

## Positions of the Jewish Organisations

With the permission of the Nazi-authorities the “Reichsvertretung der Juden in Deutschland” (Jewish Council of Germany) which cooperated closely with the “Jüdische Kultusgemeinde in Wien” had sent an official delegation to Evian which submitted a detailed, statistically based memorandum. In view of the desperate situation and the fact, that their relatives were being held as hostages until their return, the neutral scholarly tone is striking.

In the memorandum they assumed, that out of a total of 14.800 prospective emigrants around 29% would be business men and office employees, 24% would come from crafts and other professions, and 11,6% would be workmen, domestic helpers and farmers. The example of Palestine would proof, 1. “the fact that the Jews are willing and able to do any, even the hardest kind of manual work”; 2. capital transfer possibilities must be changed so that it would become possible to become self-sustaining.

An especially interesting part of the paper are the suggestions of how to deal with problems arising out of the laws and regulations dealing with immigration and with the financial prerequisites for the admission and absorption of the emigrants in their new country:

### **For the Conference at Evian**

#### **Reichsvertretung der Juden in Deutschland**

Organization formed by all the Jewish communities and societies of Germany (excluding Austria) to direct, prepare, finance and carry out the Jewish emigration from Germany, takes pleasure in submitting for your consideration the enclosed memorandum and statistics [...]

#### **Stabilizing the regulations**

[...] It would be impossible to formulate plans for the proper training of suitable immigrants in new occupations and languages for any particular country, unless one could be reasonably sure that no material changes in the immigration laws are likely to occur.

#### **Uniform handling of regulations**

[...] Facilitating the formalities:

[...] In view to the fact that the Jewish emigration organizations are responsible not only to the German authorities and the authorities of the countries of immigration, but also to the immigrants themselves, it might be feasible to require only the most important documents such as identification papers, a certificate from the police department and a medical examination. This would also help to reduce the cost of legalizing the various documents, which sometimes run into very large amounts.

As regards identification papers, some way should be considered to provide emigrants without nationality or those that have lost it with a document which will be recognized by the immigration authorities. [...]

#### **Landing money instead of blocked deposits:**

In some countries admission is dependent on a deposit being made by the immigrants which will remain blocked for a very considerable time. It would help the immigrant in getting settled if the blocked deposit might be replaced wholly or in part by so-called landing money. [...]

#### **The family as the unit for landing money:**

[...][It] should not be required to produce the landing money for every individual in the family, as is now the case in some countries. [...]

#### **Facilitating requests for immigrants:**

Certain countries will admit immigrants on the strength of immigration affidavits or requests by one of their citizens. In these cases immigration could be very materially facilitated by a liberal interpretation of the financial status of the guarantor or if the personality and the professional ability of the applicant could be taken into account, or if such guarantees would be accepted from relatives, friends and certain recognized societies.

#### **Contract labor:**

[...] If the immigrant, on the strength of his contract, will be able to support himself out of his wages without any additional expense and merely on the strength of his ability to work, he might be admitted without any further guarantees as to his financial status. [...]

#### **Colonizing:**

A number of countries, particularly those thinly populated, might admit settlers and their families, farmers and farm trained persons who, by starting settlements would contribute to the development of the county.

[...] We believe that, at the present time, there are several thousand Jewish families in Germany that are willing and able to settle as farmers. [...]

**Immigration of children and youth:**

From the point of view of the receiving country it appears as though the admission of youthful immigrants offers great advantages. Our experiences shows that those children will most easily and completely adopt the language and the customs of their new country who had previously been trained with an eye towards the particular circumstances of their country of immigration. [...]

**Special facilities for the subsequent immigration of the immediate family:**

[...] These requests for the admission of relations [parents, children] could be facilitated if the requests need merely be accompanied by evidence that the applicant will be able to take care of his relations after they are admitted. [...]

At the moment, several countries still require an immigrant to have resided in the country for a number of years [...] In many cases this represents an unfair hardship, which could easily be avoided.

**Directing the emigration:**

[...] The choice of the country which an emigrant selects is invariably influenced by the emigrant's personal initiative, his professional or occupational tendencies, his family and relations as well as a number of other factors. The personal responsibility in the selection of the country to which he emigrates offers the best assurance that the emigrant will establish himself and develop his capabilities as far as possible without outside assistance.

To direct the personal initiative so, that a planned distribution of emigrants among the prospective countries takes place, [...] is a task which can be accomplished by the emigration organizations only if they can reckon with willingness in principle [...] to absorb Jewish immigrants [...]. There is a justifiable hope that the emigration problem, which for the Jews in Germany has become a matter of life and death, can be solved if the countries to which an emigrant can go will admit a planned and controlled immigration to the extent that their laws and the economic and political possibilities permit. [...]

**Financing immigration:**

[...] The Jews in Germany realize perfectly that they may hope for co-operation from other countries only if they do not become public charges in those countries which are prepared to absorb them.

The simplest and least expensive emigrants are those young people who have completed their training in a trade or handicraft and, consequently, can be absorbed in the production process immediately upon immigration. [...] and in the case of the older emigrants [one must] arrange for the necessary financial support. [...]

**Transferring money out of Germany:**

To accomplish an increase in emigration it is therefore necessary to expand the transfer possibilities. Based on experience thus far and in view of the difficulties inherent in this problem, an expansion in transfer possibilities can only be accomplished on the assumption that the Jews in Germany can continue to use their present capital for emigration that it should be possible, with the assistance of the new country, to solve the transfer problem in such a way as to meet the requirements of the German economy. [...]

Such a concentration [of the emigrant's own capital] can perhaps best be accomplished through establishment of an emigration bank which could receive the money available to emigrants and administer them centrally. [...] This requires the consent of the German government as well as the co-operation of the countries in question. [...]

This material and suggestions herein given represent a mere outline of the questions relative to emigration. They should be judged as mere comments which will require extensive amplifying.

In a moment in which one quarter of the members of the Jewish community in Germany are no longer able to sustain themselves and are the recipients of public charity, in which thousands of healthy and work eager people who have lost the place in which they lived, and seek with their emigration the possibility of establishing a new existence and contributing their strength for the common good, at such a time are we filled with the hope that the

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achieves its high purpose, and that it will make possible the creation of new existences for people to whom history has decreed emigration as their mission.

**Sources:** Proceedings of the Intergovernmental Committee, Evian, July 6th-15th, 1938. Verbatim record of the plenary meetings of the committee, resolutions and reports. Chamberly : s.n., 1938. (Salomon Adler-Rudel: The Evian Conference on the Refugee Question, in: Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook (1968), pp. 235-276.)