key tensions between DP and administrative perspectives and priorities, as affecting DP migration. It focuses on prominent aspects of DP social and communal life in the camps that, from an administrative perspective, often served to prolong a stay in a DP camp and ultimately delay emigration. It begins by considering the comparatively high rates of marriage and childbirth within the DP camps and its impact on resettlement. It becomes evident that DPs adopting their own sets of priorities, decided to marry and have children in large numbers, irrespective of their resettlement status. It then moves to consider the ways in which resettlement status nonetheless impacted (and applied significant pressure) upon DP families, with a focus on children as migratory agents. The second half of the subchapter turns to highlight key ways in which DPs planned their future abroad and included a certain amount of preparation through employment, skills training or further study. Such pursuits invariably necessitated prolonging one's stay in Germany but were ultimately driven by visions of a better future beyond its borders. While DPs continuously sought to balance short-term and long-term interests, an outside administrative perspective often saw complex DP strategies as potential problems leading to delay.

#### **Gender in the camps: Marriage and the DP “baby boom”**

When the DP camps were initially established, they served as a potent symbol of the horrors of Nazi slave labour and genocide: one could find within them strikingly few children or elderly. In one of the great ironies of the bloody 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was the displaced victims and survivors of the Second World War in occupied Germany who represented the group with the highest birth-rates in postwar Europe. By February of 1946, the faces of the DP camps had already changed dramatically with an estimated 51,307 registered DP children under the age

of 14, of which over half were under 6.<sup>730</sup> While the influx of “post-hostility” refugees from the East accounts for some of this increase, rates of both marriage and birth grew steadily in pace after 1945. In Belsen alone, almost 1500 marriages took place in only two years after liberation, along with 500 circumcisions.<sup>731</sup> By the Spring of 1946, one in every three women living in Belsen was either pregnant or had given birth already, and by 1947, as many as 7 weddings were held daily, and 15 children a week were being born in the camp.<sup>732</sup>

As we have seen, having one or multiple children was one of the surest ways to actively prolong a stay in a DP camp, though was undoubtedly not framed as such by individual DP families.<sup>733</sup> Pregnancy was an automatic disqualifier for resettlement schemes. Once a child was safely delivered, the status of the DP parent was fundamentally altered as an individual now with one or more dependants. Nonetheless, the desire to marry and to have children was common across all DP communities, regardless of location and external conditions. What does the DP “baby boom”<sup>734</sup> tell us about the needs and priorities of DPs? How was the widespread desire to reconstruct family in the camps reconciled with the desire to escape the liminal space of the DP camp universe, in a context of restricted immigration? How did administrative attitudes and agendas interact with DPs’ own perceived social and migratory needs?

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<sup>730</sup> Gitta Sereny, *The German Trauma: Experiences and Reflections 1938–2000* (London: Allen Lane, 2000), 27.

<sup>731</sup> Dan Stone, *The liberation of the camps: The End of the Holocaust and Its Aftermath* (Yale University Press, 2015), 169; Thomas Rahe, “Social Life in the Jewish DP Camp at Bergen- Belsen,” in Zippy Orlin, Erik Somers and René Kok, *Jewish Displaced Persons in Camp Bergen-Belsen 1945-1950: The Unique Photo Album of Zippy Orlin* (Waanders Publishers, 2003), 72; Michael Brenner, *After the Holocaust: Rebuilding Jewish Lives in Postwar Germany* (Princeton University Press, 1999) 26.

<sup>732</sup> Stone, *The liberation of the camps*, 169; Zoe Waxman, *Women in the Holocaust: A Feminist History* (Oxford University Press, 2017), 128; Margarete Myers Feinstein, “Hannah’s Prayer: Jewish Women as Displaced Persons, 1945–1948,” in Marcia Sachs Littell, ed., *Women in the Holocaust: Responses, Insights and Perspectives* (Selected Papers from the Annual Scholars’ Conference on the Holocaust and the Churches 1990–2000) (Merion Station, PA: Merion Westfield Press, 2001), 173–85.

<sup>733</sup> ITS files in which young couples had a child every year post-liberation, for example, were significantly more likely to remain in the DP camps for extended periods of time. Polish DP Henryk Zurek for instance, born in 1920, and his DP wife Kazimiera had 5 children after 1945. They remained in the camps in 1951, still hoping to emigrate together to the United States. See ITS, ‘Henryk Zurek’ Doc. No. 79969426\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>734</sup> This term is used widely in the literature, see especially Atina Grossmann, *Jews, Germans and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 184-235, Chapter Five, “Mir Zaynen Do: Sex, Work, and the DP Baby Boom.”; See also Atina Grossmann, “Victims, Villains, and Survivors: Gendered Perceptions and Self-Perceptions of Jewish Displaced Persons in Occupied Postwar Germany,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 11: 1/2 (2002): 291-318, in which Grossmann references the film, *The Long Journey Home* (Simon Wiesenthal Center, Los Angeles, 1997).

The motivations behind individual DP and DP communities' reasons for marrying and reproducing *en masse* has been explored in secondary source literature relying predominantly on select DP memoirs, with a heavy accent on the voices and experiences of Jewish DPs. Dan Stone has neatly summarized the three main themes emerging from secondary analysis attempting to account for the large numbers of marriage and birth in the DP camps.<sup>735</sup> The first intuitive theme holds that babies were simply a sign that survivors needed, and wanted, family.<sup>736</sup> Marriage and pregnancy was then, a direct and natural response to the loneliness and solitude of the state of displacement after 1945. Zoe Waxman develops a second theme connected to the idea of rediscovered sexuality after prolonged periods of involuntary abstinence. She highlights a number of personal accounts in which survivors—particularly female survivors—gained a renewed interest in their physical appearance post-liberation. She notes: “for these women survivors becoming human again meant asserting—enacting or performing—their gendered identities. It also meant that women who had been until recently emaciated, bald, and sexually powerless suddenly found themselves the object of what seemed like positive male attention.”<sup>737</sup> Interest in the opposite sex, then, also signified the (un)conscious attempt to return to *normalcy*. While finding a strong desire to form couples and families within the camps, Atina Grossmann stresses the chaotic nature of DPs' sexual encounters, resulting in what Jewish DP Samuel Pizar described as a “a kind of juvenile delinquency.”<sup>738</sup> Sex, she argues, also represented relief from the burden of the fear of infertility as a result of persecution. Sex and parenthood were thus a powerful (re)confirmation of masculinity/femininity *and* fertility.<sup>739</sup> A third explanatory theme speaks specifically to the

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<sup>735</sup> Stone, *The liberation of the camps*, 169.

<sup>736</sup> Particularly in the case of Jewish DPs, pre-existing family units were unlikely to have survived the war.

<sup>737</sup> Especially if you consider early gender ratios in the camps, with males at a ratio of approximately 3:2. Waxman, *Women in the Holocaust*, 125.

<sup>738</sup> Atina Grossmann, “Living On: Remembering Feldafig,” in Jürgen Matthäus, ed., *Approaching an Auschwitz Survivor: Holocaust Testimony and Its Transformations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 78.

<sup>739</sup> Waxman, *Women in the Holocaust*, 135. That fears of infertility were a powerful motivator is argued well in the literature and a number of authors have explored the difficulties that some DPs who had lost their former families had in connecting emotionally with the children they had after the war and the challenges of raising



desire of Jewish DPs to bear children as affirmation of the continuation of the Jewish people. The Jewish baby boom, Grossmann concludes, can only be understood as a “specific and direct response to the catastrophic losses of the Holocaust.”<sup>740</sup> *Maschiachskinder*<sup>741</sup> were seen as proof of the fact that Jewish lives endured, though could not replace what had existed before; “the two lives coexisted so that the willed joy and charged symbolism of the new life existed alongside the permanent sorrow of those that had been lost.”<sup>742</sup>

While all three themes are well supported in the literature, they often neglect significant *external*, administrative and communal pressures on DPs to wed and to have children. If marriage and parenthood was seen by many DPs as a return to quasi-normalcy; much the same attitude was held by those charged with DP care. That the international relief organizations charged with DP care saw rehabilitation, in large part, as the reestablishment of the nuclear family is evident in the administrative records of the Zone. While these pressures may not have been decisive in DP decision making, they were nonetheless an important contributing factor. As we shall see, reconciling this aspect of rehabilitation with the increasing prioritization of resettlement—in a context that overwhelmingly favoured the migration of the unattached adult—would generate a number of difficulties for welfare workers and DPs alike.

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families without grandparents and extended relatives. Waxman cites the example of a DP absentmindedly referring to his children born after the war by the names of those who had perished during it. See Lawrence Langer, *Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991), 74, as cited in Waxman, *Women in the Holocaust*, 134.

<sup>740</sup> Grossmann, *Jews, Germans and Allies*, 191. A number of authors pick up on this theme with respect to marriage, citing repeatedly a quote taken from Joseph Berger’s memoir in which he succinctly notes of DP marriage: “Hitler married us.” Joseph Berger, *Displaced Persons: Growing Up American After the Holocaust* (New York: Scribner, 2004), 291. Cited in a number of key works including Grossmann, “Living On,” 78; Waxman, *Women in the Holocaust*, 30; Yael Danieli, “The Heterogeneity of Postwar Adaptation in Families of Holocaust Survivors,” in Randolph L. Braham, ed., *The Psychological Perspectives of the Holocaust and of its Aftermath* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 109–27, to name a few. As well as memoirs, one can find the phenomenon of Jewish marriage in the DP camps discussed in the interviews of David Boder. Jacob Oleiski for example, described the many Jewish marriages consummated within the first year of liberation as “if nature is intending to make good for this great loss which occurred due to this greatest of Jewish catastrophes.” Jacob Oleiski, interview with David Boder, Paris, 20 August 1946, online at: <http://voices.iit.edu>.

<sup>741</sup> Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies*, 195. Grossman references Mark Dvorjetski, “Adjustment of Detainees to Camp and Ghetto Life and Their Subsequent Readjustment to Normal Society,” *Yad Vashem Studies* 5 (1963): 215, who describes Jewish DP children as biological “miracles.”

<sup>742</sup> Stone, *The liberation of the camps*, 169.

Tensions in administrative priorities are well illustrated in the specific case of DP marriage regularization in the Zone. As mass resettlement opportunities began to open up in earnest, the British Zone's Legal Division was forced to issue a new Instruction regarding DP marriage on May 25, 1948. "Joint Instruction No. 23" was to provide DPs with "satisfactory means of contracting a legally valid marriage in Germany."<sup>743</sup> Prior to this date, a "considerable number of irregular marriages" had been encouraged by UNRRA and later, the IRO, and contracted by Church ceremony.<sup>744</sup> Remarriage under the new procedures however, rather than simplifying emigration, often negatively impacted applications for resettlement.<sup>745</sup> Marriages were only to be considered as legal from the date of the second marriage, rendering children born prior to this date illegitimate and necessitating a separate "legitimizing" legal process. Most importantly, DPs themselves balked at the idea of remarriage and any implication that they "had previously been living in sin," which was "objectionable to them, as their first marriage was, according to their consciences, valid and binding."<sup>746</sup> Furthermore, most DP Poles (who represented the majority of "illegal" marriages in the Zone) were unfamiliar with

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<sup>743</sup> Prior to the issuance of Instruction 23 described above, the only directive on this matter was dated from September 12, 1946, which had concerned primarily the marriages of Allied soldiers and which was anyway, not disseminated throughout the DP camps of the Zone. Marriages by Church ceremony only, thus occurred in the thousands. Even had the obligation to register one's marriage been widely known, contracting a legally valid marriage in Germany (even as an Allied soldier or national) was reported to be impractical, with considerable delay during this period. In short, there arose a paradoxical situation in which British and relief personnel were often encouraging DPs to marry (in churches, with their own priests) in order to satisfy certain understandings of rehabilitation, while simultaneously enforcing a bureaucracy that subsequently punished unregulated marriages. See FO 1052/43 Marriages, Non-German nationals.

<sup>744</sup> As one Senior Legal Advisor notes, "I have seen very many tragic results of this wrong advice." Ibid., 'To PWDP Division Subject DP marriages, from J. Kelly, Legal Advisor for Zone Director', April 6, 1949. According to the same file, the government in Poland was willing to recognize these marriages.

<sup>745</sup> It is worth noting that while there was significant pressure on DPs to marry and ensure the legality of these unions, there was widespread concern when it came to the question of marriage between DP women and British servicemen. Reporting on such instances, senior military personnel claimed that "extreme sympathy with their [the "DP wives," as they were referred to] plight is known to have moved the soldier to offer marriage, while the women may see many advantages accruing from such a marriage." Such cases were viewed as having a problematic potentially or explicitly *migratory* agenda on the part of the female DP and their instances were prevalent enough to warrant a discussion of a prohibition on such unions - in the manner of a pre-existing ban on marriages with between British Servicemen and German women. Undoubtedly, some "DP wives" would have seen marrying Servicemen as a way out of the DP camps; given that after the union, they received automatic British citizenship and could more easily and swiftly emigrate to the UK. FO 938 54 Major J. Wilkes: status of women displaced persons who marry British soldiers, 'Letter from C.A Roberts Brigadier to D.D.P.S', May 28, 1946.

<sup>746</sup> FO 1052/43 Marriages, Non-German nationals, 'British League for European Freedom', October 30, 1946.

the *concept* of civil marriage, being used to the automatic recognition of Church ceremonies in Poland by the Polish State.<sup>747</sup>

Consequently, a great many DPs were forced to attempt to conceal the irregularity of their marriages rather than face the odium of remarriage. The existence of legally invalid marriages and consequently DPs' indeterminable marital statuses prejudiced resettlement to such an extent that marriages in question were eventually retroactively legalized in the Zone; affected by Military Government legislation with IRO backing.<sup>748</sup> A period of legal limbo however, in connection with the conditions of labour recruitment, unsurprisingly left dependants vulnerable in allowing for the possibility of spouses (typically male) to physically as well as financially abandon dependants, raising "a host of moral problem which are contrary to IRO and CCG Policy."<sup>749</sup> Prior to legal changes in 1948, married DPs applying for resettlement opportunities were forced to endure and navigate a complex procedure whereby they had to obtain a certificate from IRO in lieu of proof of the registration of a civil marriage, declaring that to the best of the IRO's knowledge, they were married. Couples were frequently required to swear additional affidavits to German notaries to the same effect, in order to satisfy the various resettlement missions.<sup>750</sup>

While the postwar refugee regime may have affirmed marriage and traditional gender roles, the extant immigration policy it upheld punished conforming DPs by minimizing chances

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<sup>747</sup> Ibid., A number of ITS files indicate that the problem was not specific to Poles but also extended to Jewish DPs. Zygmunt Fischel for example was married to Lola, née Potak, by religious ceremony on January 24, 1946 in the Belsen DP camp. The couple encountered difficulty registering themselves as married for emigration to Palestine, in light of the fact that their rabbinic marriage took place prior to Lola having obtained an official divorce from a first marriage. See ITS, 'Zygmunt Fischel' Doc. No. 79086056\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>748</sup> Reports suggest it could take up to 12 months to be registered.

<sup>749</sup> Any children rendered legally "illegitimate" were additionally at risk of losing the nationality of their father. FO 1052/43 Marriages, Non-German nationals, 'Regularization of Marriages of Displaced Persons, DP Division', May 1949.

<sup>750</sup> Registering a DP marriage cost 25DM (Deutschmarks) as compared with the 3DM charged to German nationals. This, as was reported, unsurprisingly "gives the DP the impression of discrimination against him." FO 1052/179 Births and Marriages, 'Marriages of Displaced Persons Charges for the Issue of Dispensation', Dec 1948. The same file complains that couples were often left waiting over a year until their registrations were processed.

of resettlement for couples and families. The same administration that feared the “low moral value”<sup>751</sup> of DPs who appeared not to prioritize the reconstruction of a nuclear family could, in one and the same report lament the fact that “it will be natural that at the liquidation of IRO activities and of recruiting commissions, the people left in Germany will represent themselves—from the point of view of the recruiting countries [which of course, included the British]—the worst element, [...] first of all, having big families with children.”<sup>752</sup>

Of course, a prominent discourse on “DP morality”<sup>753</sup> and subsequent pressures to conform to what was seen as model behaviour, often came from within DP communities themselves, as well as organizations that claimed to represent and speak on their behalf. Where Polish DPs were concerned, great emphasis was placed on ensuring that DPs, especially women and unmarried mothers, were not to be encouraged to “live in sin.” In particular, British administrative records abound with reports of widespread fears from within the Polish DP communities concerning how unmarried mothers might be received in Poland were they to opt for repatriation; with doubts, fears and misgivings reportedly assuming “gigantic proportions

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<sup>751</sup> FO 1052/123 Plans for resolving DP Operations, ‘Memo’, June 21, 1949.

<sup>752</sup> Ibid.

<sup>753</sup> The subject of DP “morality” was closely connected to the issue of crime in the DP camps. Mark Wyman offers a brief sketch of the *Schwarzmarkt* [black-market] that mushroomed across occupied Germany almost simultaneously with liberation. Driven by the effects of shortages, Wyman argues its presence was driven primarily by the need for food and the illegal bartering required to supplement what he describes as the “dismal diet of the camps.” Subsequent DP literature on the subject of DP crime (typically exclusively in the American Zone, and Bavaria therein) has stressed that black market activity was not unique to DP camps but ubiquitous across the postwar German landscape. Despite this however, DPs were disproportionately thought to be criminal by local German populations (who also singled out Jewish DPs as black-market profiteers). Canoy has convincingly argued that DPs were further resented for appearing to be immune to prosecution. That DP Assembly Centres were viewed as places of refuge in which any criminal DP was kept apart from justice, was an image that British authorities were determined to combat. At the most senior levels in London, the *Polish* DP “criminal dimension” and the impact of the image of the DP criminal on the popularity of mass recruitment and resettlement schemes was the cause of much anxiety and concern. From the point of view of migration, it is worth noting that all Poles who were found guilty of a crime in British Occupied Germany and sentenced to jail time typically opted for immediate repatriation. Mark Wyman, *DPs: Europe’s Displaced Persons, 1945–1951* (Philadelphia and London: Balch Institute Press and Associated University Press, 1989), 116; Michael Berkowitz and Suzanne Brown-Fleming, “Perceptions of Jewish Displaced Persons as Criminals in Early Postwar Germany: Lingering Stereotypes and Self-fulfilling Prophecies,” in Avinoam J. Patt and Michael Berkowitz, eds., *We Are Here: New Approaches to Jewish Displaced Persons in Postwar Germany* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2010); Jose R. Canoy, *The Discreet Charm of the Police State: The Landpolizei and the Transformation of Bavaria, 1945–1965* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 107; FO 1063/99 Polish Red Cross, ‘Polish Repatriation Mission: Letter for Lieutenant-General Deputy Military Governor’, May 27, 1946.

in the minds of innumerable Polish mothers scattered in DP camps throughout Germany.”<sup>754</sup> Unmarried Polish DP mothers frequently reported as a primary reason for non-repatriation, the fact that Poland was a pronounced Roman-Catholic<sup>755</sup> country and that consequently, “pre-marriage motherhood” was condemned.<sup>756</sup> One report concludes that this “socio-psychological factor” exercised a heavy pressure on non-repatriation, adding: “this difficulty is not only individual. In the mother’s mind, arise other problem. How will the family react on the fact of being an unmarried mother?” Many unmarried DP mothers in Germany, it continues, “have relations with men in hope of marriage.”<sup>757</sup>

Polish charitable organizations responded to fears of “morally loose” DPs by organizing campaigns in the DP camps promoting marriage and “clean living.”<sup>758</sup> Aware of restrictive immigration policies that offered few opportunities for the majority of DPs, volunteers promoted the idea that any relaxation of immigration laws could be furthered by DPs presenting themselves more favourably to an international community that was reluctant to open their doors to them. One report notes that it was often fellow DPs encouraging unmarried women and mothers especially, to remain in camps in hopes of finding a husband,<sup>759</sup> in order to either repatriate or resettle without fear of stigma or ostracization: “In the various DP camps in the British Zone of Germany, several thousands of unmarried mothers are awaiting a final decision regarding the future of themselves and their children. An anxious question for them is

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<sup>754</sup> FO 1052/3, DP Polish Policy, ‘Visit of repatriation officers to Poland from the British Zone’, February 8, 1949.

<sup>755</sup> It is significant to remark once more upon religion a criterion of ethnicity. One can find virtually no examples of individual case files in which a Polish DP was not automatically registered as Catholic.

<sup>756</sup> FO 1052/3, DP Polish Policy, ‘Visit of repatriation officers to Poland from the British Zone’, February 8, 1949.

<sup>757</sup> Ibid.

<sup>758</sup> Kirchmann notes that propaganda targeted at American sponsors often depicted the DP camps as places where DPs were at risk of moral “depravation” as well as idleness. Anna Dorota Kirchmann, “‘They are Coming for Freedom, Not Dollars’: Political Refugees and Transformations of Ethnic Identity within Polish American Community after World War II,” (PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 1997): 71, 132, 259.

<sup>759</sup> That is, among the DP population. One form of marriage, “mixed” marriage, was universally discouraged by almost all bodies involved in DP care as well as within the leadership of the Polish and Jewish DP communities. As Kirchmann explains: “Polish displaced persons were also regarded as vulnerable to mixed marriages that could result in the “loss of our blood” and denationalization of the offspring” Kirchmann, “They are Coming for Freedom,” 104, in reference to “The Dangers of Mixed Marriages,” *Nowy Świat*, April 16, 1948, 4.

whether or not the means will be created to arise above the hopeless life they are living in the camps.”<sup>760</sup> Evidently, women were disproportionately affected either by legal marriage hindering emigration, or inversely, migration laws hindering marriage. Children, as we shall see, were often victims of conflicting priorities around rehabilitation on the ground.

### **Children as migratory agents**

While one can find important discussions concerning DP children in scholarship on the social and/or psychological aspects of survival after the Second World War, these same children are largely absent from more broader histories and are rarely systematically considered with respect to issues of migration. Nonetheless, the ways in which family was (re)structured in the DP camps, and in particular, the tension between dominant notions of what family and morality should look like in the DP camps and ideas about resettlement and the “desirable migrant,” can best be explored by looking at the complex and contradictory ways in which children were treated as migratory agents after 1945. What the files of the ITS make abundantly clear is that it was ironically children who suffered most from a self-professed child-centric “humanitarianism” of the postwar period, from the point of view of immigration. Once again, the same international organizations and DP administrations that officially promoted the restoration of the family in the camps, simultaneously promulgated anti-family immigration law.

Tara Zahra describes well the ways in which the refugee child was singled out for special attention after World War II. A focus on “normal child development” was to be the at the heart of the care and maintenance provided to Europe’s child survivors; achieved through the revivification of stable family life. As Zahra explains, from the Allied perspective, the

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<sup>760</sup> FO 1052/3, DP Polish Policy, ‘Visit of repatriation officers to Poland from the British Zone’, February 8, 1949.

restoration of the child was to be the key to ending the chaos of the war.<sup>761</sup> Tasked with defending the best interests of the Continent's children, Allied welfare teams saw themselves the shock troops of this new refugee humanitarianism. The first step taken was to ensure that any DP orphans were removed from foster care (if they had been fostered into German families), their parents located (if they were still living) and immediately returned to the national fold so as to re-establish national roots.<sup>762</sup>

As pertaining to emigration, ITS records are uniquely positioned to illustrate the terrible strain that resettlement policies often had on families and more significantly, fundamental conflicts between DPs and political actors. Parents who actively fought to retain the integrity of their family units were often characterized by the IRO as irresponsible and pressured by the recruitment teams of the various resettlement states to migrate without ineligible family members, including children. DP parents with a sick or infirm dependant were forced to make it explicitly clear—repeatedly, over the course of several interviews—that they would not separate.

Polish DP Józef Zarecki and his wife for example, had an ill baby girl. Their new-born daughter was struggling with an infection (perhaps as a result of, though certainly not improved by the conditions of the DP camp in which the Zarecki family were residing) and was consequently medically unstable; it was unclear whether the child, Regina, would survive. On the same medical form however is it noted several times that the family does not wish to be separated. After Regina is formally diagnosed with pulmonary tuberculosis, new medical records state yet again that the family will not be considered for resettlement apart from Regina, despite hopes of emigrating to the States and the fact that the couple might otherwise be able

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<sup>761</sup> Zahra, Tara, *The Lost Children: Reconstructing Europe's Families after World War II* (Harvard University Press, 2011). See in particular Chapter 4, "Renationalizing Displaced Children."

<sup>762</sup> This, as explored in Chapter 1, was certainly more than "humanitarianism." British welfare officers took a number of different factors into account when assessing each individual child's case; see for example, ITS, 'Boris Sweschenetz' Doc. No. 82488196\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

to do so.<sup>763</sup> Files like that of the Zarecki family highlight the significant pressures placed on DP parents to avail themselves of resettlement opportunities even where one family member may have to remain (typically referring to permanent institutional care in Germany). As Ruth Balint has recently explored with a focus on emigration to Australia, it was not uncommon for the claimed migratory interests of the siblings of an ill or infirm child to be leveraged against parents in attempts to cast them as irresponsible for pushing to keep their families intact.<sup>764</sup> As Balint highlights, the long-term institutionalisation of what was seen as the problematic individual within the family unit, was promoted actively by an IRO ultimately committed to resettlement over family unification.

Though the most common, illness was not the only cause of such pressure being applied towards permanent separation. So-called “illegitimate” children similarly demonstrated the clash between an administrative perspective that saw DPs as delaying emigration, and DPs who saw emigration as potentially detrimental to the family unit. Włodzimierz Kruszyna struggled to navigate a complex bureaucracy to formally adopt his stepson, Peter Just, born in 1946, and to emigrate together (along with his wife, Peter’s mother) as a family unit to the United States rather than separate and risk being unable to reunify on the basis of lacking any requisite proof of formal adoption. As a result, Włodzimierz faced what stretched into a two-year long process to formalize his nuclear family and “legitimate” his son.<sup>765</sup>

What ITS files indicate, is that the longer the DP camps continued to exist, the greater the pressure was placed on DP individuals to consider family separation towards emigration. Of those families who did opt to leave behind one or more family members, little has been written in DP history to date. Such instances may be found by working backwards from lists

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<sup>763</sup> ITS, ‘Jozef Zarecki’ Doc. No. 79947147\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>764</sup> On this subject there exists very little literature, save for recent contributions from historian Ruth Balint, who also draws examples from within the ITS repository. Ruth Balint, “Children Left Behind: Family, Refugees and Immigration in Postwar Europe,” *History Workshop Journal* 82:1 (2016): 151-172.

<sup>765</sup> ITS, ‘Włodzimierz Kruszyna’ Doc. No. 79349778\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).



of “unattached” institutionalized DP children or in permanent care in Germany. Many, if not most of these children, were not in fact orphaned but had at least one living DP parent. Elzbieta Janczur’s mother hoped to emigrate with her to America. After her mother was hospitalized with tuberculosis in 1948, Elzbieta was sent to a children’s home along with dozens of other *de facto* orphans. Her biological father registered for emigration to the US and left Germany in 1951; in all likelihood, never to return.<sup>766</sup> Herbert Bareja, born in 1946 to Polish DP parents, was left in Germany with his mother in when his biological father was recruited for a British Volunteer Workers scheme, no doubt, with promises of the possibility of future reunion. While the files of the Bareja family do not make this explicit, it appears that perhaps due to being unable to prove the legality of their marriage, only Herbert is subsequently permitted to re-join his father in the UK. His mother, left alone in Germany in 1949, emigrated as a single woman to Australia in 1950.<sup>767</sup> As the Bareja family’s case illustrates, it was not only children that could be deemed unfit for emigration and left behind. The young mother of three healthy DP children, Zygmunt, Ladwiga and Leokadia Adasko (born 1933, 1941 and 1943) was diagnosed postwar with schizophrenia. Her husband had her forcibly deported back to Poland, while he and the three children emigrated to Australia.<sup>768</sup> The decision taken to permanently separate a family was often taken with a view to salvaging at least some possibility of a future after years of uncertainty and struggle. The finality of such decisions however, especially as they effected the ill and the underage, is evident. Even families that had managed to survive the perils of war, miraculously, intact, could not always survive the restrictions and constrictions of Europe’s humanitarian peacetime and the migration policies of those nations that claimed to deliver it. It is clear that both age gender structured the lives and futures of DPs in important

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<sup>766</sup> ITS, ‘Stanislaw Janczur’ Doc. No. 79217705\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>767</sup> ITS, ‘Henryk Bareja’ Doc. No. 81313317\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>768</sup> ITS, ‘Stefanie Adasko’ Doc. No. 78867148\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

ways, with specific ramifications for women and children whose vulnerability was reinforced in the emigration process.

### **DP Labour and employment in the Zone**

As well as a return to family life, rehabilitation meant—from the administrative perspective—DP employment. Work was seen as an individual obligation to be fulfilled, with DPs strongly compelled to find and retain employment in the Zone.<sup>769</sup> Furthermore, a labouring DP populace was economically beneficial and the British DP administration was determined that the development of new enterprises and industries in postwar Germany take full advantage of the skill and craftsmanship of “refugees from the East,” to make use, in particular, of their “good farming stock” for agricultural expansion.<sup>770</sup> The pressure on DPs to work grew as conditions due to overcrowding in the Zone worsened. UNRRA relief worker Kathryn Hulme offered a vivid description of the deteriorating conditions in the DP camps as “infiltrates” began to arrive already in 1946:

You never knew, when you stood in the dim central hallways running the length of a blockhouse, with your hand on a grimy doorknob, what the opening of that door was going to reveal. ... It might be a bachelors' room bleak and bare with forty iron beds [...] Most generally it would be a room into which the billeting committee had thrust heterogeneous families according to their size [...] Army blankets hung from ropes [...] the last ramparts of privacy to which the DP's clung, preferring to shiver with one less blanket on their strawfilled sacks rather

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<sup>769</sup> Already in May 1945, SHAEF published a Guide that including a section on the future employment of DPs both inside and outside of the physical space of the DP camp. Described as a right, DP employment was to be strongly encouraged; and DP labour was even given preference over that of Germans in any work for Military Forces. Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force, *Guide to the Care of Displaced Persons in Germany* (May 1945), 47. The compulsory nature of the work to be performed distinguished the British Zone from that of the American. While regulations establishing the requirements of compulsory work were approved in January of 1947 in the British Zone, they were never issued in the American. The French Zone however was the first to establish compulsory DP labour. On the specificities of labour across different Zones of occupation, see Laure Humbert, “French Politics of Relief and International Aid: France, UNRRA and the Rescue of European Displaced Persons in Postwar Germany, 1945–47,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 51:3 (2016): 606–634; Silvia Salvatici, “From Displaced Persons to Labourers: Allied Employment Policies in Post-War West Germany,” in Jessica Reinisch and Elizabeth White, *The Disentanglement of Populations: Migration, Expulsion and Displacement in Post-War Europe, 1944–49* (England, Palgrave MacMillan, 2011), 210–228; J. Maspero, “Les Autorités Françaises d’Occupation Face au Problème des Personnes Déplacées en Allemagne et Autriche (1945–1949),” *Revue d’Allemagne et des Pays de Langue Allemande* 40:3 (2008): 485–500.

<sup>770</sup> FO 1052/577 International Refugee Organisation: DP Programme in British Zone, ‘Age and Gender Break-downs’, April 20, 1948.

than to dress, comb their hair, feed the baby or make a new one with ten to twenty pairs of stranger eyes watching every move.<sup>771</sup>

Promoting DP employment, the British believed, would not only kick-start German industrial development by providing cheap, much needed labour, but would alleviate some of the congestion in the DP camps by redistributing DPs to where their labour was needed. The predictable dilemma around how to encourage former forced labourers and concentration inmates to labour once again for the German economy was largely overshadowed by the conviction that DPs' moral obligation to contribute to their own upkeep should trump other misgivings they may have: as one British report firmly stresses, DPs "must now cease any reluctance to work with, or under, Germans" and be trained and distributed where manpower was required in the Zone.<sup>772</sup>

The British administration did, however, distinguish the unique position of Jewish DPs vis-à-vis prospective employment in Germany.<sup>773</sup> In September of 1946, all able-bodied DPs in British-controlled Austria, except Jews, were required to work either in camps, for the Allied Army or for the Austrians. The same change took place in the British Zone of Germany in February, 1947.<sup>774</sup> Pressure on the ground however, was still exerted on Jewish DPs with both Poles and Jews compelled to seek employment or risk repercussions in the form of reduced

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<sup>771</sup> Kathryn Hulme, *The Wild Place* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1953), 90-91.

<sup>772</sup> FO 1052/577 International Refugee Organisation: DP Programme in British Zone, 'Age and Gender Break-downs', April 20, 1948. This attitude was characterized by a number of relatively harsh policies around employment. Firstly, the British decided to subtract from DP salaries the expenses incurred for their care and maintenance, reducing by one-third the average income of a camp inhabitant. Salvatici, "From Displaced Persons to Labourers," 213.

<sup>773</sup> There were cases among Jewish DPs of individuals being recorded as outright refusing to work in any capacity. See for example, ITS, 'Arno Lustiger' Doc. No. 79427958\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>774</sup> FO 371/66673 Disposal of Displaced Persons: Welfare and Resettlement measures, 'Current Affairs Bulletin on Displaced Persons', June 10, 1947. On the exclusion of Jews, the file notes: "The world Jewish congress submits, as it has always advocated in the past, that Jewish DPs cannot be expected to work of the benefit of the German economy. To force them to do so would be doubly harmful; compulsion would encounter bitter opposition because it would awaken painful memories and feelings of justified resentment; it would also lead to anti-Semitic agitation and greatly accelerate the growing tension between the Germans and all Jewish DPs whom they hold responsible or many of Germany's present difficulties and especially for its slow recovery."

rations or even loss of DP status if concrete offers of employment were refused.<sup>775</sup> As a result of such inducements, employment was recorded in 1946 in the Zone at 54% (of those considered employable).<sup>776</sup> These relatively high figures suggest, from the British administrations point of view, that a policy of favouring compulsory employment was yielding results with respect to DP employment.

From the DP point of view, employment and the prospect of financial independence and security figured prominently in DP strategizing in a number of significant ways. While Jewish DP labour has been largely neglected within scholarship concentrating on the politics of DP Zionism, several Jewish businesses flourished in the Belsen camp, while many more Jewish DPs attempted to find work either in the camp or in the local German economy. Jeszaja (Iszaja) Buskawoda was liberated in Germany, returned to Poland to “get his jewels”<sup>777</sup> and returned to Germany almost immediately. Back in the British Zone, Jeszaja sold his belongings and as early as September 1945, had established a lingerie factory, owned entirely by himself where he earned, his interviewer diligently noted, 1500RM per month. Like most of his fellow Jewish DPs, Jeszaja aimed ultimately to emigrate outside of Germany and informed the IRO that as a Jew, he could not feel himself established in Germany long-term. He was however, clearly willing to pursue gainful self-employment in Germany until such a time, presumably, as options for emigration opened up and/or he felt financially secure enough to emigrate.<sup>778</sup> Outside of the entrepreneurial sphere, Jewish DPs also found work—like their Polish counterparts—for the British military or for UNRRA/IRO. Rachmil Wolfowicz and his wife both worked while residing in Belsen. Rachmil worked as a supervisor in an UNRRA, then

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<sup>775</sup> On the issue of calorie rationing as a means of exploitation, see Wyman Wyman, *DPs: Europe's Displaced Persons*, 114. Wyman describes for instance, the so-called “cigarette economy” that developed, in which DPs were paid for their labour in cigarettes. According to Wyman, these cigarettes did not always manifest.

<sup>776</sup> Salvatici, “From Displaced Persons to Labourers,” 213. The figure was also broken down by gender at 70% men and only 30% women.

<sup>777</sup> It is unclear in the file if this is the interviewer or the interviewees phrasing.

<sup>778</sup> ITS, ‘Jeszaja Buskawoda’ Doc. No. 78980084\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

IRO-run kitchen and did not emigrate to Israel until 1949, when the kitchen was formally closed and he was no longer employed.<sup>779</sup> German Jew Hans Happ had had his own dental practice in Berlin prior to the outbreak of war. Happ survived Auschwitz and lived unemployed in Belsen for some years, before deciding to leave the camp to transfer to DP camp Jever, where he lived and worked as a dentist, while awaiting medical clearance to emigrate to Israel.

As Happ's file suggests, finding employment (as predicted) often necessitated movement within the Zone and re-establishing oneself and/or one's family in a new environment. It was common for both individual DPs and DP families to move from one camp to another, even multiple times, in search of employment, better working conditions or to take up new positions.<sup>780</sup> As a result, more mobile, employable DP persons resided in multiple DP camps across the Zone over the course of several years. Marian Kazimierzak's file for example, registers him at an incredible eleven different DP camp locations within the Zone from April 1945-March 1950.<sup>781</sup> While movement between DP camps within the Zone for purposes related to employment appears to have been permissible and even encouraged, movement was heavily restricted when it came to exiting and re-entering the British Zone. Stefan Ciemniowski left in 1949 to visit a long-lost niece whom he had been informed was living in a DP camp there and about to depart for Canada. Stefan stayed longer than anticipated and found upon return, that he had also been struck off the strength of his DP camp and was thus technically rendered homeless.<sup>782</sup>

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<sup>779</sup> ITS, 'Rachmil Wolfowicz' Doc. No. 79930489\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>780</sup> Movement between, as well as in and out of DP camps was sometimes used as a means of lowering numbers in overcrowded assembly centres. In one case for example, a Polish DP mother decided to visit her child who had left for Holland, not realizing that to do so would mean losing her DP status. Stuck in Holland in legal limbo, her husband (who remained in the DP camp) petitioned for the IRO to either allow for his wife's return or else help them emigrate together: neither of which it seems, the IRO was willing or able to accommodate. Such cases make it clear that DPs were often unaware of the risks of departing from a DP camp. See ITS, 'Francisak Tomczyk' Doc. No. 79848968\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>781</sup> ITS, 'Marian Kazimierzak' Doc. No. 79273801\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>782</sup> ITS, 'Stefan Ciemniowski' Doc. No. 79000272\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

For both the Polish and Jewish DP communities, securing employment crucial to acquiring experience and recommendation letters that could assist applications for eventual resettlement abroad. Icak Józef-Brust, and his wife Marta (a Hungarian-Romanian Jewish couple) had returned to Hungary in 1946 but returned to the Belsen camp in the hopes of emigrating from there to America or to Australia. The family developed an extensive Curriculum Vitae, detailing collective work done for the Joint Distribution Committee and for the IRO, from whom they received glowing recommendations. Icak was described as a good chauffeur and his wife as “necessary and trustworthy in her work.”<sup>783</sup> DPs that had worked or were working for the military or the IRO were typically given the strongest recommendations. Indeed, work for the British or for UNRRA/IRO was some of the most attractive work available from the DP perspective (as well as some of the least objectionable). Within the DP camps, DPs were especially sought after as translators or drivers, though filled many different roles. Wacław Sarnacki, who was supporting a wife and three children, was employed by 89DPACS from September 1945 until the 21st of November 1948 in the capacity of camp leader, stores supervisor and camp policeman, respectively. As a camp policeman, a superior noted that Wacław “always carried out his duties enthusiastically and thoroughly. I found him to be of clean and sober habits, honest and of good character. He is also very ambidextrous and can turn his hand to any job given to him.” The same individual stressed that he had no hesitation in recommending him to “any work of trustworthy nature,” noting further, “Mr Sarnacki his wife and the children give the impression of a happy group. They are all clean and tidy in appearance and the children look well cared for.”<sup>784</sup>

As well as evolving immigration policies and opportunities, employment status had great bearing on the timing of DPs’ applications for resettlement. While being employed could

<sup>783</sup> ITS, ‘Icak-Jozef Brust’ Doc. No. 78969587\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>784</sup> ITS, ‘Wacław Sarnacki’ Doc. No. 79694025\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

mean delaying formally registering with any resettlement schemes available, it could simultaneously serve to speed acceptance onto such schemes by evidencing an individual's employability and fitness for labour. In this manner, taking up a position could, paradoxically, both delay and facilitate speedier departure from the DP camps. Work in the DP camps, whose existence was always envisaged as temporary, could not last indefinitely. Polish DP Gisela Onuferko appears to have prolonged her stay in the camps under employment with the IRO Sub-Area Headquarters in Ettlingen, where she still worked in March of 1949. Her contract, however, was to be terminated because due to widespread reductions of IRO personnel at this time. Almost immediately, Gisela sought letters of recommendation and passage to wherever would accept her, having proven herself "an excellent typist and takes shorthand in English and has performed her duties satisfactorily and efficiently."<sup>785</sup> Stanisław Adamski was similarly dismissed from a factory in 1948, after being informed by the British military unit employing him that they also had to downscale their staff. He filed an application for resettlement the same month, with the "desired destination" field left blank, indicating that Adamski was most probably willing to go wherever he could find further employment. Indeed, the appeal of possible employment in a camp and the chance to prove one's willingness to work, drew back a number of so-called "free-living" DPs into the camp system. While formally employed by German firm in Celle, Tadeusz Glab registered himself in a Polish DP camp. Tadeusz opted to seek work in the camp, rather than continue to labour on the German economy, in order to ultimately find employment "anywhere" outside of Germany.<sup>786</sup>

Gisela's file, as compared to that of Stanisław or Tadeusz, suggests an important comparative on the role played by gender in DP employment. The (re)casting of women into their traditional roles as wives and mothers generated tension with migration schemes that

<sup>785</sup> ITS, 'Roman Onuferko' Doc. No. 79547397\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>786</sup> ITS, 'Tadeusz Glab' Doc. No. 79157419\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

targeted single, as well as working—or rather, employable—women.<sup>787</sup> Some authors have claimed that as a consequence of the restructuring of family life in the DP camps, “most women abandoned any ambition of employment outside of the home where their children were born,” pointing in particular to the very few positions held by women amid the evolving structures of DP camp leadership. Male partners by comparison, even under conditions of severe restriction and limited opportunity, sought out paid work to support their families.<sup>788</sup> Silvia Salvatici has recently pointed to the difficulties around quantifying precisely both DP labour and skill sets (and attempts gauge subsequent DP employability) based on DPs’ own statements.<sup>789</sup> She notes that, particularly where an individual DP had gained certification of a new skill in the DP camps, it was often in their interest to cast newly acquired skills as work experience.<sup>790</sup> While the internal composition of DP groups with respect to occupation is difficult to breakdown on the basis of fragmentary and potentially unreliable data available, IRO statistics for 1948 indicate that among Polish DPs, some 38% of men across Germany were skilled in agriculture and farming, with a further 30% also considered as skilled labour. Recorded at half the number of skilled men, of those women who were employed, 33% were working in agriculture and the service industry and 20% as domestics.<sup>791</sup>

Differences in both numbers and kind of employment figures across genders lend credence to the idea of the physical border of the camp representing in large measure a kind of imagined border between male labour, directed beyond camp peripheries, and female labour, which was directed within. Women who were otherwise engaged with the raising of children, for instance, were not subject to policies mandating that DPs be required to accept viable offers

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<sup>787</sup> Albeit, along gendered lines.

<sup>788</sup> Waxman, *Women in the Holocaust*, 125. Waxman provides only a reference to Grossmann’s Chapter 5 of *Jews, Germans and Allies*, in apparent support of this claim.

<sup>789</sup> Silvia Salvatici, “From Displaced Persons to Labourers: Allied Employment Policies in Post-War West Germany,” in Reinisch and White, *The Disentanglement of Populations*, 210-229.

<sup>790</sup> *Ibid.*, 215.

<sup>791</sup> Louise W. Holborn, *The International Refugee Organization, A Specialized Agency of the United Nations: Its History and Work, 1946–1952* (London: Oxford University Press, 1956), 305.



of employment in the Zone. As Waxman argues, DP women were encouraged to put the domestic care of the home and children first. Female DPs seeking employment, both within the Polish and Jewish communities, were directed almost universally to roles associated with the traditional role of women as caregivers.<sup>792</sup> Female labour could be used to fulfil “female roles”—i.e., to those extending their work in the home, but not limited to work in kitchens, nurseries, as cleaners or where traditionally “feminine” handicrafts were required. That women’s work was seen overwhelmingly as complimentary to that of their male counterparts and as evidence of their extra-domesticity, is reflected in the content and structure of the many recommendation letters one finds in ITS, which stressed female working credentials as reflective of the appearance and wellbeing of the family image as a whole.

Tasked with attempting to recreate a stable nuclear family for an indefinitely period of time, in a military camp-like and suffocatingly overcrowded space: it is little wonder that women were underrepresented in official DP labour statistics. Very few women in the DP camps broke the mould of private/inside vs public/outside labour that evolved in the camps.<sup>793</sup> The extra-domestic labour of women (from teaching in DP camp schools, organizing kindergartens, working as cooks or cleaners, to studying and taking up various classes themselves) however, nonetheless represented a powerful contribution to the life and survival of the DP camps.

### **Looking ahead: Skills training, education and DP students**

In a DP camp located near Brunswick in northern Germany, the British Quaker Margaret McNeill “found the magic word ‘welfare’ could be expanded to take in practically everything.”<sup>794</sup> As Cohen notes; “Under both UNRRA and the IRO, assistance covered not

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<sup>792</sup> Waxman, *Women in the Holocaust*, 141.

<sup>793</sup> The most notable exception in the British Zone would be Hadassah Rosensaft, the wife of Josef Rosensaft, who was a prominent political figure among the Belsen camp leadership. See Hadassah Rosensaft, *Yesterday: My Story* (Washington, D.C., 2004).

<sup>794</sup> Gerard Daniel Cohen, *In War's Wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order* (Oxford University Press, 2012), 66.

only food, clothes, and housing, but also child welfare, healthcare, recreational and artistic activities, sport, education, language, and vocational training, as well as employment counselling.”<sup>795</sup> Within the ITS archive, one finds plenty of references to skills training offered within the DP camps aimed at enhancing individual applications for resettlement. As explored throughout the present study, DPs were often rejected by various recruitment schemes, or denied visas, on the basis of lacking desirable skills and/or trades. Others hoped to secure employment upon arrival in a certain destination by investing in skills training in the DP camps prior to departure. DPs were thus strongly motivated at various points in the application process to gain requisite skills and certification; once again delaying (by choice or necessity), but ultimately assisting, (re)application and chances of resettlement.

Paul Hoffman, a German Jew, enrolled already in June of 1945 in a Languages School in Bielefeld and in 1949, a vocational training school with ORT<sup>796</sup> in Koln.<sup>797</sup> According to his ITS file, the latter training especially, contributed to his successful application for resettlement in Brooklyn, US, that same year. Shlomo Gutman, a bookkeeper by profession, attended ORT classes where he learned to make trousers and shirts during his stay in Camp Föhrenwald, in preparation for eventual emigration to Israel.<sup>798</sup> These are but a handful of examples of the thousands of references to skills training attained and evidence of the role they played in future-planning.

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<sup>795</sup> Ibid., 111.

<sup>796</sup> ORT is an acronym for the Russian, Society for Handicrafts and Agricultural Work, founded in 1880 by Russian Jews with the aim of promoting and developing vocational training in skilled trades and agriculture among Jews. “Following the Holocaust, ORT ran programs in Displaced Persons camps and in western European countries, especially in France.” See voices.iit.edu; Katarzyna Person, “‘A Constructive Form of Help’: Vocational Training as a Form of Rehabilitation of Jewish Refugees in Great Britain, 1939–1948,” *Melilah: Manchester Journal of Jewish Studies* (1759-1953) 8:1 (2013): 84-95.

<sup>797</sup> ITS, ‘Paul Hoffman’ Doc. No. 79184424\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>798</sup> ITS, ‘Shlomo Gutman’ Doc. No. 79156754\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1). The same Rachmil Wolfowicz mentioned earlier in this subchapter, his wife and their two children actually returned to Germany in 1952 where they arranged their own passage to Canada to join Mrs Wolfowitz’s brother, a “well-off” tailor. The family delayed their departure while Mrs Wolfowitz attended ORT courses to become a qualified seamstress in Föhrenwald, after which she would be able to work in the trade in Canada. ITS, ‘Rachmil Wolfowicz’ Doc. No. 79930489\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

While skills training was increasingly reconcilable with growing emphasis away from repatriation and on recruitment and resettlement abroad after 1947, the scope of humanitarian aid, laid down by UNRRA, had been widened to include a great deal of activity that was more potentially inimical to hopes of mass emigration as the solution to the “DP problem.”<sup>799</sup> The thorny issue of DP specialists (individuals highly qualified in professional scientific and intellectual fields)—the numbers of which IRO historian Louise Holborn puts at around 40,000-60,000 in occupied Germany by the end of 1948—offers an illustrative case in point, as an unattractive pool of migrants from the recruitment perspective.<sup>800</sup> Frustrated by discriminatory immigration policies limiting the scope and scale of resettlement, the IRO attempted to illicit sympathy for DP intellectuals in a brochure entitled *The Forgotten Elite* who had been “passed over.”<sup>801</sup> A Resettlement Placement Service was established especially to find resettlement opportunities for the specialists and other individuals or groups who did not meet the usual criteria of mass migration programs. The project generated some results as major destinations, including Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States eventually

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<sup>799</sup> It is worth mentioning that during the UNRRA period, the education of Polish DPs and its impact on repatriation caused a great deal of tension among administrative actors in the Zone. By the end of 1945, 33,726 DPs were receiving some level of primary education, with another 10,628 reviewed as requiring education. When it came to education, the British Zone was distinguished in its provision of financial backing of DP educational systems. Unlike in the French and American Zones, where full power over DP education was given to international relief bodies, in the British, a Polish Central Advisory Council was established and DPs formed their own educational committees, with budgets being drawn from local German economies. By September of 1946, 900 schools for Polish DP children, attended by 38,000 pupils and employing 1,800 teachers were being operated by a Central Committee for Schools and Education in the Zone. Given the Committee’s declared impartiality on subject of DP Poles’ repatriation, it was not recognized by UNRRA who insisted that it cease its activities forthwith and register the schools with an organisation representative of the Warsaw repatriation mission: “It is known, though it cannot be proved, that the strong course pursued by UNRRA against the educational organisations and schools, especially apparent in the American Zone, was agreed upon between UNRRA and the Warsaw Government.” The Committee, ultimately supported by the British administration, argued that such demands were “incompatible with the freedom of choice granted to refugees by the United Nations.” Kirchmann, “They are Coming for Freedom,” 164; RHA, “Copy of Letter L. Jordan,” *Journals*, 50: FO 938/275 F Millar: Complaint at Treatment of Displaced Persons, ‘The attempt to liquidate the independent Polish educational system in Germany’, February, 1947.

<sup>800</sup> IRO, *Occupational Skills of Refugees* (Geneva, Switzerland: Office of Statistics and Operational Reports, September 1948).

<sup>801</sup> IRO, *The Forgotten Elite: The Story of Refugee Specialists* (Geneva: International Refugee Organization, 1950).

made some arrangements to receive specialists. Most, however, were considered to have to be retrained in order to maximise individual chances for resettlement.<sup>802</sup>

While the IRO was willing to lobby on behalf of DP specialists, it was significantly less enthusiastic about promoting any further higher education of DPs. UNRRA had formerly instituted an active policy that demanded that 10% of the students accepted into German Universities should be DPs and that this quota of students should be exempt from paying tuition.<sup>803</sup> As Sheila Fitzpatrick notes, “It’s not clear that the Allies had really thought this policy through, since it appeared to be in contradiction to their repatriation efforts [...] and later to their resettlement aims, since most of the receiving countries wanted labourers, not university graduates.”<sup>804</sup> Certainly the fact of both the occupation authorities and UNRRA/IRO clearly lost enthusiasm for helping DPs enter German universities for this reason, reducing the quota of DP students from 10% down to 2% by 1946 and phasing out the whole program by 1949.<sup>805</sup>

From the DP perspective, the decision to enrol in a University degree program required committing to years of study—and thus, to years remaining in Germany. Perhaps for this

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<sup>802</sup> IRO, *International Organization* 4:2 (May, 1950): 323-325.

<sup>803</sup> David Phillips, *Educating the Germans: People and Policy in the British Zone of Germany, 1945–1949* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2018), 161-162.

<sup>804</sup> Sheila Fitzpatrick, “‘Determined to get on’: Some Displaced Persons on the Way to a Future,” *History Australia* 12, no. 2 (2015): 112. There was even an UNRRA University for DPs in the American Zone, promoting a liberal, humanist education established in late 1945 with faculty drawn from the DP camps. At its peak, the University had 1,400 students before it was closed in 1947. See Wyman, *DPs: Europe’s Displaced Persons*, 123-125. While Holian argues that the history of the UNRRA University suggests that nationalism coexisted with and even encouraged internationalism, the institution was dogged by a number of allegations that suggest it did not entirely abandon nationalist impulses with respect to Polish DP students. Allegations were made that 1. Applications to UNRRA by Polish DPs for places in German universities have been handed over to Warsaw repatriation mission and made invalid. 2. That all applications including those from dissident Poles, have to be sent to Polish Centre of education operating under Warsaw Mission. 3. That applications include the address of student’s family in Poland, and reason why applicant wishes to continue studies in Germany. 4. And that circular conveying this information indicated that all Polish DPs would come under the control of Warsaw Mission, irrespective of their attitude to repatriation. Anna Holian, “Displacement and the Post-War Reconstruction of Education: Displaced Persons at the UNRRA University of Munich, 1945-1948,” *Contemporary European History* (2008): 167-195; RHA, “Control Commission for Germany British Element, Incoming message,” *Journals*, 10ff; FO 945/364 Polish DPs in Germany, ‘Polish schools in Germany’, September 20, 1946, makes it plain that the British were aware of both the fact that the government in Warsaw saw the education of Polish DPs as a major hindrance to repatriation and that UNRRA was accused of sharing the details of Polish students studying at its University.

<sup>805</sup> Fitzpatrick, “Determined to Get On,” 113.

reason, the numbers of DP students in the Zone were negligible, particularly that of Jewish students: “The first student in the Zone attended the University of Hannover in December 1945 and was joined by a second in the spring term. Their numbers grew to forty-five (with fifteen German nationals) as students took up coursework in such cities as Kiel, Hamburg, Bonn and Gottingen.”<sup>806</sup> Data for March 1, 1948, demonstrated that 351 Polish students were enrolled in colleges in the British Zone.<sup>807</sup> Undoubtedly, there was a certain element of prestige with respect to University admittance, with many more DPs applying and being rejected.<sup>808</sup> Entrance was competitive, especially to the programs that drew DP applicants: “at all times and in all settings, their studies gravitated heavily toward medicine, engineering, and the sciences.”<sup>809</sup>

Scholarship dealing with DP students emphasizes the single-mindedness of DP students to complete their education, which had been interrupted by war.<sup>810</sup> Rochelle Eisenberg explained that she was unsatisfied with the education she received in Belsen and opted to move

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<sup>806</sup> Jeremy Varon, *The New Life: Jewish Students of Postwar Germany* (Wayne State University Press, 2014), 154. The experiences of Jewish DP students in particular has disproportionate interest with DP scholarship as further evidence of the variety of survivor experiences: “while Jewish students were “numerically tiny among Jewish DPs, and their life choices were certainly non-standard among survivors [...] one might ask, what would an ‘exemplary’ DP experience be?” Current research is confined almost exclusively to the American Zone and to Munich therein and based on a paper of 2005: Bella Brodski and Jeremy Varon, “The Munich Years: The Jewish Students of Postwar Germany,” in Johannes-Dieter Steinert and Inge Weber- Newth, eds., *Beyond Camps and Forced Labour: Current International Research on Survivors of Nazi Persecution. Proceedings of the International Conference London, 29–31 January 2003* (Osnabrück: Secolo-Verlag, 2005). On the subject of Polish DP students there exists no dedicated study comparable to that of their Jewish DP counterparts; Polish students are largely absent or not systematically treated in larger monographs.

<sup>807</sup> Along with an additional 457 in the American Zone. Fitzpatrick raises the question of why any non-Jewish DP might opt for tertiary study in postwar Germany. The piece centres however, on the choices of a family of three Latvian DPs. Andrejs, one of the three, “prudently buckled down to finish his engineering degree in Germany, all the while keeping in close contact with his family (mother, sister, brother-in-law), all of them with him a DPs in the British Zone of Germany.” Andrejs’ recollections appear strikingly at odds with those of Varon’s Jewish DPs. Varon represents the pursuit of tertiary education as deeply symbolic and representative of a desire to take again one’s like into one’s own hands in the wake of the Holocaust: in short, as seizing back the reigns of control over individual destiny. In contradistinction, Andrejs’ recounts that the Latvian students he surrounded himself with post-45 were entirely “committed to not taking life too seriously.” Fitzpatrick, “Determined to get on,” 106.

<sup>808</sup> The pursuit of a German degree required moving outside of the confines and life of the DP camp—usually for several years—as well as typically, boarding with a local German family. Further embedding the DP student into Germany, German language was spoken in the “home” as well as at University as the language of instruction. Individuals were also rejected due to not having the requisite level of German.

<sup>809</sup> Medicine was the leading choice in the British Zone, one of the longest degree programs and thus representing a significant commitment to study. Jeremy Varon, *The New Life: Jewish Students of Postwar Germany* (Wayne State University Press, 2014), 157.

<sup>810</sup> So determined was Andrejs, Fitzpatrick notes, that he conducted his own tour of German universities to find the best suited to his chosen program of study. Fitzpatrick, “Determined to Get On,” 113.

to Munich in the American Zone where she was accepted into University.<sup>811</sup> 24-year-old Ruth Sorel was granted a bursary of 125DM in order to complete her studies, the records of the Rose Henriques archive noting that without this sum, “she would lose interest in life.”<sup>812</sup> 37-year-old Max Meyer Sprecher explains that after liberation, he was determined to see not only himself, but his wider Jewish DP community return to “productive, normal work.” He went to Heidelberg in September of 1945 where he resumed his training in medicine, though making it clear that the choice was a challenging one.<sup>813</sup>

The choice to continue one’s studies was made with a clear view to eventually emigrate.<sup>814</sup> “Most of them [DP students] left Germany and emigrated to the United States, Israel, or Australia, where they pursued extremely successful careers.”<sup>815</sup> The various organizations that funded DPs students similarly had ambitions on their future plans for emigration. Analysis of the “Jewish Students” files of the Rose Henriques archive indicate that the Jewish Committee for Relief Abroad and AJDC were supplying Jewish students in the British Zone with relatively generous bursaries to study.<sup>816</sup> This generosity was however, contingent on certain factors, of which one of the most significant was related to emigration. Benjamin Bochner’s appeal for an increase in his living stipend makes clear that he does “does intend to emigrate to Israel” where he will utilize his training as an engineer.<sup>817</sup> Other files reinforce the idea that bursaries were given on condition of emigration, although the destination

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<sup>811</sup> Varon, *The New Life*, 139.

<sup>812</sup> RHA, “Ruth Sorel,” *Jewish students*, 25.

<sup>813</sup> Sprecher explains to Boder how, in order to stay afloat financially, he was required to utilize the rations he was still allotted from the DP camp, which he would then convert into cash through the black market. While there are conflicting reports concerning the ease of life of the DP student in the literature, Varon stresses that Jewish DP students saw the academic path as an active choice — however (un)desirable financially — that restored a sense of agency and a vision of the future. Sprecher himself highlights at the end of his interview a sense of urgency: “while others may be able to afford to lose semesters, we with the many years [lost] in the lager, who have gotten old not studying—we cannot afford such luxury.” Varon, *The New Life*, 146; Max Meyer Sprecher, interview with David Boder, Feldafing, 23 September 1946, online at: <http://voices.iit.edu>.

<sup>814</sup> Sprecher’s file in ITS states in 1949 that he ultimately wants to resettle in Israel.

<sup>815</sup> Varon, *The New Life*, 156.

<sup>816</sup> The AJDC obtained from various students, the information that it costs them about 175DM to live and subsequently decided to boost their bursary to 200DM.

<sup>817</sup> RHA, “Benjamin Bochner,” *Jewish students*, 16.

did not have to be Israel/Palestine. The only instance in which bursaries were jeopardized was when concern was raised over whether the study would indeed leave Germany. Mendel Friedland applied in 1949 for an extension to his bursary, triggering concerns that he would remain as a Doctor in Germany. His file stresses that “he is most eager to leave Germany and is definitely not one of those who change their plans in this respect. [...] a forced emigration at this particular moment would endanger the course of his whole future life. [...] kindly defer his case until spring 1950 so as to enable him to go to the States as a fully qualified doctor.”<sup>818</sup> Investing in further education was thus carefully balanced against long-term migratory prospects. As much as individual DPs and families were committed to leaving the DP camps, strategizing and facilitating departure, as well as bettering one’s prospects in a country of resettlement, could often paradoxically result in the deliberate delaying of emigration and a prolonged stay on German soil.

### **Conclusion: When priorities clash**

Most survivors liberated in Germany had few, if any, family members left alive. Robbed of loved ones, DPs, motivated by a desire not to be alone, inevitably sought to re-establish family life in the camps. Marriage and having children was not only the affirmation of survivors’ continued existence, but signalled the widespread and immediate need for re-entry into “normal” life that had been devastated by war. With no way of knowing how long they would be forced to remain in the DP camps of Germany, for DPs, “starting a family was one way of gaining agency and looking to the future.”<sup>819</sup> Looking to the future simultaneously necessitated maximising one’s chances of resettlement abroad and imagining life in distant countries, both geographically and culturally, from where DPs themselves had been born. Resettlement

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<sup>818</sup> RHA, “Mendel Friedland,” *Jewish students*, 16. Mendel’s petition was ultimately denied, the AJDC disapproving his application despite multiple petitions for reconsideration.

<sup>819</sup> Waxman, *Women in the Holocaust*, 136.

represented new careers, new languages and new environments to which DPs would have to adapt.

This subsection has explored a number of significant causes of migratory delay (from an administrative perspective) and attempted to illustrate where the priorities of DPs, especially as concerns marriage and children in the camps, clashed with those of the British and of the international refugee regime. It has attempted to highlight in more depth the basic dilemma of British (and wider) resettlement policy, which claimed to solve a humanitarian problem primarily through the means of competitive labour markets. As has been argued, the various solutions to the DP problem that were advanced were often in tension. Ideas about rehabilitation based on a return to the nuclear family, employment and education, were often challenging to reconcile with the overarching aim of emptying the DP camps through speedy mass resettlement abroad, in the context of restricted immigration. A number of social elements in the camps prompt reflection on the links between humanitarian practices and immigration policy that underscored the DP relief project. DPs were expected, and in some measure coerced, to labour for their upkeep and skills training towards emigration was the most acceptable form of education. While the British administration and the international relief bodies charged with DP care, proclaimed to be (and certainly, many individual relief workers believed they were) motivated by the interests of the DP communities themselves, they ultimately promulgated policies that married the Allies' national interests.



## 4.1 THE GATES OPEN

While a number of conditions helped to generate the widespread desire for certain geographic locations across different DP communities and households, the conditions that *perpetuated* movement to these same locations underwent significant change across time. What follows focuses on new conditions that arose in the course of migration to both Israel and America after 1948 that came almost to function as independent causes themselves. It will be shown that the result of two key legislative developments was to make additional movement to these locations much more likely, as migrant networks spread and the role of institutions supporting transnational migration solidified.

The first half of the sub-chapter is dedicated to the first of these developments in a consideration of the termination of former British restrictions limiting Jewish immigration following the establishment of the state of Israel in May of 1948, and the subsequent movement of over 100,000 Jewish DPs from the DP camps of Germany. This transformation, along with important migratory pushes in the form of domestic shifts in the German political landscape and the ambiguous role of the IRO, solidified a pre-existing Zionist infrastructure; the institutions, networks and people committed to moving Jewish DPs to Israel/Palestine.

A second major transformation came in the form of an amended DP Bill in 1950 further liberalizing American immigration law and allowing for the entry of almost 400,000 DPs to the US before December 31, 1951. The second half of this subchapter thus moves to consider the ongoing movement of Polish DPs in particular to the United States into the early 1950s. It focuses on the derived nature of this movement via intermediary organizations,<sup>820</sup> of which the

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<sup>820</sup> Tamar Mott Forrest and Lawrence A. Brown, "Organization-Led Migration, Individual Choice, and Refugee Resettlement in the US: Seeking Regularities," *Geographical Review* 104:1 (2014): 10.

American Committee for Resettlement of Polish Displaced Persons (ACRPDP) was most prominent.

In focusing on the institutions and organizations that moved Jewish and Polish DPs this subchapter aims to conceptualize the changing international situation as well as the infrastructure that made the mass resettlement of DPs possible after 1948. As various organizations developed to promote, support and to sustain resettlement in Israel and America, the flow of DP migrants to these destinations became increasingly institutionalized. Intermediaries were an important part of migrant networks based on ethnic affinity and family connection.

### **Push and pull to Israel**

The struggle between Jewish DPs in the Hohn-Belsen camp and British authorities over emigration to Palestine had left no clear victors. While Zionist efforts had spurred the illegal immigration of Jews to Mandatory Palestine, thousands of these same Jews found themselves returned to Europe, or on the island of Cyprus.<sup>821</sup> A number of factors, including pressure exerted by Jewish DPs in the DP camps and increasing international support for the Zionist cause in world public opinion ultimately played a role in radical shifts in British policy vis-à-vis Palestine. In 1947, the British cabinet opted to evacuate Palestine, dramatically altering the possibilities the thousands of Jewish DPs detained both in Cyprus and remaining in Germany.<sup>822</sup>

When the state of Israel was established in May of 1948, the new state's provisional government immediately terminated former British restrictions limiting Jewish immigration.<sup>823</sup>

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<sup>821</sup> Arieh J. Kochavi, *Post-Holocaust Politics: Britain, the United states, and Jewish Refugees, 1945-1948* (University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 283.

<sup>822</sup> Ibid.

<sup>823</sup> Immigration policy to the new state was reflective of its tumultuous birth. At war with neighbouring states, the preference was for able-bodied men of fighting age, to boost the ranks of a fledgling military force. However, rapidly increasing overall Jewish presence in the region was thought crucial to the long-term survival of the state.

As a consequence, in the next 4 years alone, the *Yishuv* doubled in size, from 670,000 at independence, to over 1,380,000 by 1952.<sup>824</sup> Once again however, exact figures of DPs bound for Israel/Palestine vary across the literature. In part, this is due to the fact that official statistics often did not differentiate between overall Jewish migration from Europe and that specifically from within the DP camp universe. Dalia Ofer, for instance, notes that “of 779,000 immigrants to Israel in the years 1946-53, a total of 48.6 percent were Holocaust survivors. [...] Between 1946 and 1948, there were 162,914 immigrants, of whom 85-95 percent were survivors.”<sup>825</sup> Percentages of DPs as survivor immigrants, however, is unclear. Grossmann tackles the problem by presenting the likeliest range of DP migrants: “Of circa 250,000 Jewish DPs, somewhere between 100,000—120,000 and 142,000 settled in Palestine and Israel.” The numbers, she notes drily, “as usual, are far from precise, not to mention ideologically freighted.”<sup>826</sup> Fortunately, the records of the IRO serve as reliable indicators of the numbers of individuals migrating out IRO-run DP camps to Israel, if not representative of the entirety of the mass movement to the region in the postwar period. Holborn clearly states: “Israel, the second largest country of immigration, accepted 132,109 displaced persons during IRO’s

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Subsequent immigration was thus almost entirely unselective with respect to Jewish migrants, unlike any other destination on offer to DPs at the time.

<sup>824</sup> Dalia Ofer, “Holocaust Survivors as Immigrants: The Case of Israel and the Cyprus Detainees,” *Modern Judaism* (1996): 1.

<sup>825</sup> Ibid. Ofer notes that the percentage thereafter declined.

<sup>826</sup> Atina Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies: close encounters in occupied Germany*. Princeton University Press, 2009, 252. In a footnote, Grossmann directs readers to the lower figures provided by Michael Brenner’s entry on DPs in Israel Gutman, ed., *Encyclopaedia of the Holocaust* (New York: Macmillan, 1990); and the higher figures from Mark Wyman, *DPs: Europe’s Displaced Persons, 1945—1951* (Philadelphia and London: Balch Institute Press and Associated University Press, 1989), 155, 178–204.

existence.”<sup>827</sup> According to one key table, 6585 immigrants from the British Zone were transported to Israel from July 1947- December 1951.<sup>828</sup>

While an open invitation to emigrate to the new state of Israel undoubtedly represented a significant migratory “pull” for the Jews of occupied Germany, developments in the Middle East coincided by 1948, with a rapidly changing domestic German political climate that also presented a number of significant migratory “pushes.” As Grossmann notes, the ongoing debate with the Jewish DP community concerning the possibility of a Jewish future in Germany, had, by 1948 “crossed a dividing line.”<sup>829</sup> Grossmann and others refer of course, to the changing position of Germany in light of the growing Cold War; with Allied governments by 1948, seeing the German nation less as the defeated enemy and more as crucial player on a new European frontline. As Gringauz laments, Jewish survivors were “are an obstacle to this development. [...] That is the core of the present problem of the Jewish DPs.”<sup>830</sup> Three interrelated political developments in the year 1948 reinforce the idea of Germany’s shift from former foe to Cold War ally: currency reform in the Western Zones of occupied Germany, the Soviet blockade of Berlin, and the subsequent Anglo-American airlift.<sup>831</sup> As will be shown, all of these developments had implications for Jewish DP life in Germany.

Currency reform was necessitated by two main factors. Added to large supplies of money generated by Nazi war financing, Marks issued by occupying military governments to

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<sup>827</sup> Louise Holborn, *The International Refugee Organization, A Specialized Agency of the United Nations: Its History and Work, 1946–1952* (London: Oxford University Press, 1956), 415. It is unclear why the IRO’s official historian has this apparent reticence to record Jewish DPs as such in the figures given. Indeed, the word “Jewish” is noticeably sparsely used throughout the chapter concerning Resettlement. While the figure is never described as *Jewish* immigration but rather a movement of “displaced persons”; there can be little doubt that the figure was made up of exclusively of DPs registering themselves as Jewish. This author has found no evidence of any DP other than those registered as Jewish, claiming any interest in immigration to Israel/Palestine during the entirety of the existence of the DP camps in the British Zone. This makes Israel completely unique as a country of resettlement.

<sup>828</sup> Holborn, *The International Refugee Organization*, 434.

<sup>829</sup> Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies*, 242.

<sup>830</sup> Gringauz, “Our New German Policy and the DP’s,” 508.

<sup>831</sup> Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies*, 238.

finance operations across Germany resulted in an inflated volume of currency.<sup>832</sup> A second factor, the default of Reich securities, provided a pretext for Soviet authorities to force the closure of banks in Berlin, including the central bank (*Reichsbank*). The Soviet move had the ripple effect of leaving commercial banks in the western Zones without direction from a head office and thus forced to credit themselves with false assets. The result was a growing paralysis of economic life; with the need to eliminate excess money supply and restore proper banking practices compelling action. The resultant currency reform of June 1948 across the Western Zones of occupation directly affected the DP economy and black-market; devaluing DP goods and concurrently, DP status. A stabilized currency forced further engagement in an official economy as black-market goods lost their value. Many DPs depending on the black market may have been further incentivized to emigrate post-currency reform. It was clear however that remaining in Germany was beginning to mean further integration, at least in the German economy.<sup>833</sup>

Currency reform represented one aspect of a wider project of West German reform, dubbed the “London Programme,” which was directed at both economic and political revival of the region.<sup>834</sup> In a move designed to delay the implementation of the London programme, Soviet authorities began to apply pressure on the city of Berlin. While jointly occupied by the four powers, Berlin sat deep in the heart of the Russian Zone, where Soviet forces controlled the city’s access to all four sectors. On April 1, the Soviets imposed “a partial blockade restricting Western access to Berlin, which was then escalated on June 24 by the severance of all the rail, road and water routes between Western Zones of Germany and the Western sectors

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<sup>832</sup> Ibid., 239.

<sup>833</sup> Grossmann hints at an additional benefit to the DP “baby boom”: “Every resident was entitled to an initial lump sum payment of forty freshly printed deutschmarks; with that rather princely amount, new babies had material value. See Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies*, 253.

<sup>834</sup> Avi Shlaim, “Britain, the Berlin Blockade and the Cold War,” *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* 60:1 (1983): 3.

in Berlin.<sup>835</sup> The ensuing crisis ultimately solidified American and British determination to both push forward with the London Programme as well as maintain their position in Berlin, while simultaneously seeking to avoid open warfare. Faced with diplomatic deadlock, a common policy to supply the Western sectors of the city of Berlin by air was adopted by the governments of Britain, the United States and France.<sup>836</sup> While the resultant airlift, as a test of Soviet resolution, did not end until May 1949, it confirmed “that they [the Soviets] could not drive the Western allies out of Berlin.”<sup>837</sup>

Events in Berlin reverberated across the DP camps. First and foremost, the approximately 6,500 Jews registered as DPs in Berlin were evacuated out of the city in supply delivery planes, to the US Zone.<sup>838</sup> Jewish life in Germany from this moment on, was thus almost completely centred in DP camps. Here, the ongoing debate concerning whether or not a Jewish future in Germany was possible and/or desirable, which had been focused on the German-Jewish *Gemeinde* (local community) began to shift. Heinz Galinski recalls that during the World Jewish Congress in 1949, “One spoke clearly, in fundamental terms, and very aggressively, against Jews remaining in Germany.”<sup>839</sup> While some argued that a Jewish presence should remain in Germany, if only to assist fellow Jews who might opt to move further West through Germany in the future, the Zionist position held firmly that Jewish life in Germany should be effectively reduced to a self-liquidating community composed of the aging and ill.<sup>840</sup>

On January 1, 1948, Jewish DP Samuel Gringauz anticipated that what he described as a relative “golden age,” in which Jewish DPs were guaranteed certain privileges and protection,

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<sup>835</sup> Ibid.

<sup>836</sup> As Shlaim notes, supplying the civilian population of Berlin via airlift was a strategic compromise between the alternatives of a wider call to arms of a retreat from the city entirely.

<sup>837</sup> Shlaim, “Britain, the Berlin blockade and the cold war,” 13.

<sup>838</sup> Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies*, 247.

<sup>839</sup> Ibid. Galinski was a DP who became the head of the Jewish community in West Berlin.

<sup>840</sup> Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies*, 246. The terminology is deliberately harsh and reminiscent of the same use of the term – so popular with the Nazi regime in reference to the Jewish people – “liquidate” with reference to fears of Jews self-liquidating in diaspora, as explored in Chapter 2 of this study.

might swiftly be drawing to a close.<sup>841</sup> Undoubtedly, the fact of various migratory *pushes* that exerted influence on the DP camps, including the Allies' attempts to prioritize reconciliation with a former foe, as well as American immigration policy grounded in antisemitic restrictions, helped to solidify a focus on Israel as a dominant destination of choice.<sup>842</sup>

### **Pioneers vs refugees**

The doors to the new state not only opened but demanded.<sup>843</sup>

As Anna Holian explains, “Two laws gave expression to the unique situation of Israel as a country of immigration—the Law of Return, 5 July 1950, that states that ‘Every Jew has the right to come to the country as an immigrants,’ and the Law of 1 April 1952 that ‘Israel nationality is acquired by this return’.”<sup>844</sup> Indeed, both the same pressures and concerns that had existed prior to 1948 were heightened in the context of open immigration: Michael Brenner notes that Jews considering destination other than Israel—particularly after 1948—were often ostracized by DP camp leadership and in some camps, “those emigrants were stoned and cursed as traitors as they left the DP camp.”<sup>845</sup>

While the State of Israel's immigration policy represented a significant migratory pull; the demands and dangers of building a Jewish state in Palestine represented one of the major obstacles to Jewish DPs weighing their options in the camps. Zionist propaganda in Belsen had cast DP Jews on their way to Palestine as pioneers; a battler community defending the ongoing struggle for the survival of the Jewish people. This imagery, while appealing to a new sense of

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<sup>841</sup> Samuel Gringauz, “Our New German Policy and the DP's,” *Commentary* 6 (1948): 508.

<sup>842</sup> As explored in Chapter 3, the majority of Polish DPs and large parts of the Jewish DP community had a strong preference for emigration to America, made possible for some with the passing of the DP Act of 1948 and as we shall see, many more with the relaxations of its provisions in 1950 and again in 1951.

<sup>843</sup> Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies*, 249.

<sup>844</sup> Anna Holian, *Between National Socialism and Soviet Communism: Displaced Persons in Postwar Germany* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011), 415.

<sup>845</sup> Michael Brenner, *After the Holocaust: Rebuilding Jewish Lives in Postwar Germany* (Princeton University Press, 1999), 40.

nationalism born in Belsen, was nevertheless in conflict with the ideal of an Israeli state as a haven for what remained of European Jewry and DPs weary of conflict and warfare.<sup>846</sup> Significantly, in recent years, a number of historians have begun to investigate, and call into question, the role played by the IRO in the emigration of Jewish DPs to Palestine. According to Holborn, “the IRO paid for the immigration of about 6,000 before the withdrawal of the mandatory government.”<sup>847</sup> The outbreak of hostilities between Arabs and Jews, and subsequent open warfare in Palestine, she notes, “presented a serious problem of policy to the IRO.”<sup>848</sup> At issue, both in the postwar period and to this day, was whether or not the IRO was aiding one group of refugees only to facilitate the creation of more displaced persons in the Middle East (namely, Palestinians). While the Director General issued instructions that the Organizations should no longer be used to assist the immigration of any refugees to Palestine, this policy was hotly debated among delegates on the IRO’s Executive Committee. The major cleavage came down to the views upheld by the British and American Governments. While the former supported the position outlined by the Director General, the American position was that it was the IRO’s priority to empty the DP camps of Europe as soon as possible, a commitment that should include paying the costs of transportation.

Fearing the effects of the suspension of IRO assistance, Jewish volunteer bodies including the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), rapidly expanded their

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<sup>846</sup> As touched upon in Chapter 2 of the present study, the Yishuv had already put forward a plan of both recruiting for active service (as well as taxing DPs) across Germany, with The Third Congress of the She’erit Hapletah, meeting from 30 March to 2 April 1948, calling upon “all able-bodied men and women between the ages of 17 and 35 to fulfil their ‘national duty.’” Some 7,800 DPs did take off for combat duty. Although many arrived too late to bear the brunt of the fighting, they nonetheless formed a significant part of the Israeli defence forces, which numbered only 88,033 in 1948.” Hanna Yablonka, *Survivors of the Holocaust: Israel after the War*, trans. Ora Cummings (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 82. (After much contentious argument among Israeli historians, Patt affirms that in large part because of the timing of their arrival, the conscripted DPs did not serve as “cannon fodder” and their casualties were relatively low.) Avinoam J. Patt, “Stateless Citizens of Israel: Jewish Displaced Persons and Zionism in Post-War Germany,” in Jessica Reinisch and Elizabeth White, eds. *The Disentanglement of Populations: Migration, Expulsion and Displacement in Postwar Europe, 1944-49*. Springer, 2011, 162.

<sup>847</sup> Holborn, *The International Refugee Organization*, 415.

<sup>848</sup> Ibid.



budgets for immigration assistance and were able to move considerable numbers to Israel without IRO aid. In the British Zone, the JDC, or “the Joint” was the most active of all the Jewish volunteer bodies and received more than half of funds raised on behalf of Jewish DPs across American-Jewish communities.<sup>849</sup> As Holborn affirms: “it was the aim of these organizations that not a single Jewish refugee should be left in the assembly centres in Germany, Austria, and Italy, a plan that was encouraged by the Israel Government’s four-year plan to double the country’s population.”<sup>850</sup>

While Jewish volunteer bodies stepped in to fill the vacuum left by the IRO, the weight of the American position ultimately forced a change in IRO policy.<sup>851</sup> As Holborn explains: “In April 1949, when the Palestine Conciliation Commission declared that the question of the support of emigration to Israel was not within its competence, the Director General authorized full resumption of the IRO’s assistance and financial support for movements to Israel.”<sup>852</sup> Most significantly perhaps, the Executive Committee decided that the IRO should pay for all past and ongoing movements before and after January 31, 1949 and authorized the Director general to reimburse the AJDC for the costs incurred in moving refugees to Israel. Their movement of over 100,000, Holborn notes, had appreciably diminished the IRO’s case load in Germany.

Gerard Daniel Cohen rightly points out that the modification of IRO policy has not received much scholarly attention, noting that “it is often forgotten that the mass emigration of Jewish refugees to Israel after 1948 [...] was facilitated and financed by the postwar refugee

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<sup>849</sup> In 1946 for instance, the American Jewish community contributed to the United Jewish Appeal, more than \$102,000,000 of which the JDC received \$54,150,000: “In a campaign that dwarfed all previous efforts, the Jews -of America demonstrated their willingness to sacrifice for their brothers overseas.” The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, *The Year of Survival: 1946 Annual Report* (1946).

<sup>850</sup> Holborn, *The International Refugee Organization*, 434.

<sup>851</sup> RHA, JDC, “Letter from William Haber to Mr. Joe Schwartz regarding the situation in the DP camps,” June 21, 1948.

<sup>852</sup> Holborn, *The International Refugee Organization*, 434. Holborn continues: “The majority of the refugees assisted by the AJDC with the support of the IRO were taken to their future home in Israel-owned ships, manned by Israeli crews. [...] Many of the ships used for this transportation of refugees to the Jewish state had formerly, during the British mandate, conveyed illegal entrants.”

regime.”<sup>853</sup> Cohen suggests that the IRO’s about-face was driven predominantly by pragmatism, with Israel having established its ability to resettle DPs en masse, and thus relieve the DP problem in Europe. He notes that for the IRO’s Director at the time, William Hallam Tuck, “the absorption and assimilation capacities of the new country provided sufficient guarantees for the adequate resettlement of refugees, the primary task assigned to the IRO by the United Nations in 1946. For the IRO, eagerly searching for countries willing to accept refugees, Israeli know-how in immigration and resettlement made a crucial contribution to the prompt resolution of the DP problem in Europe.”<sup>854</sup> By contrast, historian Ilan Pappé has drawn attention to the decision taken by the UN to create a *separate* agency for Palestinian refugees in 1949, claiming instead that politics, rather than pragmatism drove the shift. According to Pappé, Zionist bodies in both Israel and America sought to disassociate the IRO from the issue of Palestinian displacement to prevent any comparison being made between the plight of Jewish DPs and homeless Palestinians, avoiding any potential consequent negative impact on the emigration of the former and any argument in favour of the repatriation of the latter. Pappé concludes, “it was Israel and the Zionist Jewish organizations abroad that were behind the decision to keep the IRO out of the picture [concerning Palestinian displacement].”<sup>855</sup>

What is clear is that under the auspices of organizations such as the Joint, relief workers aggressively pursued politicized agendas, even at the expense of the primary care of individual DPs. The position of the IRO was no less politicized; as increasingly acknowledged by authors pointing to the role of humanitarian organizations in migration more broadly and the “complexities of both ‘global’ and ‘local’ motives in the aftermath of war.”<sup>856</sup>

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<sup>853</sup> Gerard Daniel Cohen, *In War's Wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order*, (Oxford University Press, 2012), 143.

<sup>854</sup> *Ibid.*, 144.

<sup>855</sup> Ilan Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (Oneworld Publications, 2007), 236.

<sup>856</sup> Eliana Hadjisavvas, “Journey Through the ‘Gate of Zion’: British Policy, Jewish Refugees and the La Spezia Affair, 1946,” *Social History* 44:4 (2019): 472.

## Amending the American DP Act

The case of immigration to Israel from the DP camps highlights important aspects of the derived nature of DP movement via intermediary organizations, including the IRO. This theme is developed further in what follows, in a consideration of an amended DP Act of 1948 and ongoing immigration to America.

Once again, it was the Citizens Committee on Displaced Persons (CCDP) who spearheaded the push for a revision of the DP Act, calling for the elimination of its discriminatory features, particularly the implementation of the cut-off date and the agricultural provision. Leonard Dinnerstein explains that among Jewish CCDP members there was some discussion concerning whether or not further legislation was necessary, particularly in light of the establishment of Israel in 1948. On the one hand, any liberalization of the DP Act meant concurrently risking lobbying for (and thus courting the interests of) the entry of collaborationists and antisemitic elements, on behalf of a limited number of Jewish DPs.<sup>857</sup> As Dinnerstein puts it, “Unspoken publicly, but in the air privately, was the Zionist concern that fewer European Jews would resettle in Israel if the possibility existed of getting to the United States.”<sup>858</sup> By contrast, the interests of Polonia and the Catholic lobby were unified in support of a revised Bill. Ultimately, within the American political arena, Zionist concerns did not halt the lobby for further liberalization of the DP Bill, which took the form of an Amendment signed by the President on June 16, 1950.<sup>859</sup>

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<sup>857</sup> Dinnerstein explains that initial estimates of the numbers of Jewish DP immigrants into America after 1950 were conservative in their estimates. While concerns that an amendment to the Act would allow only for the accommodation of c. 10,000 Jews compared with 190,000 non-Jews, a total of approximately 27,000 Jewish DPs entered the United States in the fiscal years ending in June 1951 and June 1952. Leonard Dinnerstein, *America and the Survivors of the Holocaust* (Columbia University Press, 1982), 222-223. For a breakdown of arrivals under the Immigration Acts of 1948 and 1950, see 249, 252. Dinnerstein explains: “figures that I have seen on Jewish arrivals for the years 1949 through 1952 show these numbers: 1949, 31,381; 1950, 10,245; 1951, 13,580; 1952, 13,508.

<sup>858</sup> *Ibid.*, 223.

<sup>859</sup> *Ibid.* 223ff.

As Holborn explains: “This amendment liberalized eligibility requirements as defined in the Act, eliminated the provision that 30 per cent of the refugees should be farm workers or farmers—a provision that had proved impossible to fulfil—and authorized the admission to the US of a total of 313,000 refugees within the mandate of the IRO from Germany, Austria, Italy, China, and the Philippines (including the 177,000 for whom visas had already been issued) on visas granted before the final date for the issue of visas, which the amendment fixed at 30 June 1951.”<sup>860</sup> Additionally, the amendment included the admittance of German expellees. These *volksdeutsche*, Holborn notes, “were not the concern of the IRO, but, at the request of the US government, the Organization undertook to process and transport these persons subject to reimbursement.”<sup>861</sup>

While the movement of refugees under the IRO’s mandate had slowed in the first half of 1950, as the Organization struggled to meet the requirements of the 1948 Act, the removal especially of the percentage requirements for agriculturalists quickly saw an uptick in visa applications. Movement was stunted however by the adoption of a new Internal Security Act only four months later, on September 23.<sup>862</sup> Put forth as a response to widespread fears around communism as a major domestic political concern, the Act was designed to thwart the progress of communism in America. Limiting the entry of individuals originating from what was now a Soviet sphere of influence was justified as helping to curtail the potential expansion of communist, pro-Soviet interests in the States.<sup>863</sup> The Act thus significantly retarded the work of the IRO and ultimately prevented a number of DPs, of Russian origin especially, from

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<sup>860</sup> This date was later extended even further by subsequent amendments. See Holborn, *The International Refugee Organization*, 413.

<sup>861</sup> *Ibid.*, 414.

<sup>862</sup> The Act was amended further on March 28, 1951. On the Act itself see Patrick A. McCarran, “The Internal Security Act of 1950,” *University of Pittsburgh. Literature Review* 12 (1950): 481-513. On the climate in which such an Act was written, Dinnerstein notes: “The trials of Alger Hiss, who allegedly passed classified materials to the Communists in the 1930s, the ‘loss’ of China, and the detonation of the atomic bomb by the Soviet Union in 1949 reinforced the anxieties of those who suspected foreigners and Jews of plotting to undermine American institutions.” Dinnerstein, *America and the Survivors*, 236.

<sup>863</sup> Dinnerstein, *Ibid.*,

entering the US; who might otherwise have been able under the Amended DP Act.<sup>864</sup> Only in late 1951 were visas once again issued on a large scale, a full six years post-liberation.<sup>865</sup>

### **Organization-led resettlement**

As well as political developments at the international level, both the timing, direction and make-up of DP movement out of the camps to America was similarly driven and affected by the role of intermediary organizations, including and beyond the IRO. In recognition of the role played by volunteer agencies in coordinating the mass migration out of the DP camps, the amended DP included a provision granting financial aid to assist the ongoing transport and assistance of newly arrived DPs from docks to home, wherever this may be in the United States. The IRO was responsible for DPs only up until their arrival at a port of entry in Boston, New York and Orleans.<sup>866</sup> Here DPs were received by the same voluntary societies that had sponsored their visas, or in the case of unsponsored DPs, by representatives of American Red Cross or Traveller's Aid Society.<sup>867</sup> Holborn remarks: "in the work involved in receiving and settling the refugees as well as throughout the resettlement process, the contribution of the voluntary societies was essential to the US resettlement plan."<sup>868</sup>

In the case of Polish DPs, the work of coordinating visa sponsorship and resettlement in the US was worked out almost exclusively by Americans of Polish descent. The Second National Convention of the Polish American Congress in May, 1948, had seen the unanimous adoption of the resolution for the creation of a representative committee, the American

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<sup>864</sup> "Gibson Holds Law Bars 100,000 D.P.'s." *The New York Times*, March 10, 1951.

<sup>865</sup> Holborn, *The International Refugee Organization*, 414. Holborn attributes this to the impact of the Security Act as does Katarzyna Nowak: "The fact that internal security screening, or anti-communist screening, was required by the US but often opposed by the IRO brought tensions and prolonged and complicated the procedure for processing a DP." Katarzyna Nowak, "'To Reach the Lands of Freedom': Petitions of Polish Displaced Persons to American Poles, Moral Screening and the Role of Diaspora in Refugee Resettlement," *Cultural and Social History* 16:5 (2019): 632.

<sup>866</sup> Holborn, *The International Refugee Organization*, 414.

<sup>867</sup> Ibid.

<sup>868</sup> Ibid.

Committee for Resettlement of Polish Displaced Persons (ACRPDP), established in June of the same year as a non-profit recognized and accredited by the US DP Commission and the IRO.<sup>869</sup> The ACRPDP “was the only independent agency of national scope that could send its representatives abroad and issue its own ‘assurances’ for sponsoring entry of displaced persons into the United States without the necessity of securing individual affidavits.”<sup>870</sup> According to Kirchmann, on July 17, 1948, the Committee adopted a series of by-laws defining its purpose and objectives which defined its purpose and objective as follows: "...to help select eligible displaced persons of Polish nationality [...] provide them with necessities, secure their transportation from port of entry to the place of resettlement in the United States, provide them with jobs and housing facilities and to work with the Federal D.P. Commission and all related governmental, civic and private agencies in this regard; [...] to raise funds in order to successfully carry out the resettlement program of the D.P.s.”<sup>871</sup>

The ACRPDP coordinated a total of twenty-six State Division Committees from its central offices in Chicago, as well as maintaining systematic contact with British and American authorities and agencies, including the IRO and local Polish refugee organizations.<sup>872</sup> A National Fund Drive was organized on behalf of Polish DPs in the Spring of 1949, mobilizing Polish organizations across the country (including and especially, the Catholic Church in Polish parishes) and providing them with fundraising information, with the aim of collecting at least half a million US dollars by the end of the year.<sup>873</sup> Committee representatives were sent to the DP camps of Germany to offer prospective migrants English-language classes as well as explanations of the political, economic and social life they might expect in America.<sup>874</sup> By the

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<sup>869</sup> Anna Dorota Jaroszyńska-Kirchmann, “The American Committee for Resettlement of Polish Displaced Persons (1948-1968) in the Manuscript Collection of the Immigration History Research Center,” *Polish American Studies* (1987): 68-69.

<sup>870</sup> Ibid., 69.

<sup>871</sup> Ibid.

<sup>872</sup> Ibid.

<sup>873</sup> Kirchmann, “The are Coming for Freedom,” 213.

<sup>874</sup> Ibid.

end of 1951, the ACRPDP alone was responsible for having obtained assurances guaranteeing the employment and accommodation of approximately 85,000 Polish DPs.<sup>875</sup>

A collage of intermediaries, therefore, was responsible for facilitating the movement, and of resettling, thousands of Polish DPs on American shores. Organizations such as IRO and the ACRPDP played a significant role in the geography and spatial distribution of DPs across the country and must be incorporated into general constructs pertaining to DP migration. The DP Acts of 1948 and 1950 helped to institutionalize intermediaries acting on behalf of certain DP ethno-national groups, as the link between admission to the US as well as local resettlement.

Acting as a kind of “middleman” or “broker”<sup>876</sup> between Polish migrants and employers in the States, the work of the ACRPDP was often perceived by the DPs themselves, to be closer to them in comparison with the IRO, which was seen as more intimately connected to the state. When it came to Polish DPs, the aims of the ACRDPD as an intermediary actor was seen as complimentary to prevailing migratory choices. Nowak’s 2019 article, “To Reach the Lands of Freedom” argues, among other things, that comparing letters of petition written by Polish DPs to the IRO and to explicitly Polish organizations like the ACRPDP generates significant points of difference, concluding that “the way DPs approached intergovernmental organisations and the authorities was different from the one they adopted in addressing the representatives of American diaspora. As we will see, they did not evoke the language of rights, as they appealed to traditional ideals of support, based on benevolence and familiarity.”<sup>877</sup>

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<sup>875</sup> Ibid.

<sup>876</sup> See J. Lindquist, B. Xiang, and B. S. A. Yeoh, “Introduction: Opening the Black Box of Migration: Brokers, the Organization of Transnational Mobility, and the Changing Political Economy in Asia,” *Pacific Affairs* 85:1 (2012): 7–19

<sup>877</sup> Nowak, “To Reach the Lands of Freedom,” 624. Nowak’s work inadvertently speaks to important connections between individual/household priorities and organization-led migration. “These letters of petition provide the evidence of refugees’ agency in navigating the system governing migration in the aftermath of the Second World War. [...] They wrote to the Committee because they did not have family in the USA or were unable to contact them. Nevertheless, they were usually familiar with the migration pattern, had acquaintances who emigrated and had a mental image of the United States that can be traced in their petitions.”

Nowak distinguishes several intertwining themes recurring in 300 letters of petitions she analyses, one of which was a fear of recruiters and the IRO as compared with “a trust in the national network.”<sup>878</sup> She notes that in addressing the members of the Committee “writers often turned to flattery as a rhetoric method. They mentioned the reputation of the committee, praised its benevolence and great results, and indicated that it was the only force able to assist them. Also, some mentioned that each nationality tries to ‘take their own kind’, invoking national pride and suggesting that by helping refugees the committee could stand out from other nation-oriented organisations and guard the honour of the Polish case.”<sup>879</sup> This, Nowak writes, was in contrast to the resettlement efforts undertaken by the IRO, which petitioners appeared to perceive as threatening, “a sort of ‘screening machine’ or ‘resettlement machine’, envisaged as a force which would sweep them away, akin to war and displacement.”<sup>880</sup> Fears of imminent IRO closure were rife: “I count on your sympathy for my children at least because the IRO’s care will finish soon and I wouldn’t like myself and my children to remain in Germany to our fate.”<sup>881</sup> As one DP bluntly put it, without the help of the ACRPDP: “the IRO will throw me on the German standard.”<sup>882</sup> As Nowak concludes, evidently, Polish DPs’ vision of the ACRPDP was more nuanced than the image of the IRO, enabling a more discursive construction of American Polonia, whom it was thought to represent, accentuated by national ties.

### **Improbable returns**

A return would be the most weird thing imaginable; here we are all trying as hard as we can to leave this land that sent millions of our brothers and sisters to their death.<sup>883</sup>

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<sup>878</sup> Ibid., 627.

<sup>879</sup> Ibid., 631.

<sup>880</sup> Ibid., 632.

<sup>881</sup> Ibid.

<sup>882</sup> Ibid.

<sup>883</sup> The quote is taken from one DP’s letter to a relative in India, as representative of a widespread attitude concerning possible return among Jews, as cited in Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies*, 246.



Resettlement in America and Israel/Palestine from 1948 was, unlike earlier labour recruitment schemes, overwhelmingly permanent. Of the tens of thousands registered DPs who emigrated to the US, this author has found no evidence of any return to the DP camps. There was, however, a limited movement of Jewish DPs back into Germany from Israel. That some Jewish DPs emigrating to Israel might not have viewed, or more likely, came to view it as their final destination is a subject little explored in secondary source literature. While noted in several monographs on the postwar migration of Jews, any details of this particular movement remain scarce. Idit Gil notes that an astonishing “77,000 survivors left Palestine and Israel between 1946 and 1956,”<sup>884</sup> though does suggest which percentage of the general term “survivors” refers directly to former DPs; nor does she offer any further break-down of subsequent trajectories.<sup>885</sup> Atina Grossmann, in the conclusion of her book *Jews, Germans and Allies*, offers more precision, remarking that by 1952, “some 2,000 Jews had returned to Germany from Israel.”<sup>886</sup> Grossmann continues; “Despite the formal prohibition on travel to Germany,”<sup>887</sup> Israel had no interest in preventing the departure of troublemakers and apostates who preferred life in a semi-sovereign West Germany, where, still subject to U.S. and JDC support and surveillance, they could rely on the reluctant but assured aid and protection of Jewish agencies and the young West German government.”<sup>888</sup>

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<sup>884</sup> Idit Gil, “Between Reception and Self-perception: Testimonies of Holocaust Survivors in Israel,” *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 12:3 (2013): 493-515. In turn, Gil cites for these figures Dina Porat, *Israeli Society: The Holocaust and its Survivors* (Edgware, UK: Vallentine Mitchell, 2008).

<sup>885</sup> Gil’s own research considers 10 of these individuals only and puts forward tentative hypotheses concerning these individuals’ muted reports of their reception in Israel.

<sup>886</sup> Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies*, 262. Grossmann sources this figure to the following primary source: Minutes of Administration Committee of Joint Distribution Committee, Edward Warburg presiding, November 3, 1953, marked “highly confidential,” AJDCA/398. While most returnees appear to have made their way to the American Zone and to the Fohrenwald DP therein, this study focuses on those DPs who had originally emigrated from the Belsen camp.

<sup>887</sup> There was among Jewish organizations a general and outspoken condemnation of postwar Jewish settlement in Germany.

<sup>888</sup> Ibid.

There was among Jewish organizations a general and outspoken condemnation of postwar Jewish settlement in Germany. Israeli passports bore the indication: “For all countries, except Germany.”<sup>889</sup> In the eyes of Jewish organizations, the DP default option was by no means to stay in Germany. The ITS archive however, clearly spotlights the presence of a number of Jewish “returnees” to the Western Zones of Germany in the early 1950s. Elias Schenker was one such returnee. He, his wife and infant son (born in Belsen in 1948) emigrated to Israel at the peak of movement to the new state in 1949.<sup>890</sup> The family however returned to Germany, via France, in 1952. The family’s collective files indicate their reasons for wanting to both leave Israel and for choosing to return to Germany. With respect to the latter, perception of available help to re-emigrate was the dominant draw, with the family aiming to use Germany as a springboard to America. Unable to fund to their satisfaction own emigration, it appears the Schenkers were drawn to Germany for the additional economic possibility of remuneration. Elias’ interviewer notes, “I suspect he is back for remuneration.” Elias’ prior claims for bodily injuries had not been settled and he had hopes of securing a pension the family could then rely upon.<sup>891</sup> Unfortunately for the Schenkers, their file notes that they had “no prospect of emigrating to the United States,” at least partly due to their status as returnees: “They are aware of the fact that as returnees from Israel their chances [...] are uncertain.”<sup>892</sup> They were thus encouraged to consider several alternatives; Elias’ wife demonstrating a sincere interest in Norway: “She says she is eager to learn a profession, as she never had the opportunity to do so. She also thinks that she will learn the Norwegian language easily.” As concerns the family’s reasons for leaving Israel, these were presented explicitly as economic: “They had to leave

<sup>889</sup> There is much literature on this, which speaks of an outright “ban”. See e.g. Dan Diner, “Im Zeichen des Banns,” in Michael Brenner, ed., *Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland von 1945 bis zur Gegenwart* (CH Beck, 2012), 15-66; Michael Brenner, *After the Holocaust*, 66. In the eyes of Jewish organizations, the DP default option was by no means to stay in Germany.

<sup>890</sup> CM/1, ‘Elias Schenker’, 79702924\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>891</sup> Ibid.

<sup>892</sup> Ibid.

Israel, they say, for economic reasons.” Although Mr. Schenker immediately upon arrival in Israel had found work as a store clerk with a building firm and (held this job for 30 months), he claimed it was impossible for him to maintain the family on his earnings. While his wife hoped to work as well, she was prevented from doing so with a young infant to care for. Elias' heart condition deteriorated while in Israel, serving as a secondary consideration for the family to leave Israel, with its significantly warmer climate.<sup>893</sup>

The Schenker family file is representative of returnees in ITS, particularly as concerning the perception and/or reality of a lack of economic advancement in Israel. Israel Butter, another returnee, his wife and baby emigrated from Germany to Israel in 1951. In Israel, Israel worked in the Haifa port with his motorcycle and trailer as transport worker but claimed that he was unable to earn enough to provide for the family's needs, with his wife unemployed due to illness. They therefore decided to return to Germany in the hope to be offered other emigration opportunities, preferable to the States, where the family had some relatives. Rachmil Wolfowitz, his wife and two children claimed they had to leave Israel because Mr Wolfowitz could not secure a permanent job, especially during the last 6 months of their stay there. According to the family, they were presently living in a barracks and did not see any chance to rent an apartment in the foreseeable future.<sup>894</sup> Leib Rosman, his wife and two children (born 1943, 1947) moved to Israel in 1949, where they lived in Haifa until 1953. A porter in the harbour, Leib only worked part of the week during the last part of their stay and was therefore unable to support his family. In May 1953 they left Israel for Germany, and even brought back with them their married elder daughter and husband, also hoping to be able to emigrate from Germany. One of their sons, Schmerel (Salek), born on July 20, 1935, was in the Israeli army at the time of his parents' departure, but also left Israel bound for Germany,

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<sup>893</sup> Ibid. Unfortunately, while the family was accepted for Norway, their child became ill in Germany, developing a paralysis in left side of face following an infection. While the family received restitution money, they refused to emigrate to Norway and presumably stayed in Germany.

<sup>894</sup> CM/1, 'Rachmil Wolfowitz', 79930489\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

hoping to join the re-join his family with the intention of emigrating together.<sup>895</sup> Evidently from such files, it seems that Jewish returnees were unconcerned about being vocal in their experiences, desires and demands, however embarrassing their presence may have considered to have been by Jewish relief bodies.<sup>896</sup>

Returnees highlight the fact that while both the immigration policies of the Israeli state, as well as the infrastructures of emigration that enabled Jewish DPs to reach Israel were well developed, the subsequent absorption of such a large and diverse population presented problems of its own. Reflecting the findings in ITS, a number of studies have begun to explore some of the difficulties that recent migrants faced once in Israel. Idit Gil notes that many Jewish DPs had acquired professional experience in the camps, and “survivors were noted within three main fields: trade and industry, administration and office work, and the professions [...] yet when they tried to practise their occupations they were not easily hired.”<sup>897</sup> Women, she notes, had an even harder time finding a job, reflecting the marginal status of all women within the labour market. In the 1940s and 1950s, women constituted only 25 to 30 per cent of the Israeli labour force.<sup>898</sup> IRO historian Louise Holborn summarized the problem as follows:

Israel’s open-door policy confronted the young state with an absorption problem of some complexity. The admission of immigrants was not determined by economic needs of financial criteria. All Jews were welcomed, and a heterogeneous throng of migrants from all parts of the world poured into Israel [...] The national authorities of the new state confronted not only the task of welding these diverse elements into one population, but also the task of developing and reclaiming a country which, by European standards, was under-developed. The refugees entering the country after 1948 differed from the trained pioneer settlers, with skills specially adapted to their new homes, who had been admitted under the British mandate; these later refugees were a mass of uprooted people, with little in common apart from faith and hope.<sup>899</sup>

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<sup>895</sup> CM/1, ‘Leib Rosman’, 79664430\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1). This particular file is of especial interest in that it remarks that “Mrs. Rosman is known as an aggressive person, who makes trouble. She is an active member of the Committee of Israel Returnees.” This author has however been unable to find any other reference to such a Committee.

<sup>896</sup> These returnees had few qualms around fighting or ongoing support. Shlomo Gutman’s file for example, contains several letters petitioning for continued aid from the Joint. CM/1, ‘Shlomo Gutman’, 79156754\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>897</sup> Gil, “Between Reception and Self-Perception,” 496.

<sup>898</sup> Ibid., 498.

<sup>899</sup> Holborn, *The International Refugee Organization*, 417.

The awkward arrival of “Returnees,” motivated in large measure by the economic situation in Israel was an unwelcomed phenomenon. By contrast, this author has found no evidence of any comparable return in the American case.

### **Conclusion: The infrastructures of movement**

This chapter has explored key legislative shifts [brief re-cap], as well as a particular collection of organizational architectures that were generative of possibilities for DP migrants. In particular, it has attempted to demonstrate how migratory journey’s to Israel and America after 1948 were necessarily contingent on organisational structures that applied their own pressures on DP itineraries by shaping opportunities for, and sanctioning, specific destinations.

It has asked how the mobility of DP communities was conditioned and pointed to the fact that certain volunteer bodies, as well as the IRO, had greater capacity to resettle large numbers of refugees. These capacities were based not only on legislative change that advanced possibilities, but on community-based resources in the resettlement state and the lobbying and fundraising efforts of specific ethnic groups corresponding to DP communities.

## 4.2 THE HARD CORE “RESIDUE” AND ABSORPTION IN GERMANY

The following sub-section turns to consider a “hard core” of DPs who were absorbed into the German economy after 1949, as well as the so-called “institutional hard-core” of DPs who became the responsibility of German authorities in 1951, when the IRO’s work in Occupied Germany came to its end. It seeks to investigate the degree of control that individuals turned over by the British authorities to the German authorities had over the choices that they made, or that were made for them.

From the perspective of the British authorities, the absorption of DPs in Germany was seen as the penultimate option when no form of repatriation or resettlement seemed either possible or desirable. This did not mean however, that from the perspective of the DPs, staying in Germany was the default option. As the previous chapters have demonstrated, almost all remaining Polish and Jewish DPs could have left Germany for either Poland or Israel. Particularly where repatriation was concerned, DPs largely refused this option either on the basis of their assessment of the economic possibilities (or lack thereof) in Poland or Israel, or a lack of commitment to state ideologies; Communism or Zionism. Against the background of repatriation and open immigration to Israel after 1948, staying in Germany corresponded inevitably to a choice, and entailed an active effort on various levels.

What follows first explores the emergence of a so-called hard core “residue” DP population to be absorbed after 1951 and the closure of IRO-run camps in the Western Zones of occupation. It focuses on the limits of the proposed solution to the problem, as well as the ways in which pressure was applied on DPs—often through rigorous re-interview—to establish themselves in Germany independent of humanitarian aid and welfare. Thus far, few studies have attempted to characterize the tens of thousands of DPs who stayed or attempted to explain their motivations. What were, if any, the migratory strategies of these individuals, and how

were these strategies affected by policy regimes of care on the ground? The subchapter thus shifts to consider some of the reasoned justifications for remaining on the part of DPs, especially in the scandalous case of Jews who preferred the "land of the murderers" to the "Jewish national home," and for whom assuming the choice to remain in Germany was especially difficult.

While, as Carling and Schewel note, "it is a refreshingly simple thought that migration is the combined result of two factors: the aspiration to migrate and the ability to migrate," exploration of non-migration out of the DP camps from a historical perspective, problematizes any simple understandings of both aspiration and ability over *time*.<sup>900</sup> Considerations of the situation of vulnerable family members and the timing of applications and rejections for resettlement were undoubtedly decisive in swelling the numbers of DP hard core. Furthermore, there were those for whom absorption into the German economy was facilitated by varying degrees of establishment. Even in the case of those who continued seeing Germany as a hostile perpetrator state, there was a need for legal interaction with authorities and the social and medical system. Every DP represented a certain degree of insertion into the German economy, conflict-ridden socialization and acculturation. Where personal intimacy with the German population was most pronounced via intermarriage, absorption was often a likelier outcome.

Ultimately, for thousands of DPs, neither repatriation nor emigration proved to be a viable option. The plight of elderly DPs in particular, is highlighted as especially reflective of the limits of both DP agency and refugee humanitarianism in the postwar period. All these factors must be considered in any analysis of those DPs who remained in Germany after 1951, challenging any simplistic conviction that DPs lacking a strategy could become Germans by mere inactivity.

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<sup>900</sup> Jørgen Carling and Kerilyn Schewel, "Revisiting Aspiration and Ability in International Migration," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 44:6 (2018): 945.

## Anticipating a “residue”

The ratio of the young and healthy to the old and  
unable to work gets worse almost by the hour.<sup>901</sup>

Only from 1947 onwards—a full two years into the existence of the DP camp universe—do official British administrative records begin to register predictions and concerns regarding the possibility of large numbers of DPs being both unwilling to repatriate and prevented from emigrating. As with earlier planning for the post-hostilities period in the early 1940s, a British DP administration appeared unable to foresee—and subsequently, prepare for—such a probable outcome for so many displaced. This reality belied less a lack of information concerning the status of individual DPs and their families, or ill-placed optimism concerning any shift in the eligibility criteria of recruitment and resettlement schemes; which might otherwise account for this apparent ill-preparedness. Rather, delayed concern about what to do with the thousands of DPs for whom (re)settling in either their country of origin or a third country of settlement had become impossible, is best explained by an administrative mentality preoccupied by the costs of maintaining a DP population in UNRRA, later IRO-run camps, and less on anticipating the migratory possibilities (or lack thereof) and desires of individuals and families therein.

Indeed, as official British administrative documents make clear; it was frequently left to independent welfare groups advocating for specific national DP communities, to spotlight and advocate for action to prevent the emerge of a hard-core DP “residue” remaining in Germany. In the same vein as earlier campaigns against the Allied policy of forced repatriation in 1945, calls for preventative action was grounded in the language of humanitarian failing on

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<sup>901</sup> As quoted in Anna Dorota Kirchmann, “‘They are Coming for Freedom, not Dollars’: Political Refugees and Transformations of Ethnic Identity within Polish American Community after World War II,” (PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 1997): 150.



the part of Allied administrations. The Council for Baltic Welfare, for instance, in a series of communiqués to the British government, succinctly argued already in 1947, that the various schemes “operating for the time being, are applicable only to a limited number of carefully selected younger and able-bodied displaced persons. Such a policy makes us seriously concerned, for it is resulting in certain facts which, by our opinion, are contrary to the principles of the IRO Constitution and do not coincide with the principles of liberty and freedom laid down in various statements of the prominent leaders of the Western Democracies.”<sup>902</sup>

The Council went on to isolate what it saw as the major ramifications of immigration policies as they affected the DP communities:

- a) A considerable part of the families of the bona fide refugees and displaced persons will be ruined.
- b) A great number of dependants of the employables, who are not allowed to join their maintainers, will be doomed to certain ruin, if not even to death, in the poor-houses of Germany.
- c) The burden of support will fall on the shoulders of the Agencies taking care of the displaced persons or shifted to the Germans responsible as they are for the miseries of these unfortunate human beings.
- d) The individuals with sufficient vitality will be selected and at the remainder will consist only of the aged, sick, incapable and minor individuals.<sup>903</sup>

This summation would prove to be prophetic. Records registering similar complaints and conclusions across the various relief organizations operating in the British Zone shared a common conviction that “genuine refugees and displaced persons have suffered for the very same principles for which the Western Democracies have fought and made so many sacrifices.” Appealing to the Western humanitarian conscience was widely perceived by relief workers as the most effective remedy to the “precarious aspect of the problem,” borne “of the international situation.” “Consequently bona fide refugees and displaced persons deserve better treatment and from the humanitarian point of view have the right to demand the same privileges ascribed

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<sup>902</sup> FO 1052/160 Resettlement of Displaced Persons (DPs): general; vol I, “Letter to Zone resettlement officer from general advisory council Baltic welfare educational and employment organisation,” September 8, 1947.

<sup>903</sup> Ibid.

to every individual living under the auspices and protection of free democratic Governments.”<sup>904</sup>

Pressed both by the increasing concern of welfare agencies, the problem of the probable emergence of a DP “residue” for whom no permanent settlement was likely to have been found by the end of the decade was finally acknowledged by April of 1948 as requiring serious consideration: “Few of the residue will accept repatriation. Progress with resettlement abroad is slow and looks like remaining so.”<sup>905</sup> It was swiftly agreed at this time however, that “HMG [Her Majesty’s Government] has agreed that its policy for dealing with DPs shall be that of the IRO whose interest in this Zone has aimed mainly at repatriation and resettlement abroad.”<sup>906</sup> In short, the British solution was to distance themselves as much as possible from any looming humanitarian issue by effectively casting the IRO as the sole responsible party.

In late April of 1948, the IRO hoped that financial contributions would allow them to continue in being for a further two years, by which time they hoped to have “resolved the DP problem.”<sup>907</sup> Hitherto, both UNRRA and the IRO had regarded repatriation and resettlement abroad as the principal, almost the only, means of “disposing” of DPs from Germany.<sup>908</sup> The emergence of the “residue” question—referred to in IRO correspondence as “the problem of the hard core”—and a subsequent shift in IRO policy was prompted by the same transformation of the political, legal, economic, and social conditions in Germany explored in the first half of the present Chapter. These included in particular monetary reform and end of the black market economy in June of 1948, the resultant Berlin Blockade only a few days later, the decision to form a West German state in July 1948 and the ongoing process of integrating 12 million German refugees (the disrupting potential of which much worried the Allies). An

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<sup>904</sup> Ibid. This folder contains examples from different Volunteer Societies in the British Zone, including those representing Polish and Jewish Displaced communities.

<sup>905</sup> FO 1052 577 Age and Gender Breakdowns, “Control Commission for Germany,” April 20, 1948.

<sup>906</sup> Ibid.

<sup>907</sup> Ibid.

<sup>908</sup> British administrative reports are laden with examples of such cynical language.

emerging focus on the prospective mass release of DPs into German society was thus part of a context of wider measures aimed at keeping refugee pressure on German society below the threshold where it would have subverted the postwar system.

CCG and IRO personnel, committed to the goal of reducing the “residue”—and subsequent cost of care—were able to establish a relatively clear mutual agenda by the end of the year. “The most useful task, the main task, for this period [the report speaks specifically of the latter half of 1948 and into 1949] should be to direct all efforts to a policy of permanent resettlement in Germany, at work and self-supporting, for as many as possible of the residue.” This main task involved—(a) protection of the their rights as agreed with IRO, (b) finding work, and directing them to it; (c) providing them with accommodation, in civilian houses or in workers’ settlements or camps, as rent-paying self-providing workers and removing working DPs and their families into them; ((d) removing DPs not able to work (possibly as many as 40,000—this figure does not include workers’ dependents who will, of course, live with and be provided for by the workers concerned), to “institution” camps and providing for their maintenance and protection.”<sup>909</sup>

Most importantly, it was stressed that that the British DP Division should aim at entirely “reducing its liabilities” through 1948/49, handing over responsibilities for the tasks above as follows to volunteer societies or German authorities, with IRO supervising the execution of the agreed policy. “It cannot be sound,” the British position was clear, “to envisage an indefinite drift [of IRO operations] under present conditions.”<sup>910</sup> It was thus recommended as early of April, 1948, that continued support of IRO for a policy aimed at removing from care and maintenance into work in Germany as many possible “residual” DPs and the re-direction of all IRO efforts in the Zone increasingly towards resettlement in Germany as the most practicable

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<sup>909</sup> FO 1052 577 Age and Gender Breakdowns, “Control Commission for Germany,” April 20, 1948.

<sup>910</sup> Ibid.

solution in the near future for the majority of the DPs. Any acceptance in DP camps of further admission was to halt immediately, and Regional Commissioners should be instructed to afford every support to the task of removing DPs and their families into workers' settlements or "institution" camps, as was appropriate. The DPs, the British administration determined, would henceforth have "to face the fact that most of them have to seek their living in Germany and must now cease any reluctance to work with, or under, Germans."<sup>911</sup>

In its capacity as the official spearhead of the new policy of "Encouragement of reestablishment of refugees," IRO officers adopted a policy of "intensifying" its "counselling program." The Organization was actively taking steps to arrange for its closure in 1950, and any counselling assistance hitherto provided was thus to be limited by both time and funds: "It is necessary that all refugees should be urged by intensive counselling, to recognise these facts and to decide, without further delay, that course of action they will now take."<sup>912</sup> So-called "intensive counselling" was to present only three alternatives—repatriation, resettlement, or remaining in the local economy—with the prime objective of stressing that the Organization had no desire to "avoid delay in making and implementing plans for the settlement—by repatriation or in the local economy—of refugees who do not wish or are unable to be resettled."<sup>913</sup> All DPs were henceforth to be divided into one of the three "choices."

Inevitably, a policy shift had a determinable impact across ethno-national groups. As the largest DP community in the Zone, DP Poles were explicitly to be the major targets of the IRO's new policy of "intensive counselling." Internal IRO memorandums from mid-June 1949 indicate a growing sense of urgency with respect to the position of the Polish Displaced in the British Zone of Germany. One memorandum from late June of 1949 notes that any Poles now wanting to return to Poland are concerningly small minority, "the moral value of which would

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<sup>911</sup> Ibid.

<sup>912</sup> FO 1052/123 Plans for Resolving DP Operations, "Encouragement of Re-establishment of Refugees."

<sup>913</sup> Ibid., "Memo 21<sup>st</sup> June 1949: Position of the Polish Displaced in the British Zone."

be rather low.” With respect to resettlement efforts, it was acknowledged “without hesitation that Polish DPs are fully aware of the fact that the essential thing is to leave Germany, and it should happen as soon as possible.” In the camps, all efforts were to aim at putting these Poles to work in Germany. That failing, the IRO would distance itself by relying on smaller-scale volunteer organizations to step in:

It will be natural that at the liquidation of IRO activities and of recruiting commissions, the people left in Germany will represent themselves—from the point of view of the recruiting countries—the worst element, being well advanced in age, having poor health conditions and, first of all, having big families with children. [...] we may take it theoretically that at the time of termination of IRO activities some 100,000 Displaced Persons, this including proportionately, 40,000 Poles will still be found in the Zone. [...] the people left behind would be those with the worst chances to become self-dependant, and would, thus, require help from charity-organisations.<sup>914</sup>

Poles were thus conceived of as constitutive of the “worst elements” of the hard-core and requiring significant IRO pressure or failing this, to become the burden of charity organisations. Volunteer Societies (in particular the members of the Council of British Societies for Relief Abroad, known as COBSRA),<sup>915</sup> who have done welfare work in the DP camps for 5 years, viewed the prospects ahead of these “hard core” DPs with much trepidation. Official records contain several examples of panicked and even confrontational appeals from welfare workers on the ground, including those representing the British Government. One fraught letter, from an A.T. Aspinall of the CCG concerning the number of volunteer societies that the IRO wanted to keep on after 1950, at 14, complained that this figure was “ridiculous.”<sup>916</sup>

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<sup>914</sup> Ibid. As these loose estimates indicate, there was a systematic failure to precisely predict the size and general make-up of the “residue,” with very broad figures given: a problem which subsequently spills into the secondary source literature, in which the overall numbers of a “DP hardcore” to be absorbed differ widely.

<sup>915</sup> The Council of British Societies for Relief Abroad (COBSRA) was founded in August of 1942 as an umbrella organisation tasked with coordinating the activities of 40 British volunteer organizations, of which 11 sent teams to the DP camps of the Zone. The number of teams increased immediately after the cessation of armed conflict and reached a peak in mid-1946 with some 600 relief workers. Johannes-Dieter Steinert, ‘British Humanitarian Assistance: Wartime Planning and Postwar Realities’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 43, no. 3 (2008): 423.

<sup>916</sup> FO 1052/130 Plans for Resolving DP Operation: Voluntary Organisations, ‘Letter from A.T. Aspinall (Personnel and Admin)’ December, 1949.

The cause of most concern centred around issues of the legal status of DPs post-handover to German authorities. Who would represent the interests of DPs once the IRO closed its camps? How were specific national groups with the camps to be supported during and after absorption? Most importantly, what protections were to be established as a bulwark against possible discrimination? While a decision had been taken by the IRO General Council to continue operations in Western Germany on a modified scale until 31<sup>st</sup> March 1951, IROs activities during this extended period were exclusively devoted to the work of resettling DPs in Germany. All those Displaced Persons who were not in the process of resettlement by June 30, 1950 would become the responsibility, both administratively and financially, of the Federal Government: “it is considered that a figure of between 50,000 and 60,000 will be handed over.” These were divided in two categories, Institutional cases and non-institutional cases.<sup>917</sup> Only on April 25, 1951 however was secure legal status granted to DPs remaining on German soil in an ensuing “law of the legal status of homeless foreigners” [Gesetz über die Rechtsstellung heimatloser Ausländer].<sup>918</sup> While the terminology was inherently slanderous (in casting DPs as “homeless foreigners,” rather than acknowledging the conditions of their migrations), the new law enshrined approximate equality before the law.<sup>919</sup> Those who remaining in West Germany were thereafter to be considered legally equalled to German populations, save for voting rights, and full citizenship could be granted after a five year period.<sup>920</sup>

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<sup>917</sup> FO 1052/162 Liaison Officers, ‘Protocol Governing the Relations Between IRO and the German Authorities in the British Zone of Germany’. In March 1950, a discussion took place on the interpretation which should be placed on the words “in the process of resettlement” and some delegations were in favour of including all the Displaced Persons with limited opportunities for resettlement as being “in the process of resettlement”. The UK Delegation was not in favour of this proposal, and it was finally agreed that in the British Zone of Western Germany at least the British should carry on with our original plan of handing over all “hard core” DPs to the Federal Government on or before 30<sup>th</sup> June 1950.

<sup>918</sup> On this particular piece of legislation see Wolfgang Jacobmeyer, *Vom Zwangsarbeiter zum Heimatlosen Ausländer. Die Displaced Persons in Westdeutschland 1945–1951* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1985), 226–30.

<sup>919</sup> Jan-Hinnerk Antons, “Displaced Persons in Postwar Germany: Parallel Societies in a Hostile Environment,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 49:1 (2014): 108.

<sup>920</sup> Wyman, *DPs*, 204.

New legislation notwithstanding, DPs were effectively required to fend for themselves as individuals against any potentially prejudicial or hostile German administration. It was not immediately clear that the German Government would honour DP status and secure DPs the same rights that German citizens enjoyed.<sup>921</sup> The practical realisation of any such guarantees was to be left completely in the hands of lower administrative organs, with no overarching body ensuring representation of the DP cause. On the other hand, most of the remaining DPs themselves, particularly the ones going to live in hospitals and “Old Age Camps,” were unwilling or unable to defend their own legal interests and otherwise; owing to their state of health, lack of sufficient knowledge of a foreign language (German and English) and sometimes owing to their state of mind. In short, the hard-core were, by virtue of being those who remained in the camps, especially vulnerable to being unable to insist on their rights as guaranteed to the DP by the German Government.

In case of need, DPs would have to pursue their own cases to a higher official of the German Administration, or try and reach a representative of the British Office for DPs, of which there were to be only 9 such representatives remaining in the whole Zone.<sup>922</sup> As to general problems which might arise, there was no one explicitly authorised to deal with them. While the British were willing to consider “recognition” of the formation of a Polish Advisory committee, comprised of all Poles in Western Germany (and which, if registered in accordance with German law, should care for and represent Polish interest in regard to British and German authorities), it was to be understood that no financial commitments on behalf of the British or German Authorities would be involved.<sup>923</sup> In other words, while the British DP administration was willing to pay lip service to the ongoing need for the work of voluntary societies as a

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<sup>921</sup> FO 1052/130 Plans for Resolving DP Operation: Voluntary Organisations, ‘British Council for Refugees’, June 1950.

<sup>922</sup> Ibid. “A British Resident, on the authority of a “Kreis” will have a difficult task in dealing with such cases, in spite of best intentions, as he will have other important matter to deal with and his personnel will consist of Germans only.”

<sup>923</sup> Ibid.

critical buffer between DPs and any potential German hostility, the nature of their ongoing assistance and any budgetary requirements were to be worked out without the involvement of the British government: “It is a depressing truth that not too much good will towards the weaker brethren at present exists in Germany, except amongst the devoted minority of the members of the Volunteer Organisations. Added to this, the ‘hard core’ is, in the main, composed of not only physically, but also spiritually and mentally unattractive people who will take little or no trouble to help either themselves or their fellows. Therefore, although the question is one for the Land governments, it is felt that the Voluntary Societies should be called in to assist.”<sup>924</sup>

Although the last DP camp officially remained open until 1957, the “DP episode” came to its end in 1951 with the absorption of some 140,000 DPs into Western Germany, including somewhere between 12,000-15,000 DP Jews.<sup>925</sup> Why did so many end up staying? To what extent may absorption be said to be a choice? How is the non-migration of so many to be explained?

### **Reasoned justifications for remaining**

It is not surprising that prospective migrants—and especially refugees—face multiple levels and varying degrees of obstacles in the form of cost, danger, and legality, to name but a few. What consideration of the “hard core” spotlights so well, is the fact that prospective migrant journeys are not always actualized, regardless of the desires and commitments of individuals and family. While unfulfilled, these migratory aspirations nonetheless had important impact and their effects on the persons and regimes concerned must be engaged with. As explored above, a macro-level context that saw the governmental and international humanitarian relief policy align in defining the desirable migrant overwhelmingly as the able-bodied labourer,

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<sup>924</sup> FO 1052/130 Plans for resolving DP operation: voluntary organisations, “Minutes of Meeting between the DP Division, IRO,” March 30, 1950.

<sup>925</sup> Cohen, *In War's Wake*, 150; Jacques Vernant, *The Refugee in the Post-war World* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1953), 170; Brenner, *After the Holocaust*, 41–42.



disproportionately (pre)conditioned the ability of individuals and families in the DP camps to migrate. The previous chapters of this study have highlighted the dialectics of the postwar period: it was precisely because labour recruitment singled out individual migrants for emigration that a large residue remained in Germany without the solidarity of family members. Nonetheless, DPs did have the possibility to migrate from Germany to at least one other destination; though this was often not the desired destination nor the desired conditions. It is thus important to continue to explore the balance struck between external pressures and individual priorities in an attempt to identify patterns and draw conclusions as to how and why such a sizeable group of “hard-core” DPs remained permanently in Germany.

As Atina Grossman notes, “by late 1948, about 30,000 Jewish DPs remained in Germany; by 1953 perhaps half that number,”<sup>926</sup> including some “returnees” from Israel.<sup>927</sup> While many were too ill to move outside the confines of the DP camp, others stubbornly refused both resettlement and absorption, to the chagrin of Allied administrations, volunteer societies as well as the German authorities, to whom these “homeless foreigners” eventually became responsible.<sup>928</sup> The records of the Rose Henriques archive (RHA) indicate a number of confrontations between Jewish DPs and Jewish relief agencies struggling to respond to—and ultimately dislodge—camp inhabitants refusing to leave or refusing to do so until certain conditions had been met. As noted in the previous subchapter, remaining in Germany was not considered a default option for DP by Jewish aid organizations.<sup>929</sup> However, a number of factors by 1950 had emerged that served to specifically hold some Jewish—as opposed to Polish—DPs in place. By and large, these factors pertained to legal questions and anomalies in

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<sup>926</sup> Atina Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 260.

<sup>927</sup> Treated in the first half of the present chapter.

<sup>928</sup> Michael Brenner, ed., *A History of Jews in Germany since 1945: Politics, Culture, and Society* (Indiana University Press, 2018), 107.

<sup>929</sup> As Grossmann explains: “Those Jewish DPs who remained in or returned to Germany after the state of Israel opened its doors to all refugee Jews found little sympathy from the same Jewish relief groups that had supported them in the early postwar years.” Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies*, 262.

Germany that affected Jews, and disproportionally German Jews therein, of which the most prominent were the following: blocked property and external assets (particularly furniture and housing); payment of pensions; restitution of property and; taxation.<sup>930</sup>

Concern around private property and especially, securing exemption from policy targeting German populations, features as a prominent factor affecting the migration aspirations of Jewish DPs refusing to leave after 1945. Some Jewish survivors, between 1933 and 1941 had a chance to send money or goods abroad but had not the chance to leave Germany themselves. Mrs Meyer was one such example; and stubbornly refused to emigrate without confirmation that the United Nations would not take any personal belongings as reparations. Mrs Mayer had been informed by the local Reichsbank that she should register her property, which was being stored in Switzerland: she writes to the JRU, “I, as Jewess and victim of National Socialist persecution, under no circumstances wish to be affected by any such regulation. I beg you to take the necessary steps on behalf and in the interests of my affairs to protect my property from any such confiscation. My decision to immigrate from Germany sooner or later has remained unaltered. I should like to have the possibility at some later date of transferring the property which has been saved for me in Switzerland, to my country of emigration.”<sup>931</sup>

Not only was emigration conditional for some, but so too was the alternative of absorption. The restitution of property was significant to those for whom remaining in Germany was otherwise seen as a viable option. However, Allied military governments had, in the immediate postwar years, shown little interest in restoring property which had changed hands in consequence of actions classified as “internal looting,” in which a non-Jew had acquired the property of a (in most cases, German) Jew. As a result, houses belonging to Jews

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<sup>930</sup> RHA, “Extract Letter Doctor Weis,” June 4, 1946, *Colonel Solomon*, 9.

<sup>931</sup> Ibid.

had been confiscated but not returned. As the petition of one Jewish DP—returning after four years from concentration camps, including Auschwitz—to have her house in Bonn returned to her highlights, Jews were (rightfully) forcefully resistant to the idea that postwar policy legitimate their exploitation; in this instance, the untenable possibility that they be required to become paying lodgers in their own homes.<sup>932</sup> As Atina Grossman describes, the possibility (and by 1952, promise) of financial compensation effectively resulted in some DPs shelving plans to migrate, with applications requiring DPs to be present in Germany.<sup>933</sup> Others, she notes, were frustratingly fickle: “one man, heedless of how difficult it was to garner an immigration visa, even announced that he had not yet decided whether to grace the United States with his presence: ‘I’m not making any other plans until I see whether Stevenson is elected.’”<sup>934</sup>

### **Adaptive preferences over time**

While many of these factors were particular to the Jewish DP community and marginal cases therein, the records of the ITS suggest that among the hard core, the majority expressed an interest in, or actively applied for at least one or more of the resettlement and recruitment schemes available. Carling’s (2002) concept of “involuntary immobility”<sup>935</sup> defines migration “aspiration” as “simply as a conviction that migration is preferable to non-migration.”<sup>936</sup> While it appears that most of the hard core exhibited clear intentions and *plans* to migrate (which is to say, stated preferences translating into observable behaviour, including preparations in the form of visa applications), it would be misleading to assume that clear-cut general decisions about migration as such, held true over time. Many DPs stayed in the camps while thinking

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<sup>932</sup> RHA, “Letter Miss Mary Weis,” March 29, 1946, *Colonel Solomon*, 27.

<sup>933</sup> Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies*, 262.

<sup>934</sup> *Ibid.*, 261.

<sup>935</sup> Jørgen Carling, “Migration in the Age of Involuntary Immobility: Theoretical Reflections and Cape Verdean Experiences,” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 28:1 (2002): 5–42.

<sup>936</sup> Carling and Schewel, “Revisiting Aspiration and Ability,” 946.

and talking constantly about emigration; while others changed their minds entirely, or hesitated. It is thus significant to examine the *transient nature of aspiration*. While ITS evidences both a fairly consistent desire to emigrate, by 1950, certainly, the desire to leave Germany has begun to wear thin for larger numbers of DPs as pressure (in the form of eminent camp closures) mounted to “absorb.” Migration aspirations were thus neither wholly or consistently present or absent, but often in flux.

Once again, ITS records indicate that family factors were as decisive in determining absorption as resettlement. While determining precisely how representative the case of families preferring to stay together in Germany is challenging, the fact that one or more family members was unable to emigrate undoubtedly bolstered the overall number of those remaining in the camps into the 1950s. In her 2016 article, “Children Left Behind,” historian Ruth Balint has broken important ground by shedding light on the experiences of DP families with disabled children, who were forced either to institutionalize their child and effectively tear apart the family unit in order to migrate, or else face an unappealing future in Germany, intact.<sup>937</sup> While Balint focuses on those cases in which families opted for separation (and the institutional pressures that supported this option), most prioritized family unity. Timing was often decisive. When it came to emigration to America following the passing of the 1950 Amended DP Act, rejections (the most common of which were on the grounds of health and fitness to work) often came well into 1951. ITS files show that late diagnoses such as tuberculosis (TB) were both common and guaranteed to result in disqualification from emigration to the States. Polish DP Franciszek Walencik was found to have TB “in both apex fields.” As a result, he was immediately rejected by the US Public Health Service. Although subsequently hoping to

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<sup>937</sup> Balint rightly argues that a focus on those “left behind” represents an important site of scholarship, at the intersection between refugees, eugenics and immigration. The fate of families “burdened” by size or illness under an emergent postwar relief regime illustrates important points of both change and continuity after 1945. Ruth Balint, “Children Left Behind: Family, Refugees and Immigration in Postwar Europe,” *History Workshop Journal* 82:1 (2016): 151-172.

emigrate and receive treatment in Switzerland, Sweden or Norway, the diagnosis effectively barred Franciszek from all resettlement opportunities, along with his wife and 3 young children, Tadeusz, Ryszard and Krystyn, born '46, '47, '49 respectively.<sup>938</sup> The Walencik family highlight an important gendered dimension. ITS files indicate that where the male breadwinner is deemed “unfit” for resettlement, then absorption becomes almost always inevitable for the entire family unit. This author has found no instances of any explicit or implicit pressure on families to leave a *male* figurehead behind, nor instances in which the DP family opt to do so. This was not the case for elderly relatives, or ill women and children.

The Walencik family are representative of a common rash of diagnoses that inhibited the movement of DP families across the Zone. If the prognosis was found to be poor, even the slightest hopes of emigration post-recovery were swiftly dashed. Wasyl Mykytyn was diagnosed with pulmonary, spinal and mesenteric gland tuberculosis. His clinical state was reported as “unstable: (lung) sputum positive. [...] possibility of amyloid disease and lung lesion is active.” With treatment involving chemotherapy for treatment of fistulae and lung lesion, Wasyl, his wife and his infant daughter had virtually no hope of emigration.<sup>939</sup> Tellingly, prognoses were deemed pessimistic where the individual was unable to work; even if otherwise relatively healthy. Henryk Plaskocinski for instance, had both lower legs amputated and was thus unfit for a great deal of manual labour. While his wife and three children (all born after 1945) were declared healthy and willing to accept “any country” that would have them, the family were unable to find any resettlement opportunities.<sup>940</sup> Irene Dorflauer, a Polish-Jewish widow from Krakow, was three years ill post-liberation. She was eventually rejected by the US medical committee in 1950 and was sent to the US Zone to be settled locally there.<sup>941</sup>

<sup>938</sup> CM/1, ‘Franciszek Walencik’, 7989791\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>939</sup> CM/1, ‘Wasyl Mykytyn’, 79512050\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>940</sup> CM/1, ‘Henryk Plaskocinski’, 79600244\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>941</sup> CM/1, ‘Irene Dorflauer’, 79040852\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

Negative descriptions of DPs mental health similarly proved damning and counted against DP applicants. Despite large portions of individual CM/1 files being dedicated to purportedly strictly medical analysis, the aggressive hostility for DPs with physical or mental illness at the policy level, frequently bled into the language of personal files. Files of so-called “mental” cases (as the mentally ill were frequently referred to) mirrored the interests of labour recruitment. One can find numerous examples across CM/1 forms of explicitly unsavoury descriptions of DPs’ mental state and conditions. Josef Orzechowski was but one of many characterized at interview as “a mental case.”<sup>942</sup> These blunt analyses were not reserved solely for those with diagnosable illnesses, but general assessments of mental faculties as well. The widowed Krisus Blumbergs was referred to simply as “mostly dumb.”<sup>943</sup> Klemens Soc’s file goes into detail concerning his perceived lack of intellect.<sup>944</sup>

What one can confidently deduce from the ITS files, is that the interaction between aspiration and ability grew more challenging as time wore on. Zygmunt Kowalczyk’s file is representative of a pattern found across the files of the non-institutional hard core. Married to a fellow DP after 1945, the couple had two children, Halina and Janina in a Polish DP camp in the British Zone. Anxious to leave Germany and encouraged by relaxed American immigration law, the family apply for visas for the States. The process, however, was time-consuming. Like thousands of others, it appears the family gave up on the process entirely, the final document in their file noting that they have “resigned from emigration.”<sup>945</sup> Resignation, then, was indeed the appropriate term, as the family—after over 5 years of camp life—were by then fully resigned to a future in Germany.

Any one DP family unit, then, could be—and often was—comprised of what could be described as “voluntary” and “non-voluntary” members of the hard core to be absorbed. As a

<sup>942</sup> CM/1, ‘Josef Orzechowski’, 79551767\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>943</sup> CM/1, ‘Krisus Blumbergs’, 78945274\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>944</sup> CM/1, ‘Klemens Soc’, 79747720\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>945</sup> CM/1, ‘Zygmunt Kowalczyk’, 79328740\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1). This phrasing was common in such cases.

result, migratory aspiration was not simply a form of agency, nor migratory ability reduceable to matters of structural constraints and opportunities alone. Both aspiration and ability were shaped by the interplay of structure and agency, over time.<sup>946</sup> In considering the “choice” to remain in Germany it is important to challenge easy conclusions that overdetermine individualism or contextual determinism. Disentangling individual migratory aspirations from those of a collective household or family unit complicates the ways in which preferences played out both in the postwar period and within migration studies more generally.

### **Degrees of establishment and personal intimacy vis-à-vis Germany**

Carling and Schewel argue that “adaptive migration preferences”—over a period of time—“represent a valuable psychological defence mechanism. [...] If adaptive preference shift people from a situation of involuntary immobility to one of acquiescent immobility, their subjective well-being might increase. Moreover, they might be more inclined to invest in local futures.”<sup>947</sup> Indeed, while most DPs who “opted” to remain in Germany did so as a result of having been deterred by, or explicitly excluded from international immigration models that greatly constrained any migration aspirations, the decision to remain was also aspirational for many. Determining whether subsequent integration in Germany leaving the DP camps was centred on the lure of possibilities in Germany or on disillusionment concerning their ability to ever move otherwise, is difficult. In all likelihood however a mixture of both these factors was at play.

Jan-Hinnerk Antons has recently argued that an implicit affirmation of social segregation between DPs and Germans was based on the unspoken consensus that DPs would not remain in Germany indefinitely. Against this background, he claims, “overly intimate

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<sup>946</sup> Carling and Schewel, “Revisiting Aspiration and Ability,” 9959.

<sup>947</sup> Ibid.

contact with the German population would have only created unnecessary ties.”<sup>948</sup> Furthermore, local German populations were, according to Antons, dismissive of DPs based on much the same principles espoused by the National Socialist ideology that had brought them to Germany in the first place. “Foreigners,” he claims, “were still perceived as enemies and war opponents and therefore fraternizing with them was considered an act equivalent to treason,” and existing stereotypes of the DPs evoked by public officials continued to invoke antagonisms between the two communities.<sup>949</sup> From the German perspective, the idea of a parallel DP universe in which DPs were segregated from Germans was “absolutely preferred to integration or even assimilation,” and “any measures of care taken for the ‘homeless foreigners’, were primarily the result of prevailing international attention.”<sup>950</sup>

The idea of parallel societies in postwar Germany (the DP and the German) is however challenged in large measure by the fact of multiple and varied connections between the two communities over time; evidenced particularly well in the files of the so-called “hard core.” Intermarriage was an obvious site of sustained contact and appears to have changed perspectives considerably. Waław Chomiczewski married a German woman, Charlotte Groth, shortly after liberation. While Charlotte and the couple’s young daughter, Marita (born in 1947) were living in Lubeck “on the German economy,” Waław himself was still residing in various DP camps in the hope of securing a viable emigration opportunity and in the meantime, securing official classification as both an agricultural labourer and shoemaker by the IRO. Having been transferred to a number of different camps over several years, he was finally

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<sup>948</sup> Antons, “Displaced Persons in Postwar Germany,” 102.

<sup>949</sup> As well as the ongoing equation of DPs with enemies, Antons argues that the presence of DPs was a constant and unpleasant reminder of German war guilt, making it harder for German populations to conceive of themselves as victims of the postwar period, particularly as pertaining to perceptions of comparative material disadvantages. *Ibid.*, 104ff.

<sup>950</sup> *Ibid.*, 107, 109. Antons argues that a background of international “interest” in the fates of a DP hard core took the form of “reminding” (with no exposition of the concrete forms such reminders took) local decision-makers that ill-treatment of DPs would “threaten Germany’s reputation in the world.” He concludes: “in the absence of a sense of guilt, moral or humanitarian considerations rarely motivated German public authorities to care for victims of the Nazis.”



rejected for emigration for Brazil on medical grounds, after which he promptly withdrew his DP status to join his family and stay permanently in Germany.<sup>951</sup>

CM/1 files indicate that the IRO had interest in determining just how “established” DPs or their family members/dependants were (or became) on the German economy either prior to their departure from the DP camps nor following it. While intermarriage was often recorded as being “established,” individuals both being married and having some claim to property in Germany were considered “firmly established.” Czesław Czerniawski German-born wife and son (born in 1949) were not entitled to IRO rations or accommodation. His file notes however that Czesław is already “Firmly established, his German born wife possesses property.”<sup>952</sup> While the family had been for several years committed to leaving Germany and had gone so far as to secure visas to America, the fact that Czesław’s wife had been able to acquire a flat in Germany with the additional promise of being given assistance to full furnish it tipped the balance in favour of remaining. The family, the file states, “will thus leave the camp and become integrated in Germany,” indicating that the promise of housing and help was sufficient to turn the tide.<sup>953</sup>

### **“Elderly” DPs**

The example of the Czerniawski family file above hints at yet another important factor that seemed decisive for many of the hard core, who preferred to remain where some form of aid was promised to them. The elderly members of the hard core included those who required no institutional long-term care (but whom had been denied the possibility of emigration due to their age) as well as those requiring permanent institutionalisation. Thus far, very little has been written about the fates of elderly DPs. Dan Stone’s recent article on the relief given elderly

<sup>951</sup> CM/1, ‘Wacław Chomiczewski’, 78995980\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>952</sup> CM/1, ‘Czesław Czerniawski’, 79012693\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>953</sup> CM/1, ‘Stanisław Turczynowicz’, 79862198\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

Holocaust survivors is one of the few systematic treatments the subject has received. Stone's piece focuses predominantly on elderly Jewish survivors in Germany, whose numbers were difficult to determine but were, for obvious reasons, only a tiny percentage of the overall Jewish DP population. Stone defines "elderly" as persons over the age of 55 years; and while the piece identifies some of the difficulties that families had in making decisions about elderly relatives, it does not consider the emigration strategies of the elderly DPs themselves. Rather, Stone argues for the absence of migratory aspiration among this group, claiming that "where the elderly are concerned, what is most striking is the almost total absence of any hope for the future. Youngsters could not forget what had happened to them, but they had the possibility of starting a new life. The elderly (of course with exceptions) were focused on what and — primarily—whom they had lost, and they were devastated by the experience of the war and the Holocaust, with little hope for beginning life anew."<sup>954</sup> Stone declares further that figuring out what was to be done with elderly relatives was a "difficult process," and that "the contrast with ill and traumatized children is stark."<sup>955</sup>

Both of these claims, that elderly DPs were distinguished somehow by a lack of hope for the future and were subject somehow to less concern than vulnerable children, are contestable to some degree. Indeed, several of Stone's own examples betray a keen interest in the future on the part of elderly Holocaust survivors. In considering one such elderly DP, Ida Bär, Stone describes how she:

[...] asserted her decision to remain in Germany temporarily (vorläufig), until her claim for reparations had come through, suggesting a perhaps surprising degree of optimism. In 1951 Bär was still in Frankfurt and living in the Jewish old age home on Gagerstraße. Although her case record indicated that she was in reasonable health for an eighty-two-year old, Bär's wish to emigrate probably did not materialize: "care in aged home for life" were the bureaucratic words that seem to have spelled out her future.<sup>956</sup>

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<sup>954</sup> "Somehow the Pathetic Dumb Suffering of These Elderly People Moves Me More Than Anything": Caring for Elderly Holocaust Survivors in the Immediate Postwar Years," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 32:3 (2018): 389.

<sup>955</sup> *Ibid.*, 387.

<sup>956</sup> *Ibid.*, 391.

In fact, ITS records indicate that Ida's optimism with respect to emigration was shared by many elderly DPs in the postwar period.

Most survivors of the Third Reich's slave labour and concentration camps were—for obvious reasons—the young. The percentage of those over the age of 55 however, swelled with the influx of infiltrates after 1945. ITS records indicate that it was not uncommon for “elderly” DPs, regardless of physical fitness, to be de facto classified as “institutional hard core” cases, solely on the basis of age. This classification, however, did not mean that the individuals themselves conceived of themselves as such. Maria and Stanisław Broda's “institutional hard-core” file includes a first section on medical data. Their collective diagnoses according to the forms was simply “over 60 years of age.” Their clinical state, their form continues, describes Maria as a “Healthy active woman, no recent illnesses. No further treatment needed.” and Stanisław a healthy man. The prognosis was nonetheless noted simply: “as for age.” While the file confirms that being over 60 years of age was considered reason enough to be registered as institutional cases, the remainder of their collective CM/1 forms illustrates the couple's interest in strategizing a hopeful future beyond Germany; prioritizing much the same factors that were common across communities and households of the DP camps. They considered joining their son, Czesław, who had emigrated to Buenos Aires in Argentina. Unfortunately (and seemingly, decisively) Czesław appears to have been unable to promise financial assistance to the couple and appears to have raised concerns that the climate in Argentina would anyway not suit them.<sup>957</sup>

Both individuals indicated a strong desire to emigrate abroad and were nominally eligible to apply to at least some resettlement schemes or repatriation to Poland.<sup>958</sup> Nor were

<sup>957</sup> CM/1, ‘Stanisław Broda’, 78967074\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>958</sup> As Wyman notes, international sympathy for the plight of the elderly and disabled did result in some (albeit limited) efforts to ease restrictions; “Norway took in 50 totally blind DPs ; Belgium opened its doors to 237 aged refugees ; 480 handicapped DPs went to the United States ; and Sweden set up a program to receive several

such aims and possibilities unique to Polish DPs. To the contrary, the files of elderly Jewish DPs expressed similar desires to leave Germany and were arguably least likely to remain either through inactivity nor strict lack of alternatives (given extant Israeli policy, which did not discriminate on the basis of age). In several cases, the only obstacle to emigration to Israel/Palestine was an individual considering themselves too feeble for the journey and task of resettlement. Moses Lewenkron, a Polish Jew born either in 1884 or 1890 (the records in this case conflict), his wife Mali and son Solomon, born in 1933, all clearly state a desire to emigrate to Palestine.<sup>959</sup> Moses became ill however and had been, since August 1947, in hospital with his wife and child in the nearby Belsen DP camp. With Moses unable to travel, the family were moved to Föhrenwald, in Bavaria, where Moses was able to receive permanent care.<sup>960</sup>

As for Stone's second claim, that families were not pressured to leave ill children in the same way that they might have considered leaving an elderly relative, any large-scale comparative lies beyond the scope of this thesis. Wyman for example, appears to affirm a contrary picture of family separation in which elderly relatives were more likely to be left in Germany than young offspring: "as assurances came in requiring one or two young people but no other family members. A son would go to England, a daughter to Australia, and the parents would remain behind. A cartoon on a DP camp bulletin board showed a couple standing with three young children before the resettlement notices, then looking sadly down on their offspring and commenting, 'If they were kittens, we could drown them.'"<sup>961</sup> Based on the ITS files

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hundred tubercular cases and their families." Wyman, *DPs: Europe's Displaced Persons*, 203. Certainly, files of those over the age of 70 were incredibly few, especially for Jewish DPs. Where one can find such cases, it was rare for migratory preferences to have been discussed. For example, the eldest DP this author has located, Jewish DP Bernhardine Sussmann was born in 1867 and declared ineligible for resettlement services presumably because of old age. CM/1, 'Bernhardine Sussmann', 79801615\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>959</sup> The family was supported by the Joint for 2 and a half years. Moses was from 1939 until 1941 in the ghetto in Lemberg. Was sent to KZ Auschwitz until end of the way. After liberation he went to Stettin for about 5 to 6 months, then came to Germany because of his objection to the regime in Poland and because he wanted to go to Palestine.

<sup>960</sup> CM/1, 'Moses Lewenkron', 79404871\_0\_1 (3.1.1.1).

<sup>961</sup> Wyman, *DPs: Europe's Displaced Persons*, 203.

highlighted in this study, it would be more reasonable to conclude that rather than being in “stark contrast,” institutional hard core cases (constitutive of both the elderly and chronically ill) were very similar in important respects.

Most significantly, both groups reveal once again the ongoing tension between supposedly new practices of relief and old practices of immigration. Age and medical screening, from the humanitarian perspective, was in place to establish those most vulnerable and in need of care. From the immigration perspective however, the same screening identified those bodies least valuable as prospective citizens; those representing the heaviest economic burden. While IRO relief units were nominally committed to policies that prioritized family reunification, child search and the renationalization of migrants; they were equally committed to resettlement within restrictive national immigration policies that favoured the single, the young and the able-bodied. “Relief,” then, in many cases resulted in the adoption of the language and mentality of the resettlement states on offer. Donning the lens of the immigration official, relief workers consciously began the process of separating DPs into two groups; the “fit” body and the “unfit” body. It was these same categories that were more determinant of who would ultimately leave Germany than any other and reinforced practices of immigration designed to separate the “valuable” migrant from the pack, a practice which quickly became central to the entire refugee regime. Unsurprisingly, the “hard core,” the elderly, the disabled and the ill, were the least valuable on this model.

### **Conclusion: “And so it was over”<sup>962</sup>**

While one could reasonably expect that upon limiting the recruitment schemes to able-bodied individuals, the British administration would have developed a semblance of a plan concerning what was to become of the people they discarded, such a plan never fully emerged. Rather, the

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<sup>962</sup> Wyman, *DPs: Europe's Displaced Persons*, 202.

“Final Stage of the DP Problem,” as it was administratively dubbed by 1948, clearly evidences that the British hoped to distance themselves of responsibility for a remaining “residue” of DPs, whom they hoped could be successfully abandoned to the social institutions of a future independent Germany and otherwise cared for by any Volunteer Societies who opted to maintain a presence in the country. Any concerted attempt to pre-empt the problem of an eventual hard core of remaining DPs was thus characterized by focus on prioritizing ways in the IRO could be mobilized to lowering numbers in the DP camps as much as possible, largely by refocused its energies on putting as many of the hard core to work within a changing German postwar economy and to definitively classify camp inhabitants as would-be repatriates, resettlers or members of a hard core to be “absorbed” upon the cessation of its operations.

There exists presently only a limited secondary source literature that considers a DP hard core in 1951, still less literature that considers their migratory preferences and strategies, such as they were. In part, this gap in scholarship may be attributable to a tendency within migration studies generally to begin from the premise that actualized migration is the evidence of aspiration to migrate. As the ITS records of members of the DP hard core indicate however, non-migration—in this case, remaining in Western Germany—cannot be neatly equated to a lack of migratory aspiration across the board.

Certainly, there were those for whom absorption in Germany was an attractive option; and the pendulum should not swing to suppose, at the other extreme, that all DPs were *a priori* determined to resettle rather than remain. Those with established links in Germany were significantly more likely to absorb after 1951, particularly in cases where a DP was married to a German citizen.

For most of the hard core however, a decision towards absorption, rather than repatriation or resettlement, was undoubtedly *accelerated* by a number of decisive factors that applied varying degrees of pressure. As ever, family considerations were paramount, as was

the timing of rejection from resettlement schemes and pending camp closures. Perhaps even more so than migration, non-migration was especially reflective of the limits of both DP agency and refugee humanitarianism in the postwar period. Ultimately, investigation of the large-scale protracted refugee situation, as well as its “conclusion,” highlights both the success as well as the inherent limits of the Allied humanitarian effort after 1945.

## CONCLUSION: FIGHTING FOR A FUTURE

### Discussion

Almost all Displaced Persons viewed their stay in the DP camps of Germany as temporary. It was within the DP camp universe that Polish and Jewish DP communities and individuals were forced to make sense of displacement and ultimately, to fight for a future beyond its borders. 60 years after the end of the Second World War, the opening of the ITS archive offers researchers unique access to questionnaires and statements collected by welfare workers in the immediate postwar period, that shed new light on the experiences of DPs as migrants. What the records of the ITS make clear, is that in deciding whether to repatriate, resettle, or to remain on German soil, Displaced Persons weighed several factors of which interpersonal relations as well as wider understandings of community and group belonging emerged as decisive. DPs' own priorities, strategies and itineraries however, were constantly negotiated against the backdrop of evolving DP policy and wider geo-political context.

The year immediately following liberation set the tone in many ways for what was often a disharmonious relationship between, on the one hand, the political assumptions and administrative attitudes that characterized DP relief after 1945 and, on the other hand, DPs' own priorities, strategies and itineraries. Liberation was followed almost immediately by a widespread and instinctive desire on the part of former slave labourers and concentration camp inmates to return to their respective countries of origin. Driven in large measure by the desire to search and locate surviving family members, a period of mass repatriation saw the vast majority of individuals classified as displaced persons repatriate voluntarily, with many testimonies indicating a desire to do so at any cost. Mass return corresponded neatly with military and political assumptions that attributed to every survivor an obligatory homeland. However, the ongoing presence of over a million "unrepatriables" in the DP camps of Western



occupied Germany were the physical evidence of the limits of the success of mass repatriation as a solution to mass displacement.

ITS records evidence well the widespread presence of individuals across ethno-national communities whose attitudes towards repatriation after liberation were indeterminate. Such individuals often sought rather to found new familial connections in the DP camps, determine alternative geographical destinations beyond Germany where they could start their lives anew, frequently embracing political ideologies that reinforced their unrepatriable status and took the place of attachment to a country of origin. Among those Polish and Jewish DPs who had repatriated during the period of mass repatriation, were many for whom return had meant a traumatic encounter with the realities of the aftermath of war. Places and properties that had once been familiar were now either reduced to rubble or confiscated by others; most significantly, family members with whom they wished to reunite had not survived the war, were deported, expelled, or simply no longer there at all. Particularly in the case of Jews, many survivor testimonies affirm a sudden recognition that the home they had hoped to return to no longer existed. Falling back on individual and household decisions to begin life anew, they returned to the DP camps of Germany from where they hoped to resettle abroad.

Alongside these returnees to the camps were added the “infiltrates,” whose movement West was generated by much the same conditions. An “infiltrate” community seeking DP status in 1946 was composed of those who had suffered the disruptive effect of so-called repatriations and population exchanges in the eastern parts of Poland. Here, large numbers of people had been expelled from their respective side of the newly drawn Polish-Soviet border without encountering any solidarity within the territory that was supposed to receive them. Jewish exiles in the Soviet Union, forced to return to Poland, were subsequently driven further West by pogroms. While the uprooting of these populations was precisely what had politically been intended, their ongoing migration frustrated any hopes of a continued policy of solving the “DP

problem” via repatriation. Thus, for the “last million” and the “infiltrates,” “repatriation” (as evoking a return to one's home in a previously existing fatherland) was strongly at variance with a reality of ravaged Polish postwar landscape characterized by a hostile political climate and redrawn borders.

Not only did the presence of “unrepatriable” DPs fundamentally challenge the idea of rehabilitation through repatriation, different DP communities rebelled in different ways against the structures reinforced in repatriation policy. A comparison between Polish and Jewish DP communities reveals the diverse structures of belonging that emerged as a direct result of a context of mass repatriation. While Jews were widely accepted as de-territorialized, Poles were viewed as territorialized in the Polish state. When the International Refugee Organization (IRO) took over the management of the DP camp universe in late 1946, its re-screening of the DP populations it inherited aimed to demarcate those deserving of international humanitarian assistance. The fact of one's being a Jewish DP and de facto of the diaspora, was almost always enough to guarantee DP status. While admission to refugee care in the camps was certainly restrictive, it created for the first time an ideal profile of the political refugee. As DP screening exemplified however, the attempt to establish on the ground definitional clarity between DP Poles, on the basis of an artificial distinction between those passively displaced and those driven by the search for a better life, swiftly broke down.

While limiting the numbers of eligible DPs and voluntary repatriation continued to be accepted in principle as the preferred “durable solutions” to the DP problem after 1946, the enduring presence of “unrepatriable” DPs saw recruitment and resettlement promoted in practice. A period of DP resettlement was initiated by the implementation of Western-European labour recruitment schemes which, though exploitative in a number of significant ways, paved the first steps towards the idea of mass resettlement of refugees. A shift to prioritizing resettlement was marred however by the effort to base refugee policy on political and/or

economic interest, rather than on humanitarian considerations. While the screening procedures developed by the British administration and facilitated by the IRO had been grounded in identifying worthy recipients of aid in occupied Germany under military government on the basis of humanitarian priorities, that same criterion was not transferred to admission into Britain. As the restrictions of the British labour recruitment scheme *Westward Ho!* made clear, domestic democratic opposition as well as the high financial costs and political risks associated with large-scale resettlement saw migration policy attempt to marry humanitarian aid with economic gain and ethnic compatibility.

Thus, neither the social concerns that resulted in limiting immigrant recruitment to niche occupations where no British labour could be found, nor the preferencing of underrepresented national groups and unattached individuals in the camps, could be reconciled with a humanitarian goal of finding a permanent home for DPs. The deliberate exclusion of Jewish applicants is especially indicative of DP recruitment's internal contradictions, limitations and failures. From the perspective of DP applicants, one can reasonably conclude on the basis of IRO records, that political vulnerability and lack of alternatives in 1947 created an environment in which Polish DPs considered accepting highly unfavourable working arrangements in exchange for the opportunity to exit the DP camp system.

Polish DPs themselves had limited scope for action; either in cooperation with selection bodies or in resistance to these. DP labour recruitment brought to the fore the clash of conceptions with respect to family and its impacts as concerned migration. While British social engineering developed a radically individualized, almost monastic image of the migrant worker, the Polish DP community largely could not be made to fit this model.

DP resistance was significantly more successful when it came to protest against British position vis-à-vis Jewish immigration to Palestine. While scholarship focusing on DP Zionism is by now immense, a number of challenges and cleavages of interpretation remain. Did the

widespread appeal of Zionism in the camps consist in a political worldview or in the social function of replacing destroyed family and community ties? To arrive at a more nuanced picture, factors including external forces and internal dynamics, as well as opportunities and constraints that Jewish individuals and DP community encountered at a given time, must be weighed and balanced. After liberation, the primary concern for most of Jewish DPs was to locate family. From a social history perspective, a clear correlation between the loss of family members and the readiness for political commitment in an ethnonationalist sense is evidenced in the memoirs and individual CM/1 forms of survivors. A significantly more circumspect attitude existed however, among those whose family relations were still in place. As well as responding to the trauma of persecution, DP Zionism grew out of a continuity with pre-war activism as well as a framework of postwar self-organization. The Zionist project undoubtedly gained the most ground however where it was successfully able to perform the social function of political community-building. While British authorities tried to block Zionism by all means, their negotiations with Belsen's Zionist leadership was an acknowledgement of Jewish ethnic agency.

Zionism's success among a majority of the Jewish DPs, including their leadership, must also be reconciled with its limits among a large minority, admitting for changes of adherence over time and possible disparities between ideological identification on the one hand and participation in the immigration project on the other. The vast majority of Jewish DPs who did not repatriate or resettle in Israel/Palestine ended up in the United States.

America in particular, offered to both the Polish and Jewish DP communities well-established social networks, lively Yiddish and Polish cultural scenes, as well as the promise of economic and educational prospects. It was also driven by both perceptions of safety and political commitment to anti-communism. While expressing an ideological position in the context of mounting Cold War tensions was crucial in adapting one's biography to meet the

immigration criteria of the period, ideology was not as significant as the desire to reconnect with family and community beyond German borders. Offers of support by extended family members or diaspora communities in a larger sense, were often decisive in securing America as the destination of choice.

A clash of conceptions with respect to family, between postwar immigration regimes and the DPs themselves, remained consistent throughout the life of the camps. Even as more countries opened their borders to mass DP resettlement after 1947, the basic dilemma that had emerged in the context of DP labour recruitment, which had sought to solve a humanitarian problem through the means of competitive labour markets, endured. The priorities of DPs, especially as concerned the primacy of marriage, children and family reunification, were often set at odds with a wider context of restricted immigration that overwhelmingly favoured the young and unattached. One of the central themes of the present study has been to explore and evidence tensions between competing views of the human person. The British implicitly, and often explicitly as well, defended a certain operational anthropological theory at odds with DPs prioritization of family unity. The commitment to emptying the DP camps of its inhabitants as swiftly as possible profoundly impacted the approach to the management of DPs. Where DP families proved resistant to the idea of any possible separation, the result was a policy that relied on the generous application of pressure to attempt to get DPs to act in preferred ways. A view encouraging separation was regularly in conflict with DPs' own self-perceptions, as reflected in alternative source bodies. Ego-documents in particular, reflect a self-understanding of individual DPs as motivated strongly by the centrality of the family unit.

Two significant legislative shifts in the form of open immigration to Israel after 1948 and an Amended DP Act in 1950 revolutionized outlooks for Polish and Jewish DP communities. DP emigration to Israel and America evidences the relative strength of networks built on ethno-national lines in the postwar period. The formation of community-based

networks provided a vital link at the meso-level, establishing social ties that connected migrants with individuals and secured a social network on arrival. Both Polish and Jewish DP communities relied on the lobbying efforts of different pre-existing ethnic communities to both affect immigration policy and facilitate their emigration. Significantly, ideas about joining Polish and Jewish communities abroad created new patterns of chain migration of DPs over time. Establishing webs of contact that spread beyond the boundaries of the DP camp had a decisive impact both on capabilities and aspirations with respect to DP migration.

As much as illuminating the subtleties responsible for final decisions to migrate, it is also important to reflect on cases of non-migration and the limits of agency in the form of both individual capabilities and aspirations. As the ITS records of a DP “hard core” indicate, a decision to remain in Germany, at least among those not facing permanent institutionalization, was similarly accelerated by varying degrees of external pressure (as in the case of repatriation and resettlement) balanced against considerations of family unity, which often proved paramount in determining outcomes for individuals and households.

Intertwining historical narratives illustrate the ways in which multiple competing groups, policies, and priorities co-existed after 1945. A sustained comparative approach that compares and contrasts the experiences of Polish and Jewish DP communities has highlighted the clash of individual strategies and different collective ideologies based on management of the DP future. While the two groups present symmetric cases in some respects, in important other respects their collective experiences developed in opposing directions. In the postwar period, Polish and Jewish DPs developed a complete reorientation of their political model of reference. While DP Poles built up a diaspora in reaction to a Polish state undergoing a new form of foreign occupation, Jewish DPs looked to a state in Palestine in the aftermath of the extermination of the European diaspora. Yet at this particular historical moment the magnet of American pluralism was strong enough to attract large parts of both groups. Polish and Jewish

DPs alike were receptive to the clichés of a state protective of “freedom” and to integration into an empowered (Jewish or Polish) ethnic community promising political safety and economic support. Most decisively, America offered a family network and the image of an individual future in which the pursuit of happiness and economic prosperity appeared as a realistic possibility protected by the state.

The guiding concepts of British DP policy, modelled on the logic of prewar European nation-states, were difficult for DPs to challenge in the name of an emergent global human rights order. While British authorities subjectively created the impression of enormous generosity towards a DP population it believed should be the grateful recipients of its aid, friction between Britain and the Polish and Jewish DP communities (who had been the major targets of Nazi terror) around issues of migration came to dominate an increasingly antagonistic relationship. The memory of Britain's war effort and the close alliance against Nazism during WWII was superseded by postwar conflict of interests in which the DP experience added significantly to anti-British resentment.

### **Avenues for future research and contemporary relevance**

This study has made the case for the need for stronger integration of research strategies and sources that capture policies, experiences and shifts in the history of DP migration. It has argued that one of the most promising avenues for future research is the continued incorporation of the records of the International Tracing Service archive. After 1945, military and welfare authorities were faced with an almost unlimited variety of personal circumstances. In order first to determine who was qualified for refugee status and aid, administrative authorities were required to assemble as much data on individual claimants for DP status as possible. The resultant CM/1 collection of the ITS offers immense possibilities for the researcher.

Promising future lines of enquiry would continue to investigate DP self-identification and self-representation in light of the CM/1 collection. While this dissertation has focused attention on reading the primary source record in a manner attentive to the insights of disciplines including refugee and migration studies, the records of the ITS could similarly be approached from the sustained perspective of gender for example. As the present study has hinted at, careful analysis of the role and representations of gender in ITS' postwar subfiles has the potential to both compliment and challenge dominant narratives.

While this study has adopted a comparative approach that focuses on the experiences of Polish and Jewish DP communities, other ethno-national comparisons could have been made and tested against the individual account, with comparable and even competing results. A contained focus on the British Zone here, has highlighted the role that geography and administrative differences also played in the DP future. As well as across the different DP communities, there is a growing need for a more explicit studies of the various Zonal particularities, as these affected migratory agendas and outcomes. The methodology and conclusions drawn here, could be fruitfully pushed and applied to other parts of occupied Germany.

With respect to the ongoing need for further comparative studies, Jessica Reinisch has recently argued that there exists “no consistent historiography that looks at the many different kinds of refugees and dislocated people in the same context.”<sup>963</sup> Adam Seipp and Andrea Sinn have similarly pointed to the lack of transnational studies of post-displacement that examine DPs alongside ethnic German expellees as representative of how remarkably widespread permanent estrangement from one's country of origin was after 1945.<sup>964</sup> The refugee crises

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<sup>963</sup> Jessica Reinisch, “Introduction,” in Jessica Reinisch and Elizabeth White, eds., *The Disentanglement of Populations: Migration, Expulsion, and Displacement in Postwar Europe, 1944–49* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), xv.

<sup>964</sup> Adam R. Seipp and Andrea A. Sinn, “Landscapes of the Uprooted: Displacement in Postwar Europe,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 32:1 (2018): 1-7.



engendered by the Second World War were multiple, varied and fragmented. While this dissertation has centred on the DP camp universe, important work is now being done to evidence the interconnectedness of mass uprootedness across the Continent and to connect the population transfers of Germans, Poles, Ukrainians, and Jews into a common conceptual framework.

Even as scholars continue to recognize and argue for the centrality of displaced persons in Europe's twentieth century, new waves of refugees in the present era are drawing attention to important historical continuities. As anthropologist Liisa Malkki convincingly argues, the origins of the figure of the modern refugee can be traced back to the Displaced Persons camps of Europe, in the aftermath of the Second World War.<sup>965</sup> Forced to flee and immobilized in Allied-run camps, those unwilling or unable to return "home" serve as a potent reminder of the inability to place and accept hundreds of thousands of categorized people. Today's refugee law has its origins in the postwar period. We operate with the same categories of foreigners and internally displaced persons that were being worked out after 1945. The definition of the term refugee, today dates back to the Geneva Convention relating to the status of refugees in 1951—which was the product of postwar refugee debates on how to define the DPs of Europe.<sup>966</sup>

While the DP era officially ended in 1951, and the Allies' administrative regime was slowly dismantled, the scholarly community is rapidly understanding both the centrality of the DP moment in the story of Europe's 20th century and its lasting impacts into the 21<sup>st</sup>. Today as in the postwar period, refugees' access to social rights and welfare, settlement rights and importantly, to the possibility of family reunification can all be determined by the same labels that were so fiercely contested after 1945. A dichotomy between so -called "economic" and "political" migration endures; and many claims to asylum are today rejected on the grounds of

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<sup>965</sup> Liisa H. Malkki, "Refugees and Exile: From 'Refugee Studies' to the National Order of Things," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24:1 (1995): 497.

<sup>966</sup> The Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees was agreed at a United Nations conference on 25 July 1951, ratified in 1954, amended with a new protocol in 1967, and today has 145 signatories.

applicants not being formally recognized as “genuine” refugees and recipients of aid—their flight perceived as fearing dire economic conditions rather than fear of persecution as laid down by Geneva.

The same paradoxes and tensions existing between then-new practices of relief and old practices of immigration have once again come to the fore during the ongoing refugee crisis of the mid-2010s. The reception of refugees, then as now, was a hugely controversial and divisive topic. The recruitment and resettlement schemes of the postwar era demonstrated a sophisticated procedure of garnering domestic consensus for a limited form of refugee absorption by which the public image of the DP was made to fit the political and economic concerns of the day.<sup>967</sup> The difficulty of convincing a democratic society of the emotional, ethical or economic yields of the investments into refugee care is not so new. Pro-refugee campaigning at the height of the recent refugee crisis in 2015, has alternatively send out contradictory images of helpless children and of economically useful doctors and engineers. When confronted with the refugee crisis, the response of governments across Europe and indeed, much of the European public, has continued to waver between solidarity and hostility.

The politics of relief today have re-emerged in all their complexity, marked by the same extraordinary ambiguities of the DP era in which the commitment to an international humanitarianism was regularly at odds with the inherent self-interest of a restrictive immigration policy that remained deeply embedded in historical and hierarchical assumptions. In both subtle and direct ways, current models of humanitarian intervention are affected by the same dilemmas and paradoxes being grappled with post-liberation. Perhaps most significantly, in practice, refugees continue to have little say over the terms under which such “humanitarian aid” is bestowed. The pathbreaking international refugee regime that was decided in the 1940s

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<sup>967</sup> Roger Zetter, “Labelling Refugees: Forming and Transforming a Bureaucratic Identity,” *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 4, 1 (1991): 39-62.

was born out of the experience with the unruly survivor DP and has shaped our understanding of migration movements until today, including the ethical judgments that we have about them.

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