# Liberalism, Race and Humanitarianism: British Colonial Policy and Jewish Refugees 1938-1943

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## Abstract

This thesis studies the British colonial response to Jewish refugees between 1938 and 1943. By assessing Britain's 'bystander' response through the lens of the empire, this study expands on existing historiography and seeks not just to detail Britain's limited action but also explain it. In this thesis, the concepts of liberalism, race and humanitarianism are used as analytical frameworks through which to examine British colonial policy. Specifically, in the interwar years, the scope of British (in)action was defined by liberal views on assimilation and the rights of individuals versus groups. Rather than antisemitism, a strict racial hierarchical and paternal system was used to justify British power and to protect British interests in the making of refugee policy. Finally, international humanitarianism was at a particular moment of development in the interwar years, both in terms of the intergovernmental system through which humanitarian action was channelled and in the socio-political expectation on governments to act. This was expressed in a conflict of short-term emergency aid and long-term developmental aid. The result was a colonial policy of compromise that saw officials try to connect the skills and financial assets of refugees with their overriding priority of colonial development and welfare. Through the use of official documents and refugee testimony, this study provides an account of the making and impact of colonial refugee policy and raises questions that remain relevant for us today.

## Contents

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## Introduction:
## Responding to the Holocaust: Bystanders, Colonialism and Conflicting Priorities

In 1939, Norman Angell and Dorothy Frances Buxton published a book entitled *You and the Refugee: The Morals and Economics of the Problem*. Having explained that Jewish refugees 'now knock at the doors of the greatest Empire in the world', they asked, 'Shall those doors be closed against them?'[1] Angell and Buxton, Nobel Peace Prize winner and co-founder of 'Save the Children' respectively, raised a fundamental question, and one that was also being asked by others in the late 1930s and 1940s. The British Empire, at its largest ever extent, offered potential areas of settlement for desperate Jewish refugees seeking safety from Nazi persecution; would refugees be permitted entry? Given the infamous, complex and difficult history of Palestine, it is perhaps easy to assume that the answer was simply 'no'. Moreover, the numbers of refugees who found safety in other parts of empire only totalled about 9,400.[2] Nonetheless, the story of the empire's response to the interwar refugee crisis forms an important but largely untold story of the British response to the Holocaust.

Colonialism offers a new and uniquely informative context for expanding the historiography beyond details of bystander responses towards explanations for those responses. Not only does the colonial context highlight the juxtaposition of three dominant conceptual schemata in liberal democracies during the interwar period – liberalism, race and humanitarianism – but more significantly, it provides a point where all three ideologies clearly met. This affords the opportunity to analyse more specifically the subtleties and complexities of the reasons behind Allied inaction and thereby move to a fuller understanding of Britain's and the US's responses. Indeed, in the very displacement of the refugee problem to colonial areas, we can see most clearly the way that these issues were prioritised and acted upon (or not) by British and American officials. Although the thesis primarily focuses

[1] Quoted in: Martin Gilbert, *Kristallnacht: Prelude to Destruction* (London, 2006), p 136.
[2] This figure was made up of various refugee movements, including 7,600 to South Africa, 1,000 to Australia and 800 to 'other Commonwealth countries' (Simone Gigliotti, '"Acapulco in the Atlantic": Revisiting Sosúa, a Jewish Refugee Colony in the Caribbean', *Immigrants and Minorities*, 24/1 (2006), p. 24).

on Britain, which is reflected in the archival material used, the US remains an illuminating comparator at various points, for example: in American interest in large-scale settlement and colonisation schemes; in the context of race relations (particularly in the historiography of whiteness); in the context of humanitarian responses to refugees (particularly the SS *St Louis*); and in the interest in development.

This thesis explores this largely untold colonial story more fully. It develops the existing literature on bystander responses beyond outlining British inaction and instead seeks to explain why there was a limited British response. The empire – part of, but other to – the British Isles is an ideal context in which to ask big questions about the ideological influences on and nature of British policy. In this thesis, the concepts of liberalism, race and humanitarianism are used as lenses through which to examine British action. It argues that the limits imposed by liberal thinking on assimilation and group versus individual rights interacted with racial perceptions of Jews (as well as of colonial groups and white Britishness) to create a policy limited in nature.

In the empire, these ideas were complicated further by a tension between different types of humanitarianisms as well as the perceived British responsibility to colonial populations and a persecuted minority which was adding to international tensions. This clash of humanitarianisms and the priority given to colonial and developmental manifestations of it led to the adoption of a specific and deliberate colonial refugee policy. Although this policy had important precedents in other areas of colonial policy, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Malcolm MacDonald, attempted in the late 1930s to utilise refugee skills and settlement to the specific benefit of the empire.

**BRITAIN AND THE JEWISH REFUGEE PROBLEM**

Between 1933 and 1941, Nazi policy sought to make Germany '*judenrein*' (meaning an area 'cleansed' of Jews). The initial Nazi strategy was emigration. However, the increasing number of those seeking to leave Germany created a putative problem for the international community, which had to help accommodate the growing number of refugees. As A.J. Sherman observes, these refugees, the majority of whom were Jewish, 'embodie[d] a stubbornly intractable problem which subjected

both Ministers and civil servants to a cross-fire of intensely uncomfortable political pressures'.[3] This was a problem that only continued to grow in scale and complexity during the later years of the interwar period and into the war itself.

Although the impact of the Jewish identity of refugees will be discussed more fully in chapter three in the context of an examination of antisemitism, it is important to note here that, as Sherman observes, the Jewishness of refugees mattered because of a long-standing, specifically British attitude towards Jews. Although British anti-Jewish attitudes, in comparison to European (particularly German) antisemitism, are sometimes described as rather benign, Jewish Studies scholars have increasingly identified a more active antisemitism (ranging from 'Fascist violence' to ambivalent 'pressure on Anglo-Jewry both to assimilate and to remain apart from British society').[4] Bill Williams argues, specifically in relation to the emancipation contract between Manchester's nineteenth-century middle class and the city's Jewish population, that emancipation was superficial and functional, rather than offering Anglo-Jewry any genuine tolerance or acceptance. He concludes that 'Jews were validated not on the grounds of their Jewish identity, but on the basis of their conformity to the values and manners of bourgeois English society'.[5] This ambivalent place of Jews in British society, as Bryan Cheyette argues, was also fluid, as writers and politicians alike 'do not passively draw on eternal myths of "the Jew" but actively construct them in relation to their own literary and political concerns'.[6]

David Feldman summarises these studies, arguing that they have shown that 'liberalism in Britain, far from offering a benign solution to "the Jewish question", was one of the principal sources of oppression and antisemitism emanating from

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[3] A.J. Sherman, *Island Refuge: Britain and Refugees from the Third Reich 1933-1939* (London, 1973), p. 13.

[4] Tony Kushner, 'The Impact of British Anti-semitism, 1918-1945', in: David Cesarani (ed.), *The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 191, 207. See also Tony Kushner, 'Comparing Antisemitisms: A Useful Exercise?', in: Michael Brenner, Rainer Liedtke and David Rechter (eds), *Two Nations: British and German Jews in Comparative Perspective* (Tübingen, 1999).

[5] Bill Williams, 'The Anti-Semitism of Tolerance: Middle-Class Manchester and the Jews 1870-1900', in: Alan J. Kidd and K.W. Roberts, *City, Class and Culture: Studies of Social Policy and Cultural Production in Victorian Manchester* (Manchester, 1985), pp. 78, 94.

[6] Bryan Cheyette, *Constructions of 'the Jew' in English Literature and Society: Racial Representations, 1875-1945* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 268. For a fuller exploration of these issues in relation to the subjects of this thesis, see Cheyette, chapters 3 (empire) and 5 (liberalism).

the Gentile world'.[7] This all suggests (with relevance to this study) that Britain's history of a particular kind of antisemitism, in which Jews had to conform to a specific (and far from static) 'Englishness', was the context in which refugee questions were approached in the 1930s.

Following Hitler's rise to power, the Nazis implemented a policy that systematically excluded Jewish people from German public life. Jewish businesses were attacked with economic boycotts. The Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service legally excluded nearly all 'non-Aryans' from public life.[8] This was followed in 1935 by the Nuremberg Laws, which formally codified many of the anti-Jewish ideas of the Nazi Party. Based on racial categories (as defined by the party) rather than religious practices, it excluded people of Jewish heritage from citizenship in Germany and outlined laws forbidding sexual relations and marriage between Jews and non-Jews. Although there was some respite in anti-Jewish measures at the time of the Berlin Summer Olympics in 1936, persecution increased after international eyes turned away. In the process of 'Aryanization', Jewish people were forced to register property and businesses, many of which were confiscated and given to non-Jewish people. As a result, the roughly 600,000 people who made up Germany's Jewish population were at best encouraged and at worst violently coerced to leave Germany and make new lives somewhere else during the 1930s.

These discriminatory policies not only created large numbers of refugees but also increasingly impoverished those seeking to leave Germany by confiscating greater and greater proportions of their capital and property. While many of the first refugees were from the wealthy, educated and assimilated elite and were therefore more acceptable to British authorities, as time went on those seeking entry into Britain (and other countries) lacked funds and resources and thus threatened to become dependent on government resources or charity. Furthermore, even some of the first wave of refugees were considered to be undesirable as an 'overwhelming proportion' of these 'belonged to the professional or business classes' rather than sought-after occupations such as labourers,

[7] David Feldman, 'Jews and the State in Britain', in: Michael Brenner, Rainer Liedtke and David Rechter (eds), *Two Nations: British and German Jews in Comparative Perspective* (Tübingen, 1999), p. 142.
[8] David S. Wyman, *Paper Walls: America and the Refugee Crisis 1938-1941* (New York, 1985), p. 28.

technicians and agricultural workers. Even if these emigrants were prepared to take other jobs, Britain was unwilling in the middle of an economic depression to take impoverished refugees with uncertain earning potential.[9] Poor refugees were as unwelcome as the stereotyped 'foreign', 'subversive' and 'dangerous' Jew, often applied to those from Eastern Europe, especially Poland and Galicia.[10]

By 1938, about 150,000 German Jews – one in four – had already left Germany. However, 1938 saw the refugee problem turn into a crisis. In March 1938, Germany marched into Austria, claiming *Anschluss*. German territorial expansion into Austria not only represented a clear violation of the Treaty of Versailles but also brought some additional 185,000 Jews under Nazi rule.[11] The antisemitic measures which had taken nearly five years to develop in Germany were unleashed at once in Austria, causing desperate situations for Jews and triggering a significant number of Jewish suicides and another exodus of Jewish people.[12]

In the autumn, tensions over Czechoslovakia meant that Europe looked set for war, which the Munich Agreement in September managed to avoid. However, as a result, the refugee crisis worsened. In the agreement, negotiated by British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, the Sudeten areas of Czechoslovakia were ceded to Germany. After the official German take-over on 1 October, it soon became clear that the Czech government was unable to deal with the social and economic costs of the refugees created by the territorial changes endorsed by the agreement. This resulted in minority groups, particularly Jews, not receiving the nationality rights afforded to them in the Munich Agreement. Complicated by its own role in the agreement, Britain's action was based on financial aid rather than increased Jewish refugee entry to Britain. A fund of £10 million was sent to the Czech government, of which £4 million was designated for use in the relief and re-settlement of refugees.

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[9] Sherman, *Island Refuge*, pp. 23-24.

[10] Tony Kushner, 'Beyond the Pale? British Reactions to Nazi Antisemitism, 1933-1939', in: Tony Kushner and Kenneth Lunn (eds), *The Politics of Marginality: Race, the Radical Right and Minorities in Twentieth Century Britain* (London, 1990), pp. 145-146.

[11] USHMM, 'Emigration and the Évian Conference', *USHMM Holocaust Encyclopedia*, <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005520>, accessed March 2015. Pamela Shatzkes puts Jewish emigration from Germany between 1933 and 1937 at 131,000 (*Holocaust and Rescue: Impotent or Indifferent? Anglo Jewry 1938-1945* (Basingstoke, 2002), pp. 46-47).

[12] Wyman, *Paper Walls*, pp. 29-30. The suicides of those in Austria are part of a bigger pattern of such action in Nazi Germany. For a history of suicide in Weimar and Nazi Germany, see Christian Goeschel, *Suicide in Nazi Germany* (Oxford, 2009).

However, as Louise London concludes, 'Britain had obtained the peace it craved – refugees had paid the price'.[13] None more so than Jewish refugees, who remained the hardest to re-settle and often received the least help.

The peace of Munich, however, was shattered by the events of 9-10 November 1938. The violent pogroms that erupted in Germany came to be known as *Kristallnacht* and shocked the world. The persecution of Jews in Europe reached new, violent heights, and the night ended with ninety-one deaths and the arrest of some 20,000 Jewish men.[14] In the aftermath, there was a dramatic increase in the numbers of those who sought to leave Nazi-controlled territories. Bystander countries, shocked by the new level of violent persecution, sought relatively more generous responses to refugees seeking safety. Nonetheless, *Kristallnacht* did not witness a major reassessment of long-standing restrictive policies, and the small policy changes pursued were often too late and were then all but halted as Europe moved ever closer to war.

The outbreak of the Second World War on 1 September 1939 caused further restrictions in government responses to Jewish refugees. At this point, plans that were underway to help refugees were terminated, as the Allies started to focus all their resources on winning the war. Although the primary aim of the Allied war effort was not to save the Jews being persecuted by Nazi Germany, when pressure was exerted for efforts to be made to this end, officials often claimed that winning the war was the best way of solving the problem of Jewish persecution. Moreover, in the context of war, refugees who had sought safety outside of the expanding German Reich were now in countries where their foreign identity meant they were considered, first and foremost, to be 'enemy aliens' rather than refugees seeking safety. As a result, many refugees endured internment in countries including Britain and its imperial territories.

With the onset of war and the increasingly genocidal nature of Nazi policy, those Jews still in German-controlled Europe were increasingly caught in a web of destruction that would lead to the death of some six million Jews in events that

[13] Louise London, *Whitehall and the Jews 1938-1948: British Immigration Policy and the Holocaust* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 14, 142, 145.
[14] Sherman, *Island Refuge*, p. 167.

have subsequently became known as the Holocaust. As scholarly study of these events has developed over the last seventy years, Holocaust historiography has broadly fallen into the study of three main categories: perpetrator, victim and bystander – a triangularisation adopted by Raul Hilberg in his 1992 book, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders: The Jewish Catastrophe 1933-1945*.[15] It is the last of these categories, that of the bystander, that this thesis explores more fully.

More specifically, this thesis investigates further the British response to the Jewish refugee crisis between 1938 and 1943. These dates cover most of the period of the fiercest persecution of Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe and the fullest extent of the associated refugee crisis. Broadly demarcated by *Anschluss* in March 1938 and the Bermuda Conference in April 1943, these five years included major acts of Nazi persecution and aggression, British and American attempts to respond to the refugee crisis and the outbreak of war, including the early years of the conflict when the ultimate victory of Allied forces was unknown. After 1943, post-war planning started in earnest, but as this thesis is concerned with the role of certain conceptual schemes in the interwar years, these discussions are of less importance to the study.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

To date, the historiography of the Allied response has agreed that Britain and the US – or as Tony Kushner has labelled them, 'liberal democracies' – failed to produce an effective response to the Holocaust. Into the mid-2000s, reviews of the literature on the British and American responses, led mainly by Kushner, still contended that more nuance was needed.[16]

Bystander studies developed in the late 1960s and early 1970s, with work on the US generally flourishing before that on Britain. However, the earliest work on Allied knowledge and action, Andrew Sharf's *The British Press and Jews under Nazi*

[15] Raul Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders: The Jewish Catastrophe 1933-1945* (New York, 1993).

[16] Tony Kushner, 'Britain, the United States and the Holocaust: In Search of a Historiography', in: Dan Stone (ed.), *The Historiography of the Holocaust* (New York, 2005); Tony Kushner, '"Pissing in the Wind"? The Search for Nuance in the Study of Holocaust "Bystanders"', *Holocaust Studies: A Journal of Culture and History*, 9/2-3 (2000); Donald Bloxham and Tony Kushner, *The Holocaust: Critical Historical Approaches* (Manchester, 2005).

*Rule* (1964), did in fact deal with the British response.[17] While it did not generate much further debate in Britain for some time, it marked a starting point for an emerging American historiography. The first of these works, Arthur D. Morse's *While Six Million Died* (1967) and David S. Wyman's *Paper Walls: America and the Refugee Crisis 1938-1941* (1968), published in the US, were highly critical of American action, arguing that because Nazi extermination policy was known to the American government, more should have been done to help Europe's Jewry. To highlight this, Morse sought to establish the extent of American knowledge of Nazi plans for Jewish extermination. Drawing similar conclusions, Wyman identified three main reasons for American inaction: unemployment, nativistic nationalism and antisemitism.[18]

The publication of these works coincided with a growing interest among the American public in the Holocaust. Indeed, the late 1960s and early 1970s marked the start of a new focus on the issue, particularly, regarding its victims. Undoubtedly, this broader social and cultural interest in the Holocaust, along with 'a growing ethnic pride and self-confidence on behalf of American Jewry',[19] made it possible for historians to argue that more should have been done by the American government in response to the specifically Jewish tragedy.

Other important works on the American response soon followed, including Henry Feingold's *The Politics of Rescue* (1970) and Saul Friedman's *No Haven for the Oppressed* (1973).[20] Sherman's British-focused *Island Rescue*, published in 1973, was the first assessment of British policy since Sharf. Sherman, an American Jew, concluded his work with the now infamous 'Balance Sheet' of British action, arguing that British policy was 'comparatively compassionate, even generous', particularly in comparison to the US.[21] In a later work, *Britain and the Jews of Europe 1939-1945* (1979), Bernard Wasserstein made a more negative assessment of British action,

[17] Andrew Sharf, *The British Press and Jews under Nazi Rule* (Oxford, 1964).
[18] Arthur D. Morse, *While Six Million Died: A Chronicle of American Apathy* (London, 1968); Wyman, *Paper Walls*.
[19] Bloxham and Kushner, *The Holocaust*, p. 187.
[20] Saul Friedman, *No Haven for the Oppressed: United States Policy toward Jewish Refugees, 1938-1945* (Detroit, MI, 1973); Henry L. Feingold, *The Politics of Rescue: The Roosevelt Administration and the Holocaust, 1938-45* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1970).
[21] Sherman, *Island Refuge*, p. 267.

arguing that 'there is little to celebrate in the account of British policy towards the Jews of Europe between 1939 and 1945'.[22]

In 1997, William Rubinstein's book *The Myth of Rescue* sought to challenge this largely critical historiography. Controversially, Rubinstein systematically dismantled the established perspective on Allied action, arguing that no Jews could have been saved by the combined forces of Britain and the US. Although a re-evaluation was needed, his work focused on the assumption that German Jews (other European Jews were not included in his assessment) were 'prisoners' rather than 'refugees', and therefore there was no option of 'rescue' by the Allies.[23] Certainly, recognition that Nazi policy prohibited Jewish movement after October 1941 is necessary. However, as David Cesarani asserts, Rubinstein's 'analysis contradicts all recent scholarship and defies the evidence'.[24] Moreover, such deterministic conclusions limit discussion of the reasons for Allied inaction by simply claiming that Britain and the US had no choice in how they responded to the unfolding events of the Holocaust. It is this aspect which accounts for the popular success of Rubinstein's book. In fact, Kushner has contended that the work appeals to those 'anxious about the moral integrity of the British and American war memory', because Rubinstein's work 'lets the reader off from any consideration of the dilemmas facing bystanders'.[25]

This swing back and forth between adamant criticism and more defensive works has been, to some degree, successfully bypassed in other scholarship which seeks to explain Allied actions by contextualising the period and policy decisions of the US and Britain. Richard Breitman and Alan Kraut, in *American Refugee Policy and European Jewry, 1933-1945* (1987), assert the importance of assessing Allied action in its 'historical and political context', in order to understand 'the real constraints and trade-offs faced by government officials'.[26] Louise London, in *Whitehall and the Jews 1933-1948* (2003), the principal and most recent account of

[22] Bernard Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe 1939-1945* (Oxford, 1979), p. 345.
[23] William D. Rubinstein, *The Myth of Rescue: Why the Democracies Could Not Have Saved More Jews from the Nazis* (London, 1997).
[24] David Cesarani, 'Review of *The Myth of Rescue*', *The English Historical Review*, 113/454 (1998), p. 1258.
[25] Kushner, 'Pissing in the Wind', p. 71.
[26] Richard Breitman and Alan M Kraut, *American Refugee Policy and European Jewry, 1933-1945* (Bloomington, IN, 1987), p. 2.

British policy, outlines the bureaucratic and wider political parameters in which British policy was formed. London utilised material including Home Office, Foreign Office and Treasury files to build a detailed picture of the internal politics and bureaucracy of Whitehall that dictated British refugee policy. The result is a more complete, albeit still critical, assessment of the British response.[27]

Moving away from these more narrative surveys, Kushner, in *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination* (1994), explored 'the reactions of liberal societies when confronted with an *illiberal* phenomenon', the Holocaust. Rather than assessing state responses or the high-level diplomacy of Jewish agencies, Kushner focuses on the role of popular opinion. His findings show that although liberal ideology was closely connected with tolerance, the reaction of the Western Allies to the highly intolerant Nazi regime was not straightforward condemnation. Rather, the strength of liberalism, with its belief in assimilation, led many people to see refugees as essentially problematic. Indeed, in the context of a refugee crisis caused by Nazi antisemitism, the Jewishness of the refugees mattered. Kushner concludes that '[o]utright hostility (or more rarely, sympathy) is easier to chart than what is the more normal and complicated response, ambivalence and ambiguity'.[28] It is these complexities that this thesis seeks to engage with more fully. Rather than simply documenting the ways Britain restricted immigration and refugee entry, the ideas underpinning restriction need to be assessed, taking into account the influence of not just liberalism but also other conceptual frameworks including race and humanitarianism.

While the existing historiography suggests that political and social ideologies were important in the formation of policy, this has yet to be detailed or sustained in relation to Jewish refugees in the 1930s and 1940s.[29] An important exception to this is the work carried out by David Cesarani on the importance of anti-alienism in the UK. His work identifies anti-alienism as a discourse which included socio-biological

[27] London, *Whitehall*.
[28] Tony Kushner, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination: A Social and Cultural History* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 17-18.
[29] Work by Gavin Schaffer on the role of race and liberalism in Britain's response to minorities in the interwar and war years are exceptions to this. See: Gavin Schaffer, 'Assets or "Aliens"? Race Science and the Analysis of Jewish Intelligence in Inter-war Britain', *Patterns of Prejudice*, 42/2 (2008); 'Re-thinking the History of Blame: Britain and Minorities during the Second World War', *National Identities*, 8/4 (2006), pp. 401-419.

vocabulary to describe the 'other' as well as the wavering nature of humanitarian concern to provide asylum.[30] Cesarani's work also addresses some of the important dominant ideological influences, particularly race. However, more work on these ideological foundations, specifically analysing together the influence of liberalism, race and humanitarianism, would help develop the historiography and our understanding of British policy.

As stated at the outset of this introduction, this thesis explores the frameworks in which policy was formulated by looking at the issues in a colonial context. Britain's colonial response to the refugee crisis is most closely associated with the history of the British mandate rule of Palestine, the 1939 White Paper which limited Jewish refugee entry, and the creation of Israel in 1948. Scholarly work on Palestine has to navigate, in turn, the intensely personal and political nature of this complicated subject. However, there is a broader British colonial response that not only offers context to the question of Palestine but also provides a new angle from which to examine British responses.

This thesis argues that it is within the British tropical empire and Dominions (as well as the American Commonwealth) where we can see most clearly the ideological building blocks of the British and American response. A brief review of research in these areas helps identify important questions in the assessment of colonial refugee policy and of bystander studies more broadly.

First, scholarship on the British Dominion response to the Jewish refugee crisis has highlighted the limited nature of Australia's, Canada's and South Africa's refugee and immigration policies and the importance of racial thinking in the construction of these limitations. The Dominions, designated 'white settler colonies', wanted to control the racial make-up of their populations, and as such, racial discrimination had long been at the centre of their immigration practices.[31]

[30] David Cesarani, 'An Alien Concept? The Continuity of Anti-Alienism in British Society before 1940', in: David Cesarani and Tony Kushner (eds), The Internment of Aliens in Twentieth Century Britain (London, 1993).

[31] See: Marjory Harper and Stephen Constantine, *Migration and Empire* (Oxford, 2012); Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality* (Cambridge, 2008); R.A. Huttenback, 'The British Empire as a "White Man's Country" – Racial Attitudes and Immigration Legislation in the Colonies of White Settlement', *Journal of British Studies*, 13/1 (1973); Daniel Gorman, 'Wider and Wider Still?: Racial Politics, Intra-

Conceptions of 'otherness' were based on more than just colour and involved liberal concern over assimilation. This was particularly the case in relation to Jewish refugees who, although 'white', were feared because of their perceived inability to assimilate into the social and economic structures of the Dominions. Therefore, Dominion refugee and immigration policies were not just an expression of race or antisemitism, but rather the natural response in a world where liberalism, race and humanitarianism helped shape action (see chapter two).[32]

While the Dominion historiography has established the limits set by liberalism, race, and humanitarianism within a British-specific system, other imperial contexts develop how these ideological frameworks interacted with practical challenges of settlement in tropical climates. Specifically, the Philippines (a US Commonwealth between 1935 and 1946), the Dominican Republic (part of the US's sphere of influence in Latin America) and Shanghai (an international settlement until 1941, where Britain had vested and arguably colonial interests) have drawn some scholarly attention.

Recent scholarship on the Philippines as a site of significant settlement for the Jewish diaspora provides information about some of the restrictions and priorities that influenced refugee settlement in the territory and colonial space more generally.[33] The Philippines offers examples of two kinds of settlement plans. First, the controlled entry of limited, individually-selected refugees was relatively successful. This was based on a number of factors. The established Jewish

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Imperial Immigration and the Absence of an Imperial Citizenship in the British Empire', *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, 3/3 (2002).

[32] For Australia, see: Paul R. Bartrop, 'Indifference and Inconvenience: Jewish Refugees and Australia, 1933-45', in: Paul R. Bartrop (ed.), *False Havens: The British Empire and the Holocaust* (Lanham, MD, 1995). For Canada, see Lois Foster, 'No Northern Option: Canada and Refugees from Nazism Before the Second World War', in: Bartrop, *False Havens*; W. Peter Ward, *White Canada Forever: Popular Attitudes and Public Policy Towards Orientals in British Columbia* (Montreal, 1990); Valerie Knowles, *Strangers at Our Gates: Canadian Immigration and Immigration Policy, 1540-1990* (Toronto, 1992). For South Africa, see Edna Bradlow, 'South African Policy and Jewish Refugee Immigration in the 1930s', in: Bartrop, *False Havens*; Edna Bradlow, 'Empire Settlement and South African Immigration Policy, 1910-1948', in: Stephen Constantine (ed.), *Emigrants and Empire: British Settlement in the Dominions between the Wars* (Manchester, 1990); Frieda Sichel, *From Refugee to Citizen: A Sociological Study of the Immigrants from Hitler-Europe Who Settled in Southern Africa* (Cape Town, 1966).

[33] Feingold, *The Politics of Rescue*, pp. 76, 94, 97-99, 108, 111, 300; Frank Ephraim, *Escape to Manila: From Nazi Tyranny to Japanese Terror* (Urbana, IL, 2003); Frank Ephraim, 'The Mindanao Plan: Political Obstacles to Jewish Refugee Settlement', *Holocaust Genocide Studies*, 20/3 (2006); Dean J. Kotlowski, 'Breaching the Paper Walls: Paul V. McNutt and Jewish Refugees to the Philippines, 1938-1939', *Diplomatic History*, 33/5 (2009).

community in the Philippines accepted this refugee settlement, as those entering were deemed to be the 'right kind' of refugees, largely based on their employment, e.g. as medical workers but also mechanics, farmers, barbers and accountants.[34] Indeed, the President of the Philippines, Manuel L. Quezon, 'was interested in bolstering the island nation economically by admitting skilled Jewish workers'.[35] This also suited 'liberal' views on race and assimilability. Although the US was more open to 'ethnic pluralism' than Britain, it still preferred assimilation of refugees and immigrants,[36] even in its Commonwealth territory.

Furthermore, the success of the scheme highlighted the importance of the positive working relationship established between Paul V. McNutt (the American High Commissioner), Jewish representatives and Philippine officials in the pursuit of securing Jewish settlement. McNutt was unusual in his support for Jewish entry, but as a pro-Zionist, anti-racist and largely tolerant man, he truly believed that liberalism was the antithesis of the fascism sweeping across Europe. The way that McNutt conceptualised the issues shared many similarities with British colonial officials. For example, his desire to respond to the abhorrent Nazi persecution of Jews, working within the law and the preference for certain kinds of Jews all reflected ideas evident in British policy-making discussions.[37]

The second type of plan was large-scale settlement, and this was far less successful. Specifically, the Mandiano Plan aimed to colonise part of the Philippines with 10,000 agricultural settlers. Quezon hoped to use Jewish settlers to help 'drown' out the large number of Muslim Moros and to neutralize the influence of Japanese immigrations who inhabited the island.[38] Although initially popular with the US State Department, enthusiasm waned as war approached and difficulties emerged, especially in regard to local Filipino opposition. The plan ultimately failed. Ephraim argues that the large-scale settlement of a 'racially and religiously

[34] Kotlowski, 'Breaching the Paper Walls', pp. 882, 885.
[35] Jonathan Goldstein and Dean Kotlowski, 'The Jews of Manila: Manuel Quezon, Paul McNutt, and the Politics and Consequences of Holocaust Rescue', in: Manfred Hutter (ed.), *Between Mumbai and Manila. Judaism in Asia since the Founding of the State of Israel* (Bonn, 2013), p. 131.
[36] Kushner, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination*, p. 58.
[37] Kotlowski, 'Breaching the Paper Walls', pp. 873-875, 887-888.
[38] Goldstein and Kotlowski, 'The Jews of Manila', p. 131.

different' group was 'fraught with difficulties'.[39] The failure of the Mandiano Plan demonstrated the difficulties inherent in using refugee colonisation for programmes of social engineering and state formation. Liberal and humanitarian agendas only stretched so far, and as a result, large-scale agricultural and development colonisation schemes, which went against these strongly held liberal principles, were largely unsuccessful.

Nonetheless, large-scale Jewish colonisation was also attempted in the Dominican Republic and with relatively greater success. Historical assessments of the venture have highlighted the practical difficulties that settlement schemes faced in tropical territories. Marion A. Kaplan outlined the settler response in her work, *Dominican Haven: The Jewish Refugee Settlement in Sosúa 1940-1945* (2008). Allen Wells (the child of Sosúa settler, Heinrich Wasservogel) wrote *Tropical Zion: General Trujilo, FDR, and the Jews of Sosúa* (2009), in which he contextualised the settlement in terms of the local (i.e. General Trujilo and the Dominican Republic) and geopolitical (i.e. American refugee and rescue policy action) realities.[40]

Jewish settlement in the Dominican Republic is estimated to have saved about 3,000 lives, taking into account the settlers in the capital, the specific settlement of Sosúa and the visas given to potential refugees. As countries around the world were adopting increasingly restrictive immigration legislation, the Dominican Republic was unique in actively encouraging Jewish refugee settlement. It was the only country in attendance at the Évian Conference (1938) that offered any settlement opportunities, offering entry for up to 100,000 Jewish refugees. While other countries refused refugee entry because of concerns regarding what large-scale entry would do to their population demographics, the Dominican Republic wanted to encourage white settlement, particularly Jewish settlement, as a way of combating their own perceived racial crisis. In fact, Dominican 'leaders attributed European bourgeois values, that they themselves shared, to Jews, including thrift, hard work, urbanity, cosmopolitanism, and business skills, and hoped to bring Jews

[39] Ephraim, 'The Mindanao Plan', p. 429.
[40] Marion A. Kaplan, *Dominican Haven: The Jewish Refugee Settlement In Sosúa, 1940-1945* (New York, 2008); Allen Wells, *Tropical Zion: General Trujillo, FDR, and the Jews of Sosúa* (Durham, NC, 2009).

to their developing nation'.[41] Ironically, the President of the Dominican Republic, Rafael Trujillo, while offering safety to persecuted Jews, had overseen the massacre of several thousand Haitians at the border, in the attempt to reduce the Caribbean/African population.[42]

Despite the complicated origins, the Dominican Republic settlement eventually saw about 500 refugees settle in Sosúa (with an additional 200 passing through). Although the Sosúa settlement received local and international support (and finance), it never flourished. Importantly, the settlement did not suffer because of negative racial perceptions of Jewish settlers. Rather, the failure can be attributed to practical reasons. For example, the US, despite its initial support, eventually restricted the issuing of transit visas necessary to reach the Dominican Republic. Jewish attitudes to the difficulties of settlement also limited Sosúa's success. The farming enterprises were challenging, and these difficulties were often compounded by some settlers who were not necessarily practically equipped or mentally adjusted to the hard life of physical labour the project required. Moreover, disparities between the numbers of single Jewish men and women were a source of tension that could not be redressed. Cultural differences between Eastern and Western Jews also caused problems that limited the success of the settlement.[43]

Studies of settlement in the Dominican Republic show how important the refugee experience was in colonisation schemes. While optimistic policy-makers might have assumed that an alternative place of settlement to Palestine would have alleviated the refugee crisis, the reality was much more complex. Although lives might have been saved, had broader and more generous settlement plans been pursued, this perspective treats Jewish refugees as passive actors who were simply at the whim of colonial and social planners. The inclusion of the refugee perspective in this study (details of which will be outlined below) allows historians to see the complexity of colonial expectations of assimilation and 'successful' settlers, and moreover, emphasises how far these were sometimes detached from the human reality, not only of the refugee experience but also of colonial social planning. Not

[41] Kaplan, *Dominican Haven*, pp. 3, 22.
[42] *Ibid*., p. 23.
[43] *Ibid*., pp. 3, 135. These difficulties are discussed in full in chapter 6.

on the scale originally offered, the settlement scheme was a well-researched project, led by Jewish agencies with the tacit support of the Dominican and American governments and became an important example of the success but also the inherent limitations of agricultural European settlement in a tropical climate.

Practical challenges were also evident in the case of Jewish settlement in Shanghai. In the 1930s, Shanghai was an 'open port', which meant that no visa was required for entry. As immigration restrictions increased across the world, many European Jews sought safety there. In the end, approximately 17,000 Jewish refugees entered Shanghai, mostly settling in the Hongkew district of the international settlement.[44] In 1941, as war spread to the Pacific theatre, Jewish refugees found themselves under Japanese rule (as did those Jews who had settled in the Philippines).

Scholarly work on Jewish settlement in Shanghai started with David Kranzler's *Japanese, Nazis and Jews: The Jewish Refugee Community of Shanghai, 1938-1945* (1976) in which he argued that rather than mirroring Nazi Jewish policy, the Japanese sought to utilise alleged Jewish power and money for Japan's benefit.[45] Later work by Pamela Rotner Sakamoto placed Japanese action towards Jewish refugees in a diplomatic context.[46] Gao Bei, in *Shanghai Sanctuary* (2013), has taken up the story from Chinese and Japanese perspectives, emphasising the importance of perceptions of Jews in policy formation.[47] Other work, such as Marcia Reynders Ristaino's, *Port of Last Resort*, shifts the focus to the refugee communities themselves and examines the Slavic and Jewish refugees who settled in Shanghai in the 1920s.[48] These works serve to highlight the importance of racial identity in refugee policy. Of particular importance, Gao emphasises the influence of politics in Great Power policy towards Shanghai, arguing that it reveals 'much about their

[44] USHMM, 'German and Austrian Jewish Refugees in Shanghai', *USHMM Holocaust Encyclopedia*, <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007091>, accessed 14 April 2014.
[45] David Kranzler, *Japanese, Nazis and Jews: The Jewish Refugee Community of Shanghai, 1938-1945* (New York, 1976).
[46] Pamela Rotner Sakamoto, *Japanese Diplomats and Jewish Refugees: A World War II Dilemma* (Westport, CT, 1998).
[47] Gao Bei, *Shanghai Sanctuary: Chinese and Japanese Policy toward European Jewish Refugees during World War II* (Oxford, 2013).
[48] Marcia Reynders Ristaino, *Port Of Last Resort: The Diaspora Communities of Shanghai* (Stanford, CA, 2001).

national priorities, their international agendas, and their perceptions of the global balance of power'.[49]

The work carried out on the Dominions, the Philippines, the Dominican Republic and Shanghai suggest that ideas about race, liberalism and humanitarianism interacted over refugee settlement in colonial contexts. In the context of British tropical colonial territory, these issues are brought into even starker relief, but this remains largely absent from the historiography.[50] While schemes of settlement discussed for various colonial territories have been acknowledged by some historians, they have not been fully studied. Indeed, Wasserstein pays little attention to colonial settlement plans, arguing that they were soon 'consigned to the oblivion of the archives', never being transformed into active policy.[51] However, by removing these schemes from the 'oblivion of the archives', the complexities and priorities of liberal democratic policy-makers in response to the Holocaust come into sharper focus.

Refugees themselves have also made some attempt to prevent the stories and experiences of those who found safety in more unusual places from being lost. Ephraim, who experienced exile in the Philippines, has published his own memoirs as well as scholarly work on the Jewish experience in the Far East. Likewise, several memoirs on life in the Shanghai have also appeared.[52] Fewer published sources exist on refugee experience in Africa or the West Indies. Notable exceptions on the

[49] Gao, *Shanghai Sanctuary*, pp. 3-4.

[50] Major works on the British and American responses to the refugee crisis mention colonial settlement options in passing. Moreover, they do so mostly with reference to Foreign Office and Home Office files. Colonial Office files are referenced in regard to Palestine, but otherwise they remain an under-used resource. Exceptions to this pattern include some work on various African colonies, including, Frank Shapiro, *Haven in Africa* (Jerusalem, 2002); Hugh MacMillan and Frank Shapiro, *Zion in Africa The Jews of Zambia* (London, 1999); Robert G. Weisbord, *Africa Zion: The Attempt to Establish a Jewish Colony in the East Africa Protectorate 1903-1905* (Philadelphia, PA, 1968). Work on the West African colony of the Gold Coast has been carried out by Anne Hugon in 'Les Colonies, un Refuge pour led Juifs? Les Cas de la Gold Coast (1938-1945)', *VingtiemeSiecle, Revue d'histoire*, 4/84 (2004). On Jamaica, see Paul Bartrop, 'From Lisbon to Jamaica: A Study of British Refugees Rescue during the Second World War', *Immigrants and Minorities*, 13/1 (1994), pp. 48-64. For Mauritius, see Genevieve Pitot, *The Mauritian Shekel: The Story of the Jewish Detainees in Mauritius 1940-1945* (Mauritius, 1998). For the West Indies, see Joanna Newman, *Nearly the New World: Refugees and the British West Indies, 1933–1945* (PhD thesis, University of Southampton, 1998).

[51] Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe*, p. 46.

[52] Published Shanghai refugee memoirs include Ernest G. Heppner, *Shanghai Refuge: A Memoir of the World War II Jewish Ghetto* (Lincoln, NE, 1993); Sigmund Tobias, *Strange Haven: A Jewish Childhood in Wartime Shanghai* (Urbana, IL, 1999).

former include Stefanie Zweig's *Nowhere in Africa* (2004). Although a fictionalised autobiography, it speaks to the general experience of life for refugees in British territory in Africa.[53] A collection of letters by Helga Voigt, a German who was Jewish by Nazi standards, is presented in *Letters from Helga 1934-1937* (2008). Although slightly earlier than the focus of this study, Helga's experiences in Tanganyika provide another example of refugee testimony of exile experience in Africa.[54] Other records of refugee experience in colonies such as Kenya, Cyprus and the West Indies do exist but remain unpublished in archives such as the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) in Washington.[55]

This thesis makes key interventions into two distinct historiographies. Firstly, as the literature review has made clear, it adds to studies of Britain and the Holocaust and bystander studies more broadly. However, in setting the problem in the colonial context, it also reveals new material about interwar imperial policy on issues such as multiculturalism, race (particularly 'whiteness') and development. As the literature on this field is vast and disparate and as the focus of this particular study requires an inter-disciplinary approach, it has been decided to place the relevant reviews of specific literatures in an opening, contextual section at the start of each chapter that will also deal with how my research engages with the topic. Broadly though, this thesis argues that the distinct nature of the interwar empire was a constant guiding principle for officials, and therefore the changing attitudes towards the nature, if not the fact, of British imperial rule are central to understanding colonial refugee policy.

In the interwar period, Britain's position of influence and control over colonised nations (whether formally or informally) was affected by particular ideas and understandings of Britain's colonial role. In the case of Britain's tropical colonies, theories of trusteeship and paternalism were of paramount importance.

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[53] Stefanie Zweig, *Nowhere in Africa: An Autobiographical Novel* (Madison, WI, 2004).

[54] Helga Voigt, *Letters from Helga 1934-1937: A Teen Bride Writes Home from East Africa*, translated by Evelyn Voigt (Renfrew, 2008).

[55] For the experience of refugee children in the colonial context, see Jennifer Reeve, '"No Common Mother Tongue or Fatherland": Jewish Refugee Children in British Kenya', in: Simone Gigliotti and Monica Tempian (eds), *The Young Victims of the Nazi Regime: Migration, the Holocaust, and Postwar Displacement* (London, forthcoming).

These principles were largely taken from Lord Lugard's influential work *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* (1922). He explained that:

> Let it be admitted from the outset that European brains, capital, and energy have not been, and never will be, expended in developing the resources of Africa from motives of pure philanthropy; that Europe is in Africa for the mutual benefit of her own industrial classes and of the native races in their progress to a higher plane; that the benefit can be made reciprocal and that it is the aim and desire of civilized administration to fulfil this dual mandates.[56]

From this, and based on his experiences in Nigeria, 'Lugard constructed a specific political doctrine for colonial administration in Africa', in which he argued that 'Britain had a double obligation to develop the colonies economically to produce for the outside world while preserving African culture and protecting Africans from exploitation by governing through "traditional" African leaders and institutions'.[57] There was some move toward a more developmental perspective, highlighted by the adoption of the Colonial Development and Welfare Act in 1940, but this did not remove completely the idea that the people in Britain's colonies were the charge of His Majesty's Government until they had been 'civilised' and were able to take their own lead in development and democracy.[58] These themes will be expanded more fully in chapter two and picked up again in the various case-studies used in the thesis.

**STRUCTURE**

The thesis has been structured thematically rather than chronologically for several reasons. Adopting a chronological approach across the numerous colonies investigated would have cluttered the thesis with a repetitive narrative with little analytical benefit. Indeed, a chronological narrative, while showing that, like British domestic policy, colonial policy towards Jewish refugees was limited, would have simply perpetuated the existing tendency in the historiography to outline a

[56] Michael D. Callahan, *Mandates and Empire: The League of Nations and Africa, 1914-1931* (Brighton, 1999), p. 73.
[57] *Ibid*.
[58] See: Stephen Constantine, *The Making of British Colonial Development Policy 1914-1940* (London, 1984); Michael Havinden and David Meredith, *Colonialism and Development: Britain and its Tropical Colonies, 1850-1960* (London, 1993); L.J. Butler, 'The Ambiguities of British Colonial Development Policy, 1938-48', in: Anthony Gorst, Lewis Johnman, and W. Scott Lucas (eds), *Contemporary British History, 1931-1961: Politics and the Limits of Policy* (London, 1991).

restrictive policy agenda without developing this to a study of the reasons for such a policy. That is not to say there is no value in such studies. The core findings of Louise London's excellent work are borne out by this study too. The bureaucratic nature of the British government and the limits this produced are relevant to the Colonial Office. However, the Colonial Office functioned very differently to other departments. As Ronald Hyam suggests, in contrast to the Colonial office, the Foreign Office 'was radically different, its main interest being in diplomatic accommodations without the responsibility of actually running any territories'. The departments were also different in practice. While Foreign Office record-keeping was 'sparser, less reflective', Colonial Office policy-making took place through an 'hierarchical', 'extensive and meticulous' process of minuting. As such, a record has been left of 'the reasoning behind decisions'.[59] Studies of the 'Foreign Office mind' have shown the value of investigating the 'core belief system', 'set of values and ideas', accepted understandings, and 'unspoken assumptions'. This thesis investigates some of these aspects in relation to the Colonial Office and refugees and, as such, a new window from which to look at the wider ideological and intellectual influences on policy.[60]

The selection of liberalism, race and humanitarianism in part stems from the work of others. Most obviously, and as the second chapter details, my study of liberalism is indebted to, but also builds on, the work of Kushner. The other themes explored here are those that emerged most strongly from the source material studied. Questions of race and the tension between various humanitarianisms seemed to be at the root of the examples that appeared in government files. Other intellectual schemas such as class or gender could have been included and are intimately linked to the themes that are studied here, but the frameworks of class and gender did not emerge as often as explicit explanatory themes for the historical actors involved. That is not to say they were not important or that they were not referenced. However, class, for example, seemed to connect so closely with race in the colonial setting – racial hierarchies mirrored class divisions; the fear of the black

[59] Ronald Hyam, 'Bureaucracy and Trusteeship in the Colonial Empire', in: Ronald Hyam (ed.), *Understanding the British Empire* (Cambridge, 2010), p. 217.
[60] T.G. Otte, *The Foreign Office Mind: The Making of British Foreign Policy, 1865-1914* (Cambridge, 2011), pp. 3-4.

majority in the colonies was similar to the fear of the growing working-class in Britain; entry into the colonies was based, in part, on financial assets – that it was the former that I decided to investigate more fully. Likewise, while gender roles and identities were important – the 'right kind' of settlers were understood to be men; fear of the 'other' was often linked to their real or imagined relationship to white women – this was also more overtly discussed in racial terms, meaning that the focus of this study was once more directed there. Ultimately, the selection of the themes of liberalism, race and humanitarianism aims not necessarily to discount other frameworks of analysis but to elucidate the contemporary preoccupations and influences that were most evident in my study of the primary material.

Chapter one examines the context of the refugee problem and the colonial response in more detail and establishes the practical realities with which the intellectual schemas of liberalism, race and humanitarianism interacted. Ideas do not develop in a vacuum, and the challenges of international relations in the interwar years, the changing and developing colonial context as well as the unprecedented and unpredictable ways in which the refugee crisis developed were responded to by officials without the benefit of hindsight. Mapping these conflicting and changing real-world developments at the outset of this study provides a tangible basis on which to overlay ideological concerns in order to see how they evolved into the policy of linking colonial development with refugees. Therefore, this chapter establishes important information on: (1) the international context, including the League of Nations, Palestine, appeasement and Anglo-American relations; (2) colonial perspectives on new approaches to colonial policy as well as departmental differences and the way in which refugee agencies and advocates interacted with ideas of colonial settlement; and (3) the development of the refugee crisis with particular focus on turning points, such as the Évian Conference, Kristallnacht, war and internment, and the Bermuda Conference.

The second chapter examines the impact that liberalism had on the British response to the refugee crisis. This is done, firstly, by establishing the ways in which liberalism impacted refugee entry into Britain and into the British Dominions. Next, specific colonial examples, including plans for large- and small-scale settlement in Kenya, Northern Rhodesia and Cyprus, evidenced by both official files and refugee

testimony, highlight the tensions inherent in liberalism over individual and group rights. They further show that questions of group versus individual rights and assimilation went to the heart of the restrictive policy Britain adopted both domestically and in the colonies. For policy-makers, 'successful' assimilation involved limiting local opposition (i.e. political problems), maintaining colonial social order (i.e. racial hierarchies) and the assumption by refugees of certain occupations such as farming (i.e. protection of local economies). More broadly, it is argued that it was the contradictions and complexities the tensions created that allowed room for the development of a specific colonial refugee policy agenda that focused on colonial development.

The third chapter examines the role of race on refugee policy. As many historians have agreed, antisemitism is not a sufficient explanation for Britain's restrictive policy, although the Jewish identity of the refugees clearly mattered. By examining the question in the colonial setting, the complexities of this issue are more starkly exposed, and what emerges is the fact that race mattered in specific ways but often in relation to other races as well as to policy-makers' identities as white and British. This chapter will show how Colonial Office perceptions of race impacted their attitudes towards refugees and the resulting policy initiatives. Firstly, the contemporary understanding of racial groups – specifically, Jewish, black, Indian and white – will be explored. These attitudes will then be analysed within the context of specific case-studies: land settlement policy in Kenya; internment of enemy aliens in the colonies; and refugee attitudes towards race.

The fourth chapter will outline the tensions in British policy over various kinds of humanitarianisms. The question of refugee entry into the colonies brought the immediate need of refugee relief into direct conflict with developmental forms of humanitarianism that were increasingly central to British colonial policy. This conflict will be assessed through the study of British colonial policy towards two case-studies: refugee boats and internment. Chapter four will also unpack the assumption that a nation-state could and should have acted against perceived national interest in response to humanitarian need. It will do so by assessing the history of humanitarianism, the connections between humanitarianism and empire and the ways these impacted Britain's role in the international humanitarian

response to the Jewish refugee crisis of the 1930s. Understanding the clash of these two humanitarianisms is the final stepping stone to understanding the policy of compromise that emerged among colonial officials – that of linking refugees to colonial development – which is the subject of the final chapter.

The final chapter draws the core argument of this thesis together by examining the way in which the three frameworks of liberalism, race and humanitarianism helped shape a specific policy of compromise that linked refugee entry with colonial development. This policy of compromise sought to harness: the limits of liberalism in terms of immigration, the views on the ways that different races interacted, and the benefits of developmental humanitarianism with the needs of the colonies. The chapter will establish the history of colonial development, outline the role of Malcolm MacDonald (the Colonial Secretary for much of the period when these plans were under discussion) in linking refugees and development and then examine two case-studies. First, the use of refugee doctors to help develop the colonies' social and welfare infrastructure will be considered. This was an area of growing interest, and questions of population and the development of social planning became central to policy-making. Race and liberalism featured highly in the Colonial Office's preference for this idea. Second, the focus on large-scale refugee re-settlement as a method of developing a colony will be assessed through the example of British Guiana. Liberalism, race and a hope to unite two competing forms of humanitarianism were the reasons behind both support of this idea and its ultimate failure. In fact, it is in the support for and resistance to these potential plans that the place of the intellectual schemas analysed in this thesis become clear.

**SOURCES**

Three types of primary documents form the basis of this research. First and foremost, this is a project detailing government policy. Therefore the main type of evidence used is Colonial Office files found at the UK National Archives in Kew. Colonial Office files include a range of topic specific files (immigration, refugees, internment) and are geographically diverse. These issues have not left a material record across all colonies. This is primarily because the refugee question concerned some territories more than others. Colonies such as Kenya and Cyprus were heavily

preoccupied with the issue, and an abundance of material remains as evidence of this. Other territories where large-scale settlement was not actively considered or was not deemed to be likely, such as territories in Asia, are therefore largely absent from the story. That is not to say they did not feature in the story at all. For example, Hong Kong, located in the heart of the British Asian empire was a place of transit for many Jewish refugees, especially those heading to Shanghai or the Philippines. However, the issue has not left large amounts of physical evidence and therefore appears little in this study.

While the Colonial Office formed just one part of the British government, the selection of evidence has been limited to Colonial Office files as domestic records including those of the Foreign and Home Offices as well as the Treasury have been used extensively by scholars, including, most recently and significantly, Louise London. Instead, this study aims to tell an untold perspective of the same story. The works of those historians that have focused on the domestic and foreign policy aspects of the refugee crisis are utilised to help recount the domestic context, and their findings are expanded by looking at the questions from a new angle.

Official policy documents are also contextualised and supplemented by the use of private papers of officials, most significantly Malcolm MacDonald, as well as newspaper reports and editorials. Many clippings of newspaper articles from Britain and the colonies were attached to the official files relating to issues discussed in this thesis. Moreover, these clippings were then also referred to in minutes and policy discussions. The use of the press a gauge for popular opinion is of course problematic. Nonetheless, the content of these articles was, at times, a clear source of preoccupation among policy-making officials. Therefore, newspapers are referenced when they appeared in the files, and *The Times*, a paper many officials would have read, is used to flesh out some of the issues and debates that were engaging the political and educated elite at this time.[61]

Finally, this thesis also makes use of refugee testimony. This project was initially conceived as a more traditional policy study. However, the policy files

[61] The importance of the press, both at home and in the colonies, is emphasised by John Darwin, who argues that '[b]y the late nineteenth century, [...] an "imperial press system" had come into being' (John Darwin, *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World-System 1830-1970* (Cambridge, 2009), p. 5).

themselves included hints at the personal stories behind policy-making and its impact. Many refugees or their advocates wrote directly to the Colonial Office asking for entry and help. They sometimes included details of refugee qualifications and work experience, photographs and letters of recommendation. The discussions these prompted came alive when they were associated with specific people. In order to pursue this further, the testimony of refugees has been selected to illuminate further the findings of this research. Five refugee families' stories form the core of the refugee testimony used (and will be introduced fully below). In addition, snippets of recollections from other refugees appear where relevant.

Refugee experiences are not included in a traditional linear narrative and therefore do not appear altogether or in chronological order. Rather, relevant testimony is placed in the context of the subject of each chapter to further illustrate the way that official policy was experienced by refugees. This structure was adopted for two main reasons, although they are connected. The first is that colonial policy was made in the abstract, rarely in relation to individuals (although occasions when this was the case are also included). Therefore, to present the refugee testimony in a standard narrative form gives their experiences a coherence their lives evidently did not have during this time.[62]

Second, just as colonial policy was not necessarily made in relation to individual refugees, it was also often generated in such general terms that it was also detached from reality. As discussed, official expectations and responses to assimilation, conceptions of 'successful' settlers or the realities of internment show how far policy was sometimes detached from the human reality not only of the refugee experience, but also colonial social planning and policy objectives. Therefore, the real, lived experiences of refugees, placed alongside policy implementation are a powerful counter to large, policy-driven histories that often neaten narratives of official history. As this thesis shows, although guided by general principles of restriction and protection, policy was not fixed, but rather

[62] In his analysis of Saul Friedländer's *The Years of Extermination*, Alon Confino argues, 'By using Jewish individual testimonies that are interspersed in the chronological history of the extermination, Friedländer creates a narratives based on ruptures and breaks [...]', which were in turn representative of their experiences ('Narrative Form and Historical Sensation: On Saul Friedländer's *The Years of Extermination*', *History and Theory*, 48 (2009), pp. 199, 209-211).

shifted and developed in response to numerous external and ideological factors. Below, brief biographical information is given on each of the refugees who feature in the thesis.

Walter, Jettel and Stefanie Zweig found refuge in Kenya for the duration of the war. Walter Zweig, a Jewish legal professional from Breslau (now Wrocław) arrived in Kenya in early 1938. With the help of the local Jewish community, he managed to afford the £50 per person entry deposit required for his wife and daughter, Jettel and Stefanie, who arrived in Mombasa in July 1938 on the SS *Adolph Woermann*.[63] The family struggled through wartime Kenya as Walter had little skill for the agricultural work to which he was set. Most of Zweig's immediate family (both sets of grandparents and her aunts and uncles) died in the Holocaust. At the end of the war, Zweig's father was keen to return to Germany and took up a judicial role in Frankfurt. Zweig's autobiographical novel *Nowhere in Africa* (*Nirgendwo in Afrika*) recounts her childhood in Kenya and was made into an Oscar-winning German-language film in 2002. Zweig's recollections are used to highlight several key aspects of British immigration and refugee policy, particularly the way liberal ideas impacted immigration practices and the importance of race in imperial refugee experiences.

The Berg family also found refuge in Kenya. In May 1939, Jill Pauly (née Gisella Berg) and Inge Katzenstein (née Berg), two Jewish sisters from just outside Cologne fled Nazi-controlled Europe for Kenya. Jill was six years old, and Inge was 10. The Berg's close-knit, observant Jewish family managed to escape almost intact; seventeen members of the extended family found refuge in Kenya.[64] There they established a relatively successful cattle farming business and stayed until after the war when they departed again for America. Jill and Inge both married other Holocaust survivors and now live in the Washington DC area and volunteer at the USHMM. The sisters' experiences help illuminate the way refuge in the colonies

[63] Natalie Eppelsheimer, *Homecomings and Homemakings: Stefanie Zweig and the Exile Experience In, Out of, and Nowhere in Africa* (PhD thesis, University of California, Irvine, 2008), p. 136.
[64] Jill Pauly and Inge Katzenstein, Interview, *USHMM First Person Podcast Series* (2003), <www.ushmm.org/remember/office-of-survivor-affairs/survivor-volunteer/jill-pauly>, accessed 30 October 2013; Jill Pauly, 'Oral History Interview with Jill Pauly', 27 February 1998, RG-50.106*0092, USHMM Permanent Collection, <collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn506657>, accessed 30 October 2013.

raised questions about the racial identity of refugees themselves and others as well as their perspective on internment.

Heinz Bauer and his family also found safety in Kenya. Bauer was a young Austrian Jew who was studying medicine at the University of Vienna at the time of the *Anschluss*, after which his family immediately decided to leave. Despite much difficulty, Heinz and his brother made their way to Kenya via Paris and London. The family were eventually reunited in Kenya, where they enjoyed a relatively settled life, with Heinz taking work as a farmer, his brother, as a dentist and his mother teaching piano. After the war, the whole family settled in the US, where Heinz became a professor of pathology. Bauer's journey to Kenya and experiences there were shaped by his age and a good deal of luck, and he provides a different perspective to Zweig and the Bergs on issues including immigration policies and internment.[65]

Moving away from the African refugee experience, Frederick Wohl eventually found refuge in colonial Cyprus. As a young man from Baden-Baden in Germany, his opportunities were eventually so limited by Nazi anti-Jewish restrictions that he opted to go to Greece in 1936 to continue his studies. By 1938, his parents and sister were also living in Greece, but when the Greek government refused to renew their permits of residence, they sought safety elsewhere. After attempting many different destinations, the Wohl family, in part due to personal connections, eventually found safety in Cyprus. Wohl's experiences help illuminate both immigration practices and the refugee experience of internment.

Finally, the experiences of Arthur Silbiger move the story to the West Indies. Silbiger, a Dutch Jew, escaped his home in The Hague in April 1942 with his parents, and brother Herman. The family's journey to the West Indies was not planned and took over a year. Brief stays in Antwerp and Brussels followed, before the family reached Paris. In June 1942, the Silbigers travelled south, leaving Vichy France. Bureaucratic problems and health concerns kept the Silbigers in the south of France for some months. In October 1942, the family received visas for the Dutch West

[65] Heinz Bauer, memoir (unpublished, 1940), RG-02.083, USHMM Permanent Collection; Walter Lacquer, *Generation Exodus: The Fate of Young Jewish Refugees from Nazi Germany* (Hanover, NH, 2001), p. 14.

Indies and began to prepare for their departure. More delays in France finally saw the Silbigers cross into Spain where they boarded the *Marques de Comillas* destined for Dutch Guiana. However, their entry into Dutch Guiana was revoked during their passage, and in December 1942, they found themselves held in the Gibraltar Camp on Jamaica. Although the family eventually found refuge in the Dutch West Indies and ultimately settled in the US, the recollections of internment and life in British West Indies feature in this thesis' discussions of internment and colonial development.[66]

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The study of the British colonial response offers clear examples of the conflict of ideas and perceptions that dominated policy. These included tensions between: the rights and responsibilities of the British government to different races; humanitarianism and paternalism; and liberalism, imperialism and immigration. The ideological frameworks of liberalism, race and humanitarianism will be used as a way of exploring the complex interactions within these tensions. The following chapters provide the historical and historiographical context of the frameworks as well as case-studies of how these impacted and shaped the application of colonial policy and the refugee experience.

[66] Silbiger, Alexander, memoir, *Our Great Escape: The Story of a Dutch Family's Flight from Persecution* (unpublished, 2005), 2006.27, USHMM.

## Chapter One:
## International Relations, Empire and Refugees

Before considering the three ideological schemas of liberalism, race and humanitarianism more fully, this chapter provides important contextual information on three key areas: (1) the international context; (2) the colonial context of the interwar years; and (3) the refugee crisis across the whole period under study, 1938-1943. While highlighting the importance of liberalism, race and humanitarianism is the primary aim of this thesis, policy-making rarely happens on purely ideological grounds or in political and cultural isolation. Colonial policy-makers were subject to the broader international context in which they formulated policy, influenced by dominant trends and discourses in their department and responsive to the changing nature of the refugee crisis itself. These factors must be highlighted and explained in order to connect more abstract ideas with practical policy-making. Therefore we must start with this thorough grounding in the interwar British, European and colonial worlds before moving to the main body of the thesis's argument.

**INTERNATIONAL CONTEXTS**

The refugee problem was contemplated through the lens of four important and interconnected international contexts: the League of Nations, the Palestine Mandate, appeasement of Germany and Anglo-American relations. Although the League of Nations had helped to provide a response to refugee questions in the early interwar years, the diminishing success of its responses to the German refugee crisis, questions of sovereignty and the general deterioration in European diplomatic relations made the league a focus of British concern in the 1930s. Palestine, under British control as a League of Nations mandate, became the destination of choice for many refugees leaving Europe. As the rising levels of immigration caused tension with the Arab population, Britain was compelled to respond. Another diplomatic imperative for Britain was to improve relations with Germany. The policy of choice, appeasement, impacted decisions on refugee policy. These included the failure to admonish Germany for its treatment of its Jewish population, as well as Britain's response to suggestions of refugee settlement in the

empire. Finally, Anglo-American relations informed so much of British action, and understanding the wide context of this as well as the ways it specifically interacted with the refugee problem is of vital importance to this study.

**THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS**

The League of Nations was the most powerful manifestation of Europe's interest in internationalism in the interwar years. It was established after the First World War, with the hope that it would help stop further armed conflict, deal with questions of sovereignty in the light of the changed geopolitical context and (what many contemporaries saw as a small sideline) help answer other humanitarian problems, including disease and refugees, which were also products of the First World War.[1] Although created at the suggestion of its President, the US never became a member. Without America's leadership, the integrity of the League was muted from the outset.[2] Indeed, it limited its ability to act, including on refugee issues. The US's absence was soon compounded by the departure of other countries. German participation ended with the rise of Hitler in 1933. Italy withdrew its participation in 1936 following its invasion of Ethiopia. Similarly, Japan had exited after the Manchuria Incident in 1931. In the face of such expansionist actions, Susan Pedersen argues, the League's 'time-consuming and wordy deliberations drove the aggressor states out of the League, but not out of the invaded territory'.[3] Clearly unable to respond to these serious infringements on League ideas by major international powers, the League gradually lost legitimacy and power.

However, one area in which the League proved to be particularly successful was in the task of 'refugee advocacy'. Initially this was in response to Russian refugees and people fleeing the creation of new nation-states in the Baltic region.[4] In fact, the first major action taken by the League was the creation of a High Commissioner for Russian Refugees in 1921 to deal with the huge numbers of refugees fleeing the Russian Revolution and the resulting civil war. The newly appointed High Commissioner, Fridtjof Nansen, a Norwegian explorer, diplomat and

[1] Susan Pedersen, 'Back to the League of Nations: Review Essay', *American Historical Review*, 112/4 (2007), p. 1108.
[2] Claudena M. Skran, *Refugees in Inter-War Europe: The Emergence of a Regime* (New York, 1995), p. 87.
[3] Pedersen, 'Back to the League', p. 1093.
[4] Skran, *Refugees in Inter-War Europe*, p. 30; Pedersen, 'Back to the League', pp. 1091-1117.

humanitarian, was a powerful and successful refugee advocate.[5] On a personal level, he took an active role in highlighting the suffering of 300,000 'stateless and starving Armenian survivors'. In 1922, after winning the Nobel Peace Prize, he toured the US and Europe, emphasising the plight of Armenians. William F. Fuller explains that '[h]e felt that Europe's bloodless passivity toward Armenia and Armenians was as shameful as the bloody massacres perpetrated by the Turks'.[6]

Under his leadership, the League helped facilitate the mass movement of many hundreds of thousands of people, sometimes in less than ideal ways. For example, he played a notable role in the forced Greek-Turkish population movement in the early 1920s.[7] He also played a central role in the development of the 'Nansen Passport', a document which allowed stateless people to cross borders. This pragmatic document was an important change in refugee affairs.

The League's refugee work continued under Nansen, co-ordinated from the Nansen Office for Refugees, until his death in 1930. By 1931, many believed that the refugee problem would be solved in the next seven years. This was reflected in the planned closure of the Nansen Office for Refugees at the end of 1938.[8] However, as the interwar period progressed and additional refugee problems developed, it was recognised that in fact new bodies would be needed. The growing number of refugees from Germany led to the creation of a High Commissioner for Refugees coming from Germany. The Commissioner was assigned the role of dealing with this new refugee movement in parallel to the work of the Nansen Office. In order to ensure German agreement, the body was established away from general League business, with its own budget (that it needed to repay within its first year) and located in Lausanne**,** rather than Geneva.[9] The first High Commissioner (and future US ambassador to Israel), James G. McDonald, was another passionate refugee

[5] Michael R. Marrus, *The Unwanted: European Refugees from the First World War Through the Cold War* (Philadelphia, PA, 2002), pp. 86-91.
[6] William F. Fuller, 'Peace Profile: Fridtjof Nansen', *Peace Review: A Journal of Social Justice*, 20/2 (2008), p. 239.
[7] Marrus explains that Nansen was supposedly the first to suggest an organised exchange of populations as Greek and Turkish relations rapidly deteriorated. Although the forced expulsion of different groups was already underway, the officially-organised movement placed a disproportionate burden of people on Greece, causing many problems in the interwar years (*The Unwanted*, pp. 97-106).
[8] Wyman, *Paper Walls*, p. 31.
[9] Skran, *Refugees in Inter-War Europe*, p. 197.

advocate who, rather than simply dealing with the result of refugee movements, encouraged the League to deal with the root cause of refugee-producing countries. However, McDonald tendered his resignation in 1935, shortly after the Nuremberg Laws, in protest against the limited powers of the High Commissioner position, restricted as it was by finance and separation from the League. He was succeeded by Sir Neill Malcolm in 1936 and Sir Herbert Emerson in 1938.

When it became clear that the international refugee problem would not be resolved by the proposed date of 1938, discussion turned to the possibility of merging the League's various bodies that dealt with refugee questions, such as the Nansen Office and the High Commissioner for Refugees. This took place in May 1938, and Emerson became the High Commissioner for Refugees in January 1939. Emerson was a former member of the Indian Civil Service, where he had built a reputation for effective administration and strong diplomatic skills. His work in India spanned over thirty years, and this background undoubtedly informed his near decade of work in the humanitarian field.[10] The new body Emerson headed was charged with providing legal aid to refugees, coordinating private organisations' humanitarian endeavours and assisting private groups and government efforts in the process of emigration and settlement.[11] However, as this new body set out to respond to refugee problems, the scale of the refugee issue expanded several times in 1938: after *Anschluss* in March, after the Munich Agreement in September and finally after *Kristallnacht* in November.

During this year of crisis, the ability of the League to deal with the new scale of the refugee problem was called into question and undermined by external events. A clear sign of the League's diminishing power in refugee matters was the instigation of the international refugee conference at Évian in July 1938 (discussed later in this chapter). The US, which was notably absent from the League, called the meeting, and this, along with the resulting Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, became the new forum in which refugee questions were discussed. However, these initiatives were still directly related to action by the League of

[10] Tan Tai-Yong, 'Emerson, Sir Herbert William (1881-1962)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (2006), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/67177>, accessed 6 March 2015.
[11] Wyman, *Paper Walls*, p. 32.

Nations. As Wyman explains, 'the delegates who brought the new committee into being repeatedly specified that its efforts would complement, not supplant, those of the League'. This was particularly a British concern; however '[q]ualms about overlapping responsibility ended when, in February 1939, Sir Herbert Emerson, head of the League's newly formed High Commission for Refugees, was also named director of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees'. Although the two organizations remained separate, Emerson's role in both ensured co-ordination of what little action did take place.[12]

From the creation of the first High Commissioner for Refugees in 1921 to the High Commissioner for Refugees coming from Germany in 1933 to the Office of the High Commissioner of the League of Nations for Refugees in 1939, the League of Nations was the main international framework, or 'regime', that impacted governmental policy towards refugees in the interwar years.[13] The origins of the post-war international community can be seen in this period too. Susan Pedersen argues that rather than peacekeeping or managing questions relating to sovereignty, the long-term impact of the League's actions was greatest in the area of humanitarian endeavours. Furthermore, she argues that:

> while the United Nations' refugee regime was from its origins much more comprehensive and ambitious than the League's, UNHCR's basic structure and practices – its insistence on political neutrality, the concentration of authority in 'a man and a staff' – still bear Nansen's imprint.

She concludes that '[m]any of the agreements and institutions that today regulate movements of peoples, services, and goods around the globe took shape in Geneva between the wars'.[14]

The League of Nations, as well as being a vital forum for international refugee action, was representative of the shifting nature of international humanitarianism in the interwar years. The First World War had marked a turning point in manifestations of humanitarianism, when acts of charity motivated by religion or

[12] *Ibid*., p. 33.
[13] Gilbert Jaeger, 'On the History of the International Protection of Refugees', *International Review of the Red Cross*, 83/843 (2001), p. 729. For the League of Nations as an inter-war refugee regime, see Skran, *Refugees in Inter-War Europe*.
[14] Pedersen, 'Back to the League', p. 1112.

ideology started to link more fully with national and international humanitarian action. In its role as the meeting point for declining empires, emerging international legal systems and old and new nation-states, the League challenged state sovereignty and older ideas of Western imperialism and power. Nonetheless, it also, sometimes implicitly, endorsed the Western political and cultural dominance, for example by the League of Nations mandate system (see chapter four).

**PALESTINE**

For Britain, the issue of Jewish refugees was also deeply connected with the history of Palestine, which was under British control in the 1930s as a League of Nations mandate. At least partly as a result of the Balfour Declaration of 1917, which outlined Britain's support for the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine, the territory was generally accepted by many British people as a natural destination for Jewish refugees.[15] Palestine was ruled from 1920 by a British High Commissioner in Jerusalem, and in 1921, despite its status as a non-colony, responsibility for Palestine was passed from the Foreign Office to the Colonial Office.[16] Until 1936, Palestine largely remained a Colonial Office concern. However, developing Jewish-Arab tensions over the region 'brought the active intervention in the policy-making process of the senior Department, the Foreign Office, as well as that of the Chiefs of Staff and the War Office'.[17]

The number of Jews entering Palestine had steadily risen in connection with growing persecution in Europe. However, this increase of Jewish immigration had led to Arab protests and violence, the physical manifestation of the tensions created by the rival claims to Palestine as a Jewish or Arab homeland. In 1932, authorised Jewish entry to Palestine had totalled 9,553. The next year, when Hitler gained power in Germany, the number rose to 30,327. By 1935, it reached 61,854.[18] The challenges prompted by increased Jewish migration became a prominent political issue for the British government. So much so, in the summer of 1938,

[15] The Balfour Declaration came from a letter written by Arthur Balfour, the British Foreign Secretary, to Lord Rothschild, which stated: 'His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this objective' (Clyde Sanger, *Malcolm MacDonald: Bringing an End to Empire* (Liverpool, 1995), pp. 88-89).
[16] Martin Bunton, *Colonial Land Policies in Palestine 1917-1936* (New York, 2007), p. 22.
[17] Michael J. Cohen, *Retreat from Mandate* (London, 1978), p. ix.
[18] Sherman, *Island Refuge*, p. 75.

British participation at Évian rested on an agreement that Palestine would not be discussed.

Ultimately, the British, motivated by their need for support from their predominantly Arab empire in the event of war, responded by strictly limiting Jewish entry. The 1939 White Paper was undoubtedly a political manoeuvre which sought to improve Anglo-Arab relations. It limited Jewish immigration to 75,000 for the five-year period between 1940 and 1944, setting the yearly limit at 10,000 and containing a supplementary quota of 25,000 to cover refugee emergencies. The restrictions did not necessarily limit Britain's problems in Palestine. For example, it prompted the illegal entry of many refugees, which reached unprecedented levels in 1938-1939.[19] The outbreak of war in September 1939 marked the start of a more bitter and violent resistance to illegal Jewish immigration by the British government, including the events surrounding the *Tiger Hill,* a vessel carrying illegal immigrants which the British authorities attacked in questionable circumstances and which will be discussed more fully later in the context of humanitarianism.

Palestine is, quite deliberately, not the subject of this thesis. Nonetheless, it formed one of the central contexts in which all other British refugee policy was made and appears in this work only in so far as it directly impacted on the tropical colonial refugee policy that is analysed herein. Kushner also raises the important connection between the closing of doors in Palestine and other British refugee efforts. For example, he references the 'generosity' of British policy after *Anschluss* and *Kristallnacht* with 'guilt at the appeasement of Arab unrest and the further move away from the remnants of the Balfour declaration'.[20]

Indeed, Palestine prompted strong views among officials, which undoubtedly impacted other areas in which they made policy. Winston Churchill's pro-Jewish and pro-Zionist stance is well documented and discussed.[21] Wasserstein makes much of his anti-White Paper attitudes, especially in contrast to colonial officials who broadly supported it, including Secretaries of State for the Colonies, MacDonald, Lord Lloyd and Lord Moyne. (Moyne would ultimately be assassinated by Jewish

[19] Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe*, p. 26.
[20] Kushner, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination*, p. 51.
[21] For example see Martin Gilbert, *Churchill and the Jews: A Lifelong Friendship* (London, 2007); Michael J. Cohen, *Churchill and the Jews, 1900-1948* (London, 1985).

terrorists in Palestine in November 1944). It was only Viscount Cranborne, as the Secretary of State between February and November 1942, who expressed any discontent towards the policy. Cranborne's views, however, do not change Wasserstein's argument that the Colonial Office was broadly anti-Jewish, with some attitudes bordering on paranoia.[22] Nevertheless, Palestine was a violent and quagmiry background to all official discussion of the refugee crisis. Indeed, 'creating another Palestine' was an explicit and oft-repeated fear in the Colonial Office.

**APPEASEMENT**

The rise of Nazi control in Europe, the associated persecution of the Jews and the more general threat to peace and stability in Europe that these represented unsurprisingly prompted British efforts to use diplomatic means to improve relations with Hitler, a policy that has become known as appeasement. According to Paul Kennedy, the policy of appeasement aimed to satisfy 'grievances through rational negotiation and compromise'.[23] Although mostly associated with the 'Guilty Men' (most infamously Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain) and their policy towards Germany in the 1930s, particularly regarding Munich, appeasement was in fact part of a well-established framework of diplomatic conciliation.

The Munich Agreement, reached in September 1938, provided a resolution to the Czech Crisis, which had dominated international events in the summer of 1938 and had looked set to bring Europe to war. Chamberlain, believing a general settlement was possible with Germany if the Czech issue could be resolved, looked to reach an agreement with Hitler for the sake of peace and worked personally to ensure this.[24] However, the resolution of European-based problems were not the only means by which the British sought to improve relations; colonial appeasement was another part of this broader effort. Therefore, in 1937 and 1938, a potential colonial agreement with Hitler became the focus of significant domestic attention and looked likely to become a major factor in Anglo-German relations.[25]

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[22] Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe*, pp. 31-34, 49-52.

[23] Quoted in: David Reynolds, *Britannia Overruled: British Policy and World Power in the Twentieth Century* (London, 2000), p. 57.

[24] Reynolds, *Britannia*, p. 126.

[25] Andrew J. Crozier argues 'that almost two-thirds of the material circulated to the British Cabinet Committee on Foreign Policy in the period July 1936 to February 1939 related directly to the colonial question' and that 'during 1937 and 1938 the issue was discussed in the House of Commons on no

Colonial appeasement was based on the potential to settle peace with Germany by agreeing to renegotiate the status of Germany's former territories.[26] These had, after the First World War, been distributed to other powers as League of Nations mandates. Chamberlain's plan was essentially 'to restore to Germany the former Togoland and Cameroon colonies, and in addition to create for Germany a completely new colony'. To achieve this, it was proposed that 'Britain and France would each surrender their colonies in Togoland and Cameroon'. The British would then 'add bits of Nigeria', 'Belgium would surrender a portion of the southern Congo; Portugal would be compelled to give up a part of Northern Angola' but would be compensated with a bit of Tanganyika. This was all to ensure that Britain did not have to surrender all of Tanganyika which, although a former German territory, was considered strategically important.[27]

Wm. Roger Louis argues that it was Britain, rather than Hitler, that was concerned with colonial settlement between 1936 and 1938. Indeed, a Sub-Committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence had concluded in 1936 that appeasement offered little benefit to Germany:

> Though Germany would undoubtedly obtain certain advantages from the return of her former colonies, these advantages would, we think, be much smaller than she expects. Her *amour-propre*, though not her ambitions, would be satisfied; a considerable temporary stimulus would be given to her export trade; and she would find the limited opportunities for employment of her upper-middle classes useful. On the other hand, she would not be able to send out any substantial number of emigrants; she would obtain comparatively little in the way of raw materials; and she would find her colonies expensive, particularly if she attempted intensive development.[28]

Whether Hitler was ever really prepared to make peace based on a colonial agreement, the British believed he might. Therefore, the centrality of this idea to British policy-making cannot be underestimated, especially in the Colonial Office

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fewer than seventeen occasions' (*Appeasement and Germany's Last Bid for the Colonies* (London, 1988), pp. 2-3).

[26] Reynolds, *Britannia Overruled*, p. 113.

[27] Ronald Hyam, *Britain's Declining Empire: The Road to Decolonisation 1918-1968* (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 43-44.

[28] Wm. Roger Louis, 'Colonial Appeasement, 1936-1938', *Revue belge de philologie et d'historie*, 49/4 (1971), pp. 1176-1177.

where it was generally opposed but nevertheless informed ideas on refugee settlement.

For example, when discussing options of Jewish settlement in Tanganyika, it was recognised that 'to transplant [...] the very people whom Germany is doing her utmost, by the most brutal methods, to exclude from "the homeland" would surely be regarded by the present Nazi regime as a significant and perhaps even provocative act', and that 'any such settlement [...] would be regarded as an indirect but certain indication that Britain does not intend to restore Tanganyika to Germany'. Moreover, the number of Germans already in territories such as Tanganyika was another 'deterrent factor'.[29] Although some felt that 'to turn Tanganyika into a sort of Jewish Colony might be easier politically and strategically than to return it to Germany' and that settlement there 'might ease things in Palestine',[30] concern remained over the potential that Germany might recover the territory. It was felt that 'the Jewish settlers would get short shrift' because of the territories' 'considerable German (largely pro-Nazi) community, very well organized, highly race-conscious, and anxiously awaiting the day when "Ost Afrika" will be restored to the fatherland'.[31] J.G. Hibbert, an assistant secretary in the Colonial Office's General Division and Social Services Department, concluded that:

> [p]ersonally, I should very much like to see a large colony of Jews established in Tanganyika, if only for the purpose of counteracting the aggressive and highly objectionable Nazi element [...] However, I think we had better keep politics out of this business as far as possible.[32]

The question of colonial appeasement also engendered much public debate, particularly regarding the morality of such action. As early as 1933, staunch refugee supporter Eleanor Rathbone wrote against negotiation with Germany, specifically referencing the colonies. She argued that '[t]o permit any measure of rearmament to Germany under its present Government would be lunacy, and to give them a share in mandates would be a crime against any coloured race affected'.[33] Rathbone, and others like her who criticised colonial appeasement on the grounds

[29] Boyd, minute, 22 June 1938, CO691/169/19; minutes from Cabinet Committee on Refugees, 25 September 1939, CO525/182/21, the National Archives of the United Kingdom, Kew (TNA).
[30] Eastwood, minute, 6 July 1938, CO691/169/19, TNA.
[31] Boyd, minute, 22 June 1938, CO691/169/19, TNA.
[32] Hibbert, minute, 22 June 1938, CO691/169/19, TNA.
[33] Rathbone, 'Nazis and Jews', *The Times* (London), 11 April 1933, p. 10.

of British responsibility to the 'interests of the natives', referred to the moral duty of Britain as a colonial power.[34] In the context of changing ideas about trusteeship and development in the colonies, this was a compelling argument.

With particular reference to colonial appeasement, *The Times* ran an editorial which argued that:

> The savage outburst of the German Government against the Jews, their manifest indifference to the common promptings of humanity where a defenceless subject population is concerned, the wave of indignation and sympathy which has swept the civilized world – all these are convincing evidence that, whatever solution may eventually be found of the colonial problem, it will find no support nowadays if it lies in this direction.[35]

The editorial went on to state that 'no one at the moment feels disposed to risk the unconditional transfer of any backward race to the sort of subjection which finds favour in Germany to-day'.[36] This was a view echoed in numerous comments of readers. W.E. Goodenough, the deputy chairman of Barclays Bank and son of its founder, asked, 'Is the public conscience, which is still, we believe, the chief factor in our administration, prepared to turn over the care of those inhabitants to an administration who are behaving with the discrimination now being shown in Central Europe?'[37] Goodenough's views were, at best, paternal when his 'stubborn' position on race, regarding hiring non-whites in branches of Barclays in the West Indies are considered.[38] However, they are no doubt representative of the complexity of attitudes towards race common during this time (see chapter three).

Contemplating in 1943 the consideration given to the issue of colonial appeasement by the government before the outbreak of war, correspondence between Sir George Gater, the Permanent Under-Secretary at the Colonial Office, and Sir Alexander Cadogan, the Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office,

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[34] Frank Füredi, *The Silent War: Imperialism and the Changing Perception of Race* (London, 1998), p. 36.
[35] 'Germany and Africa', *The Times*, 16 November 1938, p. 15.
[36] *Ibid*.
[37] W.E. Goodenough, 'The Question of Colonies', *The Times*, 15 November 1938, p. 15.
[38] Sonya O. Rose, *Which People's War: National Identity and Citizenship in Wartime Britain 1939-1945* (Oxford, 2003), p. 268.

observed that '[o]ut of fear of Germany, we were prepared to hand over large tracts of colonial empire to Germany without consulting the wishes of the inhabitants'.[39]

Although the policy of appeasement ultimately failed, based as it was 'on fundamental intelligence misconceptions about Hitler's benevolent intentions and exaggerated capabilities', that it was pursued at all provides important context for British action that had significant consequences for British refugee policy.[40] Official interest in looking for solutions to international and domestic problems in colonial spaces was explicit and pervasive, as were questions of race and changing perceptions of Britain's rights and responsibilities to various groups.

**ANGLO-AMERICAN RELATIONS**

In the interwar period, both the Foreign and Colonial Offices sought to improve relations with the US and to encourage the US to move from isolationism to greater engagement with Europe. Both before and during the war, good relations with America were considered to be vital by many in the British government.[41] However, an Anglo-American 'alliance' was not 'without its difficulties'.[42] Suke Wolton highlights the source of this tension, explaining that:

> British officials were on the one hand annoyed with the United States for not playing a larger role in maintaining a peaceful world order and, on the other hand, irritated by American pretensions to tell the British what to do especially within their own domain such as the Empire.[43]

Anglo-American relations were also interconnected with and complicated the issues of the League of Nations, Palestine and appeasement in the interwar years. America's abdication from a central role in the League of Nations weakened that body's ability to respond to international tensions and the growing refugee crisis. Given America's anti-imperial views, tensions over refugee entry into Palestine were also problematic. Furthermore, America's general anti-colonial attitude made Britain mindful of how colonial appeasement would be viewed across the Atlantic.

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[39] Crozier, *Appeasement*, pp. 3-4.
[40] Reynolds, *Britannia Overruled*, p. 307.
[41] See Hyam, *Britain's Declining Empire*, p. 26.
[42] L.J. Butler, *Britain and Empire: Adjusting to a Post-Imperial World* (London, 2002), p. 42.
[43] Suke Wolton, *The Loss of White Prestige: Lord Hailey, the Colonial Office and the Politics of Race and Empire in the Second World War* (Basingstoke, 2000), pp. 27-28.

These issues played out both in response to the refugee question and American anti-imperialism.

As the scale of the refugee problem grew, Britain wanted to encourage American diplomatic and financial support and thus felt it particularly necessary to participate in the American-initiated Évian Conference in July 1938. However, British participation was complicated by the conference's independence from the League of Nations and the pressure it undoubtedly placed on Britain regarding Palestine (see below). Moreover, having responded to the American invitation and successfully removing Palestine from public discussions, the Foreign Office felt it necessary to offer some concrete contribution to the reduction of the refugee problem, including possible colonial solutions. The meeting's key result was the creation of the Intergovernmental Committee, a body that became a key site for Anglo-American cooperation on the refugee question.

From 1941, Britain and America faced questions of refuge and rescue together as allies in war. Although both powers have been criticized for inaction, their responses differed and sometimes produced points of tension. The Allied Declaration on 17 December 1942 marked the first occasion that Britain and America publicly recognised the Jewish plight. The declaration was made in London, Washington and Moscow at the same time and confirmed the 'barbarous and inhuman treatment' to which Jews were being subjected to in 'German-occupied Europe'.[44] Despite public pressure for action after the declaration, the British government, along with America, still assumed that they could continue to focus on the successful pursuit of war and therefore gave only limited attention and resources to rescue initiatives. This was exemplified by the Bermuda Conference, an Anglo-American meeting held in April 1943 which, while seeing the revival of the Intergovernmental Committee, achieved little positive action in terms of aid to refugees.

Kushner argues that the liberal powers' action was, in 1942, still in line with each other. However, after the Bermuda Conference and as the end of the war

[44] Commons, 17 December 1942, *Hansard Parliamentary Debates, Fifth Series* (hereafter *Hansard*), 385, cols. 2082-2087.

neared, Britain and the US adopted increasingly different approaches to the question of rescue and re-settlement.[45] Louise London explains the shift:

> [t]he British believed the US government's commitment to saving Jewish lives to be as weak as their own and until the end of 1943 this assessment was reasonably accurate. But thereafter the Foreign Office failed to realise the extent to which the substance as well as the appearance of American policy on rescue had changed.[46]

Prompted by internal pressures, America launched a much more liberal policy. The creation of the War Refugee Board (WRB) in 1944 signalled a separation of the two countries. Although this inadvertently encouraged more action, particularly as Britain took on a competitive view of the WRB, it added further strain to Anglo-American relations on questions of post-war settlement of refugees and survivors.

A second area of tension in Anglo-American relations was that of American anti-imperialism. Despite its own complex racial issues, anti-imperialism was a widely held conviction in the US in the late 1930s.[47] As well as having specific consequences for colonial policy, American perceptions of Britain's empire dominated foreign relations between the two countries for much of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This manifested itself practically after the First World War when President Woodrow Wilson shaped the League of Nation's mandates policy. While British colonial officials were deeply aware of how their relations with their colonies were viewed in America, this was heightened after riots in the West Indies highlighted imperial unrest on the very doorstep of the US. Britain looked to colonial development to help ease international criticism, and a pre-war movement of prioritising social welfare was crystallized in the political turmoil of war.

The Atlantic Charter, signed in August 1941 by Churchill and Roosevelt, in which Article 3 recognised the right of self-determination, further challenged Britain's imperial status. Despite Churchill's later claim that he understood Article 3 to refer to European populations under the grip of Nazism, 'the article's wider significance for the populations of the dependent empire was clear'. Anglo-

[45] Kushner, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination*, pp. 181-191.
[46] London, *Whitehall*, p. 204.
[47] Wolton, *The Loss of White Prestige*, p. 29.

American relations over the empire were further compounded by the loss of Britain's Southeast Asian colonies to the Japanese in the first few months of 1942. This humiliating defeat 'reinforced' for America 'the conviction that colonial rule was inherently flawed'.[48] Nonetheless, Britain was determined to maintain control of the empire after the war, despite US-led discussion of international trusteeship for British colonies.

These two distinct aspects of Anglo-American relations coalesced over the issue of refugee settlement in the empire. Many officials viewed Jewish settlement as a threat to the interests of indigenous populations, and a growing focus on development and welfare in the colonies, especially in light of American criticism, ensured that local populations were prioritised.

**COLONIAL PERSPECTIVES: ECONOMIES, NATIONALISM AND THE CONCEPT OF DEVELOPMENT IN THE INTERWAR YEARS**

White, European settlement in the colonies was well-established by the interwar years and, given this precedent, many viewed it as a possible answer to the rising refugee question. For example, in July 1938, Count Richard Nikolaus Eijiro von Coudenhove-Kalergi, the President of the Paneuropean Union (an organisation that advocated for a united Europe), advocated Jewish colonial settlement. He argued that refugee settlement in the colonies: 'might prepare a general solution of the Jewish question in Central and Eastern Europe'; bring 'about a reconciliation of Jews and Arabs in Palestine'; and '[f]inancially [...] have the advantage of developing the natural resources' of the British Empire.[49] Although Coudenhove-Kalergi presented the benefits of refugee settlement in explicitly colonial terms, it was an idea supported by many within the British government, particularly by representatives of the Foreign and Home Offices as well as other external commentators. Supporters all agreed that settlement potentially offered a solution to many of Britain's major diplomatic, political and economic concerns and would have alleviated internal domestic tensions over how best Britain should respond to the growing refugee crisis.

[48] Butler, *Britain and Empire*, p. 43.
[49] Coudenhove-Kalergi, memorandum to the Évian Conference, 6 July 1938, CO323/1605/3, TNA.

However, the reality was much more complex and events that unfolded in the empire during the interwar years provided the specific context in which all imperial policy was formed. For colonial officials, refugee settlement was seen in terms of its consequences on colonial objectives. It was, therefore, ultimately these that dictated the nature of refugee policy. A brief assessment of the changing ideas about colonial rule and how these interacted with questions of refugee settlement are the subject of this section.

The economic depression and the simultaneous rise in colonial nationalism seen in the interwar years threatened the very foundation of colonial rule. To counter these challenges, various territory-specific actions were taken across the empire, reflecting the reality of a complex and diverse 'imperial system'.[50] In the Dominions and India, the interwar years saw changes in the mode of government. In India, 'dyarchy' was introduced in 1935 when the Government of India Act passed local government control to the Indian peoples. In the case of the Dominions, the 1931 Statute of Westminster effectively handed complete domestic control to territories including Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand.

Meanwhile, political and social unrest, with deep-rooted economic and social causes, dominated other areas of the empire. Unrest in Palestine grew steadily over Jewish immigration, leading to violent eruptions including the 1936 Arab Revolt. In Britain's tropical empire, economic strife also manifested itself in violence, such as the 1937 riots in the West Indies. As John Darwin identifies, 'the onset of economic depression by 1930 created dangerous economic grievances among the rural masses [...] grievances which colonial rule could do little or nothing to alleviate'.[51] The Colonial Office ordered an investigation of the causes of the unrest; Lord Moyne started the Royal Commission in 1938. The report, finished in 1939, was 'felt to be too critical of Britain's past record', and publication was suppressed until

[50] John Darwin identifies several different aspects of the British world-wide imperial system, including 'constitutional, diplomatic, political, commercial and cultural relationships'. These were not necessarily deliberate or well-organised, but they nonetheless displayed the key characteristics of a 'system', including 'inter-dependence of its parts, on each other or with the centre of the system' and the 'assumption by each of a specific function or role' (Darwin, *The Empire Project*, pp. 1, 3).
[51] John Darwin, *Britain and Decolonization: The Retreat from Empire in the Post-War World* (London, 1988), p. 48.

1945, as it was feared that it would be detrimental to the war effort.[52] Nonetheless, it was felt by many that 'even the recommendations were a sufficiently damning indictment'.[53]

These problems in the empire challenged the fundamental principles on which British imperial rule had been based and was most obvious in the passing of the 1940 Colonial Development and Welfare Act. The act sought investment in Britain's dependent empire for development and welfare initiatives. In total, a maximum of £5 million a year was to be made available, with an additional £500,000 a year given for research. Finally, £11 million of debt owed by the colonies was to be cancelled.[54] The bill had been in draft since before the outbreak of war, and although the war was important in shaping the bill, a broader change in colonial thinking was also central to the Colonial Development and Welfare Act.

The interwar years saw an evolving attitude towards the nature of colonial rule. Although there remained a 'fundamental assumption' of British 'control' over the process of change, many nonetheless recognised that change was necessary.[55] Lugard's principles of 'trusteeship' and 'indirect rule' had formed the basis on British rule, especially in Africa during the interwar years. Essentially Britain was to act as a trustee for the development of resources and the welfare of indigenous people, while the tasks of local government would be carried out by traditional authorities in the colonies. These principles soon spread from their origin in Northern Nigeria right across the empire, and their adoption was actively encouraged from Whitehall.[56]

In 1938, Lord Hailey's *African Survey* challenged the principle of 'indirect rule', arguing that 'the static conception of administration enshrined in Lugard's philosophy was inconsistent with a growing recognition of the need to improve colonial living standards through the promotion of welfare services and economic development'.[57] Hailey's report highlighted the importance of 'partnership', a theme that would be taken up throughout the war, calling for active collaboration

[52] Butler, *Britain and Empire*, p. 34.
[53] R.D. Pearce, *The Turning Point in Africa: British Colonial Policy 1938-48* (London, 1982), p. 18.
[54] *Ibid*., pp. 19-20.
[55] Butler, *Britain and Empire*, p. 19.
[56] Hyam, *Britain's Declining Empire*, pp. 13-14; Callahan, *Mandates and Empire*, pp. 73-76.
[57] Butler, *Britain and Empire*, p. 21.

with colonial people, rather than the old-fashioned paternalism which justified British leadership and direction.[58]

This change was linked to the increased international attention on colonial issues, notably by the US. With the prospect of war and then war itself, Britain sought American involvement in the Allied cause and were thus keen to present an 'energetic and purposeful' image which proved that they were working fruitfully 'in the interests of local populations' welfare'.[59] As MacDonald stressed during his presentation of the Colonial Development and Welfare Bill to the Cabinet in February 1940, '[a] continuation of the present state of affairs would be wrong on merits, and it provides our enemies and critics with an admirable subject for propaganda'.[60] In fact, as R.D. Pearce argues, it was the 'ideological requirements of a war against Nazi Germany' that cemented the new Colonial Office direction.[61]

Despite important changes in attitude, old expectations did not completely disappear in colonial thinking. Indeed, the empire remained 'a given', with 'a set of often unspoken assumptions about Britain's interests and status in the world' dictating policy. Most importantly, the argument of this thesis is that '[t]hese did not have to be codified to have substance or importance'.[62] Ideas about, for example, the tropical empire and African territories remained particularly fixed. It was accepted 'even among liberal and reformist critics' that policy in Africa was 'not about whether Britain should leave Africa, but what type of rule should exist'.[63] Even given the move towards development and welfare, there was still a general assumption that 'the African simply could not stand on their [sic] own feet, and that the British were giving them good government'.[64] As Hyam argues, '[d]espite low-grade racial prejudice and some high-handed politics, the empire had a definite countervailing doctrine of trusteeship – the idea that African territories were held in trust, and the interests of the ward should be carefully considered'.[65] It was these

[58] Hyam, *Britain's Declining Empire*, p. 90.
[59] Butler, *Britain and Empire*, p. 24.
[60] MacDonald quoted in Pearce, *The Turning Point*, p. 21.
[61] Pearce, *The Turning Point*, p. 21.
[62] Butler, *Britain and Empire*, p. 1.
[63] Barbara Bush, *Imperialism, Race and Resistance: Africa and Britain, 1919-1945* (London, 1999), p. 29.
[64] Pearce, *The Turning Point*, p. 6.
[65] Hyam, *Britain's Declining Empire*, p. 44.

attitudes that framed colonial officials' responses to proposals of Jewish refugee settlement in Africa and across the tropical empire. For colonial officials, Jewish settlement schemes had to be rationalised within the context of colonial development. Ultimately, this pushed officials towards supporting the developmental needs of the colonies over the emergency needs of the refugees by specifically trying to connect refugee entry with colonial development (see chapters four and five).

**DEPARTMENTAL DIFFERENCES**

Despite a specific colonial agenda, Colonial Office officials could not formulate policy without regard to wider world events and to the views and priorities of other government departments. While this thesis deliberately presents a colonial perspective, this section establishes the tensions between various departments in order to show that British policy was not a homogenous entity, but rather it was often divided, with different departments pursuing different objectives that manifested themselves in specific policies. Sherman argues that:

> each Government department was burdened by its own particular anxiety: for the Home Office it was, overwhelmingly, the large numbers of British unemployed and the possible importation through inadvertence of an undesirable 'racial problem'; for the Foreign Office, fraying relations with Berlin and the desire to avoid criticism from Washington and later from new allies such as Poland and Rumania; for the Treasury, the spectre of unlimited financial liability for the settlement and possible relief of needy migrants; and for the Colonial Office, Palestine and the entire constellation of issues in the Arab-Jewish conflict.[66]

The differences between the departments, while reflecting the particularities of the refugee question, also highlighted more fundamental differences in officials' background, training and knowledge. Hyam identifies that 'in the broadest terms' the Colonial Office mind was 'humane and progressive', 'proud of the empire, but also sceptical about it'. In terms of administration, '[t]hey were happiest and worked most effectively under radical administrations, such as that of the Liberal government of 1905 to 1915 and the Labour government of 1945 to 1951'. The business of the Colonial Office was carried out through a hierarchical circulation of

[66] Sherman, *Island Refuge*, pp. 15-16.

papers and minuting which was 'extensive and meticulous', especially compared to that of the Foreign Office's 'sparser' and 'less reflective' files. As Hyam argues:

> The approach of the Foreign Office was radically different, its main interest being in diplomatic accommodations without the responsibility of actually running any territories. All too often it seemed to think the Colonial Office could well afford to make gestures within the colonial empire in order to make its own general task in the international arena simpler.[67]

Comments by Sir Cosmo Parkinson, the Permanent Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies – for example, that 'the Foreign Office rather tend to regard the colonies as a useful dumping ground' – exemplified the tensions caused by different departmental views.[68] Similarly, Hibbert minuted that 'I am getting very tired of these continued and rather silly letters from the Foreign Office asking us whether the British Colonies can take refugees from countries occupied by Germany'.[69] The Foreign Office clearly failed to appreciate the problems of colonial settlement, while it was well understood by colonial officials that there were difficulties in 'providing accommodation for any serious numbers of European refugees'.[70] Hibbert stated that 'it is almost unbelievable that a senior official in the Foreign Office should suggest that the colonial governments in the Mediterranean should be asked to admit these people'.[71] Sir J.E. Shuckburgh, the Deputy Under-Secretary of State, agreed with Hibbert's view, explaining that those territories 'have [...] played up well, within the limits inferred by local conditions. I cannot think that either of them ought to be asked to do more'.[72] The political ramifications of large-scale Jewish entry into various colonies were of deep concern to colonial officials. However, these concerns were not necessarily recognised or shared by officials from other government departments, who sought to ease their own difficulties with the resources of the empire.

The tension continued throughout the period under study. During the preparation for the Bermuda Conference, Herbert Morrison, the Home Secretary,

[67] Hyam, 'Bureaucracy and Trusteeship', p. 217.
[68] Parkinson, minute, 7 January 1941, CO323/1750/12, TNA.
[69] Hibbert, minute, 16 July 1940, CO323/1750/13, TNA.
[70] Lloyd, minute, 28 December 1940, CO323/1750/12, TNA.
[71] Hibbert, minute, 16 July 1940, CO323/1750/13, TNA.
[72] Shuckburgh, minute, 2 January 1941, CO323/1750/12, TNA.

complained that '[a]s usual the Foreign Office is good at taking the cheers [and] also good at passing the real problem to someone else'. He nevertheless went on to say that '[w]hat I much prefer to this rather dribbling policy is to find a biggish territory where large numbers can go e.g., Madagascar'.[73] Morrison made this point again in a meeting of the War Cabinet Committee, stating that 'the refugee problem could only be solved satisfactorily if some large single area could be found in which really large numbers of refugees could be settled'.[74] Morrison wanted to reinforce the point that Britain was unsuitable for this purpose, implicitly placing the responsibility elsewhere. The Home Office may not have taken the cheers, but it, like the Foreign Office, certainly looked to pass on the real problem.

Overriding these departmental clashes was the role of the Treasury. Whether action was proposed by the Foreign, Home or Colonial Offices, it was subject to Treasury sanction. Although very keen to limit British expenditure, Louise London identifies that Treasury officials were sometimes more willing to support refugee agencies than other departments and, in comparison, were motivated by humanitarian concerns rather than political calculations.[75] Likewise, the economic limits placed by the Treasury could be overcome if political arguments were strong enough, which was the case for colonial development in the late 1930s.[76] However, as a general rule, across government departments, significant gestures towards refugee aid were simply not considered politically worthwhile or economically expedient.

Within governments, individuals enacted policy. While 'decision-makers in Whitehall were inevitably imbued with British ideas, thought with British minds, and saw with British eyes', there was significant variations within and between departments.[77] It is therefore necessary to examine the role of key individuals involved with refugee policy. London identifies the restrictive role played by Alec W.G. Randall, the head of the Foreign Office's Refugee Department, who was, at times, positively obstructive during his tenure between 1942 and 1944. In contrast,

[73] Morrison quoted in London, *Whitehall*, p. 205.
[74] Draft minutes of War Cabinet Committee on the Reception and Accommodation of Refugees, 7 January 1943, FO371/36648, TNA.
[75] London, *Whitehall*, p. 90.
[76] Constantine, *The Making of British Colonial Development Policy*, p. 248.
[77] Pearce, *The Turning Point*, p. 1.

Sir David Waley, a principal assistant secretary in the Treasury (who was also Jewish) and one of his juniors, Edward Playfair, were much more open-minded, as was Emerson, the High Commissioner for Refugees and the head of the IGC.[78]

In the colonial context, MacDonald was open to plans for small-scale settlement of doctors in the empire (see chapter five) but adopted restrictive policies towards Palestine. Officials such as Shuckburgh, the Deputy Under-Secretary of State at the Colonial Office in the 1930s, had long-standing experiences in areas relevant to the refugee question. Shuckburgh had in the 1920s worked for Churchill, advocating the latter's pro-Zionist views over Palestine. He is noted as being 'more positive towards Zionism than the average official dealing with Palestine' and worked hard to improve Arab views of Jewish settlement by pushing the benefits of Zionist enterprises.[79] Parkinson, another high-level official at the Colonial Office, had particularly strong views on 'Britain's obligations to the colonial peoples'.[80] Hibbert worked extensively on the refugee question and was the colonial representative at the Évian Conference. At times, his comments make uncomfortable reading because of his ready use of stereotypes and anti-Jewish views. Yet at other times, he wrote against colonial appeasement, arguing that 'until the non-totalitarian states feel brave enough or strong enough to tell [...] the totalitarian countries that unless they allow these unfortunate people to remain and live [...] there can be no question of any concessions'.[81]

Individual attitudes of governors also made a great deal of difference. From Sir Herbert Palmer, the Governor of Cyprus (1933-1939), who was keen to limit refugee entry, to Sir Gordon James Lethem, the Governor of the Leeward Islands (1936-1941) and of British Guiana (1941-1947), who responded positively to MacDonald's request to employ Jewish refugee medical practitioners, actions by individual officials on the ground also helped to shape policy.

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[78] London, *Whitehall*, pp. 87, 246. David Waley came from a long lineage of prominent Anglo-Jews. The family, formerly named Schloss, changed their name to Waley in 1914 'probably in response to anti-German prejudice' (William D. Rubenstein, Michael Jolles and Hilary L. Rubinstein (eds), *The Palgrave Dictionary of Anglo-Jewish History* (Basingstoke, 2011), p. 1000.)

[79] Roger T. Stern, 'Shuckburgh, Sir John Evelyn (1877-1953)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/36081>, accessed 6 March 2015.

[80] Hilton Poynton, 'Parkinson, Sir (Arthur Charles) Cosmo (1884-1967)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/35390>, accessed 6 March 2015.

[81] Hibbert, minute, 10 May 1938, CO323/1605/2, TNA.

The very nature of the British Empire and its bureaucratic structure of rule complicated the process of policy-making, particularly in comparison to other domestic departments. The channels of power were more complex in the colonial environment. Decisions rested with governors, the 'men on the spot' who were selected and responsible to the Colonial Office. Ultimately, however, these decisions had to be justified to the British government as well as to the wider British public, by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, who was often an elected Member of Parliament. Policy in Whitehall was generated by many who had never visited the colonies, and the views of the governors were influenced by their own unique perspective on any given colonial context.

More broadly, this issue relates to debates about the power structure between the metropolitan 'centre' and the colonial 'periphery' in Britain's policy-making. Although centre-periphery debates have occupied imperial historians since the work of Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher in 1950s to 1980s, more recent scholarship – often postcolonial in nature – has sought to widen the debate on the spatial importance of policy-making in the empire.[82] Rather than just considering centre-periphery debates in traditional areas of economics and politics, these scholars have looked to the importance of 'multiple transactions across the empire' between groups such as 'British emigrant communities, missionaries, officials, traders [and] newspaper editors'. These groups (and others) created networks that ultimately meant there were many and varied centre-periphery dynamics. This complicates our understanding of the imperial system, and forces us to understand factors of influence other than just white men of power.[83]

Therefore, it is important to conceptualise the empire as well as policy across it as the results of varied competing interests, those of: the British government in London; the specific interests of the Colonial Office; colonial officials in different imperial centres; the power of white settler communities; other colonial migrants; and indigenous communities. In different places and at different times,

[82] Alan Lester provides an historiographical overview of the development of studies of the centre-periphery debate, starting with the work of Robinson and Gallagher (1950s-1980s), D.K. Fieldhouse (1980s), Peter Cain and A.G. Hopkins (1990s). Later work by John Darwin connected more traditional imperial history to an emerging postcolonial field, also known as 'new imperial history' (Alan Lester, 'Imperial Circuits and Networks: Geographies of the British Empire', *History Compass,* 4/1 (2006)).
[83] *Ibid*., pp. 130-131.

these networks and dynamics varied. In this study, this was clear in Kenya over land settlement, as the influence of white settlers complicated the relationship between the centre and periphery. It was clear in Cyprus, where the particular nature of the Governor and the fact that this coincided with a broader foreign policy agenda afforded him significant influence. Finally, in Jamaica, the interests of the British government, the personality of the Governor, and external Jewish bodies (whose criticism of British action was registered) helped create a distinct refugee policy on that West Indian island.

These inter- and intra-departmental differences only added to the difficulty of formulating a unified policy. One contemporary observed that:

> It is becoming increasingly difficult to put one's finger on the point where the responsibility of one Department ends and another Department begins. There is even some danger, that, with the divided responsibility which now exists in dealing with this complicated and constantly evolving problem, Departments may be disinclined to shoulder as much responsibility as perhaps they should, with the result that work which ought to be done may be left undone.[84]

This is significant. In understanding the British government's response, and particularly that of the Colonial Office, bureaucratic inertia as much as the lack of political will often slowed down policy-making initiatives. Indeed, in a trend that will emerge in this thesis, and has been acknowledged by others, often government policy was to have no policy at all.[85] With divided opinions across and within departments, schemes of settlement, financial aid and humanitarian endeavours could and were easily sidelined. It also highlights that different government departments adopted different policy agendas. Although it is fair to speak about 'British' refugee policy, within this broad description, individual departmental objectives undoubtedly shaped the action they took.

**COLONIAL REFUGEE SETTLEMENT AND REFUGEE ADVOCACY**

As we shall see in the following chapters, the action taken by the Colonial Office, particularly in regard to small- or large-scale settlement, took place only in

[84] Cooper to Randall, memorandum, 29 August 1939, FO371/24078, TNA.

[85] For discussion of similar bureaucratic inertia in the case of the Armenian genocide, human rights and the empire, see Michelle Tusan, '"Crimes against Humanity": Human Rights, the British Empire, and the Origins of the Response to the Armenian Genocide', *American Historical Review*, 119/1 (2014).

connection with the help of refugee organisations. The reliance on refugee organisations for the funding of any colonial refugee scheme reflected the domestic reliance on Jewish organisations' finances and resources in helping refugee entry to Britain. In 1933, as the refugee crisis started to grow, the Jewish community in Britain gave a written guarantee for Jewish immigrants, promising that no refugee would become a public charge. This promise, although made on the original assumption that those needing help would count between three or four thousand, lasted until May 1938 and facilitated the entry of many thousands of Jewish refugees into Britain.[86] In fact, Kushner argues it gave British immigration policy a 'flexibility' it otherwise would have lacked.[87] Zionist organisations also aided refugees, although with the aim of establishing them in the British mandate of Palestine rather than Britain itself.

Pamela Shatzkes notes that '[a]n important element in the evaluation of the 'bystander' nations and a partial explanation for their relative inaction has been held to be the failure of their organised Jewish communities to exert pressure on their governments'.[88] While this particular aspect of the 'bystander' response is not the focus of this study, many of the stories it tells overlaps with the content of this thesis, including prominent and active Jewish organisations and actors within the Anglo-Jewish community. Therefore, a brief overview of these groups and people are necessary, particularly for the discussions that will be had in the chapters on liberalism and colonial development.

**REFUGEE AGENCIES**

Jewish organisations were not all united. The question of Palestine divided many, and the differences between Zionist and non-Zionist organisations became more pronounced when it came to the search for alternative places of settlement in the British Empire. Some organizations were international, such as the World Jewish Congress. Others operated on a national level, such as the Board of Deputies of British Jews, which was widely understood to be representative of Anglo-Jewry. Although this body did not actively engage with refugee relief, it maintained

[86] Shatzkes, *Holocaust and Rescue*, p. 48.
[87] Kushner, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination*, p. 46.
[88] Shatzkes, *Holocaust and Rescue*, p. 1.

connections with those organisations that did.[89] Such organisations of importance include the Jewish Refugee Committee (JRC), which was founded by Otto Schiff, and the Central British Fund for Jewish Relief and Rehabilitation (CBF), both created in 1933.[90] The JRC's work focused on helping refugees already in Britain by providing immediate relief. Money for this work was provided by the CBF, whose mandate was 'to foster reconstruction rather than relief'. The CBF managed to strike a balance between their broader aim of increased settlement in Palestine with helping those Jewish refugees already in Britain. However, this focus on settlement in Palestine reflected divisions within the organisation between Zionist and non-Zionist factions. In 1936, the Council for German Jewry (CGJ) was formed by Anglo-Jewish leaders 'to organise a massive programme of permanent emigration overseas to places other than Palestine'.[91] The tensions between these two kinds of responses to refugees - relief and reconstruction – are discussed in the colonial context in chapter four.

Notable families and individuals from the Anglo-Jewish community also played a significant role in the Jewish organisations and refugee agencies discussed or through personal financial generosity and advocacy. Particularly well-known, the Rothschild family was heavily involved with the refugee question. As Louise London explains, '[t]he dynamic and flexible Rothschild organisation offered an alternative forum to the formal institutions of Anglo-Jewry'. Anthony de Rothschild was the head of the family organisation as well as the Chairman of the CBF and the CGJ, which merged during the war to become the Central Council for Jewish Refugees (CCJR). Rothschild took a central role in some of the discussions about potential settlement in the colonies. London describes Rothschild as 'non-Zionist and assimilationist', an important observation when his role in refugee settlement plans are discussed in more detail in the chapters on liberalism and colonial development.

London argues that, like the British government, British Jewish agencies were keen to limit the entry of 'foreign-seeming and unassimilated' refugees. This was because of a fear of increasing domestic levels of antisemitism. The question of

[89] London, *Whitehall*, p. 40.
[90] Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe*, pp. 37-39.
[91] London, *Whitehall*, pp. 39-40.

assimilation and the ability of Jews to settle into British society will be dealt with more fully in chapter two on liberalism. Here, however, it is important to note that, as London argues, Jewish agencies were often just as keen to limit domestic entry as the government.[92]

**REFUGEE ADVOCATES**

Various influential public figures also took up the Jewish cause. Churchill is the most notable supporter of the Jews in Palestine. In the colonial sphere, Secretaries of State MacDonald and Lord Lloyd supported the White Paper.[93] However, as will be discussed in chapter five, the role of MacDonald was more complex than this pro-White Paper stance might suggest. Of course, political interest in the Jewish question did not just concentrate on high-level public officials. Other refugee supporters included Eleanor Rathbone, an Independent MP for Combined English Universities. Rathbone was a vocal and tireless advocate of refugee rights. A staunch defender of women and women's rights across the empire, the fate of Europe's Jews took up increasing amounts of her attention in the 1930s. While many took the view that Jewish persecution in Germany was a domestic matter, Rathbone saw it as one of importance to humanity.[94] This conviction manifested itself in the creation of two important bodies that worked on behalf of refugees: the All-Party Parliamentary Committee on Refugees and the National Committee for Rescue from Nazi Terror. Rathbone was not alone in her pursuit of more generous policy towards refugees. She was joined by, among others, Victor Cazalet and Harold Nicolson, both of whom were members of Rathbone's refugee organisations.[95]

Rathbone's particular role has been highlighted by Susan Cohen. Cohen identifies Rathbone explicitly as an 'humanitarian activist', stressing her role as an advocate for many marginalised groups before the her attention turned to the refugee crisis in the 1930s. Cohen's assessment of Rathbone is particularly relevant to this study as it sees the latter's work with women (including colonial women) and

[92] *Ibid*., pp. 38-39.
[93] Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe*, pp. 33-34.
[94] See Susan Pedersen, *Eleanor Rathbone and the Politics of Conscience* (Cambridge, 2004).
[95] David Cesarani, 'Mad Dogs and Englishmen: Toward a Taxonomy of Rescuers in a "Bystander" Country – Britain 1933-45', *Journal of Holocaust Education*, 9/2-3 (2000), pp. 37, 43.

her aid of refugees as part of a broader international humanitarianism (both political and social) that developed in this period (see chapter four).[96]

Norman Angell, another refugee advocate, penned the book, *You and the Refugee*, with Dorothy Buxton. It was, in part, 'an attempt to destroy [...] the illusion that a foreigner taking a job in Britain necessarily threw a Briton out of work'.[97] The book placed the refugee question, and possible solutions, firmly in the context of the empire, both on economic grounds and in relation to the feared consequences of population decline. They argued:

> Our empire constitutes a quarter of the world's surface, and contains the emptiest spaces fit for human habitation. Possessions so vast certainly carry with them very definite responsibility. We talk readily enough of our great empire being held 'as sacred trust for civilization'. [...] If while refusing to use the house ourselves, we allow those whom it might shelter to perish miserably in the cold outside because we think that their presence within it might cause us some slight inconvenience, then indeed we shall have come very near to those Nazi standards which have of late provoked the execration of mankind.[98]

To this end, they argued that:

> If we are to find even a temporary corrective to those tendencies to decline of population which are so threatening to our future as a nation and as an empire, and also to find a real solution of the refugee problem and give private charity in that matter a chance of being effective then we must restore something of that freedom of migration which existed before the war, and which, for the countries receiving the emigrants – our Dominions, and the United States notably – was found to be compatible with a steadily rising prosperity.[99]

Their rhetoric linked to key concerns of the time. These included economic and population problems, to which they saw a mutual solution by increasing Jewish refugee entry to both Britain and the empire. The moral imperative in their argument directly referenced League of Nations mandates. This undoubtedly tapped into debates about the necessity and nature of humanitarianism, empire and immigration practices that were underway in the interwar years.

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[96] Susan Cohen, *Rescue the Perishing: Eleanor Rathbone and the Refugees* (London, 2010), p. 4.
[97] *Ibid*., p. 40.
[98] Norman Angell and Dorothy Frances Buxton, *You and the Refugee: The Morals and Economics of the Problem* (London, 1939), p. 27.
[99] *Ibid*., p. 31.

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE REFUGEE CRISIS**

Between 1933 and 1938, people left Germany in response to events and escalations of persecution. Historians have identified various distinct but overlapping stages. For example, Sherman outlines five main phases of refugee movement. The first, from Hitler's rise to power as Chancellor in January 1933 to the enactment of the Nuremberg Laws in September 1935, created a refugee problem 'relatively small in numbers' and 'rather tentative in character'. Those leaving could still exit with many of their possessions and financial assets, which made arriving in a new country much easier. Many of those who left simply went to neighbouring European countries to wait out a change in government or for the introduction of more moderate Nazi policy.[100] However, those leaving still had to pay a flight tax of up to fifty percent of their capital, a serious disadvantage for those seeking a new home at a time of worldwide economic depression.[101]

The second stage, following the Nuremberg Laws until *Anschluss* in March 1938, still witnessed a steady movement of people, but it became increasingly difficult for those seeking refuge to find countries of safety particularly as Nazi confiscation of financial assets and property only became more severe. Third, the period between March and the *Kristallnacht* pogrom in November 1938 was characterised by 'massive flight' and 'widespread panic'. Refugees were 'stripped of almost all their property', and receiving countries tightened their own regulations to limit entry of large numbers of impoverished refugees. In the fourth stage, between November 1938 and March 1939, privately organised efforts to aid refugee movement broke down, and the situation was complicated by new refugees from Czechoslovakia. In the face of the crisis, countries adopted policy that effectively closed the possibility of refugee entry. The final stage, before the outbreak of war, 'saw the widest possible territorial spread of the problem'. Refugees 'wandered for weeks in search of some port' where they could land and be received safely, but the attempts to find permanent settlement grew increasingly desperate.[102]

[100] Sherman, *Island Refuge*, pp. 16-18.
[101] Skran, *Refugees in Inter-War Europe*, p. 51.
[102] Sherman, *Island Refuge*, pp. 16-18.

Sherman's five stages are based primarily on Nazi policy and refugee reaction and are essential to this study. To understand the British colonial response to Jewish refugees, however, another set of turning points – turning points in the narrative of Allied government perceptions of and actions regarding the unfolding refugee crisis and worsening international relations – must be laid on top of Sherman's timeline. These turning points, which will be discussed below, are the Évian Conference, *Kristallnacht*, the outbreak of war, and the Bermuda Conference.

**THE ÉVIAN CONFERENCE**

The Évian Conference was a meeting called by the US government on the refugee question and held at the French lakeside resort, Évian-les-Bains, between 6 and 15 July 1938. Representatives from thirty-two countries gathered together to discuss possible solutions to the rapidly growing refugee crisis. The was called with grandiose claims of a 'humanitarian purpose' and mindful of the 'harrowing urgency' of the problem. However, expectations for a positive response were limited from the outset. The American delegate, Myron C. Taylor, stated on the first day of the conference that:

> We must admit frankly [...] that this problem of political refugees is so vast and so complex that we probably can do no more at the initial Intergovernmental Meeting than put in motion the machinery, and correlate it with existing machinery, that will, in the long run, contribute to a practicable amelioration of the condition of the unfortunate human beings with whom we are concerned.[103]

The American invitation had made it clear that no participating nation was asked to amend their existing immigration laws in preparation for the meeting. Similarly, no country was obliged to offer finance to any scheme suggested. This, it was agreed by participating governments, was to remain the responsibility of Jewish agencies. However, these agencies were not allowed to actively participate at Évian but rather had to present to sub-committees in closed meetings. It was feared that co-ordinated international action, funded by those governments participating at the meeting, would inadvertently encourage other Central

[103] 'Intergovernmental Committee: Évian – July 1938: Verbatim Report of the First Meeting', 6 July 1938, CO323/1606/1, TNA.

European nations to introduce further anti-Jewish policies and exacerbate the refugee problem.

Unsurprisingly, Évian saw delegate after delegate explain why they could not offer greater refuge to Jewish refugees. Great powers and small Latin American countries alike explained that they were unable to help because of domestic financial difficulties or, in the case of the under-developed tropical countries, because of the limited possibility of large-scale refugee settlement. The refusals focused on the perception that tropical territory lacked suitable work for the urban Jewish refugee. For example, M. Leon R. Thebaud, the delegate of Haiti, stated that '[i]n view of the country's economic structure (essentially agricultural), its social situation and the financial crisis at present prevailing [...] preference will be given among such persons to agriculturalists and agricultural experts'.[104]

This perception was borne out by statistics which suggest that of the 14,800 refugees who had enquired about settlement abroad, 29% were businessmen, while only 3.6% were farmers.[105] As one official put it, 'this idea of permanent [...] (agricultural) settlements in the tropical areas, for the class we are considering here, is absolutely impossible'.[106] Historical assessments have been no less critical. In relation to Jewish settlement in the Dominican Republic, Simone Giglioti argues that '[h]alf the German-Jewish population were over 50, most of them were not involved in labour-intensive occupations, and only 1.5 per cent of them were farmers'.[107]

The only exception to the negative responses discussed at Évian was the Dominican Republic, which offered settlement opportunities to some 100,000 Jewish refugees. The Caribbean country offered to accept these refugees largely to help with its own development. Importantly, the settlement also did not face anti-Jewish opposition. In fact, Jewish money and citizenship were viewed positively as a way of developing the territory. However, the Sosúa settlement has been judged to be only a relative success. Of the 100,000 positions offered, the settlement peaked

[104] 'Proceedings of the Intergovernmental Committee. Évian, July 6th to 15th, 1938: Verbatim Record of the Plenary Meetings of the Committee. Resolutions and Reports', July 1938, CO323/1606/1, TNA.
[105] Memorandum of the *Reichsvertretung der Juden in Deutschland*, CO323/1606/3, TNA.
[106] Campbell, minute, 10 February 1939, CO323/1688/1, TNA.
[107] Giglioti, 'Acapulco in the Atlantic', p. 29.

at 500 settlers. Despite local support and significant finance, the settlement never flourished.[108]

Britain's response to the meeting was defensive from the outset. When the invitation was received in March 1938 following *Anschluss*, limitations were immediately set on British participation, including, most significantly, the agreement that Palestine would not be a topic of discussion at the meeting.[109] For the British government, attendance at Évian was a diplomatic necessity rather than a meaningful humanitarian endeavour. As Britain was keen to encourage American engagement with Europe, officials felt obliged to participate but likewise worked hard to find a way to contribute without compromising on any of their own key policy concerns and objectives (e.g. Palestine and colonial appeasement).

Although the British government as a whole was in agreement on the importance of the meeting, government departments formulated very different ideas on where this contribution should come from. The Foreign Office and Home Office assumed that the British contribution should be underwritten by the colonies, especially given that Palestine was not to be discussed and that the Dominions were largely uncooperative. The Foreign Office called for a 'generous and constructive contribution', such as 'an area in British territory for permanent settlement of refugees'.[110] The need for this was directly connected to diplomatic relations with the US, and the Foreign Office confronted the Colonial Office with the consequences of a negative response from the empire in an inter-departmental meeting:

> the United States Government probably regarded the British Empire as in a position to make an important contribution to the [refugee] problem, but it seemed that not only would the Empire make no adequate contribution, but that only one Dominion would even be represented at the conference. [Therefore] it would be open to the United States to criticise very strongly this negative response to their initiative and to attribute to it any blame that may accrue from a possible failure of the meeting.[111]

[108] Kaplan, *Dominican Haven*, pp. 21-22.
[109] Sherman, *Island Refuge*, p. 95.
[110] Mallet (Foreign Office) to Colonial Office, 9 June 1938, CO323/1605/2, TNA.
[111] Record of an inter-departmental meeting held at the Foreign Office, 8 June 1938, CO323/1605/2, TNA.

Although the Colonial Office was keen to prevent pressure falling on the colonies, during a series of interdepartmental meetings which took place in preparation for Évian, they conceded that some investigations would have to take place but limited them to Kenya, Tanganyika and Northern Rhodesia.

The initial public statement made at Évian by the British representative, Edward Turnour, Lord Winterton, outlined the limited nature of settlement opportunities in the colonies:

> The question is not a simple one. The economic and social factors which operate in the United Kingdom are here further complicated by considerations of climate, of race, and of political development. Many overseas territories are already overcrowded, others are wholly or partly unsuitable for European settlement, while in others again local political conditions hinder or prevent any considerable immigration.[112]

Settlement in East Africa was briefly mentioned but couched in very limited terms, with no specific details given. However, pressure during proceedings to discuss Palestine and to expand on the opportunities for settlement in East Africa saw Winterton make a speech on both of these issues during the last session. He revealed, after communication with officials in Whitehall, that a small-scale settlement scheme was underway in Kenya and that local authorities and Jewish agencies were working together on the project (see chapter two).[113]

Winterton's statement was welcomed by colonial officials, who noted that it would 'make it clear that the possibilities in Kenya are strictly limited' and forestall 'any unduly optimistic notions on the part of the Jews'.[114] In fact, Hibbert, who was present at Évian, concluded that 'one of the main achievements of the Conference was that every country was agreed that large-scale settlement of Jews was out of the question'. To this end, he was hopeful that the meeting would act as 'an effective silencer to the many misguided people in this country who consider that large-scale settlement in the wide open spaces of the British Empire is a practical proposition'.[115]

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[112] 'Intergovernmental Committee: Évian – July 1938: Verbatim Report of the First Meeting', 6 July 1938, CO323/1606/1, TNA.
[113] Hibbert, minute, 18 July 1938, CO323/1606/1, TNA.
[114] Paskin, minute, 12 July 1938, CO323/1605/3, TNA.
[115] Hibbert, minute, 18 July 1938, CO323/1606/1, TNA.

The only other practical step taken at Évian was the establishment of the Intergovernmental Committee (IGC), which as '[a] child of the Évian Conference [...] inherited many of its defects from its parent'.[116] The IGC met for the first time in August 1938. The body had two main functions. First, it was responsible for trying to improve the conditions of immigration, turning disorder and chaos into controlled departure. Second, it was responsible for leading investigations into possible locations for permanent settlement.[117] It's success was limited on both counts.

Historians and Holocaust survivors alike have judged the meeting negatively, seeing it at best as 'a weak reed unable to stem or direct the engulfing tide of refugees'.[118] At worst, the conference was a 'public relations exercise'.[119] Clearly, Évian failed to formulate a policy which actively helped the large-scale settlement of refugees anywhere, let alone in the British Empire. However, it was never a forum at which actual rescue initiatives could have developed. Foreign, domestic and colonial imperatives dictated a limited response for several key reasons, and the conduct and constitution of the IGC highlight the increasingly limited but complex nature of international co-ordinated humanitarian policy towards refugees during the approach of war.

**KRISTALLNACHT AND ITS AFTERMATH**

On the night of 9/10 November 1938, Nazi persecution of its Jewish minority reached new levels of violence when state-sponsored anti-Jewish riots saw the widespread destruction of Jewish property and people. Although Nazi officials claimed that the violence was a spontaneous demonstration of public feeling, the pogrom was in fact a calculated response to the assassination of a German diplomat, Ernst vom Rath, at the German Embassy in Paris. On 7 November 1938, a young Polish Jew named Herschel Grynszpan had opened fire in response to the harsh treatment of his parents in the course of Jewish expulsions from Poland. Vom Rath died of his injuries on 9 November, and two nights of violence followed. In all, 177 synagogues were destroyed, and 7,500 shops were plundered, leading to material damage amounting to several million Reichsmark. The impact on Jewish

[116] Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe*, p. 9.
[117] Skran, *Refugees in Inter-War Europe*, p. 215.
[118] Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe*, p. 9.
[119] London, *Whitehall*, p. 279.

life was no less severe: ninety-one Jews were murdered, and 20,000 Jewish men were imprisoned.[120]

News of the attacks spread quickly. 'Detailed press reports of violence, destruction of property, and the threat of massive expulsions' soon reached Britain.[121] On 10 November, *The Times* correspondent described 'scenes of systematic plunder and destruction which have seldom had their equal in a civilized country since the Middle Ages'.[122] Using similar language, Neville Baille, writing to *The Times*, noted that '[a] series of attractive tourist posters has for some time been displayed bearing the caption, "Visit Mediaeval Germany." How well this adjective fits, in view of present-day happenings!'[123] An editorial on 16 November stated boldly that '[i]n this, as in previous cases, deeds not words are required'.[124] In an opinion poll carried out shortly after the pogrom, seventy-three per cent of those polled 'believed that the persecution of the Jews was an obstacle to good understanding between Britain and Germany'.[125]

The pogrom changed the momentum of the refugee crisis and in turn prompted a re-evaluation of British policy. Neville Chamberlain 'was appalled at the barbarity of the *Kristallnacht* pogroms'.[126] In a circular telegram to the colonies sent on 1 December 1938, MacDonald also recognized the impact of the November pogrom: '[The position of] the various classes of persons in Germany who are likely to become involuntary emigrants […] has steadily deteriorated, and it is not too much to say that in some cases, particularly that of the Jews, it has become almost desperate'. In fact, linking this with further action, MacDonald wrote, 'I am very anxious that the Colonial Empire should play its part in furnishing a contribution towards the solution of this great and most urgent problem'.[127]

Perhaps the most notable example of a liberalisation of British policy was the changes adopted over the entry of refugee children. After *Kristallnacht*, schemes designed to specifically help children were implemented. Between 2 December

[120] Sherman, *Island Refuge*, p. 167.
[121] *Ibid*., p. 170.
[122] 'A Black Day for Germany', *The Times,* 11 November 1938, p. 15.
[123] A. Neville Baillie, 'To the Editor of the Times, *The Times*, 14 November 1938, p. 8.
[124] Evelyn Wrench, 'Deeds Not Words', *The Times*, 16 November 1938, p. 15.
[125] Kushner, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination*, pp. 49-50.
[126] London, *Whitehall*, p. 32.
[127] MacDonald, circular despatch to the colonies, 1 December 1938, CO323/1549/7, TNA.

1938, when the first *Kindertransport* children arrived in Harwich, and 31 August 1939, 9,354 children (7,482 of whom were Jewish) had arrived in Britain under a scheme organised by Jewish and non-Jewish refugee agencies.[128] Although government leniency on this issue was, in part, based on the belief that children were less dangerous than adults, largely because they were more assimilable, the policy was nonetheless generous. This was particularly the case when such action is considered against the failure of similar changes to pass through the American government and the subsequent failure of the Wagner-Rogers child refugee bill (see chapter 2).[129]

On 21 November 1938, Prime Minister Chamberlain spoke in the House of Commons of the issue of refugees. While he did not publicly denounce German action, the events of early November had clearly prompted a public statement on British action in response to the refugee crisis.[130] Chamberlain spent some time talking about possibilities in the empire. At the time of the Évian Conference, Kenya had been the focus of such plans. After *Kristallnacht*, attention turned to Tanganyika, Northern Rhodesia (see chapter two) and British Guiana (see chapter five). Chamberlain explained that:

> Many of our Colonies and Protectorates and our Mandated Territories in East and West Africa contain native populations of many millions, for whom we are the trustees, and whose interests must not be prejudiced. Many large areas, which at present are sparsely populated, are unsuitable either climatically or economically for European settlement. The Colonial Governments could only co-operate in any schemes of large or small-scale settlement provided the schemes were formulated and carried out by responsible organisations.[131]

Chamberlain concluded that 'however great may be our desire and that of other countries to assist in dealing with this grave situation, the possibilities of settlement are strictly limited'.[132]

*Kristallnacht* shocked many in the liberal democracies who objected to its obvious and persecutory nature as well as illiberal violence against people and

[128] Gilbert, *Kristallnacht*, p. 227.
[129] For details of the bill, see Breitman and Kraut, *American Refugee Policy*, p. 73; Wyman, *Paper Walls*, p. 94.
[130] Sherman, *Island Refuge*, p. 173.
[131] Commons, 21 November 1938, *Hansard*, 341, col. 1314.
[132] *Ibid*., col. 1316.

property. Although some concessions to this were made, the frameworks of liberalism and race, along with humanitarianism, meant that doors were not opened wide in response. Rather, a carefully considered prioritisation of factors was made in the light of new circumstances. These were naturally subject to change once more at the outbreak of war.

**WAR AND INTERNMENT**

On 3 September 1939, Britain declared war on Germany. War-time commitments resulted in a further reduction of British action to aid Jewish refugees.[133] Attention increasingly focused on fighting the war, rather than specific re-settlement, rescue or relief initiatives. Likewise, it halted action already underway and limited the scale and type of new schemes envisaged. Perhaps most significantly, war changed the status of Jewish refugees. Not only did the Nazi invasion of Poland create yet more refugees, this act of war inadvertently turned refugees into enemy aliens. This potential change in status had been under discussion even before the war – one official noted that '[i]t will probably be very difficult for countries of refuge to accept further refugees from Germany, even if they are allowed to leave' – but its implementation clearly changed refugee status for the worse.[134] Fear of fifth-column agents in wartime refugee movements became just one more factor limiting refugee entry.

As well as increased restrictions on those able to enter Britain and the colonies, there were changes for those already in British territory. Within days of the outbreak of war, the Home Secretary, Sir John Anderson, called for a review of all German and Austrian people in Britain.[135] 'One-man tribunals' set about assessing those enemy aliens in Britain to decide whether they posed a risk to British security. Between September 1939 and May 1940, 64,244 people were assessed, and the vast majority had been automatically exempted from internment. Generally, the Home Office found the idea of mass internment 'unnecessary on security grounds and inexpedient on grounds of general policy'. However, in May 1940, at the lowest point in the war, the British government implemented a policy

[133] London, *Whitehall*, p. 169.
[134] Foreign Office to Lothian (Washington), 2 September 1939, FO371/24078, TNA.
[135] Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe*, p. 84.

of mass internment.[136] After Dunkirk and the increased threat of air attack or invasion of Britain itself, people were frightened and felt threatened by foreign refugees who were, after all, often enemy nationals. Churchill himself was convinced by claims that fifth-column activities had contributed to the fall of the Netherlands and feared the same happening in Britain.[137]

Public opinion, however, soon shifted again, and within three months, the government began a reversal of its mass internment policy. After July 1940, mass internment effectively ended, and although it took several months for many of those held to be released, internment was never adopted again as general policy. Significantly, the timescale of these changes differed in Britain and its colonies (see chapter four).

War did not bring about a total end to refugee entry. Some exceptions were made for people who had embarked on a journey with a valid visa but had not yet made port before the outbreak of war. Similarly, relatives of people already in Britain were sometimes allowed entry, and transmigrants were allowed to enter in certain circumstances.[138] Even in the context of these limited concessions, the situation only worsened when, after October 1941, German policy completely limited Jewish escape. Instead of questions of refuge, the Allies were faced with questions of rescue. With the commencement of Operation Barbarossa, the German attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941, the mass murder of Jews had also began. Small units of men, known as the *Einsatzgruppen*, followed the German army and rounded up and killed thousands and thousands of Jewish victims. The scale of these killings was at least known by Churchill, but British policy generally saw no obvious changes. It was not until the following year in 1942, that Britain, along with America and Russia, publicly acknowledged the crimes being committed by Nazi Germany, particularly against the Jews. However, as previously outlined, the Allied Declaration came at the end of 1942, the year in which it is estimated that about half of the 5.1 million Jewish victims of the Nazi regime were murdered.[139]

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[136] London, *Whitehall*, p. 170.
[137] Aaron L. Goldman, 'Defence Regulation 18B: Emergency Internment of Aliens and Political Dissenters in Great Britain during World War II', *The Journal of British Studies*, 12/2 (1973), p. 123.
[138] Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe*, p. 81.
[139] London, *Whitehall*, pp. 198-199.

The public reaction to the declaration prompted a government response and resulted in the Anglo-American meeting at Bermuda in April 1943.

**THE BERMUDA CONFERENCE**

British and American representatives met on the secluded island of Bermuda between 19-30 April 1943 to discuss possible rescue initiatives for European Jews. The 1942 Allied Declaration had caused a huge public outcry in Britain and America and forced both governments to take action to allay this. Initial calls for the joint meeting came from Britain.[140] Unconvinced for several weeks after the initial British suggestion, the US adopted a more positive attitude after it too was subject to growing domestic pressure for action. Although there were important differences between British and American objectives for the meeting, both agreed that the meeting would not lead to drastic changes in policy. Moreover, both powers were pleased with the location of the conference; Bermuda was subject to strict controls during the war, which meant that as well as limited inference from Jewish and other refugee organisations, it would also be easier to control the press. For both Britain and the US, the central objective remained winning the war. A brief prepared for the Foreign Secretary by Randall, stated that while:

> all other possible remedies should be tried […] to provide a solution of the refugee problem at all commensurate with the tragic seriousness and deplorable magnitude[,] we – not only His Majesty's Government but the whole United Nations – must bring the whole Hitlerite system down.[141]

Therefore, Randall concluded, 'the essential stipulation remained' that 'any steps to aid refugees that might interfere with the war effort were forbidden'.[142]

In line with the limited plans for meeting, Bermuda only really considered 'the very modest problems of assistance and removal of escapees in country's of first asylum'.[143] Therefore, the conference ruled out any major action, including large-scale rescue and re-settlement initiatives. For example, a proposals to send 15,000 refugees to Angola (a Portuguese colony in Africa) using Portuguese ships did not go

[140] Monty Noam Penkower, *The Jews Were Expendable: Free World Diplomacy and the Holocaust* (Urbana, IL, 1983), pp. 98-99, 104; London, *Whitehall*, pp. 207-209.
[141] A.W. Randall (Councillor, Foreign Office), brief, 19 May 1943, FO371/36725, TNA.
[142] Richard Breitman, 'The Allied War Effort and the Jews, 1942-1943', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 20/1 (1985), p. 152.
[143] G.G. Kullman, Emerson's deputy, quoted in London, *Whitehall*, p. 209.

far, and nor did similar suggestions for settlement in Santo Domingo, Madagascar and British Honduras.[144] Plans for negotiations with Germany for the release of potential refugees were also rejected. Officials, especially in Britain, feared where large numbers of refugees would go if negotiations with Hitler were actually successful. After more significant gestures were discounted, discussions followed on possible smaller initiatives. As at Évian, plans for action revolved around the Intergovernmental Committee for Refugees (IGC). The decision to turn to this 'dormant' institution included extending its 'mandate' to 'acquire new power to receive and spend private and public funds'. Its two main tasks were: (1) to 'promote resettlement of refugees who were out of immediate danger'; and (2) 'to encourage neutral countries, Switzerland and Sweden in particular, to admit potential refugees from enemy territory'. Another topic discussed was the possible evacuation of about 6,000-8,000 Jews who were then in Spain, which, it was hoped, would keep escape routes open and provide the British with a much-desired boost in public opinion.[145] These efforts did little to help European Jewry, and the limitations imposed at Bermuda on immigration confirmed the preference for limited, individual nature of admission into Britain.

Just as they had done at Évian, the Colonial Office still felt duty-bound to protect itself against long-standing pressure from both the Foreign and Home Offices to provide answers to the refugee and settlement question. The Colonial Office outlined that 'as regards policy, no doubt [the Colonial Secretary's] line must be to prevent having refugees planted on the Colonial Empire'. C.G. Eastwood, a principal in the Colonial Office, argued, 'it is sufficiently clear that the United Kingdom, the United States, the Dominions and almost every other country is going to find very good reasons for taking very few of these refugees'. Eastwood re-emphasized the importance of strong colonial policy, explaining that:

> it is essential that before the Conference we should ascertain whether there are any further possibilities of assisting in the solution of this urgent and difficult problem on which public opinion is greatly exercised. If as a result of investigation it is considered that no more

[144] Penkower, *The Jews Were Expendable*, pp. 109-110.
[145] London, *Whitehall*, pp. 213-214, 217

> refugees can be accommodated a refusal to receive them must be backed by strong and convincing reasons.[146]

The empire was mainly discussed in reference to refugee entry into Jamaica and East African territories (see chapter 4). However, in line with the results of the meeting, the empire ultimately faced very little pressure for action.

Historians of the Bermuda Conference almost unanimously describe the meeting as a failure or worse, as a deliberate attempt to justify Allied inaction and to relieve public pressure for a more active policy towards Jewish refugees. For some contemporaries, the latter was almost certainly the case. For example, the former British Foreign Secretary, Lord Halifax, said in 1943 that 'it is most important that we should avoid any reproach that we are not doing all we can to rescue these unfortunate people'.[147] His perspective did not focus on what Britain should do but what they should be seen to be doing, a distinction that largely defined (in)action at Bermuda. While the conference undoubtedly failed to help a significant number of refugees – Wyman places this number at approximately 600, those who eventually made it to the camp established in North Africa as a result of the meeting – Wyman suggests that 'help for the Jews was not, after all, the objective of the diplomacy at Bermuda'. Rather '[i]ts purpose was to dampen the growing pressures for rescue'.[148] As attention turned to post-war plans, there remained a fundamental lack of energy in government refugee policy.

The Bermuda Conference is also an important bookend in the structure of this thesis. 1943 saw plans move to post-war efforts. More broadly, the failure of Bermuda shows how the limits of liberalism (set by the preference for controlled, individual entry), racial concerns (especially fear of enemy aliens), and the clash of humanitarianisms (over the implementation of internment in the colonies, particularly when they were asked to take more refugees in preparation for Bermuda) all limited action.

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[146] Draft minutes of War Cabinet Committee on the Reception and Accommodation of Refugees, 7 January 1943, FO371/36648, TNA.
[147] London, *Whitehall*, p. 221.
[148] David S. Wyman, *The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust 1941-1945* (New York, 1984), pp. 121-122.

The developments of interwar international relations, the refugee crisis itself and events in the colonial sphere all interacted with British refugee policy and, more specifically, British colonial refugee policy. Nazi persecution of Europe's Jews clearly presented an intractable problem for the liberal democracies and for individual departments within the British government. Because the historiography of the British response to the refugee crisis focuses on the Foreign and Home Offices, the colonial empire has been primarily assessed in terms of its ability to alleviate the domestic and diplomatic pressures caused by the growing refugee crisis. However, while the Colonial Office shared similar interests to those of the Foreign and Home Offices, its views and priorities were different. Like the Foreign Office, its relationship with the US was essential. However, rather than interests based on the wartime alliance, the Colonial Office was concerned with American anti-colonialism and what this would mean for the empire in the post-war world. Like the Home Office, they had to satisfy the British public, while keeping colonial territories economically, politically and practically functioning. However, for the Colonial Office, there were multiple territories with multiple and various kinds of needs. Moreover, the Colonial Office remained a part of the domestic political system to which it was answerable and upon whose foreign and domestic relations it could have an impact.[149]

In order to navigate this complex web of connections, colonial officials had to be capable of adopting subtly or significantly different policies as need dictated and in pursuit of their own goals. This ultimately produced a policy of compromise that, while developing alongside that of the other departments, remained separate and sought to help ease the refugee crisis in a way that benefited the colonies. The problems encountered in the empire during the interwar years and the change in direction this prompted provided the framework in which colonial officials sought to work, and this is evident in the connection their policy of compromise made to concerns about colonial development, international reputation and pressures exerted by international humanitarianism. British and colonial refugee policy were most readily expressed through immigration policy. In the next chapter, I will

[149] J.M. Lee and Martin Peter, *The Colonial Office, War, and Development Policy: Organisation and the Planning of a Metropolitan Initiative, 1939-1945* (London, 1982), p. 18.

explore one of the most defining undercurrents of immigration policy, liberalism, which shaped immigration and refugee policies by its concern for assimilation and preference for controlled, individual refugee entry.

## Chapter Two:
## The Limits of Liberalism: Britain's Domestic and Colonial Immigration Policies

In his 1994 work, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination*, Tony Kushner placed the Allied response (that of Britain and the US) in the context of the limits of liberal democratic powers. Kushner concluded that '[t]he failings of Britain and the United States with regard to the Jewish crisis during the Nazi era may [...] be explained by the failure of state and society to solve the contradictions and ambiguities of liberalism'. Within this argument, Kushner identifies several key themes that are relevant to this study. First, assimilation (i.e. that immigrants would replace their foreign 'otherness' with the ideals and outward appearances of their adoptive country) was central to liberal democratic immigration policies. Second, liberal democracies struggled to respond to the illiberal phenomenon of Nazi persecution (which, it was often implied in government circles, the Jews had somehow partly brought upon themselves). Finally, within 'democratic liberalism' there was a prevalent view (held most infamously by Ernest Bevin after 1945) that Jews, despite persecution, should not be given 'special treatment' in immigration practices.[1]

Kushner's work provides a starting point for the assessment of liberalism as a conceptual framework. However, this chapter will take the assessment further by considering the role of liberalism through a colonial lens. In imperial spaces, questions of group versus individual rights as well as the importance of assimilation were starkly exposed because of the presence of several different groups and the ways in which British officials understood their relationship and responsibilities to them.

In response to the refugee crisis, rather than the development of a distinct refugee policy, both Britain and its empire utilised existing immigration legislation to control entry.[2] The primary aim of immigration legislation was to retain control of how many and in what manner foreign peoples entered Britain or those territories under its control, in order protect themselves from what they considered to be the

[1] Kushner, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination*, pp. 18-19, 24, 233-234, 273.
[2] Skran, *Refugees in Inter-War Europe*, p. 28.

problems of unlimited immigration.[3] Time and again during the 1930s, both Britain and its empire developed and changed immigration policies in accordance with the level of perceived threat from growing refugee numbers. While self-interest and self-preservation ultimately motivated all government action, the underlying influences of liberalism (and also racial thinking and humanitarianism) defined official perceptions of the 'refugee threat' and dictated the limited extent and type of government action.

This chapter explores the immigration laws and practices adopted by the colonies, particularly in relation to official views on individual entry and large-scale settlements. Both of these kinds of settlement plans raised questions about assimilation and group rights, and a study of them helps to highlight why small-scale, individual entry was ultimately more successful. First, this chapter will examine the arguments of Kushner (and others) on liberalism. Second, it will discuss British domestic immigration policies. Finally, it will examine colonial policies in terms of both individual entry and large-scale planned settlement. As well as Colonial Office records, this chapter utilises refugee testimony, as nowhere was the limits of liberalism more clear than in the specific experiences of those who tried to enter the colonies.

**BRITISH LIBERALISM DEFINED**

'Liberalism' is a contentious term. This section does not set out to engage with the wide-ranging (and often confusing) debates about its value as an analytical term but rather seeks to establish what liberalism means in relation to the British imperial context of this study. Two main factors dominate this definition: (1) British liberalism has an historic precedent, which firmly places it at the centre of British politics and as a worldview of many officials; and (2) the contradictory value that liberalism places on both individualism and universalism.

First, a brief history of British liberalism highlights its firmly established roots in British political thought, adding weight to the claim that Britain was a liberal democracy, no matter if Conservative, Labour or Liberal governments were in

[3] Louise London, 'British Refugee Policy and the Anglo-American Relationship, 1933-1945', *The Forty Years' Crisis: Refugees in Europe 1919–1959*, 14-16 September 2010, Birkbeck College, University of London.

power. The earliest form of liberal intellectual thought emerged at the time of the English Civil War, which began as an attack on absolute monarchy but soon broadened to a wider challenge of the existing social order, ultimately releasing 'a torrent of radical ideas that challenged the traditional image of a rigid social hierarchy, in which authority was the monopoly of a privileged minority'. Within this context, a group called the Levellers emerged. They sought to expand the electorate, abolish the authority of the monarch and the Lords and guarantee equal civil rights, and by doing so espoused the idea of 'free and independent citizens'. As such, they have been identified by some as liberals' 'ideological ancestors'. Despite the failure of the Levellers' radical programme, opposition to authoritarian rule continued, next in the guise of John Locke, 'the father of Liberalism', and the creation of the political group known as the Whigs. As a political party, the Whigs moved away from Locke's more radical ideas, such as the support of 'natural rights' for all. After the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and a new parliamentary context, the Whigs continued to distance themselves from Locke's call for civil equality and rather sought to confirm the propertied status-quo. As Eccleshall agues:

> Later liberals, then, inherited an ambivalent legacy from the seventeenth century. Some found in the arguments of the English revolution inspiration to continue the struggle for individual emancipation from existing social constraints; whereas others discovered a defence of parliamentary government that could be used in a post-revolutionary world to resist demands for further reform.[4]

The Liberal Party, which formed in 1859, provided a middle ground for Whigs and Radicals, until a split over Irish Home Rule in 1886 pushed many Whigs back towards the Tory Party. Economic liberalism, as espoused by Adam Smith, was soon called for in response to growing political rights. Samuel Smiles's *Self Help* became a central tenet for Radical Liberals who believed (often in connection with non-conformist religious beliefs) that one was in charge of one's own fate and needed to work for improvement. A move away from the influence of *laissez-faire* politics at the turn of the nineteenth century saw a call for more state intervention on the part of liberals, manifested clearly in the social reforms introduced by the Liberal

[4] Robert Eccleshall, *British Liberalism: Liberal Thought from the 1640s to the 1980s* (London, 1986), pp. 8, 10, 12.

government in 1906 regarding national insurance, old age pensions and free school meals for children from the poorest families. This movement towards state intervention was sold as a compromise between Conservative free capitalism and socialism. This came to a head in the 'Welfare State', a system proposed by William Beveridge. A liberal idea, it was implemented by a Labour government in 1948. Many aspects of interwar liberalism, especially economic, were followed by Labour and Conservative governments until the 1960s. Despite the interwar years seeing a decline in the electoral success of the Liberal Party, liberal ideas saw a growing popularity across the political spectrum.[5]

Liberalism also impacted attitudes towards Britain's growing empire, and scholarly work has explored the connection. Uday Singh Mehta has studied the views of key nineteenth-century liberal thinkers on empire and argues that the 'urge' to be imperial was 'internal' to liberalism. This was manifest in liberals' focus on 'civilizing' colonial 'others' and discourse that identified colonial people as childlike and superstitious. To this end, Mehta argues:

> In the empire, the epistemological commitments of liberalism to rationality and the progress that it was deemed to imply constantly trumped its commitments to democracy, consensual government, limitations on the legitimate power of the state, and even toleration.[6]

Other studies, including that by Thomas C. Holt, on the subject of British emancipation policy in 1838-1866, also elucidate the place of liberal thinking in imperial policy, arguing that the consequences of emancipation challenged both economic and political tenets of classical liberalism.[7] Although the literature on liberalism and empire focuses on the nineteenth century, it offers an important guide for the study of the issues in the interwar period. For example, while individual emancipation was deemed to be desirable, it was also widely believed that Britain was in a unique position to 'civilise' colonial peoples as a group, an attitude which ideas on race only helped reinforce (see chapter three).

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[5] *Ibid*., pp. 16-17, 22, 24, 49-51.

[6] Uday Singh Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire: A Study in Nineteenth-Century British Liberal Thought* (Chicago, IL, 1999), pp. 20, 36.

[7] Thomas C. Holt, 'The Essence of the Contract: The Articulation of Race, Gender and Political Economy in British Emancipation Policy, 1838-1866', in: Frederik Cooper, Thomas C. Holt and Rebecca J. Scott (eds), *Beyond Slavery: Explorations of Race, Labor, and Citizenship in Postemancipation Societies* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2000).

This brief history of British liberalism highlights key aspects that became an accepted part of British culture and thought, particularly in the interwar years. The pervasive nature and influence of liberalism in this period has been explained by Gunn and Vernon in the following way:

> Far from being wedded to a particular set of ideas or the ideology of a political party, this mentality was the product of new forms of knowledge and expertise. In turn, they produced and justified new techniques of rule over those subjects deemed capable of self-government (the informed, industrious, healthy, and self-improving individual) as well as those others found incapable of it. [...] As a political technology that extends far beyond the realm of politics and the work of the state, liberalism here is a diffuse rationality, generated by many actors from multiple sources and evident in a panoply of everyday practices and material environments.[8]

The impact of British liberalism on interwar refugee policy was complex. First, from its earliest origins, liberalism left an ambivalent and sometimes contradictory legacy. This was clear in the interwar years when liberal attitudes did not define a single response to refugees, but rather helped shape policies that were inconsistent and subject to change. Second, self-help – a long-standing tenet of the liberal worldview – dictated that individuals had to work for self-improvement. Although never stated so explicitly, this idea permeated the discussions in the 1930s regarding refugees, in which many argued openly that it was necessary for individuals to have key skills or money to be allowed to enter Britain and the colonies. The centrality of individualism and self-help within liberal thought meant that refugees' skills and commodities were considered to be essential factors in the formulation of government policy.

Third, universalism was, contradictorily, also central to liberal thought. Eccleshall contends that 'liberalism' never provided a clear answer on the issue of 'universal freedoms', that is, 'which particular freedoms should be made available to every citizen'.[9] This was very much relevant to both imperial subjects and Jewish refugees. For example, were they entitled to basic rights, and, if yes, who was to ensure these rights (especially as many Jewish refugees had lost their German or

[8] Simon Gunn and James Vernon, 'Introduction: What Was Liberal Modernity and Why Was It Peculiar in Imperial Britain?', in: Simon Gunn and James Vernon (eds.), *The Peculiarities of Liberal Modernity in Imperial Britain* (London, 2011), p. 9.
[9] Eccleshall, *British Liberalism*, p. 4.

Austrian citizenship as a result of Nazi persecution)? These questions were heightened in the colonial context, where questions of who was a British citizen and to what rights this entitled them were serious points of contention. Finally, the centrality of assimilation to liberal thinking significantly shaped British colonial refugee policy. However, the importance placed on assimilation sat uneasily alongside officials' continued suspicion of assimilated Jews, bringing us once again back to the contradictions inherent in liberalism.

**LIBERALISM AND BRITAIN'S DOMESTIC IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE POLICY**

Britain's restrictive immigration policy during the refugee crisis of the interwar years had its origins in the early twentieth century and its long-standing 'liberal tradition'. Britain, until 1905, was relatively open for immigrants, a legacy of the 'Victorian tradition of free immigration and political asylum'. Although causing some tension in international relations, many political refugees from continental Europe entered Britain in the Victorian period. However, this more open policy was challenged in 1881 when large numbers of impoverished Russian Jews started to enter Britain.[10]

Large-scale immigration (which by the 1901 census measured 247,758 aliens in Britain, of whom approximately 100,000 were Jews who had arrived since 1881) had two important implications.[11] First, for Britain's Jewish community, increased immigration changed Jews' relationship to the state, by threatening middle-class Britain's liberal tolerance of Jewish 'others' in the context of emancipation.[12] Indeed, Feldman identifies a change in the status and treatment of Jews in England as they became 'objects of policy as a social problem and not as a religious minority'. This was clear in questions regarding living and working conditions, particularly in the East End of London, where the majority of recent Jewish immigrants arrived.[13]

Second, large-scale immigration had a significant impact on anti-alien legislation. Specifically, John A. Garrard highlights a complex tension between

[10] Bernard Wasserstein, 'The British Government and the German Immigration 1933-1945', in: Gerhard Hirschfeld (ed.), *Exile in Great Britain: Refugees from Hitler's Germany* (Leamington Spa, 1984), pp. 63-64. For the importance of the tradition of British tolerance in the 'pro-alien' movement, see John A. Garrard, *The English and Immigration, 1880-1910* (London, 1971), pp. 67-74.
[11] Wasserstein, 'The British Government', pp. 63-64.
[12] See Williams, 'The Anti-Semitism of Tolerance'.
[13] Feldman, 'Jews and the State', p. 155. See also: David Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews: Social Relations and Political Culture 1840-1914* (London, 1994).

antisemitism (deemed to be 'disreputable') and anti-alienism (deemed to be 'respectable'). He concludes that 'the amount or extent of racial prejudice is really irrelevant [...] [w]hat matters is the suspicion of its existence; and the suspected presence of racial prejudice serves to muffle, rather than increase, hostility'. Against this backdrop, he traces the development of anti-alien agitation into legislation between 1880 and the passing of the 1905 Aliens Act, identifying the various Liberal and Conservative responses to the development of immigration laws.[14]

Feldman develops this idea, arguing that 'the hostility and opposition aroused by Jewish immigrants was more than an episode in this history of xenophobia or anti-Semitism. It was part of an attempt to redefine the state and the idea of the nation'.[15] This, then, interacted with 'a more general theme of jingoism' that developed around the turn of the century, particularly in relation to imperial expansion and conflict, especially the Boer War. [16] The Boer War led to increased levels of xenophobia, particularly to white 'others' (see chapter three).[17] Feldman links this conflict and the later Marconi Scandal (1912) to broader discussions about the place of Jews in Britain, immigration legislation and social questions after the Boer War.[18] The work of Feldman and Garrard shows that immigration policies were not always simply about racism, but rather the complex interaction of other external factors, for example, national identity, state formation and, important here, the ambiguity of liberalism and the influence it had on these issues.

The 1905 Aliens Act 'removed the earlier (unconditional) right of asylum; no alien could now enter the country, other than temporarily, without a Ministry of Labour permit or visible means of support'.[19] Indeed, immigration officials were 'empowered [...] to refuse to admit undesirables – the diseased, the insane, the criminal, and the putative public charge'.[20] However, a closer look at the details of the Act highlight the role liberalism had in defining the restrictions it imposed. While officers were allowed to refuse leave to land, immigration agents only

[14] Garrard, *The English and Immigration*, pp. 57, 62, 205.
[15] Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews*, pp. 264-267, 275. See also Feldman, 'Jews and the British Empire'.
[16] Garrard, *The English and Immigration*, p. 56.
[17] For the importance of whiteness of Boer soldiers, see Paula M. Krebs, *Gender, Race and the Writing of Empire: Public Discourse and the Boer War* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 1, 9, 17, 111.
[18] Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews*.
[19] Shatzkes, *Holocaust and Rescue*, p. 47.
[20] Wasserstein, 'The British Government', p. 64.

checked vessels 'carrying 20 or more passengers in steerage', meaning wealthy immigrants could enter more easily. In an important concession to Britain's earlier tradition of asylum, 'impoverished aliens' could be granted entry 'if they could prove they were fleeing religious or political persecution'. Undoubtedly, the Act marked a turning point towards restriction, but more significantly, its details help highlight the ways in which liberalism influenced later restrictive domestic immigration policy.[21]

Changes during and after the First World War in the form of the Aliens Restriction Act (1914) and the Aliens Restriction (Amendment) Act (1919) not only formed the basis of immigration laws in the post-war era but also 'removed the earlier (unconditional) right of asylum'.[22] These acts in effect ensured 'undesirable' immigrants were not allowed entry. These included 'East European Jews, Germans and Chinese'.[23] Indeed, the interwar years saw the growing strength of xenophobic, racist and ultimately anti-alien sentiment reflected in British immigration policy.

Work by numerous scholars has explored this aspect more fully. For example, In addition to the importance of race (see chapter three), Laura Tabili's work on the 1925 Coloured Seamen's Order serves as one example of a generally restrictive attitude that developed in British immigration laws in the interwar period. The order outlined that all 'undocumented Black seamen register as aliens in Britain'. Although originally employed as colonial subjects and therefore paid much less (one-third to one-fifth of a British seaman's wage), many black seamen tried to jump ship in Britain (or Europe) and then find work, this time getting hired as British seaman and thus entitled to higher levels of payment. The 1925 Black Seaman's Alien Order also helps illuminate the influence of liberalism on Britain's immigration practices. The order, a manifestation of social, cultural and economic factors in the interwar years meant Britain started to define 'nationality and entitlement' by

[21] Tony Kushner and David Cesarani, 'Alien Internment in Britain during the Twentieth Century: An Introduction', in: David Cesarani and Tony Kushner (eds), *The Internment of Aliens in Twentieth Century Britain* (London, 1993), p. 30. Louise London argues that '[t]he modern system of immigration dates from the Aliens Act of 1905' ('British Immigration Control Procedures', p. 488).
[22] Shatzkes, *Holocaust and Rescue*, p. 47.
[23] Kushner, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination*, p. 33.

factors such as race.[24] In this context, liberal frameworks on belonging and assimilation coalesced with race to create restrictive immigration practices.

Gavin Schaffer's study of the attitudes of British race scientists towards Jewish immigrants in the interwar years shows that immigration of 'others' was consistently viewed as a question of benefits versus problems in line with liberal concerns, such as assimilation. Schaffer contends that Jewish difference was never in question. Rather, debate focused on whether this difference was beneficial or problematic to Britain. Racial scientists, although sharing a common belief in the importance of race per se, also believed it was intimately connected 'to concerns about the social welfare of the nation', especially in regard to immigration practices.[25]

Like Tabili's work, Schaffer's study shows the way that both race and liberalism (as well as competing views of humanitarianism) worked together to help shape immigration practices. In another of Schaffer's studies, he places the wartime response of the British government to Jewish refugees and black immigrants in the specific context of liberalism, arguing that in both cases the fear that racial 'others' were somehow fundamentally unable to assimilate dictated policies over internment of Jews and the treatment of black immigrants. These two groups' differences were based on perceptions of racial stereotypes that meant that they could not become a part of British society, either because of, in the case of Jews, being weak-willed and defeatist or, the case of black people, a sexual prowess that threatened 'miscegenation' and children of dual heritage.[26]

Sascha Auerbach identifies similar restrictive attitudes, but this time with a focus on the experience of Chinese migrants. Auerbach explains that 'the Chinese puzzle [...] aptly portrayed the challenges of regulating Chinese immigration and dealing with the social and cultural compatibilities of Chinese immigrants and white residents'. The difficulties between these migrants and the host country Britain developed before and after the First World War and were manifestations of 'the economic, political, social and legal development of British society as a whole in the

[24] Laura Tabili, 'The Construction of Racial Difference in Twentieth-Century Britain: The Special Restriction (Coloured Alien Seamen) Order, 1925', *The Journal of British Studies*, 33/1 (1994), p. 79.
[25] Schaffer, 'Assets or "Aliens"?', p. 206.
[26] Schaffer, 'Rethinking', pp. 401-419.

early twentieth century'.[27] Many of these tensions focused on Chinese labourers and how their presence at home and in the empire challenged British whiteness as well as power (the two were intimately linked). More broadly, this once more played on liberal concerns over assimilation. Restrictive immigration practices for Chinese 'others' were justified by the perceived behaviour of Chinese migrants, providing patterns of prejudice that could easily be transferred to Jewish immigrants and refugees who were frequently, if sometimes implicitly, blamed for their part in their own persecution.

Clearly, immigration practices and the ideological frameworks in which they were formed, set the tone for restrictive immigration practices during the 1930s and were well-established by the time increasing numbers of Jewish refugees attempted to enter Britain. This can be seen in Home Secretary Sir John Gilmour's response to the refugee question in early 1933, when he emphasised the 'continuity of existing legislation against aliens'. Moreover, he advocated that Jews would not be dealt with collectively but rather 'judged on [their] merits'. In this, 'Gilmour reflected the strong commitment to individualism and opposition to treating Jews as a collective entity'. Indeed, 'their ability to be assimilated into the national culture was the key factor in such considerations. Antisemitism was seen as an unacceptable price that would have to be paid for allowing in refugees who would not be able to adjust to the "English" way of life'.[28]

The desire to appear 'liberal' (especially in contrast to illiberal Germany) remained central to many policy-makers, even as immigration practices became more restrictive. However, this desire was always in tension with the accepted necessity to exclude, or at least to have the power to exclude, unwanted immigrants. Ultimately, this meant that, for British officials, the rise of Hitler and increasing Jewish persecution was never considered to be reason enough in Britain (or America) to liberalise immigration regulations.[29]

Liberal frameworks did not just impact the response to increasing Jewish persecution on the continent and its associated immigration concerns. They also

[27] Sascha Auerbach, *Race, Law, and 'The Chinese Puzzle' in Imperial Britain* (Basingstoke, 2009), pp. 1, 3.
[28] Kushner, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination*, p. 34.
[29] *Ibid*.

impacted popular domestic politics. During the Battle for Cable Street, which took place on 4 October 1936, it is estimated that about 100,000 people stopped a planned march by Oswold Mosley and the British Union of Fascists in the East End of London. While political protests that impacted public order had increased since the turn of the century, the government, guided by liberal ideals, was hesitant to legislate against such action. However, the events of the Battle of Cable Street were severe enough, argues Richard C. Thurlow , that the government rushed through the passing of the 1937 Public Order Act. Although the tensions between politically-extreme groups like the British Union of Fascists (right-wing) and the Communist Party of Great Britain (left-wing) caused a change in legislation, this was not really connected to the humanitarian needs of Jews and other minorities that were subject to attack in these debates. Rather, 'police on the ground were more concerned, provided that public order was not threatened, about the principle of free speech for fascists and communists than they were with protecting Jews or other minorities from verbal abuse'.[30] As with immigration, Jewish persecution was not sufficient to overcome universalist liberal ideas.

Jewish refugees seeking entry to Britain in the interwar period required passports or identity documents, and in some cases visas were also necessary. These requirements were viewed as tools of protection and were adapted and amended in the course of the 1930s to help further control the entry of unwanted migrants and prevent the mass entry of refugees. Requirements included the introduction of time and employment restrictions on the entry of some people into Britain.[31] Some of these changes specifically impacted refugees seeking entry. For example, those made stateless by the political and national convulsions in Europe were consequently exempt from deportation if they managed to enter Britain. This resulted in stateless people often being denied entry because Britain was fearful of the lack of recourse should these migrants become a public charge. All those entering Britain had to show that they were able to maintain themselves,

[30] Richard C. Thurlow, 'The Straw that Broke the Camel's Back: Public Order, Civil Liberties and the Battle of Cable Street', *Jewish Culture and History*, 1/2 (1998), pp. 75, 83, 85-86.
[31] Louise London, 'British Immigration Control Procedures and Jewish Refugees, 1933-1939', in: Werner E. Mosse (ed.), *Second Chance Two Centuries of German-Speaking Jews in the United Kingdom* (Tübingen, 1991), pp. 485-486.

sometimes without the prospect of employment, due to concerns over domestic unemployment. Britain was still feeling the impact of the Depression, and unemployment was high. Therefore, those entering Britain had to have independent means, a financial sponsor or the prospect of employment.

In response to these government restrictions, the Jewish community in Britain gave a written guarantee for Jewish immigrants, promising that no refugee would become a public charge. The guarantee helped abate some of the government's fiscal concerns. The role voluntary organisations played in the administration of refugee entry was also important, as they took on the ever-growing case work required to implement Britain's immigration laws. The already heavy caseload grew after *Anschluss* in March 1938, in response to which the government reintroduced the requirement for visas for German and Austrian migrants in May. This change added further bureaucratic difficulties for refugees in Europe who sought safety in Britain. In addition to this, the head of the British GJAC, Otto Schiff, informed the British government that it would no longer be able to honour the 1933 financial guarantee, as refugee numbers increased way beyond original estimates.[32]

Another concern at this time was the 'consequence of the recent German law obligating every German living abroad to report to a German consulate. It was anticipated that most German refugees would avoid reporting, thereby forfeiting their German nationality and rendering themselves stateless'.[33] The reintroduction of visas for German and Austrian nationals can therefore be seen as both a response to rising numbers of refugees and the revocation of the GJAC financial guarantee, as well as to fears over the longer-term control Britain would have over refugees if they were to become stateless.

Before the re-introduction of visas, the decision for admittance was made when refugees presented themselves at a port of entry. Refugees could therefore leave Europe and only face restrictions when they tried to enter Britain. While visas kept these difficult decisions away from the British border, it meant that refugees could be rejected without ever having arrived in Britain. In a circular despatch sent to passport control officers, the Foreign Office 'emphasised that the main purpose

[32] Shatzkes, *Holocaust and Rescue*, pp. 48-49.
[33] *Ibid*., p. 48.

of the new visa procedure for German and Austrian passport holders was to regulate the flow of refugees'. The policy was justified by the Home Office which was trying to 'prevent the accumulation of undeportable stateless aliens in Britain'. Louise London argues that 'fears of fostering the growth of antisemitism were a subsidiary issue'.[34]

The events of *Kristallnacht* caused another change in policy. Reflecting the shock and concern that the pogrom caused, the process of entry was accelerated and simplified with more staff employed to process paperwork.[35] In total, the months before the outbreak of war, 40,000 Jews entered Britain. Although these were mostly on temporary transit visas, they represented a significant liberalisation of policy.[36] This move to a more generous immigration policy places the ambiguities of liberalism at the centre of the assessment of British action. For example, the policy the British government adopted towards refugee children, known as *Kindertransport*, highlights the British government's successful navigation of liberalism's contradictions (i.e. assimilability and individual versus collective rights) to implement a more open immigration policy. The key in this case was the fact that the refugees were children and thereby believed to be more assimilable.

The *Kindertransport* developed from the efforts of various groups and individuals who worked under the umbrella organisation of the World Movement for the Care of Children from Germany (which was known later as the Refugee Children's Movement). These included the Jewish Refugee Committee, religious groups such as the Quakers, and British political figures such as Sir Wyndham Deedes, Viscount Samuel and Sir Nicholas Winton.[37] These groups and individuals worked within the confines of limited British entry, and the initiative ultimately facilitated escape from Nazi-controlled Europe for thousands of children. Between 2

[34] London, 'British Immigration Control Procedures', pp. 502-503.
[35] *Ibid*., p. 506.
[36] Bloxham and Kushner, *The Holocaust*, p. 192.
[37] Milena Roth, *Lifesaving Letters: A Child's Flight from the Holocaust* (Seattle, WA, 2004), p. xi; Anthony Grenville, 'The Kindertransports: An Introduction', in: Andrea Hammel and Bea Lewkowicz (eds), *The Kindertransport to Britain 1938/39: New Perspectives. The Yearbook of the Research Centre for German and Austrian Exile Studies, Vol. 13* (Amsterdam, 2012), p. 8; Jana Burešová, 'Nicholas Winton, Man and Myth: A Czech Perspective , in: Hammel and Lewkowicz (eds), *The Kindertransport*, pp. 52, 47.

December 1938 and 31 August 1939, Britain received 9,354 children. Of this number, 7,482 were Jewish.[38]

While the *Kindertransport*, in popular British memory, has become associated with a particularly generous aspect of British action during the Holocaust, there is a growing move by both survivors and academics to approach the issue more critically. Indeed, as Caroline Sharples has outlined, there must be an acknowledgement of:

> the reality of the ad hoc nature of the scheme, including the lack of resources and qualified personnel and the failure to check on the suitability of some of the foster parents [...] [as well as] the abuse and exploitation experienced by some of the children.[39]

As well as the sometimes negative experiences of *Kindertransport* children, the limits of the scheme more broadly, especially in the context of Britain as a liberal democracy, must be acknowledged. The scheme only applied to children under seventeen, which was an expression of the fear that adult refugees would ultimately become a burden on the state and increase domestic antisemitism.[40] As a result, the scheme was not extended to parents, and scholars have criticised the longer-term impact on parents and family networks.[41] Nonetheless, others have notably disagreed with this general consensus. For example, Anthony Grenville, who was a child of the *Kindertransport*, argued that '[t]he parents were not "excluded"' and that 'of those who survived probably about two in five, the greater majority succeeded in emigrating from the Reich before the war, and the bulk of them came to Britain'.[42]

Whatever the debate, the *Kindertransport* undoubtedly did save the lives of thousands of young Jewish children. However, the scheme highlights exceptionally well the limits of liberalism in British immigration policy. Children were favoured, in part, because they were believed to be less dangerous, largely because they were believed to be more assimilable. While the *Kindertransport* was an expression of

[38] Gilbert, *Kristallnacht*, p. 227.
[39] Caroline Sharples, 'The Kindertransport in British Historical Memory', in: Hammel and Lewkowicz (eds), *The Kindertransport*, pp. 21, 24.
[40] *Ibid*., p. 21.
[41] Kushner, 'Pissing in the Wind?', p. 71; London, *Whitehall*, p.13; Grenville, 'The Kindertransports', pp. 3-5.
[42] Grenville, 'The Kindertransports', p. 3.

concern and relative generosity, it took place in the context of Britain's otherwise limited immigration/refugee policy and should be assessed as such. Finally, the *Kindertransport* is also often assessed in comparison to American action to help child refugees. Scholars have generally lamented the lack of American action on the behalf of children, specifically focusing on the failure of the Wagner-Rogers Bill as evidence of this. In February 1939, a bi-partisan bill outlined a plan to settle 20,000 refugee children in the US over two years, in addition to the existing immigration quotas for this period. The plan, however, was very unpopular, and even after significant amendment, it did not pass. The failure of the Wagner-Rogers Bill is viewed as evidence of anti-immigration and antisemitic attitudes in the American government.[43]

Although there was a marked increase in the interest in the refugee question after *Kristallnacht* both in Parliament and in the public sphere, the aim of policy remained the same: to protect Britain. As Nazi domination of the continent continued, persecution increased, and refugees were increasingly stripped of their assets, making it ever harder for them to find refuge in other parts of the world. Due to the increasing numbers of refugees, exacerbated by new refugees from Czechoslovakia, refugee agencies became less effective in providing help for those in need, and governments, including Britain, responded by making it harder for refugees to enter.[44] This can be seen in the British response to the Czech crisis when money was provided for refugees created by the Agreement rather than entry into Britain.[45] After the outbreak of war, refugee entry into Britain reduced significantly, although refugees were able to enter Britain by various ways and means. War also halted plans that were underway for large-scale settlement plans (for example, in British Guiana). Winning the war became the primary goal of Allied governments, and calls to aid Jewish refugees were responded to with the claim that winning the war was the best way of solving the problem of Jewish persecution.

[43] For details of the bill, see Breitman and Kraut, *American Refugee Policy*, p. 73. Wyman claims that 'nativism, anti-Semitism, and economic insecurity' were central factors in the failure of the Wagner-Rogers Bill (*Paper Walls*, p. 94).
[44] Sherman, *Island Refuge*, pp. 16-18.
[45] London, *Whitehall*, p. 146.

As other historians have shown, there were very real limits to Britain's immigration policy, limits that had been in place since the early 1900s and which only grew in response to domestic constraints caused by economic downturn and an increasingly hostile international scene. These limits applied to all those whom Britain considered to be 'other', and Jews frequently fell into this category. Kushner argues that although there was 'genuine anguish at the violence of Nazi anti-Semitism', there was also ' a failure to confront why it was happening and a tendency to blame the victims if not support the severity of the punishment'. The long-held self-belief that Britain was 'a genuinely tolerant society that prided itself on the help it had offered refugees in the past' could not overcome the extent of the Jewish refugee crisis in the mid- to late-1930s.[46]

At this time, the key tensions within liberalism – including questions of assimilation, individual versus group rights and the belief that the Jews did not deserve particular help – meant that the British government actively worked against 'letting in' any 'other than carefully selected individual Jews, or individual groups of Jews' who were believed to be beneficial , or at least not detrimental, to Britain.[47] More broadly, it points to the importance of understanding the complexity of British and American (in)action, rather than dismissing their policies as simply 'indifference'.[48]

**DOMINION IMMIGRATION POLICY IN THE INTERWAR YEARS: A PRECEDENT?**

Immigration practices in the Dominions provided a precedent for colonial refugee policy in two main ways. First, the Dominions (white settler colonies) had, until 1931, been under the direct control of Westminster. A separate Dominion Department had been created within the Colonial Office in 1907, and the role of Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs followed in 1925.[49] However, with the passing of the Westminster Act in 1931, Britain's Dominions gained more autonomy in areas including immigration. As a result, these countries of white settlement introduced more and more restrictive immigration practices. Looking at the immigration policies of Australia, Canada and South Africa, we can see that while

[46] Kushner, 'Pissing in the Wind?', pp. 66-67.
[47] *Ibid*.
[48] Kushner, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination*, pp. 273-274.
[49] Hyam, 'Bureaucracy and Trusteeship', p. 212.

population growth was a top priority for policy-makers, the racial make-up of that growth was even more important. These concerns were particularly relevant in the question of Jewish settlement. Second, Britain's imperial space had consistently been used as a way of solving domestic concerns, including economic and demographic issues. The 1920s saw the British government attempts to unite these two concerns in the Empire Settlement Act. The Act provided an ideological example of the possible in questions of population settlement that undoubtedly influenced policy-makers looking for imperial solutions to the refugee crisis in the 1930s. As well as providing important frameworks for British action, both of these aspects of Dominion policy offer an important insight into imperial manifestations of the tensions of liberalism.

From its founding in 1901, the Australian Commonwealth pursued a policy of 'white Australia', in part by limiting the entry of 'coloured' (largely Asiatic) migrants. The First World War further perpetuated restrictive policies, with focus moving to migrants from southern Europe. Although limited immigration practices did not entirely stop migration from these areas, Australia continued to pursue racially restrictive immigration policies.[50] Australia also did not have a clear refugee policy. Rather, they permitted officials the freedom to make a case-by-case assessment of those seeking entry. In practice, this meant immigration officials were able to increase the entry of desirable 'white' immigrants while specifically limiting Jewish refugee entry. This policy reflected the liberal preference for individual entry that the government could control. For example, T.H. Garrett, the Assistant Secretary of the Australia Department of the Interior, argued that 'Jews as a class are not desirable immigrants for the reason that they do not assimilate; speaking generally, they preserve their identity as Jews'.[51]

The interwar years also saw a rise in anti-Jewish feeling, especially connected to the economic downturn experienced after the 1929 Wall Street Crash. A number of right-wing political movements developed, including the New Guard in New South Wales, the Social Credit movement, as well as Australia First. In this context,

[50] Michael Roe, '"We Can Die Just as Easy Out Here": Australia and British Migration, 1916-1939', in: Constantine (ed.), *Emigrants and Empire*, pp. 96-102.
[51] Paul R. Bartrop, 'Indifference and Inconvenience: Jewish Refugees and Australia, 1933-45', in: Paul R. Bartrop (ed.), *False Havens: The British Empire and the Holocaust* (Lanham, MD, 1995), p. 129.

the question of assimilation became a focus for concern. For example, in cities such as Sydney and Melbourne, areas of Jewish settlement became the 'foci of racial tension'.[52] Paul Bartrop places Australia's immigrant and refugee policy in the context of state-formation, arguing that the policies were an expression of 'the way in which Australians saw themselves and others'.[53] The centrality of immigration policy to state-formation and national identity are vital questions that feature throughout this thesis. They also link to another important issue: how was Jewishness seen in relation a racial identity of 'whiteness'?

Canada's restrictive immigration policies also coalesced in the early twentieth century. The 1906 Immigration Act (coming only a year after Britain's 1905 Aliens Act) 'consolidated and revised all immigration legislation dating from the implementation of the primitive 1869 statute respecting immigration'. It defined who was an immigrant, limiting the category by excluding all those who were considered to be undesirable, such as the mentally or physically ill and prostitutes. Restrictive powers were increased again in 1910, and financial clauses were added to the policy.[54] Like Australia, Canada's restrictive immigration policies focused on Asiatic migrants, particularly in the western territories, such as British Columbia. Xenophobic attitudes, especially towards Japanese migrants, reached a peak in the interwar years, as Japan gained in strength and as the deterioration of international relations more broadly threatened stability.[55] As discussed above, historians have highlighted 'indifference', 'hostility' and the failure of the 'humanitarian appeal' to prompt a more liberal policy.[56] Clearly, the racial identity of immigrants (and later refugees) was central to the restrictive nature of Canada's immigration policy.[57]

The Union of South Africa adopted restrictionist immigration policies from its inception in 1910. Laws such as the Immigrants' Regulation Act (1933), the Immigration Quota Act (1930) and the Aliens Act (1937) all sought to restrict entry of immigrants to South Africa. The focus of these laws changed over time, reflecting

[52] Suzanne D Rutland, *The Jews in Australia* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 50, 53.
[53] Bartrop, 'Indifference and Inconvenience', p. 149.
[54] Knowles, *Strangers at Our Gates*, pp. 76-81.
[55] Ward, *White Canada Forever*, pp. 102-109.
[56] Abella and Troper, *None Is Too Many*, pp. 280-281, quoted in: Lois Foster, 'No Northern Option', p. 81.
[57] Foster, 'No Northern Option', pp. 80-81.

the shifting perceptions of whom was considered to be 'undesirable', from 'Asiatics', Eastern Europeans and German Jews. The issue of immigration was heightened in South Africa because, unlike the other white settler Dominions, there was not a white majority. South Africa's large black population meant that the government was keen to limit poor white migration in order to maintain existing racial hierarchies, even against the British desire to bolster 'white British' entry. Moreover, that the white population was not united, given the presence of British and Afrikaner groups, added to this issue.[58] The importance of white identity and the tensions within it will be explored further in chapter three.

Despite the fact that South Africa had a large, established Jewish community of over 40,000, a move towards nativism after the First World War was reflected in the 1930 Quota Act and set the tone for future policy. The change saw the 'concept of "national origins" and its corollary, "assimilability" rather than individual merit' become the criteria by which an immigrant's application for entry was judged. The Act, with its distinction between countries of origin that required quotas and those that did not, placed Germany on the 'scheduled' list along with Britain, other Commonwealth countries and the US. By 1936, the number of German Jews looking to South Africa for refuge had significantly increased, and government and public attention once more turned to the issue. In response to this, the passing of the 1937 Aliens Act was designed to 'exclude' German Jews.[59]

The reception of Jewish refugees in South Africa was further complicated by the presence of several pro-Nazi, antisemitic and nationalistic political organisations. These groups provided a constant source of anti-Jewish propaganda, pushing their antisemitic agenda into the heart of mainstream politics. More generally, as Edna Bradlow argues, this translated into cultural differences being perceived in racial terms which only bolstered calls for restrictive policies. Although not presented in explicitly racist terms – arguments were often based on the view that South Africa had reached its absorptive capacity for Jewish settlers, particularly at a time of economic difficulty – views on race certainly impacted South Africa's response to Jewish refugees. Indeed, the government used 'unspecified and

[58] Bradlow, 'Empire Settlement', pp. 174-175.
[59] *Ibid*., p. 188; Bradlow, 'South African Policy', pp. 239-240.

subjective criteria' in decisions over the suitability of immigrants, which were often based on race.[60]

Although Asiatic, Southern European and Eastern European immigrants tended to be the main focus of anti-immigrant policy, the practices already in place were soon put to use when, during the refugee crisis, entry of unprecedented numbers of poor and desperate Jewish refugees became a real possibility. Dominion immigration practices highlight the ways in which liberalism shaped and directed policy. For example, immigration restrictions challenged the idea of equality for all. This in turn raised questions about imperial citizenship and the assumptions of liberal universalism. Moreover, Dominion immigration and refugee policies show a preference for responding to the crisis on an individual basis rather than collectively. Many argued that Jews were unsuited to assimilation and would therefore choose to maintain cultural and religious practices that separated them from full integration into their new country. In countries that were just establishing a measure of independence (and thereby national identity), this was a genuine concern and used to justify limited immigration. Race played a significant part in Dominion immigration laws and was essentially used a signifier of difference. The continuities and inconsistencies of Dominion policy were also present in the colonies and will be explored further below.

The Dominion's general immigration practices can be usefully contrasted with the 1922 Empire Settlement Act, a scheme that aimed: to 'rectify demographic imbalances in Britain and the dominions', reducing 'domestic unemployment, over-crowding, and discontent'; to supply 'labor and wives for colonial populations'; and, as a result, to 'increase trade and strengthen defense within the imperial system as a whole'.[61] Under the Act, funding was provided for 'land settlement schemes, assisted passages [and] training courses'. The scheme was renewed again in 1937, continuing in some form until the 1970s, and was 'part of a greater imperial

[60] Bradlow, 'South African Policy', pp. 245, 248.
[61] Dane Kennedy, 'Empire Migration Post-War Reconstruction: The Role of the Overseas Settlement Committee, 1919-1922', *Albion*, 20 (1988), pp. 403-404.

economic and welfare strategy [...] [that] remained self-evident to many commentators in the United Kingdom between the wars'.[62]

The precedent of the Empire Settlement Act, therefore, potentially played a role in the popularity of large-scale settlement options for Jewish refugees. However, that such schemes did not take place reveals much about the tensions of liberalism. For example, the white settlement which had been encouraged by the Empire Settlement Act had unforeseen consequences. While the Empire Settlement Act had indeed bolstered white settlement in the Dominions, these groups of settlers sometimes became so powerful that they threatened policy initiatives directed from Whitehall, including refugee settlement plans (see discussion of Northern Rhodesia below). Moreover, large-scale settlement of Jewish refugees was seen as something different to the settlement of British settlers by some (in South Africa, the right kind of white settler was important), and the issue seemed to heighten the fact that Jewish refugees were perceived to be unable to settle within established national cultures.

**COLONIAL REFUGEE SETTLEMENT SCHEMES AND THE LIMITS OF LIBERALISM**

Generally, Britain's tropical dependencies implemented restrictive immigration policies. These both mirrored and were dictated by Whitehall and, broadly, aimed to prevent the entry of persons who might become a financial burden on the local government. Colonial immigration practices were directed by the Colonial Laws Validity Act of 1865, which outlined that colonies could amend any constitution granted by the British government but only if these changes did not fundamentally challenge British law. Indeed, this practice 'whereby Westminster could overturn colonial legislation that was "repugnant" to British practice, ultimately determined the foundation upon which colonial migration policy was framed'.[63]

Immigration controls varied from territory to territory but did have general trends. For example, Kenya outlined in its 1927 Immigration Restriction Ordinance those who were to be denied entry, including people without 'visible means of support who [are] likely to become a pauper or a public charge', the sick or insane,

[62] Stephen Constantine, 'Introduction: Empire Migration and Imperial Harmony', in: Constantine (ed.), *Emigrants and Empire*, pp. 4, 10.
[63] Paul R. Bartrop, 'The British Colonial Empire and the Jewish Refugees during the Holocaust Period: An Overview', in: Bartrop, *False Havens*, pp. 1-2.

prostitutes, convicts and '[a]ny person deemed by the Immigration Officer to be an undesirable immigrant in consequence of information or advice received'. Financial requirements necessary to prove 'visible means' varied for different groups. For example, 'a native of Asia or Africa' was required 'a sum of ten pounds or such other sum as the Governor in Council may from time to time order'. All other potential immigrants required 'a sum of thirty-seven pounds ten shillings'.[64] By 1930 this sum was increased to fifty pounds and remained in place when many Jewish refugees sought entry in the colony after 1933.[65]

By new immigration laws in 1936, Cyprus restricted the same categories as Kenya (e.g. the sick, insane, prostitutes and convicts). In addition to financial requirements of £1000 disposable capital (a sum that decreased according to an immigrant's skill or trade), entry into Cyprus required a 'passport bear[ing] a British Consular visa for the Colony'. More than this though, the immigration officer was given wide powers to attach 'such conditions as he may think fit to the grant of permission to an alien to enter the Colony'. To this end, the Ordinance made it clear that 'no alien shall have an absolute right to enter the colony without the permission of the Principal Immigration Officer'.[66]

Similar trends were also evident in West Indian immigration laws. By 1931, no colonial governments required visas, and only four territories (Jamaica, the Leeward Islands, Trinidad and the Windward Islands) required passports for entry. However, like Kenya and Cyprus, financial deposits were demanded by West Indian colonial governments, and different sums were also outlined for British and non-British citizens. In the case of British Guiana, a $24 deposit was required for the former, while the latter had to deposit $96. Other colonies also had other requirements. For example, Jamaica required a literacy test from 1919. However, restrictions grew, and in 1933, as Hitler became chancellor in Germany, passports were required in all West Indian colonies (except the Bahamas), and for entry into Jamaica and British Honduras, visas were also required. Despite these general trends, over time and

[64] 'The Immigration Restriction Ordinance. Rules', 28 November 1927, *The Kenyan Government Gazette*.
[65] 'An Ordinance to Amend the Immigration Restriction Ordinance', no. 20 of 1930, 10 June 1930, *The Kenyan Government Gazette*.
[66] 'A Law to Regulate and Control Immigration', no. 16 of 1936, 12 June 1936; 'Regulations Made under the Immigration Law, 1936', no. 1152, 11 December 1936, *The Cyprus Government Gazette.*

across colonies, policies varied, and as such, 'no colony [in the West Indies] had exactly the same requirements'.[67]

In 1940, Colonial Secretary Lord Lloyd explained to Sir John Maybin, the Governor of Northern Rhodesia, that '[g]enerally speaking, the immigration laws of the African Colonial Dependencies have in the past been framed on liberal lines admitting any person who did not fall into one of the limited categories of prohibited immigrants'.[68] However, in reality, the only liberal thing about the policies were their contradictions. The examples of immigration practices in Kenya and Cyprus (e.g. high financial requirements and, in the case of Cyprus, the need for a visa) show how central assimilation was to policy-makers. In Kenya, the differentiation made between African and Asian and all other immigrant groups shows that, like in the Dominions, race was used as a category of difference that also helped shape policy. The powers given to immigration agents demonstrates the importance attached to the controlled entry of selected migrants.

In response to the refugee crisis, immigration to the colonies was conceptualised in two main ways: individual entry and large-scale settlements. The majority of those who found safety in the colonies managed to navigate immigration requirements like those set out above and entered the colonies as 'immigrants'. As will be discussed later in the chapter, the stories of those who entered in this way are varied and complex and were influenced by factors such as finance, luck and personal connections. However, it was the potential for large-scale settlement in the colonies that held particular appeal for refugee advocates, with many looking to the empire for places of potential settlement. Indeed, questions in the House of Commons by people such as Eleanor Rathbone and in the House of Lords by the Bishop of Chichester reflected what a *Times* editorial described as the 'impulsive humanitarian emotion' which found many people, 'after glancing at maps displaying the British colonies in the conventional red', picking places for settlement but ignoring 'the numerous factors essential to successful European colonization'.[69]

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[67] Newman, *Nearly the New World*, pp. 33-34.
[68] Lloyd to Maybin, 10 June 1940, CO323/1750/14, TNA.
[69] Commons, 23 May 1938, *Hansard*, 336, col. 835; Lords, 5 July 1939, *Hansard*, 113, cols. 1034-1041; 'Homes for Refugees', *The Times,* 22 November 1938, p. 15.

It was not just within Britain that the idea of re-settlement held sway. Eric T. Jennings argues that potential Jewish colonisation schemes were deeply rooted in the culture of European colonial powers, particularly in relation to Madagascar. Settlement schemes for Madagascar dated back to 1885, when Paul de Lagarde, a German antisemite, first proposed such an idea. The French, British, US, Polish and Japanese governments as well as some Zionist organisations also identified Madagascar as a place of potential settlement before the Nazis incorporated the island into their more genocidal plans when they gained the territory in June 1940.[70]

Obviously fundamentally different to the other European re-settlement plans, the Nazi 'Madagascar Plan' started by asking similar questions to those in the liberal democracies about the nature of Jewish people and how best to deal with them.[71] For example, an article in the *Völkischer Beobachter*, the newspaper and propaganda tool for the Nazi Party, as translated by Sir Ogilvie Forbes, the British Chargé d'Affaires in Berlin, claimed that 'the whole world is beginning to recognize that the Jews are a race which cannot be assimilated'. The article continued:

> one must look round for a suitable territory which is not yet inhabited by Europeans. The possibility of Uganda was once seriously discussed, why not now consider giving them a large territory in Africa which would afford them scope for independent creative effort? Another possibility is Madagascar. The situation is serious and can only be dealt with [...] by those powers who possess gigantic territories [...] in the interests of all nations and also of the Jews themselves.[72]

The report based its assumptions on the view that Jews could not be assimilated. Although to a lesser degree than the Nazis, assimilation was a genuine concern for British officials. Likewise, the inclusion of Jewish stereotypes, such as the reference to Jewish 'creative effort', played a part in British official assessments of possible colonisation plans and was evident in the way that refugee entry was ultimately connected to colonial development.

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[70] Eric T. Jennings, 'Writing Madagascar Back into the Madagascar Plan', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 21/2 (2007), p. 187.

[71] Christopher Browning argues that '[h]owever fantastical in retrospect, the Madagascar Plan was an important psychological step on the road to the Final Solution' (*The Origins of the Final Solution The Evolution of Nazi Jewish Policy, September 1939-March 1942* (Lincoln, 2004), p. 81).

[72] Forbes (charge d'affaires, Berlin) to Winterton, 8 July 1938, CO323/1605/4, TNA.

American officials, including President Roosevelt, also viewed re-settlement as a possible solution to the problem of Jewish refugees, and their plans reflected a similar desire to displace population or refugee concerns to other parts of the world. Roosevelt viewed re-settlement as vital to the postwar order as well as to the more pressing Jewish refugee crisis. To this end, Roosevelt created 'Project M' (for 'migration'). Top geographers and other thinkers were put to work on the question of large-scale re-settlement during the war, and although it never generated concrete results, the creation of such a project is indicative of the wider interest in the subject. In respect to Jewish refugees, re-settlement plans included Angola (a Portuguese territory) and Latin American countries Brazil, Venezuela, Ecuador and Mexico. Even closer to home, settlement in Alaska was linked to the development of the territory and argued that settler refugees were needed as much as they needed a place of safety.[73]

In Britain, re-settlement plans had been discussed for many years, but in 1938, at the height of the refugee crisis, that government and refugee organisations (which the British government still relied on for financial support of such schemes) started to try and turn these long-standing ideas into reality. Organised settlement schemes offered some flexibility, as long as an external body was willing to take financial responsibility for the refugees and the refugees possessed key requirements for emigration, such as specific skills and finance.

Illustrative of this interest in pursuing re-settlement options was the meeting between Anthony de Rothschild and J.E. Shuckburgh, the Deputy Permanent Under-Secretary of State at the Colonial Office, in December 1938. Rothschild, as head of the Co-ordinating Committee for Refugees, an organisation representing all the important voluntary refugee organisations in the country, both Jewish and non-Jewish, met with Shuckburgh to discuss settlement opportunities in Northern Rhodesia, Tanganyika, Nyasaland and Kenya. Although the government was still unwilling to provide substantial funding, Shuckburgh personally assured Rothschild

[73] Henry L. Feingold, 'Roosevelt and the Resettlement Question', in: Yisrael Gutman and Efraim Zuroff (eds), *Rescue Attempts during the Holocaust: Proceedings of the Second Yad Vashem International Historical Conference* (Jerusalem, 1977), pp. 123-181; Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations* (Princeton, NJ, 2009), pp. 111-113.

that ‘we are ready and willing at all times to render you every assistance in our power’, as the Colonial Office was ‘convinced that much more can be accomplished by direct contact between representatives of the voluntary organisations and the local Government authorities than by any number of despatches from here’.[74] Eventually a commission was established to visit these territories and assess their viability.[75] Through these investigations, the cost of settlement was established, and it was found to be prohibitive (see below).

Of course, this was just one of many such meetings (not to mention those that took place in the US), but it serves to highlight the reluctance of the Jewish agencies and the political considerations that went into settlement. Moreover, the nature of refugee policy (which amounted to immigration practices) was limited by prevailing conceptual schemas of the period, particularly liberalism.

Large or small, agricultural or urban, colonial refugee settlement triggered unease among officials. An examination of three case-studies illuminates this further. Here, focus is given to those discussions of refugee settlement in schemes that were planned for Kenya, Northern Rhodesia and Cyprus. In the discussions prompted by settlement plans, questions were raised about whether the Jews were likely to cause problems on arrival, their ability to assimilate and whether special schemes were necessary, even in the face of Nazi persecution.

**KENYA**

The small-scale settlement of twenty-five agriculturalists planned for Kenya was the most advanced scheme for refugee settlement in any colony and provided the model for other suggested settlement schemes. It was presented at Évian as an example of the colonial contribution to the refugee crisis and represented many of the benefits offered by organized refugee settlement. It was well-funded, time was invested to ensure the suitability of candidates and it was designed specifically not to antagonize local opinion. However, it also met with many of the limitations imposed by liberal perceptions of the refugee problem. This section will explore the discussion around this small scheme and highlight two aspects: first, the emphasis on the assimilability of those refugees allowed entry; and second, how tensions

[74] Shuckburgh to Rothschild, 23 December 1938, CO691/169/19, TNA.
[75] Lambert, minute, 28 January 1939, CO525/182/21, TNA.

manifested themselves over the rights of Jews as a group and the right of entry for individual Jewish immigrants.

Plans for small-scale agricultural settlement in Kenya were developed under the guidance and financial support of non-government organisations, specifically under the auspices of the Council for German Jewry and the British Fund. The scheme was designed to include twenty-five young German Jews, aged between eighteen and thirty. Over half of those selected were to be over twenty-five years of age, and among the whole group, five men were to be married. The men would be selected from a group who had already received agricultural training in Germany. It was planned that when those selected arrived in Kenya, they would receive a period of six to twelve months training on an already established farm before being settled in groups on five to six farms, with a married couple on each. The Plough Settlement Association (PSA) was established to provide finance for the cost of transport, training and maintenance, as well as the purchase of the necessary equipment to establish their own farms.[76] The PSA was as successful as it was, perhaps, because it treated their activity as 'a relief measure for German Jews' rather than as a commercial endeavour, which made them keen to help as many refugees as possible.[77] This contradicts Feingold's argument that the 'guarantee of profit' was necessary for the success of re-settlement schemes and therefore suggests that a more nuanced understanding of the ideological context for success or failure of re-settlement is necessary.[78]

The careful and calculated formula of the numbers and types of potential Jewish settlers was a prerequisite for overcoming significant official concerns over assimilation. Governor Brooke-Popham, for example, objected to the creation of a 'Jewish enclave'. He instead insisted on 'the carefully regulated influx of Jews of the right type – i.e. nordic from Germany or Austria [...] in small groups of a size not too large to become part of the general economic and social life of the community'.[79]

[76] 'Note on Experimental Scheme for the Settlement of a Small Number of Young German Jewish Refugee Trained Agriculturalists in Kenya', 11 November 1938, CO533/497/8, TNA.
[77] Paskin, minute, 17 November 1938, CO533/497/8, TNA.
[78] Feingold, 'Roosevelt', p. 169.
[79] Sherman, *Island Refuge*, pp 105-106.

These concerns were a central motif that appeared time and again in the communications of colonial officials. In another example, MacDonald wrote to Brooke-Popham that:

> the success of the scheme and in particular for the retention of the goodwill of the existing settler community, [...] the farms on which these persons are to be settled should be selected in such a manner as to ensure as far as possible, the assimilation of the emigrants into the general social structure of the Colony. It is contemplated that when the thirty original settlers have become sufficiently established on their farms, they will be joined by other members of their families. It is not anticipated, however, that the total number of settlers, including the original thirty, will exceed 150, and there is no intention of forming a Jewish enclave in the Highlands.[80]

Mirroring this language, Paskin, a colonial official who worked on the issue of land settlement in Kenya, wrote to the Secretary of the Central British Fund for German Jewry that:

> it is necessary for the success of the scheme that the farms on which these persons are to be settled should be selected in such a manner as to ensure as far as possible the assimilation of immigrants into the general social structure of the Colony, and that there is no intention of forming a Jewish enclave in the Highlands of Kenya.[81]

These are just three of many examples that use the same or very similar language to express the need for the settlers to assimilate. This reflected concerns in Britain (and in Kenya) that Jews could create problems by maintaining differences. Even the repeated use of 'enclave' evokes the fact that Jews were believed to be ethnically or culturally distinct.

To overcome official concerns about assimilation, the PSA also went to great lengths to individually select settlers to ensure their suitability for success. As well as a financial guarantee, officials were reassured that 'the settlers who are to be sent to Kenya will be carefully selected with particular reference to their suitability for the purpose'.[82] Lieutenant-Colonel Knaggs, a white settler and agent for the Kenya government in London, was sent to Germany to select refugees suitable for agricultural settlement (presumably as a gesture to official concerns as well as local

[80] MacDonald to Brooke-Popham, draft letter, 17 August 1938, CO533/497/8, TNA.
[81] Paskin to Secretary, Central British Fund for German Jewry, 2 November 1938, CO533/497/8, TNA.
[82] Campbell to Stephany, 21 September 1938, CO533/497/8, TNA.

opinion).[83] However, by November, problems had emerged. Colonel Knaggs reported to Paskin that 'the candidates who had been selected to go to Kenya had been sent to a concentration camp, and that the documents relating to the scheme, including the list of selected candidates, had been impounded by the German authorities'.[84]

Their release was eventually negotiated, but this meant that rather than being able to use German money for passage directly from Germany to Kenya, the refugees would need to be 'brought to [Great Britain] and maintained at the expense of the Jewish Council until they can be provided with passage to Kenya'.[85] The realities of implementing even a small scheme meant that the Colonial Office was increasingly asked to compromise its own guidelines on immigration. Questions were therefore raised about how much of a compromise would be necessary should large-scale settlement schemes be pursued. Furthermore, the attention, time and resources given to the selection of suitable refugees highlights another central tenant of liberalism that impacted refugee policy: there was a tension between the need to help Jews as a persecuted group and the desire to ensure that individual entrants were 'deserving' (i.e. able to meet liberal expectations of assimilability and self-help).

The tension between the individual and group identity of Jewish refugees was far from straightforward. The contradictory and complex nature of the ways that liberalism impacted attitudes towards Jews can be seen in the discourse that surrounded official discussions of Jewish people and agencies that organised settlement. Mr. Fletcher, '[t]he leading spirit amongst the Directors' of the PSA, was described by Paskin as 'a Jew, who changed his name from Fleicher, and went out to Kenya some years ago'.[86] Fletcher, who was by all accounts an assimilated Jew who even Anglicised his name, was still identified as Jewish by Paskin. Jewish refugees could not receive special treatment as a group, but individuals were consistently identified as Jewish, even when assimilated.

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[83] For Colonel Knaggs, see Bernard Wasserstein, *On the Eve: The Jews of Europe before the Second World War* (New York, 2012) p. 357.
[84] Paskin, minute, 29 November 1938, CO533/497/8, TNA.
[85] Paskin, minute, 29 November 1938; Hibbert, minute, 2 January 1939, CO533/497/8, TNA.
[86] Paskin, minute, 17 November 1938, CO533/497/8, TNA.

While Paskin's opinion of Fletcher was dictated by the latter's belonging to a larger Jewish community, Hibbert noted when discussing the proposed expansion of the settlement scheme by the PSA in 1939 that '[t]he Jews have made their usual stupid mistake of taking the ell. If they had not opened their mouth so wide [...] it might have produced a different reaction from the Governor'.[87] In this comment, Hibbert carelessly dismissed all Jewish people as problematic. Officials, expressing the contradictions of liberalism, could both refuse to make special allowances to help Jews as a group in need, and criticize, stereotype, and/or dismiss individuals or entire groups as problematic.

Given the particularity of the colony, individual and group rights as well as questions of 'deserving' became especially complicated. The *Spectator*, a weekly publication with Conservative leanings, published the following editorial:

> There are two points of view to be considered: the good of the Jews, and the good of Kenya. As far as the Jews are concerned one might assume that any land is better than those which refuse to have them, and that as other Europeans live and make a living in Kenya, why should not they? Yet the problem is not as simple as all that. The present white inhabitants of Kenya have, so far, not been consulted in any way; under the Colonial Office system of Crown Colony government they are not likely to be given any say in a matter which concerns them very closely.

The editorialist went on to ask:

> What exactly is meant by 'the good of Kenya'? The good of the land; the native inhabitants; the white settlers; or the Indians of whom there are about 30,000? It is noteworthy that the East African Indian National Congress is opposed to any scheme for Jewish settlement and it has sent a memorandum to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. They are opposed obviously because they foresee increased competition in commerce and trade generally. They are permanent and bitter opponents of white settlement: behind them lies the immense influence of the India Office; the settlers have no backing.[88]

This article points to another concern of officials: whether Jews were any more deserving of special rights or privileges than other groups, such as white settlers or Indian settlers. This issue was complex, especially in the colonial setting where politics (and conceptions of race) played into official understandings of who

[87] Hibbert, minute, 24 March 1939, CO533/511/7, TNA.
[88] Cleland Scott, 'Jewish Settlement in Kenya?', *The Spectator*, 30 September 1938, CO533/497/8, TNA.

was ‘deserving’ of help. That the article was included in official files reflects the fact that the issue was a live one and of public interest. The ramifications of this will be discussed more in the context of humanitarianism (chapter four).

As well as understanding the attitudes that helped formulate policy, the centrality of liberalism to the ambiguities and ambivalence of policy is evident in records of refugee experience. The refugee testimony used in this thesis highlights examples of refugees who found safety in Kenya outside of organised settlement schemes and therefore had to navigate Kenya’s immigration laws themselves, including financial requirements as well as when immigration policies changed at short notice. In the cases of the Zweig, Berg and Bauer families, we are afforded the opportunity to see how different refugees navigated Kenya’s immigration laws with varying levels of success, and through this, the impact of liberal attitudes on refugees’ lived experiences.

Walter Zweig, a Jewish legal professional from Breslau (now Wrocław) arrived in Kenya in early 1938. When Walter arrived, he could not speak any English and was unsuited to the agricultural work he was expected to undertake. Although he and his immediate family successfully found refuge in Kenya, they were not considered ‘desirable immigrants’. They had no financial resources and no specific skills that could benefit the colony, and as such, his stay in Kenya was fraught with challenges. Although the family found safety in the colony, other members of their extended family were not so fortunate. Zweig’s father, Max Zweig, did not initially wish to leave Germany. However, as the situation in Nazi-occupied Europe deteriorated, he too sought safety in the British Empire. Although Walter Zweig encouraged his father and sister to leave, he did not have the sufficient funds to help them fulfill the £50 immigration requirement for entry into Kenya. Max Zweig nonetheless sent a letter to the British Government in the hope he would be permitted to travel to meet his son:

> My son Walter Zweig, a former lawyer and public notary of Leobschutz in German Upper-Silesia, had as a jew [sic] to leave his country. He emigrated in February 1938 to Kenya and is since November 1938 owner of a farm in Eldoret. Because he is not yet allowed to request my coming to him at present, I request your Excellency to grant me a visa for entering Kenya without being obliged to depose money there. Being

> a lonely man, I ask your Excellency to help me to see my only son who is in the position to care for my living there.[89]

The Colonial Office response acknowledged Max Zweig's desire to see his son but offered no practical help. He was advised to contact the Government of Kenya, but as he did not have sufficient resources, he was unable to find safety with his son in Kenya. There is no indication that Walter Zweig knew about his father's correspondence with the Colonial Office. He only learnt of his father's fate after the war. A friend wrote to tell him that his father had died at the hands of the SS when they beat him in the street.[90] What this personal tragedy illustrates is that the individual entry of refugees remained based on the individual refugee's ability to fulfil immigration requirements. Access was based on immigration regulations, rather than refugee policy, and individuals were often denied entry despite need, especially where there was no individual or agency willing to advocate or provide financial assistance for them.

The Berg family managed to escape in much larger numbers, mostly due to the fact that they had financial resources outside of Germany which could pay for the visas and deposits required for entry. In fact, the Bergs' close-knit, observant Jewish family managed to escape almost intact. Already successful farmers in Cologne, the family were able to translate this to Kenya, where they took up cattle farming. They arrived in the colony with skills that could be directly applied in the colonial agricultural setting, and they went on to own a 375-acre farm in Limuru and an additional 125 acres about eight miles to the south in Muguga.[91] Although they did not stay in Kenya after the war, Jill Pauly recalls that her father had been happy there, and both Jill and her sister Inge recall positive memories of life on the farm. The Bergs were 'desirable' immigrants, and their adaptation to life in the colony is suggestive of this. The Bergs had financial means and valued skills and sought entry on that basis rather than solely as refugees. This, along with a helpful dose of luck, meant that the family found safety in Kenya. Although with a more positive

[89] Zweig to Colonial Office, 18 May 1939, CO533/506/11, TNA.
[90] Zweig, *Nowhere in Africa*, pp. 211-213.
[91] Pauly and Katzenstein, *USHMM First Person Podcast Series*; 'Oral History Interview with Jill Pauly', RG-50.106*0092, USHMM.

outcome than the Zweigs, the experiences of the Berg family once again illustrates the influence of liberalism in action in refugee and immigration policy.

Heinz Bauer's family's experiences highlight the way that the restrictions in immigration practices could be navigated by refugees, particularly when others could provide financial help or advocacy. Heinz and his brother's departure was initially made possible by the assistance of an English patient of their father who helped guarantee their entry to Kenya. During their journey, via Paris and London, they received more help, this time from a family friend who provided funding for their parents' eventual emigration to Kenya. On arrival in Kenya, Jewish benefactors provided finance and employment. The family were eventually reunited in Kenya after Heinz's parents and future wife made it safely to Kenya with the help of government and consular officials. In his memoir, Bauer even defends the financial requirements of Kenya's immigration policy: '[b]ut, to be quite fair, without their knowing what kind of people we were, such misgivings were somewhat understandable'.[92] Bauer also praised the post-immigration experienced: '[o]nce a refugee was a legal resident of Kenya [...] no distinction was made between [them] and any other immigrant'. He also said: 'We were all given an equal and fair chance which is much to the credit of the British'.

The Bergs were successful agriculturalists and the type of settlers who were tolerable for the British. The Zweigs, on the other hand, were the kind of problematic settlers the British feared. This is made clear by the fact that Walter Zweig struggled to find the stability and success he sought and that his father was denied entry to the colony on economic grounds. Heinz Bauer's age and the good fortune he had in receiving help at the most desperate of times shaped his experiences. However, he again found most success when he adapted to the preferred role of agriculturalist. The immigration laws in place in Kenya favoured self-sufficient individuals who were able to find employment in the established racial hierarchies of the colony. Liberal attitudes, as well as race, helped make these traits central to the success of refugee colonial settlement.

[92] Bauer, memoir, RG-02.083, USHMM.

**NORTHERN RHODESIA**

While Kenya was the location of the most advanced settlement scheme, Northern Rhodesia was also frequently mentioned during discussions of potential refugee settlement. Unlike Kenya, which was categorized by the 1923 Devonshire Declaration officially as a future black state (thereby limiting white settler interests and power), Northern Rhodesia was involved in contentious debates about its racial future, specifically regarding closer union with Southern Rhodesia and even Nyasaland. At this time, Southern Rhodesia was led by a white settler government, and many wanted this same privilege for settlers in Northern Rhodesia. Henry J. Antkiewicz argues that Southern Rhodesia prided itself on being, unlike South Africa, 'untainted by Afrikaanerdom'. Similar aspirations were evident in Northern Rhodesia.[93] Therefore, white settlement of anyone other than British people would have been potentially unpopular. It was in this context that possible Jewish refugee settlement was discussed and the place of liberal ideas, including assimilation, in the construction of refugee policy are shown in their full complexity.

The possibility of settlement in Northern Rhodesia was first raised at a meeting between Parkinson and Sir Hubert Young, the former governor of Northern Rhodesia in May 1938. After this meeting, Parkinson reflected, '[o]ur ideas as to large scale Jewish settlement in the Colonial Empire may have to be revised'. Young had indicated that 'there was room for a very large number of Jewish refugees to be settled in the north-western part of Northern Rhodesia on Crown land where there are very, very few natives'. Parkinson explained:

> We shall have to take this seriously. If it should be possible for the British Government to offer a home to Jewish refugees in large numbers in N[orthern] Rhodesia, it would be a splendid gesture, and I have no doubt that from the political, as well as the humanitarian point of view the S[ecretary]of S[tate] would welcome it.[94]

Despite his optimistic posturing to Parkinson, Young had previously 'rejected the possibility' of settling around 10,000 Assyrian refugees on 'geographical, climatic, economic and political grounds'.[95] Assyrian refugees (from areas of

[93] Henry J. Antkiewicz , *Zion on the Zambezi: The Problem of German-Jewish Settlement Schemes in Northern Rhodesia* (1980), pp. 23-24.
[94] Parkinson, minute, 21 May 1938, CO323/1605/2, TNA.
[95] Hibbert, minute, 25 May 1938, CO691/169/91, TNA.

modern-day Iraq, Turkey, Iran and Syria) had also sought safety across the empire earlier in the 1930s. Antkiewicz explains that the Assyrians 'were Asiatics and would not be welcome'.[96] Although this definition is certainly open to debate, it does touch on the fact that Asiatic, particularly Indian settlers, were also considered to be problematic. Regarding Young's suggestion for Jewish settlement, Hibbert wryly observed, 'I cannot help feeling that it is very doubtful whether Sir. H. Young would have made his suggestions had he been returning to Northern Rhodesia as Governor!'[97]

Following Young's suggestion, in June 1938 the Acting Governor was asked about the possibilities of settlement in the Mwinilunga district of Northern Rhodesia, to which he responded that around 500 families could possibly be accommodated. However, as he felt that the plan was likely to be unpopular with the local European community, he asked to seek the opinion of the representatives of the local white population, known as 'unofficials', on the issue of refugee settlement.[98] Although officials in Whitehall hoped that settlement options in Northern Rhodesia could be mentioned at Évian, where it was felt that it would be 'at least desirable that [Britain] should have made specific enquiry of these two territories which are most likely [...] to suggest themselves to others as possible places for settlement', a response was not received in time for its inclusion.[99] Moreover, when a response was received, it was, unsurprisingly, negative. The unofficial element rejected even small-scale settlement based on subsistence farming for reasons including the concern that that Jewish refugee settlers would soon abandon farming and present competition in trade or on the labour market (a similar fear to that held by Brooke-Popham in Kenya).[100]

Although it seemed that white settler opinion had stopped plans for Jewish settlement, Hibbert wrote a compelling minute in August 1938, observing that 'some of the papers' on file:

> might convey the impression that some of us here also think it is dead, and are possibly glad to think so. I do not think it is dead, and I will

[96] Antkiewicz , *Zion on the Zambezi*, p. 5.
[97] Hibbert, minute, 25 May 1938, CO691/169/91, TNA.
[98] Cohen, minute, 30 August 1938, CO795/104/12, TNA.
[99] Parkinson, minute, 1 June 1938, CO795/104/12, TNA.
[100] Macmillan and Shapiro, *Zion in Africa*, p. 105.

> prophesy that in a very short time [w]e shall be subjected again to very heavy pressure to try and do more than we have done towards finding a partial solution of the dreadful German Jewish refugee problem within the Colonial Empire.[101]

Hibbert was proved to be right, and as events deteriorated in Europe in the autumn of 1938, attention once more turned to Northern Rhodesia. In fact, just five days after the events of *Kristallnacht,* colonial officials were specifically requested by MacDonald to communicate with colonial territories including Northern Rhodesia about the settlement of Jewish refugees.[102]

In December 1938, a meeting between Shuckburgh and Rothschild about refugee settlement in the empire brought Northern Rhodesia once more to the fore. Before the meeting, Shuckburgh had written to Rothschild explaining that 'the Governor has set up a local committee to examine the possibility of small-scale settlement' based on 'the settlement in the first instance of a small number of trained refugee agriculturalists', with final numbers of settlers reaching only about 150 persons. The Colonial Office, however, pushed for the investigation of options for more significant settlement and to this end wanted to establish a committee to investigate the possibilities of settlement, an 'exercise of considerable tact' given the 'great apprehension' expressed by the local settler community.[103]

Despite concerns over the cost of investigations, it was finally agreed that a commission would be sent to Northern Rhodesia on 29 April 1939 to investigate possibilities of settlement there.[104] The commission, headed by Sir James Dunnett, a retired member of the Indian Civil Service, was made up of six people, including a settler from Northern Rhodesia called Hector Croad and a retired provincial Commissioner for the Northern Province.[105] The inclusion of a settler voice was undoubtedly a concession made to the powerful white settler community in the colony, which remained opposed to even the investigation of settlement.

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[101] Hibbert, minute, 23 August 1938, CO795/104/12, TNA.
[102] Hibbert, minute, 15 November 1938, CO691/169/91, TNA.
[103] Shuckburgh to Rothschild, 23 December 1938, CO691/169/19, TNA.
[104] Shuckburgh to Hibbert, 30 December 1938, CO691/169/19; Cohen, minute, 30 August 1938, CO795/104/12, TNA.
[105] MacDonald to Maybin, 6 March 1939, CO525/182/21, TNA; Macmillan and Shapiro, *Zion in Africa*, p. 108.

After the Commission visited Northern Rhodesia, it reported that 'the capital cost involved was so high that it would prohibit the refugee organisations from considering the schemes at all.' It was explained that 'the resources at their disposal could not spare funds of the order of half a million pounds to settle some four to five hundred refugees and their wives and children'.[106] The report outlined that settlers in Northern Rhodesia would need at least £120 a year to survive. Without this money, the likelihood of successful settlement was considered to be small. African expert Lord Hailey warned against 'the introduction of a "poor white" community'.[107] This was generally agreed, particularly as there was already such a problem 'among Afrikaner small-holders [...] half of whose children were said to be malnourished'.[108] For those who wanted increased power for white settlers, it was necessary to bolster the territory with the right kind of white settler. Jews, particularly impoverished, persecuted refugees, were not deemed to be suitable based on their stereotyped inability to assimilate.

Due to the negative findings of the Commission's report, particularly in regard to the cost of settlement, Rothschild's refugee organisation asked that a proposed White Paper of the findings not be published. They viewed it as a 'grave mistake', as 'it might encourage' other countries where settlement schemes could be carried out at a cheaper cost to inflate their estimates in order to ensure that refugee settlement did not take place.[109] Ultimately, the Colonial Office agreed, which suggests that they had some sensitivity to the difficulty of the situation for the refugee organizations.

The importance attached to funding by external bodies must also be understood as a manifestation of the limits of liberalism. In May 1938, Lieutenant-Colonel Acland-Troyte, MP for Tiverton, asked during a discussion of the refugee problem 'Why should we give away public money on these refugees from other countries?' Many questioned why refugees, let alone Jewish refugees, were more

[106] Seel to Reilly (FO), Brooks (Treasury), Waley (Treasury), Price (Dominions Office) and Cooper (Home Office), 30 June 1939, CO525/182/21, TNA.
[107] Seel, note, 28 June 1938, CO525/182/21, TNA.
[108] Macmillan and Shapiro, *Zion in Africa*, p. 109.
[109] Seel to Reilly (FO), Brooks (Treasury), Waley (Treasury), Price (Dominions Office) and Cooper (Home Office), 30 June 1939, CO525/182/21, TNA.

deserving of money than other groups in need, including the unemployed in Britain itself.[110]

The opinions expressed about Jewish settlement in Northern Rhodesia between May 1938 and August 1939 provide clear evidence of the way that liberalism helped shape refugee entry into the colony. In this regard, the presence and influence of the powerful white settler community is key. Despite the hopes of the British government in London and others such as Coudenhove-Kalergi (who had suggested in his statement at Évian that colonial settlement by Jewish refugees 'would have the advantage of developing the natural riches of Rhodesia and securing this promising country for the white race'), the settlement of Jewish refugees remained limited largely because it threatened local opinion.[111] Indeed, the powerful white settler community argued that '[y]ou have always told us that [Northern] Rhodesia is a black man's country and that that is the reason why we cannot be allowed to dominate it. How can you reconcile this with an attempt to impose white settlement on the country?'[112]

The debate was taken up by Sir Leopold Moore, who raised the issue in July 1938 while giving a speech at an agricultural show in Southern Rhodesia. In his speech, he exaggerated details of the settlement plans under discussion, claiming that up to 500 refugees were to be settled. He also argued that Jews would ultimately enter Southern Rhodesia, 'owning this farming country, running businesses and banks and no one could live very long here'. This reveals the underlying racial perceptions of Jews not just as potentially unassimilable but as an overt threat. This was also, of course, in complete opposition to the concern that Jewish refugees would add to the 'poor white' problem. The contradictory images show how within a liberal context, Jews could be viewed as a threat because of their perceived abilities and/or because of their refugee status. More often than not, group stereotypes abounded despite the reluctance to respond to refugees as a group in need.

[110] Commons, 23 May 1938, *Hansard*, 336, col. 835.
[111] Coudenhove-Kalergi, memorandum to the Évian Conference, 6 July 1938, CO323/1605/3, TNA.
[112] Dawe, minute, 22 October 1938, CO795/104/12, TNA.

Although the white settler community was able to impact the scope of action taken towards Jewish refugees, this did not go unnoticed by Whitehall. For example, Parkinson minuted that '[t]he position is unfortunate, but I do not think we can allow ourselves to be deterred by these Unofficials. We really must do something for these Jews, and if we are going to be stopped by every outcry of this kind, we shall never get anywhere. But we must proceed cautiously'.[113] Likewise, Hibbert minuted that 'I trust that we shall not allow ourselves to be too much swayed by the opinions of the Unofficials in Northern Rhodesia and of their double-faced leader [Sir Leopold Moore]'. [114] Parkinson and Hibbert expressed, first and foremost, a general frustration with problematic white settlers. However, it is clear that while Jewish refugee needs consistently lost to the needs of local colonial peoples (see chapter four), the decision-making process was less clear cut in the case of white settlers and refugees.

Nonetheless, settlement remained limited. Figures from the South African Board of Deputies estimated that only 230 German Jewish refugees found refuge in Northern Rhodesia between 1937 and 1939. Taking into account other estimates by the Chief Immigration Officer, Macmillan and Shapiro place the number of refugees who entered Northern Rhodesia by early 1940 at between 250 and 300.[115] Clearly, in Northern Rhodesia the tensions within liberalism mixed almost seamlessly with those of race. By unpacking these problems around Jewish settlement, both here and in subsequent chapters, the reasons behind restrictive, limited policies become clearer, illuminating not just that re-settlement schemes failed but also why.

**CYPRUS**

Cyprus was a small, strategically important colony in the Mediterranean Sea. As a result of its proximity to Palestine, it received unprecedented interest as a destination for Jewish settlement. An examination of this territory – where political issues were as much international as domestic and where British rule was more actively challenged in the interwar years than in Africa – offers another view of the contradictions of liberalism and the ways in which they limited Jewish settlement. In

[113] Parkinson, minute, 10 August 1938, CO795/104/12, TNA.
[114] Hibbert, minute, 8 August 1938, CO795/104/12, TNA.
[115] Macmillan and Shapiro, *Zion in Africa*, p. 111.

the interwar years, the colonial government was challenged by a rise in tensions between those parties on the island seeking e*nosis* (union with Greece) as well as a rise in communist activities led by parties such as the communist Progressive Party of Working People (AKEL).[116] In 1931, as a result of these tensions (which climaxed in the form of a small revolt and the burning down of Government House), the Governor abolished the Legislative Council and instead worked with an advisory Executive Council, made up of the Colonial Secretary, the Commissioner of Nicosia, the Attorney General and the Treasurer (official members) and three non-official members who were nominated by the Governor. This meant that 'there was no real representative organ on the island'.[117] Therefore, settlement questions were based largely on official views of the situation, and the international dimension of Cypriot politics ensured that a conservative and limited response developed.

Although the Foreign Office was keen to pursue opportunities of settlement on the island for larger geopolitical reasons, the Colonial Office viewed these in a more limited way because of local political concerns. Indeed, the political ramifications of large-scale Jewish entry into Mediterranean territories were frequently discussed in the Colonial Office, which felt that prioritising refugee needs would be to 'rob Peter to pay Paul' – that is to say, aiding refugees would cause difficulties and tensions with the Cypriots.[118] In response to questions about possible refugee settlement, the Governor responded: 'I cannot understand why it should be supposed that there is room in Cyprus for refugees. There is no room and I am sure you will agree that we should not attempt to remedy one injustice, however great, by creating another one'.[119] Indeed, even small-scale agricultural schemes were rejected because it was felt that 'to facilitate land settlement in Cyprus in any form [would] forfeit the respect of the Cypriots forever'.[120] The Governor also expressed his fear that refugee settlement 'for reasons however

[116] Christopher James Sutton, *The British Empire and the Early Cold War: A Comparison of Hong Kong and Cyprus* (PhD thesis, University of East Anglia, 2014), p. 40.
[117] Anastasia Yiangou, *Cyprus in World War II: Politics and Conflict in the Eastern Mediterranean* (London, 2010), p. 17.
[118] Williams, minute, 27 October 1938, CO67/290/14, TNA.
[119] Palmer to Wedgwood, 4 October 1938, CO67/290/14, TNA.
[120] Palmer to MacDonald, 11 October 1938, CO67/290/14, TNA.

excellent, which are of no interest to Cyprus[,] could not fail to assist' the political unrest which was ever-present over issues such as *enosis*.

Although 'one or two newspapers took the view that an influx of capital and skilled labour would be a valuable accession of economic strength to the Colony, the traditional opposition to the settlement of foreigners in Cyprus was predominant'.[121] While Williams noted the 'Cypriot prejudice against the Jews', Hibbert responded with a hand-written note that '[s]o has nearly everybody else', highlighting the general tension over Jewish settlement across the empire.[122] Moreover, this exchange reflects the frustration of those officials working closely on the issue, that an indigenous dislike of Jews was so frequently given as a reason for not exploring settlement plans.

Local prejudices and the fear engendered by the prospect of mass Jewish settlement were particularly relevant to Cyprus because of its proximity to Palestine. This was recognised by officials who argued that 'with the tragic example of Palestine so near their eyes who can blame the Cypriots for feelings of disquiet at anything which they can construe as the thin edge of the wedge'.[123] This alluded to the fact that Jewish immigration to Palestine had continued to increase and to cause many problems – problems that Cypriots did not want repeated in their own country. Moreover, Jewish entry into Palestine, especially after the 1939 White Paper, represented many of the liberal concerns officials had with Jewish refugee entry: levels of Jewish immigration had been so high that assimilation was not possible; the mass movement of Jews to Palestine heightened the negative connotations of Jews as a group; and illegal immigration highlighted for many that Jews were not deserving of special treatment. Many in the government, including high profile figures such as Ernst Bevin, viewed Palestine and illegal immigrants negatively, taking the position that Jews should not be allowed to circumnavigate immigration practices in place (see chapter four).

Like many other colonies, immigration laws were amended in Cyprus to increase control. As in Britain, these largely focused on the requirement of a return

[121] Extract from a secret report on the Political Situation in Cyprus, 1 July-30 September 1938, CO67/290/14, TNA.
[122] Williams, minute, 27 October 1938, with hand-written comment by Hibbert, CO67/290/14, TNA.
[123] Williams, minute, 27 October 1938, CO67/290/14, TNA.

visa from the country of origin, which was difficult (if not impossible) for stateless refugees. There were also certain capital requirements to protect the colony from accepting refugees who were unable to leave and unable to support themselves. Governor Palmer tried to gain further control over immigration procedures by requesting the ability 'to exclude persons, who on economic or other grounds, would not be suitable immigrants'. Although there was concern in London that this 'might lead to unfair discrimination', it was, overall, deemed to be necessary.[124] One Colonial Office official minuted:

> If a special regulation is needed to ensure this, I certainly think that there could be no grounds on which we could withhold approval of the Governor's proposal. It would be an intolerable situation if he had no power to exclude from the Colony any person who happened to be able to comply with the regulations as regards the possession of capital.[125]

Such statements highlight that the Jewishness of the refugees was a central issue. Even if refugees could comply with the standard immigration requirements, they could still be labeled 'undesirable' because of who they were: in this case, Jews. This was also linked to the reassurance that Palmer would not be pressed 'to consent to a degree of immigration which would be contrary to the general welfare of the colony and its inhabitants, whose interests must be the primary consideration'.[126] Like the laws produced in Australia which allowed for the discrimination of Jews by less overt means, giving Palmer the right to veto entry took immigration practices outside legal precedents and into the subjective power of the Governor. It was another way of asserting that the needs of Jews as a persecuted group could not and would not be prioritised above those of local inhabitants.

An examination of one man's recollections of refuge in Cyprus offers insight into the lived experience of British colonial policy and the limits of liberalism in the specific context of the Mediterranean territory. Frederik Wohl entered Cyprus after having been forced to leave Greece at the end of 1938 because the Greek government refused to renew the family's residence permits. Wohl recalls:

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[124] Barlow, minute, 20 March 1939, CO67/297/1, TNA.
[125] Williams, minute, 19 April 1939, CO67/297/1, TNA.
[126] MacDonald to Palmer, 29 September 1938, CO67/290/14, TNA.

> The four of us, my parents, my sister and I, we went from one foreign consulate to the other in Athens to try and get a place to [...] go to. And this was quite difficult. We once thought we had a, we thought to go to Paraguay but when we went to buy steamship tickets, we found out that that consul was only an honorary consul, and wasn't supposed to give visas out and after some difficulty we got half our money back.[127]

Eventually, the Wohl family found safe passage to Cyprus, in part because of his father's connection with the Free Masons. They also benefited from the fact that Frederik's mother was related to Walther Rathenau, the Foreign Minister in the Weimar Republic and wealthy industrialist who was assassinated in 1922. A man at the British Embassy told the Wohls that they 'could proceed [to] any place in the British Empire we wanted to go, provided we had the means to do so'. Therefore, as Wohl explains, the:

> Closest place was the island of Cyprus; but Cyprus required for anyone who came there one thousand pounds to show in cash. We didn't have that kind of money. So the British Ambassador in Athens caused them to reduce this amount to a thousand pounds for the whole family [...] which was very nice. The only drawback was that we didn't have the thousand pounds. And I managed to go to the two main employers I had, and I borrowed from each one five hundred pounds in Greek money. So we put that on an account in Cyprus [...] Half a year later, I could send them the money back [...] [W]ithout the help from the British Ambassador I don't know what would have happened.[128]

Although the family eventually entered Cyprus in March 1939, it is important to note that the initial permission to enter the colony was still based on the fulfilment of standard immigration requirements, despite the family's obvious difficulties. However, by virtue of the father's Free Mason connections and illustrious family history, they were considered to be 'deserving' refugees by the unknown British official.

Immigration practices were often more flexible at an individual level, especially when someone within government or with influence was prepared to help. The nature of liberalism preferred this kind of movement of people, and this was therefore the most successful way Jewish refugees entered various colonies.

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[127] 'Oral History Interview with Fred R. Wohl', 22 November 1989, USHMM, RG-50.030*0255, <http://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn504750>.
[128] 'Oral History Interview with Fred R. Wohl', RG-50.030*0255, USHMM.

Moreover, personal intervention is again evidence of the contradictions within liberal society. Many people were happy to vouch for or financially aid Jewish people whom they knew or to whom they were connected. The same generosity was offered much less often in cases of larger schemes, when questions of assimilation and rights came into play.[129]

Friedrich and Minna Burstein and their two-year-old baby were not as fortunate in their experiences as the Wohl family. As Czechoslovakian Jews, they had been forced to leave Istanbul as a result of the German annexation of Czechoslovakia in 1939. Their story came to the attention of the British Colonial Office after it was recounted to Barlow, a colonial official, by Mrs Marianne Fisher, a relative of the Burstein family. When the Bursteins left Istanbul, they had been informed 'at the English Consulate that they would be allowed to disembark at Cyprus and that it was not necessary for them to have a visa'. They knew that Cyprus was set to introduce a visa requirement for all Czechoslovakian nationals from 1 April, so they planned to arrive in Cyprus before this date. However, Barlow noted, 'they were not allowed to land at Cyprus, and are still on board the ship, as it seems that no authorities anywhere will allow them to land'.[130]

An investigation found that the Bursteins had 'informed the immigration officer that they were "seeking refuge" in Cyprus and he was therefore justified in not regarding them as "bone fide" travellers'.[131] It was decided that the decision of the immigration officer was to be upheld. As the Governor of Cyprus explained:

> Owing to [the] changed regime in Czecho-Slovakia the principal Immigration Officer on the 20th March instructed all Immigration Officers to exercise special care in examining the bone fides of all Czecho-Slovakian nationals seeking to enter Cyprus as travellers and to guard against attempts to enter Cyprus by all such persons of Refugee class who had not obtained prior authorisation to reside in Cyprus and whose admission would render this Government responsible for permanent asylum.[132]

After establishing the immigration officer was not legally at fault, it was accepted that the Bursteins had no case for entry, and the file pertaining to the couple does

[129] *Ibid*.
[130] Barlow, minute, 4 April 1939, CO67/293/4, TNA.
[131] Barlow, minute, 14 April 1939, CO67/293/4, TNA.
[132] Palmer to MacDonald, 13 April 1939, CO67/293/4, TNA.

not suggest that they were allowed to enter Cyprus. In this case, the personal plea of a family member was not enough to aid the family, and they were ultimately denied refuge because they did not meet the requirements of the Cyprus immigration legislation.

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This chapter has shown that the inherent contradictions and complexity of 'liberalism' contributed to the limited nature of the British response. In the examples from Kenya, Northern Rhodesia and Cyprus, the concern with assimilation was paramount in defining immigration practices. Moreover, few exceptions were made for refugees simply because they were in need of help. Plans for large-scale entry were often played down as they would have gone against both of these key liberal concerns. This meant that in most cases, limited or individual entry was the only means of finding refuge in the colonies.

As discussed earlier in the chapter in the context of the PSA settlement scheme in Kenya, Feingold argues:

> the creation of such projects depended in the long run not on humanitarian sentiments, of which there were precious little in the world in the thirties, but on the promise of returns on capital investments. Had it been possible to guarantee a profit and harness the forces of the market, resettlement havens might have materialized more rapidly and in greater numbers.[133]

Of course, re-settlement had to offer specific gains in order to win support, but as this chapter has shown, the reality was more complex than financial gain. As the following chapters will show, race also played a role in the perceptions of Jewish assimilability, and much more besides. 'Humanitarian sentiments', which Feingold identifies as lacking, can more helpfully be viewed as a clash of humanitarianisms. Finally, in colonial contexts, re-settlement plans were also connected to colonial development through the money and/or skills of refugees (see chapter five).

Then, as now, 'immigration' is closely connected to ideas of toleration and liberalism. Practically, immigration policy also feeds into pragmatic considerations of the wider social, political and economic context, as well as the perceived limits on the possible by policy-makers and public opinion. These various influences manifest

[133] Feingold, 'Roosevelt', p. 169.

themselves in the wide-ranging language we have to discuss the subject. Indeed, the terms ‘refugee’, ‘immigrant’, ‘displaced person’ and ‘asylum seeker’ remain politically loaded and are selected to best convey meaning other than the simple status of an individual who wishes to cross an international border. In the interwar years, the terms used to describe those Jewish people who sought, or indeed obtained, entry into the colonies supported and affirmed British and, specifically, colonial agendas. Generally, Jewish refugees had to fulfill immigration laws to enter a colony and were therefore defined as such. Exceptions could only be made when Jewish refugees had either useful skills or substantial assets. Then, their ‘refugee’ status could be used as a justification for changes in policies. These terms allowed officials to take different action according to their assessment of the benefits, or not, of entry and are revealing of the limits of liberalism, both in terms of Britain’s response to the Holocaust but also more generally in the interwar period.

## Chapter Three:
## A Question of Race?: Colonial Policy, Race and Jewish Refugees

The restrictions, prioritisations and contradictions inherent in the liberal democratic response to refugees were also significantly influenced by colonial officials' perceptions of race. The relative importance of race to imperial policy-making has been debated by historians; this study takes the position that race was a central ideological framework in which policy was formed.[1] This chapter will chart racial perceptions and consider their impact through an assessment of three case-studies: land settlement policies in Kenya; wartime internment of enemy aliens; and the refugee experience and engagement with colonial racial hierarchies.

Identifying race as a central conceptual framework through which colonial officials viewed policy issues raises questions about whether the Colonial Office was an overtly, or wholly, racist institution. Historians such as Barbara Bush have argued that it was, stating that '[r]acism and imperialism have always been inseparable, although the nature and expression of racism has changed over time in form and content'. Bush also quotes Jan Nederveen Pietersie, who argues that '[r]acism is the psychology of imperialism, the spirit of empire, because racism supplies the element that makes for the righteousness of empire. Hence racism is not simply a byproduct of empire, but [...] part of the intestines of empire'.[2]

In contrast, Ronald Hyam argues that in the British imperial context, it is 'more satisfactory to distinguish between "racism" and "racial prejudice"'. The former term, 'racism', he restricts to 'the abnormal systemisation of racial prejudice into institutionalised (legalised) discrimination or exploitation'.[3] Hyam highlights that the aim of the empire was not 'racial domination *per se*, but geopolitical security or

[1] For example, David Cannadine has argued that 'the hierarchical principle that underlay Briton's perceptions of their empire was not exclusively based on the collective colour-coded ranking of social groups; but depended as much on the more venerable colour-blind ranking of individual social prestige' (*Ornamentalism: How the British saw their Empire* (London, 2001), p. 9).
[2] Bush, *Imperialism, Race and Resistance*, pp. 1, 7.
[3] Hyam, *Britain's Declining Empire*, pp. 38-39. Fredrickson adopts a similar view of Western imperialism, suggesting that racism – i.e. the state-supported view, which was codified into law, that differences between peoples were unchangeable – does not apply to the attitudes of the French or British but rather only to the Jim Crow southern states of the US, Nazi Germany and apartheid South Africa (*A Short History of Racism* (Princeton, NJ, 2002), pp. 107-108.

commercial profit'.[4] Similarly, Michael Adas warns 'against making racism the ideological essence of imperialism'.[5] In regard to questions of citizenship, Daniel Gorman also suggests that racial restrictions were not the de facto aim of the government, but rather the means by which they sought to pursue imperial unity.[6]

More specifically, this study makes distinctions between different motivations and manifestations of racial prejudice. Frank Füredi argues that the exact 'role of racial calculations in twentieth-century international relations is hard to determine. It remains an unexplored subject, one that is rarely discussed as a problem in its own right'. Problems in the assessment of racial thinking revolve around the difference between what attitudes were privately felt and how this was altered or changed for public consumption.[7] Another problem, as Wolton puts it, is understanding 'what is not said'. Wolton continues, 'the mainstream position is often taken to be common sense by those of the period', and '[t]herefore they have no need to argue for something that is agreed by all sides'.[8] This study makes a distinction, as outlined by Hyam, that '[i]n assessing what – if anything – "racial prejudice" as a cultural phenomenon might mean in practice, we need to distinguish between words and actions, ideas and their implementation'.[9]

Hyam's distinctions point to the fact that officials did not fall into binary categories of 'racist' or 'not racist', imploring us to seek a more nuanced understanding of the way that race functioned in policy-making. Therefore, in this study, a distinction will be made between institutionalised racism and racism manifest in thinking, in the formulation and implementation of policy and in the ways in which the world of the 1930s was understood by officials at the Colonial Office.

Importantly, the use of the term 'racism' only emerged in the interwar period. Studies in the 1920s responding specifically to the actions of the Nazis brought the

[4] Hyam, *Britain's Declining Empire*, p. 39.
[5] Fredrickson, *A Short History of Racism*, p. 108.
[6] Gorman, 'Wider and Wider Still'.
[7] Füredi, *The Silent War*, p. 28.
[8] Wolton, *The Loss of White Prestige*, p. 6.
[9] Hyam, *Britain's Declining Empire*, p. 40.

term into common usage.[10] Although this, in some regards, makes any discussion of 'racism' in this study anachronistic, it can still be a useful analytical tool. Moreover, even before the term 'racism' came into use, other language had developed to delineate between racial groups, including 'native', 'coloured person' and 'non-European'. Differences between groups were understood and responded to. According to Lorimer, while a more optimistic focus on the 'civilizing mission' and a belief in assimilation changed in the late nineteenth century into a more pessimistic racial discourse that permanently separated 'white virtues' from colonial 'others', race and race differences have long informed official and intellectual thinking and, as such, impacted policy.[11]

In 1997, George M. Fredrickson defined 'the essence of racism as ethnicity made hierarchical, or in other words, making difference invidious and disadvantageous though the application of power'.[12] In the context of my thesis, this relates to the idea that British officials viewed different 'others' in a hierarchical way. Officials, from their position of power, based policy decisions on their understanding of different groups and how they ranked against each other. The position they assigned different groups was based on wider social, economic, cultural and political factors and consequently was not static. In this study, racial perceptions provided the lens through which many colonial officials operated. However, this was not necessarily a manifestation of an overtly racist policy which had discrimination as its aim; as such, this study will adopt the terms 'racial prejudice' or 'racial perceptions' to describe the attitudes of many officials. As Fredrickson contends, '[t]he story of racism in the twentieth century is one story with several subplots rather than merely a collection of tales that share a common

[10] Works in the 1920s by Theophile Simar and Frank H. Hankin first used the term 'racism'. The term became more common with Magnus Hirschfeld's 1938 book, *Racism*, which responded to Nazi persecution of the Jews. Later, *Race: Science and Politics* (1940) by Ruth Benedict also responded to 'German racial ideology'. (Fredrickson, *A Short History of Racism*, pp. 150-170.)

[11] D. Lorimer, 'From Victorian Values to White Virtues: Assimilation and Exclusion in British Racial Discourse, c. 1870-1914', in: P. Buckner and D. Francis (eds.), *Rediscovering the British World* (Calgary, 2005), pp. 123-125.

[12] Fredrickson, *A Short History of Racism*, p. 140. This definition of racism was originally articulated in George M. Fredrickson, *The Comparative Imagination: On the History of Racism, Nationalism, and Social Movements* (Berkley, CA, 1997). Fredrickson has subsequently amended this, by putting more emphasis on 'the presence and articulation of a belief that [racial] defining traits are innate or unchangeable' (*A Short History of Racism*, p. 140).

theme'.[13] This chapter focuses on the 'subplot' of interwar British imperial attitudes towards race in the formulation of colonial refugee policy.

Racial thinking was a central part of the 'intellectual climate' in the 1930s. Indeed, '[i]mportant characteristics were attached to racial differences and the view that some races were superior assumed the status of self-evident truth'.[14] These differences were often discussed in terms that included large generalisations and the use of stereotypes. Such stereotypes had been firmly established in popular culture, not least through a host of World Fairs and Great Exhibitions, including notable examples in Britain such as the Crystal Palace Great Exhibition in 1851 and the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley in 1924-1925. These events attracted six million and twenty-seven million visitors respectively and undoubtedly perpetuated stereotyped views of the empire and its inhabitants.[15] Race also provided an important framework for assessing the perceived problems of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, including population control, hospitals, welfare provisions and education. This is evidenced in the popularity of eugenicist ideas across a broad spectrum of political, social and economic groups. It is also important to note that the connection between race and social problems was not just a domestic concern, but also one that featured in colonial policy discussions (see below).[16]

In the colonial context, 'natives' were often seen as savage and dangerous but also in need of guidance. Racial thinking helped to frame the official responses to both these concerns. Limited, childlike qualities were often attributed to indigenous populations in some officials' descriptions. For example, Sir Harry Luke, the High Commissioner of Fiji, wrote to Sir Harry Batterbee, the High Commissioner in New

[13] Fredrickson, *A Short History of Racism*, p. 104.
[14] Füredi, *The Silent War*, p. 5.
[15] Anne Maxwell, *Colonial Photography and Exhibitions: Representations of the Native and the Making of European Identities* (London, 1999), p. 1. For more on the role of race and the Great and Imperial Exhibitions, see: Deborah Hughes, 'Contesting Whiteness: Race, Nationalism and British Empire Exhibitions Between the Wars', *Twentieth Century British History*, 22/2 (2011); Daniel M. Stephen, '"Brothers of Empire?" India and the British Empire Exhibition of 1924-25', *Twentieth Century British History*, 22/2 (2011).
[16] Frank Dikotter, 'Race Culture: Recent Perspectives on the History of Eugenics', *The American Historical Review*, 103/2 (1998), pp. 467-478; Chloe Campbell, *Race and Empire: Eugenics in Colonial Kenya* (Manchester, 2007); Karl Ittmann, *A Problem of Great Importance: Population, Race, and Power in the British Empire 1918-1973* (Berkeley, CA, 2014).

Zealand, in July 1939, describing his encounter with the indigenous populations: 'The natives [...] range from quiet, mission-educated people to wild and almost naked people of the lowest type, who have never been brought under administration, are still engaged in inter-tribal wars and often have never seen a white man'.[17] The duality of the official view of the 'native' – as both able to be educated and savage – is clear in Batterbee's observations. Moreover, it highlights that 'white' was seen as the civilising factor. However, it was the duality of official views, and an attempt to respond to both of these, that defined the nature of British colonial governance as they sought to both develop and control colonial (and racial) 'others'.

Evolving understandings of colonial development in the interwar years marked a change in Colonial Office perceptions of and its relationship to the people it ruled. However, the changes that were envisioned concentrated on social solutions, and as Karl Ittmann argues in his recent work on population control and race in the British Empire, '[b]eginning in the interwar years, the Colonial Office experimented with allowing private birth control agencies to operate in colonial territories, imposed limits on imperial migration, and invested in new public health and agricultural programs'.[18] Although this change highlighted a move away from explicitly oppressive colonialism, ideas about development were still underpinned by long-standing racial assumptions of colonial populations and the (moral) authority of the metropole.

It was not just attitudes towards colonial groups that dominated the interwar period. Perceptions of Jews were never static, and the approach to Jewish refugees in the 1930s would have been influenced by the fact that many officials had witnessed, in whole or in part, the increased entry of Jewish immigrants into Britain from the 1880s and the problems that were believed to have emanated from this. As outlined in the previous chapter, the mass movement of Jews from Tsarist Russia certainly contributed to a change in attitude toward immigration and more generally toward Jewish, Chinese and black 'others'. These views were also placed

[17] Luke to Batterbee, 30 July 1939, Box 6, File 7., GB 0162 MSS.N.Z.s.13, *Papers of Sir Harry Fagg Batterbee,* Bodleian Library, Oxford University.
[18] Ittmann, *A Problem of Great Importance*, p. 12.

alongside attitudes towards indigenous African populations as well as other colonial peoples, particularly Indian settlers, and in formulating refugee and immigration policies, colonial officials balanced their views of these groups. Furthermore, this process raised questions about, and at times affirmed, their own identities as white and British.

This raised the question of how to prioritise these groups within refugee policy. Racial thinking not only assumed 'the existence of distinct, identifiable races each with their own separate "essence" or "character"' but also presupposed 'a hierarchy of differences' in which races embodied 'higher and lower values'.[19] As well as different assumptions about different racial categories, there was also the perception that 'whenever different races came into contact with one another, some form of conflict was inevitable'. This made immigration to the colonies as a means of solving the Jewish refugee crisis problematic. In racially diverse colonies, those concerned with the prospect of racial conflict aimed to avoid this by limiting opportunities in which different races met.[20] These fundamental concerns were all involved in the calculation of colonial refugee policy in the late 1930s, and it was these myriad and connected questions that made up the complex landscape in which colonial refugee policy was mapped out.

The response of officials to different races can be helpfully understood as a way of ordering and organising governance. In the colonial context, this was specifically linked with the idea of indirect rule, originating from Lord Lugard, which had seen the British work with local elites to rule various territories. This meant, for example, that officials did not respond to 'Indian' issues but rather were more specific in their concerns (i.e. for Muslim Indians or Hindu Indians). The same was also true in African colonies where different tribal groups were dealt with differently. Rather than traditionally binary Atlanto-centric conceptions of differences in categories of 'black' and 'white', racial types were not simply divided by colour (although more simplified 'black/white' constructions of race did exist); in the imperial context, however, shades of difference were also important.

[19] Robert S. Wistrich 'Introduction: The Devil, The Jews, and Hatred of the "Other"', in: Robert S. Wistrich (ed.), *Demonizing the Other: Antisemitism, Racism and Xenophobia* (Amsterdam, 1999), p. 2.
[20] Füredi, *The Silent War*, p. 89.

The Second World War further changed and challenged the ways racial perceptions influenced policy. The firm racial hierarchies that had been pervasive in the interwar years were challenged by Japanese victories in the Far East. The ease with which Britain lost its colonies to Japan during the Second World War caused many to rethink established perceptions of race and colonial loyalty. In more general terms, the Second World War is often seen as a turning point in racial thinking. Kenan Malik argues that, '[a]fter the death camps and the Holocaust it became nigh on impossible openly to espouse belief in racial superiority'.[21] Whether the war marked such a dramatic change is open to debate. It was, nonetheless, the case that by the end of the war, 'old racial ideas proved to be ideologically inadequate for the new task of defending and justifying colonial empires in the context of the emergence of the USA as the globally dominant power'.[22] Of course, America's domestic racial policy left its position on British imperial policy open to challenges. However, the changes wrought by the Second World War were still conceptually far off in the interwar period, when, although changing attitudes were discernible, certain ideological frameworks, specifically concerning race and empire, remained.

This chapter will show how Colonial Office policy decisions were problematised in the context of race and as such, how race impacted resulting policy initiatives. Refugee policy did not have the *aim* of being racist, but rather the consequences of Jewish entry into the colonies, settlement on certain land, or even the release of Jewish refugees from internment were thought about in the general framework of difference – difference of refugees, of indigenous peoples, and of other colonial subjects. By assessing specific issues and the formation of policy, this shows the embedded racial thinking of the time and the way it influenced policy in its contemporary complexities of interwar Europe, rather than assuming simple, binary categories of difference. First, the contemporary understanding of racial groups – specifically, Jewish, black, Indian and white – will be explored. These attitudes will then be analysed within the context of specific case-studies: land

[21] Kenan Malik, *The Meaning of Race: Race, History and Culture in Western Society* (London, 1996), p. 124, quoted in: Wolton, *The Loss of White Prestige*, p. 2.
[22] Wolton, *The Loss of White Prestige*, p. 3.

settlement policy in Kenya, internment of enemy aliens in the colonies and refugee attitudes towards race.

**JEWISH REFUGEES**

Antisemitism – that is, the hatred of and prejudice against Jewish people – has a long history. Indeed, 'deeply irrational and counter-factual' stereotypes of Jews and subsequent prejudice have remained remarkably constant over two millennia.[23] In the 1920s and 1930s, anti-Jewish attitudes focused on old Christian stereotypes of Jews as 'Christ-killers'. Popular, Christian-based anti-Jewish attitudes had been revived in 1913 when a Russian Jew, Mendel Beilis, was accused of 'blood libel' (the ritual murder) of a young boy in Kiev.[24] Other stereotypes such as international Jewish conspiracies were propagated especially by *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion,* first published in 1903 in Russia. Although exposed as a hoax in 1921, *The Protocols* was still widely read throughout the interwar period.

Jews were also associated with success in areas like medicine, law, academia and, especially, finance. Much anti-Jewish feeling was directed at their supposed control of various economies, especially in Europe. For those on the left, Jewish control of capital was the main focus of anti-Jewish sentiment (as espoused by Karl Marx and others). At the same time, the interwar period saw a growing connection between Jews and the left, which became the focus of resentment for many on the right. This was linked to the perceived role of Jews in the 1917 Russian Revolution. Despite 'only a tiny minority of Jews' supporting the Bolsheviks, popular public perception held that many high profile socialist and communist leaders were of Jewish origin, with many outside of Russia (including, for example, Winston Churchill) believing that the revolution was a 'Jewish phenomenon'.[25] Despite the

[23] Wistrich, 'Introduction', p. 1.

[24] For the Beilis case, see Maurice Samuel, *Blood Accusation: The Strange History of the Beilis Case* (New York, 1966).

[25] Hyam Maccoby, *Antisemitism and Modernity: Innovation and Continuity* (London, 2006), pp. 25-28. Maccoby has identified the fact that Jews received criticism by both those on the political left and right. He concludes that '[t]he villainizing and scapegoating of the Jews on such contradictory lines shows that there was a predisposition to blame the Jews for all ills', a fact which he argues 'derives from the theological past' (*Ibid*., p. 25).

inaccuracy or irrationality of these associations, antisemitism was often married, therefore, to both anti-communist and anti-capitalist politics.[26]

The link between Jews, modernity and anti-Jewish attitudes is well-established among scholars generally and is a central aspect in scholarly debates about the 'liberal' response to Jews in Britain during the nineteenth and twentieth century (see introduction and chapter two). Zygmunt Bauman has argued that modernity and, in particular relation to the Jews, emancipation were (in the words of Feldman) a 'flawed bargain in which Jews gained their freedom as citizens by effacing their identity as Jews'.[27] It was their failure to adopt successfully 'national self-sameness' that was the real problem.[28] While others, including David Feldman, do not agree with the 'monolithic' argument made by Bauman, each side of the argument, in different ways, highlights the connection between Jews and modernity and that this could and did manifest itself in negative ways. This was especially the case, according to Feldman, with the onset of more democratised political systems in which anti-Jewish attitudes could be expressed.[29] Wistrich identifies the way in which these debates played out in the interwar period:

> The tendency to identify Jews and Judaism with great and powerful forces of modernity (democracy, liberalism, and secularization, etc.) had already emerged in France during the European fin-de-siecle. It was to take on a tremendously heightened form in the Weimar Republic and throughout European society after 1918. These developments could be seen as a response to the growing and visible impact of Jewish emancipation and assimilation, to the general crisis of European civilization after the First World War and fear of the Bolshevik Revolution, as well as to the rise of extremist antisemitic movements that embraced fully-fledged conspiracy theories of history. Some of these antisemitic movements were Christian (Christian-socialist, Christian nationalist, Catholic populist, etc.) and some were anti-Christian, but all believed in the centrality of the Jewish role in Western civilization.[30]

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[26] For the connection between Marx, the left, and antisemitism, see S. Beller, *Antisemitism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 52-56.
[27] David Feldman, 'Was Modernity Good for the Jews?', in: Bryan Cheyette and Laura Marcus (eds), *Modernity, Culture and 'the Jew'* (Cambridge, 1998), p. 175.
[28] Zygmunt Bauman, 'Allosemitism: Premodern, Modern, Postmodern', in: Bryan Cheyette and Laura Marcus (eds), *Modernity, Culture and 'the Jew'* (Cambridge, 1998), p. 153.
[29] Feldman, 'Was Modernity Good for the Jews', p. 179.
[30] Wistrich, 'Introduction', p. 10.

The contradictory connections between Jews and modernity underscored widespread antipathy towards the Jews. It is true that in the interwar years, Jews were seen as a people both frighteningly modern (in their association and success with finance and modern professions) but also something timeless, defying label or national identity.[31]

Without doubt, some British officials who generated policy towards refugees were antisemitic to some degree or another. However, there were variations in the racial perceptions of Jews. From latent stereotypes to more malign associations, officials responded to Jewish refugees in numerous ways. While much has been made of British official inaction towards Jewish refugees, historians have also argued that antisemitism is not a sufficient explanation for the way Britain (and America) responded to Nazi persecution of the Jews and the events of the Holocaust.[32] This presents a challenge for historians who wish to understand the ways in which perceptions of Jewish refugees (and other racial groups) influenced British policies in its contemporary complexity, without falling back on simplistic stereotypes of Jews and antisemitic tropes. Therefore, a more detailed assessment of official perceptions, especially in the colonial context, is needed to establish the nature and complexity of antisemitism, as well as the ways that perceptions of Jews impacted policy towards refugees.

David Feldman has argued that despite a real and vital relationship between Jews and the empire, little has been written by either Jewish or imperial historians. Feldman illuminates how, in the imperial context, Jews were often viewed in stereotypical ways. For example, there were concerns over Jewish control of finances and the press during the Boer War. Feldman argues that during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, '[t]he relationship between Jews and modernity was a concern for both Jews and non-Jews as they tried to shape and

[31] Bauman argues that '[t]he Jew is ambivalence incarnate' and that attitudes towards Jews comes from the fact that they do 'not fit the structure of the orderly world, [do] not fall easily into any of the established categories, emits therefore contradictory signals as to the proper conduct – and in the result blurs the borderlines which ought to be kept watertight' ('Allosemitism', pp. 144, 147-148).

[32] There is a general historiographical consensus that antisemitism alone does not explain British and American (in)action towards the Holocaust. See, for example, Michael Marrus, *The Holocaust in History* (London, 1993), p. 166. Wyman argues that antisemitism sat alongside 'nativistic nationalism' and 'unemployment' as reasons for American inaction' (*Paper Walls*, p. viii). Kushner, 'Pissing in the Wind', pp. 64-67.

comprehend the relationship of Jews to the British Empire'.[33] This was also the case in the 1930s, when Jews and non-Jews alike questioned the possibilities and pitfalls of Jewish settlement in the empire for those who fled Nazi persecution in Europe.

By the time of the refugee crisis in the 1930s, there was already an existing Jewish community in several British colonies, including Kenya, Jamaica, Hong Kong and Cyprus. Although by this time, these communities formed part of the colonial elite, earlier settlers had often arrived as refugees or poor immigrants. Some work on the role of Jewish people in the development of various African countries, including both Southern and Northern Rhodesia, has highlighted the disproportionate role small numbers of Jews had in the development of these territories, particularly as 'middlemen and entrepreneurs in frontier zones'.[34]

Jewish settlers, like other Europeans, were part of the complex process of colonisation of African land, with its myriad consequences for the settlers as well as local populations. In the 1930s, authority for much of this land had passed to the hands of colonial officials, who had a very clear idea of settlement options suitable for European Jewish refugees as well as a clear sense of where in the empire these were possible. When presented with ideas for settlement plans they deemed unsuitable, Hibbert dismissed these as 'obviously written by a Jew or by someone who is particularly interested in Jews'.[35] Prejudices and stereotypes were pervasive in official thinking. For example, Howell noted that 'the Jews favour such occupations as thrive on the follies and vices of the Gentiles; furs and finery, entertainment, credit trading, and money-lending as examples'.[36]

Colonial officials assumed that 'the solution of the German Jewish problem lies in the establishment of urban refugee centres',[37] because these would 'better suit the majority of refugees'.[38] As one official put it, 'this idea of permanent [...] [agricultural] settlements in the tropical areas, for the class we are considering here,

[33] David Feldman, 'Jews and the British Empire c.1900', *History Workshop Journal*, 63 (2007), pp. 70, 74-75.
[34] MacMillan and Shapiro, *Zion in Africa*, p. 39. See also Eugenia W. Herbert, 'Review of *Zion in Africa: The Jews of Zambia*', *African Studies Review*, 44/1 (2001), pp. 158-160.
[35] Hibbert, minute, 30 January 1939, CO323/1688/1, TNA.
[36] Cowell, minute, 9 February 1939, CO323/1688/1, TNA.
[37] Hibbert, minute, 30 January 1939, CO323/1688/1, TNA.
[38] Emerson, memorandum on Jewish Refugees and Colonial Development, 31 January 1939, CO323/1688/1, TNA.

is absolutely impossible'.[39] Louise London argues that this was 'one of the stereotypes most entrenched in British official thinking', and any confirmation that 'Jews [were] incorrigibly urban and incapable of settling to agricultural work' was 'relished'.[40] This was most notable in the British governmental response to the difficult progress made in the Jewish refugee settlement established in the Dominican Republic in 1940. The problems faced in the Sosúa settlement only confirmed the preconceived ideas about Jewish unsuitability to agricultural labour. One Foreign Office official argued that those 'experiences [...] are likely to be repeated elsewhere and for the same reasons'.[41]

The kibbutzim in Palestine contradicted the assumption that Jewish settlers would not be suitable for agricultural work. However, this contradiction was explained away by the settlers' Jewish identity, both in terms of their special commitment to the land in Palestine and their ability to harness investment to develop the infrastructure there. Rita Hinden, a contemporary commentator, journalist and member of the Fabian Colonial Bureau, suggested that 'the rate of progress has been unequalled; in all respects the approach has been bold and original'. However, a lot of this success was based on the investment of private capital and the long-term establishment of settlement infrastructure. Hinden explains that '[t]he fundamental work of draining and preparing the land for settlement, of building roads, of establishing the first pioneer villages, of building school and hospitals, was performed by [...] public funds' between 1917 and 1939. For colonial officials, this success might have been appealing. Hinden did suggest that 'the same results could be achieved with half the money' in any other colony, and that '[t]he same approach, applied in the more favourable political atmosphere of an African or West Indian colony, is capable of opening up prospects as yet unimagined'. Nonetheless, she also explicitly stated that:

> Palestine is a special case. The capital, the initiative and special idealism which the Jews could command for a special cause, cannot be imitated in any other colony. And the Jews have a skill and an education which

[39] Campbell, minute, 10 February 1939, CO323/1688/1, TNA.
[40] London, *Whitehall*, p. 276.
[41] Wilkinson, a Foreign Office official, quoted in London, *Whitehall*, p. 276.

> most colonial people do not possess, and can only acquire in the course of years.[42]

In 1938, the Colonial Office, despite some effort, had neither the funds nor the time to establish a settlement as economically beneficial as the kibbutzim in Palestine.

In the context of African and West Indian colonies, the prospect of Jewish settlement, specifically the prospect of contact between Jews and indigenous populations, greatly concerned white settlers and officials. Feldman highlights the similarity in attitudes from the early 1900s, when Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain offered British East African territory for Jewish settlement. At the time, it was hoped by some that it would bolster white settlement in the area, but there was concern even then that 'the natives would soon realise that the Jews were "not white men according to their own ideas but would be influenced by them and their low code of morals"'.[43] The stereotype of Jews as dangerously modern, representing 'democracy, liberalism, and secularization', put them at the heart of a process of Westernization that was believed to be bad for colonial peoples.[44] This view was based as much on the stereotypes of Jews as the stereotypes of indigenous people and remained current in the interwar years.

**INDIGENOUS PEOPLE**

In the interwar years, the conception of race difference, especially in relation to indigenous populations, was complex and reflected political, social and economic realities as much as specific physical differences. This complexity was evident in the interwar domestic context where those identified as 'Black' included 'Africans and West Indians, South Asians such as Burmese and Indians, Arabs, and people of mixed race'. Tabili argues that the fact that these groups were all from areas colonised by the British shows that '[t]he boundary between Black and white was

[42] Rita Hinden, 'Palestine and Colonial Economic Development', *The Political Quarterly*, 13/1 (1942), pp. 91-92, 94, 98-99. Hinden was a South African-born economist and the co-founding member (along with Arthur Creech Jones, the Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Minister of Labour and National Service and future Colonial Secretary) of the Fabian Colonial Bureau. The bureau was the research arm of the Fabian Society and was established in 1940 to conduct research, develop constructive colonial policy, work with colonial nationalist leaders, and lobby Parliament, particularly in response to the period of riots and unrest across the Empire (Bush, *Imperialism, Race and Resistance*, p. 264).

[43] Feldman, Jews and the British Empire', p. 84.

[44] Füredi, *The Silent War*, p. 89.

drawn, not merely on the basis of physical appearance, but on relations of power, changing over time'.[45]

In the empire, two main strands of racial thinking can be identified. First, there was a strong belief among some that indigenous people were biologically and anthropologically different.[46] Like perceptions of Jews, pseudo-scientific explanations of race difference had also been applied to sub-Saharan Africans (e.g. the eugenics movement in Kenya which carried out intelligence tests) and helped heighten the view that black people were not only different but inferior.[47] Many believed Africans were 'indolent, lacking in initiative, thrift, and honesty' and that they had 'invented nothing – founded no civilisation, built no stone cities, or ships, or produced a literature, or suggested a creed'.[48] A second, 'more romantic tradition' believed that democracy was essentially Anglo-Saxon in origin, and it was therefore necessary for the British to help spread 'freedom and justice to other, more backward parts of the world'.[49] These ideas were not mutually exclusive and often served to reinforce each other; together, helped to justify British rule in African and West Indian colonies.

Although Britain's attitudes towards its indigenous subjects underwent significant changes in the interwar period and during the war, the new focus on colonial development and welfare was still underscored by established racial traditions and the belief that indigenous people needed help to 'develop' (i.e. to attain the Western ideals of democratic, representative government and to cultivate industries and economies). In fact, when the Colonial Development and Welfare Act was introduced in May 1940, Malcolm MacDonald, as former Secretary of State for the Colonies, 'defined the ethical content of the measure'. He said that the 'development' outlined in the act was 'not a narrow materialistic interpretation' but relevant to 'everything which ministers to the physical, mental or moral development of the colonial peoples of whom we are the trustees'. As Paul Rich

[45] Tabili, 'The Construction of Racial Difference', pp. 60-61.
[46] Paul B. Rich, *Race and Empire in British Politics* (Cambridge, 1986), p. 13.
[47] For the Kenyan eugenicist movement, see Campbell, *Race and Empire*.
[48] Hyam, *Britain's Declining Empire*, p. 43.
[49] Rich, *Race and Empire*, p. 13.

argues, there was a 'broad consensus' of opinion on the role that Britain needed to play in the 'benevolent civilising mission towards black societies'.[50]

It was in this context that Jewish settlers were seen as a malign influence on indigenous people. In 1931, Lionel Curtis, a writer and civil servant, wrote that 'the problem before us in Africa [...] is to bring the most helpless family of the human race into right conditions with Europe, America and Asia'. He also argued that if Africa was 'exposed to the impact of Eastern civilization', a phrase that alluded to Jews, this would 'ruin the life of its child-like peoples unless it is controlled'.[51] Curtis was eluding to the stereotypical association of Jews with left-wing and communist politics, which, in the context of the colonies, meant support for nationalist anti-colonialism.[52]

Concern over the entry of Jewish refugees was also connected to fact that colonial policies were organised around principles of multiculturalism.[53] Britain ruled the empire by governing different ethnic communities, often through a process of divide and rule. However, in urban centres, both in the metropole and in the colonies, there was a concern over the mixing of races. This was also linked to perceptions of class. As Tabili outlines, 'local and national authorities concerned with domestic order, often influenced by colonialist notions of Black people's irrationality and volatility as well as class-based hostility to workers in general, increasingly viewed interracial settlements as potential sites of chronic crime and violence'.[54] This meant that there was increasingly unease over black settlement in seaport towns, including Bristol, Cardiff and Liverpool. Given the stereotypes of Indians as artisans and tradesmen as well as of Jewish preference for urban centres, the concerns must have been magnified in the empire. The mixing of local

[50] *Ibid*., pp. 146, 205.
[51] Curtis to Keppel, 20 July 1931, quoted in: Rich, *Race and Empire*, p. 147.
[52] For more on the relationship between Jews and Blacks in the US, see Hasia R. Diner, *In the Almost Promised Land: American Jews and Blacks, 1915-1935* (Baltimore, MD, 1995). The connection between the two minority groups grew from 1915 and was perhaps in the minds of officials in Whitehall.
[53] For more modern implications of multiculturalism in Britain as well as a history of this idea, see David Feldman, 'Why the English like Turbans: Multicultural Politics in British History', in: David Feldman and Jon Lawrence (eds), *Structures and Transformations in Modern British History* (Cambridge, 2011).
[54] Tabili, 'The Construction of Racial Difference', p. 73.

populations, Indian settlers and Jewish refugees seemed to offer, to many contemporaries, the potential for serious trouble.

Despite some changes in attitudes towards race, especially in light of overtly racial policies spreading through fascist Europe, Rich argues, '[i]mperialism [...] even in its late and relatively benign phase, perpetuated a climate of opinion in Britain [...] that buttressed a set of social models based upon a hierarchy of races'.[55] Racial views adapted and responded to the changing circumstances of social tensions and political power in the colonies. Although black indigenous people were clearly low down in the British racial hierarchy, this did not mean that they were necessarily disadvantaged (in colonial policies) against other groups, such as the Jews, as Britain clearly felt obliged to offer them 'protection' under the auspices of racially-motivated paternalism.

**ASIATIC SETTLERS**

While black imperial subjects prompted a paternalistic attitude from officials, the empire's Asiatic people generated a more ambivalent response. Neither wholly accepted as 'trouble' or as in need of help, Indian settlers raised fundamental questions about imperial identity and Britain's rights and responsibilities to their many and varied imperial citizens. Throughout the British Empire, there were small but significant groups of Asian (including Indian and Chinese) settlers who had, since the mid-nineteenth century, filled labour shortages brought about by the abolition of slavery. These workers moved across the empire as indentured labour. Although this practise was officially ended in 1917, settlers and their families (many of whom had been born away from their country of origin) remained scattered across the empire.

The Chinese were particularly associated with negative qualities. Sometimes this was connected to economics, although many employers in the Dominions, such as Canada and South Africa, argued that the Chinese were hard workers. However, other factors also contributed to Chinese 'othering' in Britain and the colonies. Auerbach argues that Chinese settlers became associated with threats to British working-class masculinity, which saw a new focus on the moral impact that Chinese people had on surrounding populations because of their association with practices

[55] Rich, *Race and Empire*, p. 208.

such as gambling and opium smoking.[56] Thomas Otte argues that, at least until the First World War, British foreign policy-makers used racial stereotypes and hierarchies to help provide order to diplomatic engagements with eastern powers such as Japan and China.[57] In the colonial context, Hyam also notes the impact such stereotypes had on policy: '[t]o an extraordinary extent, promiscuity, prostitution, and sodomy were depicted as central characteristics of Asian and other societies, and it was this which was said to make them inferior and unfit for self-rule'.[58] Moreover, their very presence was seen as a corrupting force, especially for white women in Britain and colonial subjects across the empire. As outlined in chapter two, Chinese (and later Japanese) settlers had been a point of particular tension in the white settler Dominions, and immigration regulations sought both implicitly and explicitly to control entry of these specific groups.

Unlike the Chinese, relatively few Indian settlers made their way to the Dominions. Rather, Indians had mostly travelled and settled in the areas known as the tropical empire, such as Burma, Ceylon, Fiji, Malaya, Mauritius, Trinidad and, particularly relevant to this study, British Guiana and Kenya. Indian indentured labourers migrated under contracts that effectively bought their labour for a set term of five years, with the assurance that passage home would be provided thereafter. In reality, many were encouraged to renew their terms or give up their return passage for a piece of land in the colony to which they had travelled.[59] The legacy of their presence in British Guiana and Kenya is discussed more fully in both this chapter and chapter five on colonial development.

In 1945, a contemporary observer, Dr Sripati Chandrasekhar, detailed the problems faced by Indian settlers in each of these territories. Chandrasekhar was an Indian demographer, who, having received his doctorate from New York University in 1944, took several important roles in the US, including working for the American Office of Strategic Services and lecturing on India's independence across the

[56] Auerbach, *Race, Law, and 'The Chinese Puzzle'*, p. 27.
[57] Thomas Otte, '"A Very Great Gulf": Late Victorian British Diplomacy and Race in East Asia', in: Rotem Kowner and Walter Demel (eds), *Race and Racism in Modern East Asia: Western and Eastern Constructions* (Leiden, 2013), pp. 128-129, 150-151.
[58] Hyam, *Britain's Declining Empire*, pp. 42-43.
[59] S. Chandrasekhar, 'Emigration and Status of Indians in British Empire', *Social Forces*, 24/2 (1945), pp. 153-157.

country.[60] In a 1945 article, he observed that Indians living in the West Indies (including British Guiana) had a 'poor standard of living, agricultural bias, and backwardness in education'. There were many social problems in the West Indies, as detailed by the Royal Commission, but the author observed that some were specific to the Indian population, who retained 'their Hindu and Moslem ways of life'. He described how '[d]espite the long and many years they have lived abroad, and though the majority were born in these regions, they have remained culturally loyal to the Indian way of life, and have resisted complete westernization'.[61]

In Kenya, the problems focused on land settlement issues. The majority of Indian settlers in Kenya were not previously indentured labour, but rather had settled there even before white settlers established themselves. As Chandrasekhar outlines:

> The major Indian grievance in Kenya is against the reservation of Kenya Highlands for Europeans, not necessarily British, as against the Indians. This reservation is not statutory, but the British Government invariably vetoes any transfer or sale of land to an Indian, irrespective of his social and economic position. Indians cannot understand why a wealthy German can buy a piece of land on the Highlands and an Indian millionaire cannot do the same, especially when the colony is British and the Indian is a British subject.[62]

Chandrasekhar's report identified key areas of contention over Indian settlers in the empire, and his observations played into liberal fears over immigrant/refugee communities being unable to assimilate into colonial social and racial structures. Indian settlers were particularly problematic because, as colonial subjects, they were entitled to some protection. In turn, ideas about imperial citizenship challenged conceptions of 'Britishness' (see below). The complicated ethnic status of Indians mattered. Chandrasekhar observed that:

> India's nationals are not 'white' to the man in the street or even to the minister in the Cabinet, irrespective of the anthropological view that India's nationals belong to the 'Caucasian race' and are the only people

[60] Douglas Martin, 'Sripati Chandrasekhar, Indian Demographer, Dies at 83', obituary, 23 June 2001, *The New York Times*, <www.nytimes.com/2001/06/23/world/sripati-chandrasekhar-indian-demographer-dies-at-83.html>, accessed 7 March 2015.
[61] Chandrasekhar, 'Emigration and Status of Indians', p. 159.
[62] *Ibid*., pp. 159-160.

> in Asia, barring the Soviet Union, who come closest to the European ethnically.[63]

More practically, the settlement of Indian people in the colonies was believed to threaten the economic and social position of, firstly, the white settler and, secondly, the indigenous people. In correspondence between William Ormsby-Gore (Colonial Secretary) and Brooke-Popham (the Governor of Kenya), the latter wrote that:

> The Indian is not always a pleasant neighbour and in the case of a good many of them, his habits are beastly, while his increasing political-mindedness and truculence gives no little annoyance. Also there is the fact that the Indian in Kenya is usually not out of the top drawer and there are quite enough people settled in Kenya with first-hand experience of India and Indians to make them feel great resentment at being asked to meet the Kenya Indian on equal terms.[64]

Wolton argues that:

> The concept of 'trusteeship' was invoked to create another justification for the separate treatment of colonial people from Europeans. The Colonial Office worried that Indians employed in Africa would hinder 'trusteeship' – as if Indians were indeed to blame for the lack of employment opportunities for Africans.[65]

Therefore Indians, not ethnically white and loaded with negative stereotypes, were perceived to be a threat to British rule. Wolton identifies the treatment of immigrant groups, such as Indians and Chinese, as a good gauge of British race relations. Although they had served a purpose as indentured labour throughout the empire, Indians' social and political demands as well as their ambiguous racial identity, by the 1930s, became intractable problems within a British imperial system defined by a strict racial hierarchy.[66]

**WHITE BRITISH PEOPLES**

In the stereotypes and racial classifications that British officials used to understand and interact with other racial and ethnic groups, they also reflected their

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[63] *Ibid*., p. 153. See also Sukanya Banerjee, *Becoming Imperial Citizens: Indians in the Late Victorian Empire* (Durham, NC, 2010).
[64] Brooke-Popham to Ormsby-Gore, 20 September 1937, Box 1 III/3, MSS.Afr.s1120, *Papers of Sir Robert Brooke-Popham*, Bodleian Library, Oxford University.
[65] Wolton, *The Loss of White Prestige*, p. 55.
[66] *Ibid*., pp. 137-138.

conceptualisations of themselves.[67] While twenty years ago Ruth Frankenberg could claim that 'the White Western self as a racial being has for the most part remained unexamined and unnamed', historical literature on the subject has since developed.[68] Sociological and anthropological studies (especially writing from an American perspective) have started to unearth the ways in which whiteness is constructed and understood. However, in an attempt to move away from this American-focused scholarship (which has been argued to be problematic), attention has turned to a more transnational approach to the question of whiteness. Jane Carey, Leigh Boucher and Katherine Ellinghaus have sought to examine whiteness and postcolonialism together. They argue that:

> the construction of whiteness and the phenomena of European colonialism are fundamentally interconnected, and that whiteness studies must be 'Re-Orientated' to take this into account. Equally, a greater and more rigorous focus on whiteness as a racial category has much to offer our understandings of the historical operations of colonialism and its ongoing effects.[69]

Bill Schwarz has also tried to unpack the significance of whiteness in the empire, particularly in the context of white settler colonies and the end of empire. Schwartz explains that '[t]he white man may seem to be an uncontentious entity, obvious enough, and not in need of conceptual investigation'. In fact, Schwartz argues, it is an idea that has 'an entire fantasized, discursive complex which underwrites its creation', and therefore '[w]hat appears to be straightforward turns out to be very complex'.[70]

Examining similar complexities within a broader discussion of empire and ethnicity, in which he considers the way empire helped construct ethnic identity for both white settlers and non-white imperial subjects, Darwin argues that:

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[67] See Bill Schwartz, *A White Man's World* (Oxford, 2011), p. 20; Ruth Frankenberg, *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness* (Minneapolis, MN, 1993), pp. 16-17.
[68] Frankenberg, *White Women*, p. 17; Satoshi Mizutani, 'Historicising Whiteness: From the Case of Late Colonial India', *Australian Critical Race and Whiteness Studies*, 2/1 (2006).
[69] Jane Carey, Leigh Boucher, and Katherine Ellinghaus, 'Re-Orienting Whiteness: A New Agenda for the Field', in: Leigh Boucher, Jane Carey, and Katherine Ellinghaus (eds), *Re-Orienting Whiteness* (New York, 2009), p. 1. Carey, Boucher and Ellinghaus 'foreground the limitations that have resulted from the U.S.-centred nature of most whiteness scholarship', which 'makes broad, even universal calms to explaining the operations of "race"'. Instead, they argue that whiteness has a 'far wider geographic purchase' (p. 2).
[70] Schwartz, *A White Man's World*, p. 20.

> [T]he Britishness asserted in these settler societies was not deferential. It was selective and critical. 'Imperial' Britishness did not aspire merely to replicate what existed 'at home'. Quite the reverse. It insisted that British ethnicity (although the word was not used) was energised by its encounter with the colonial environment, where virtuous attributes, long lost at home, could flourish anew.[71]

Clearly then, the identity of British settlers and what 'whiteness' meant in this context were not fixed and were open to interpretation by those experiencing it. Thus, while this burgeoning field continues to develop, as Angela Woollacott observes, 'there is still not a great deal of work on the historical construction of whiteness in Britain itself'.[72]

Nevertheless, this developing field, along with studies of the history of race in Britain and America, can help us identify the ways in which the perceptions of white British officials as different to those over whom they had authority (which was also intimately connected with ideas of superiority and inferiority) helped dictate the debates and decisions on refugee settlement in the colonies. The codification of difference by race, supported by pseudo-scientific arguments about biological difference which had been developing since the late nineteenth century, still provided justifications of social and cultural differences in the interwar years. Regarding refugee settlement in the colonies, the definition and understanding of whiteness mattered in two main ways: (1) the importance of the 'white man' as leader of the indigenous people, and (2) the consequences, both real and imagined, of classifying Jews as white.

Hyam argues that colonial officials functioned in 'a society consumed and permeated with class consciousness' and 'obsessed with snobbish codes of behaviour'. Moreover, they were often 'conditioned to the need to have social inferiors to look down upon'. In this context, 'these attitudes were inevitably magnified when thinking about and treating Asians and Africans'.[73] Discussions of racial hierarchies were therefore closely linked with established class systems. In fact, Cannadine identifies class as the key structural foundation of Britain's imperial

[71] Darwin, 'Empire and Ethnicity', p. 396.
[72] Angela Woollacott, 'Whiteness and "the Imperial Turn"', in: Boucher, Carey, and Ellinghaus (eds.) *Re-Orienting Whiteness*, p. 21.
[73] Hyam, *Britain's Declining Empire*, p. 40.

rule. He argues that 'the hierarchical principle that underlay Britons' perceptions of their empire was not exclusively based on the collective, colour-coded ranking of social groups, but depended as much on the more venerable colour-blind ranking of individual social prestige'.[74]

While Cannadine sees this other, less racial way of codifying imperial peoples as important, more recent research has suggested that the relationship was more dynamic. In his case-study of 'Domiciled Europeans' in India and the study of whiteness, Satoshi Mizutani argues that the relationship between upper-middle class white Britons and other white Europeans was defined by race as well as class. Mizutani concludes that '[u]nder imperialism, it was not just class but race that defined the terms on which the internal civilising of "degenerates" was conducted'.[75] While race was central to the way officials understood the colonial world, many of the concerns expressed in this regard were mirrored in the domestic context through class.

For example, while the eugenics movement developed in Britain in response to the rising lower classes, eugenicists in the empire focussed primarily on racial constructs. In the colonies, eugenics was frequently used by white settlers, who were numerically smaller but politically and economically dominant (i.e. minority rule) to help maintain their position of power over their 'social inferiors'. Although limited in its influence, the role of the eugenics movement, especially in the colonial context, is worth considering here. The presence of a eugenic movement in Kenya highlights the role that pseudo-science had in confirming the superiority of white men to lead indigenous populations. Intelligence tests were still being carried out in the 1930s by eugenicist groups, who hotly debated the predisposed ability of African populations. These 'experiments' were given more credence by some because it was believed the proximity to the 'native' added weight to the findings. These experiments also served a political purpose for those who lived and worked in the colony; they were used to show that Africans were not capable of

[74] Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, p. 9.
[75] Mizutani, 'Historicising Whiteness', p. 11.

development and education. White racial superiority was a self-serving argument, as it endorsed white suitability for settlement and leadership.[76]

As the discussion of settlement schemes in Kenya and Northern Rhodesia in the last chapter highlighted, the status of colonial territories as a 'White Man's Country' was a contentious issue between Whitehall and the 'unofficial' elements in the colony. The interwar years and the Duke of Devonshire's Declaration in 1923 confirmed that (at least) Whitehall viewed Kenya as a place of African development, not a country for white settlers. Pressure from white settlers for unifying Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland added to these tensions. Nevertheless, settler authority was, in part, derived from 'their incessant boast that they alone knew the native', and the eugenics movement fed these claims.[77] This resulted in unsolvable tensions over who could best direct policy: those in Whitehall or those in the colonial territories.

White British settlers often held more stringent and negative racial views than their Whitehall counterparts, because the former's power was based on a racialised socioeconomic relationship in which white people adopted the dominant position. The threat to minority rule posed by the majority indigenous populations generated fear, and as Hyam notes, '[f]ear was always at the bottom of settler racial prejudice'.[78] Race difference therefore became a way of constructing a social-economic structure that affirmed white settler dominance. In this way, racial perceptions were not simply theoretical constructions or necessarily overt manifestations of deeply-held racist attitudes, but were pragmatic theories for justifying and maintaining dominance.[79]

While differences between white and black people were broadly accepted, whiteness itself was complex and highly contested. Those identified as Caucasian today have myriad identities, and in the late nineteenth and early twentieth

[76] Campbell, *Race and Empire*, pp. 2-4, 70-71, 147-156.
[77] Schwartz, *A White Man's World*, p. 22.
[78] Hyam, *Britain's Declining Empire*, p. 39.
[79] Camilla Schofield makes a similar point about the fluid nature of racial identity in the post-war period: 'it does not suffice to simply view postwar British society as the inheritor of a singular, imperial belief in white racial superiority and social order. Rather, "race" as a belief is not fixed but is a flexible entity that promises to make sense of the tensions and social hierarchies of a particular moment with a set of (malleable) "truths"' (*Enoch Powell and the Making of Postcolonial Britain* (Cambridge, 2013), p. 7).

centuries, these various origins and identities were named and important.[80] Indeed, whiteness, like black identity, was about more than race. 'To call oneself "European"', Maxwell argues, 'implied more than an identification with a particular race and culture. It also implied that one adhered to middle-class principles of behaviour'.[81] According to Stoler, racial membership was sustained by observance of 'middle-class morality, nationalist sentiments, bourgeois sensibilities, normalised sexuality, and a carefully circumscribed "milieu" – hence the metropolis's demonization of impoverished and mixed-race colonials'.[82]

This made Jewish people particularly troubling. As Friedländer has argued, '[t]he Jew was the inner enemy par excellence. It is this mimetic ability which [...] will open the way for the most extreme phantasms'. In other words, 'is otherness more threatening in its difference or is it more menacing in its sameness?'[83] In the case of Jewish refugees, it was their sameness. For British colonial policy-makers, Jewish settlers were problematic because, while looking like white British settlers, they were believed by some to bring with them different values, political persuasions and lower moral standards.

The case of Leo Frank highlights the importance of these distinctions. In 1913, a young white woman was found dead in a pencil factory in the US state of Georgia which belonged to Leo Frank, a Cornell graduate and part-owner and manager of the business. Frank was also Jewish. He was convicted of the murder based on the testimony of a black employee. When his sentence was commuted, a mob attacked the prison where he was held, and Frank was taken and lynched by outraged locals. During Frank's trial, his Jewishness became part of the prosecution's case. As Matthew Frye Jacobson puts it, 'Leo Frank was *inconclusively white*' and therefore subject to suspicion. Leo Frank's story fitted with the stereotype of Jews as deceptively educated and civilized, appearing cultured but 'actually perverse', at which point he became the prime suspect of the murder and rape of a young

[80] Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, MA, 1999), pp. 2-4.
[81] Maxwell, *Colonial Photography*, p. 7.
[82] Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things*, (Durham, NC, 1995), p. 105, quoted in: Maxwell, *Colonial Photography,* p. 7.
[83] Saul Friedländer, '"Europe's Inner Demons": The "Other" as Threat in Early Twentieth-Century European Culture', in: Wistrich (ed.), *Demonizing the Other*, p. 213.

'Gentile' woman. Although the American South's racial line was becoming more distinctly split along black and white lines, 'Jews could be racially defined in a way that irrevocably set them apart from other "white persons" on the local scene'.[84]

This imprecise racial definition of whiteness was also relevant to cases within imperial Britain. Firstly, the case of the Irish raised challenging questions about white identity. As Radhika Mohanram argues:

> The Irish are so problematic: their practice of Catholicism, the history of their colonization, their political sympathies all scandalize and problematize British whiteness, revealing the limits of its assimilative processes. Are they black or are they white? The visual index of difference is so minimally written on their skin that their presence causes a severe disturbance to the notion that race and the authority of whiteness becomes perceptible at a glance.[85]

In her study of Rudyard Kipling's *Kim*, Mohanram identifies the way that Kipling's central character, Kim, an Irish man in India, raises questions about the concept of whiteness.[86] This links with the work of Satoshi Mizutani, which explores the 'so-called "domiciled" population' in India, people who 'were of white descent, permanently based in India, often impoverished and frequently (if not always) racially mixed'. These 'domiciled' people inhabited a more ambiguous role than strictly 'white' British.[87]

Another space in which whiteness was contested was South Africa, where British and Boer hostilities, in both the Second Boer War (1899-1902) and after, impacted South African and imperial politics and brought definitions of race (including whiteness) to the centre of official debates. The Anglo-Boer war, which saw British forces attack the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, declared Boer settler territories, was just the most obvious manifestation of long-term racial tensions between the two groups. Moreover, the Boers and British competed against each other for dominance in a country with a black African majority, raising fundamental questions about racial superiority. The Boers resented British treatment of them as little better than indigenous populations, while the British

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[84] Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color*, pp. 63-67.
[85] Radhika Mohanram, *Imperial White: Race, Diaspora, and the British Empire* (Minneapolis, MN, 2007), p. 152.
[86] *Ibid*., pp. 163-174.
[87] Mizutani, 'Historicising Whiteness', p. 1.

dismissed the Boers, traditionally a farming population and often illiterate, as unnecessary to British white dominance. As Steyn argues:

> Like ethnic working class whites and partially racialized groups in America [...] Afrikaners had to 'fight' for the status of first-class citizens: 'What was termed the "racial question" in early twentieth-century South Africa referred not to relations between Europeans and Africans but to the relationship between the Boers and the British. Relations with the Africans were termed the "native question" [...].[88]

After peace was made at the end of the Boer War, the political system in South Africa continued to be influenced by a powerful and vocal Afrikaner group who was a consistent source of agitation against British dominance.[89] The inherent fear this caused British officials manifested itself in the question of Jewish settlement in concern over potential Jewish 'enclaves', discussed below.

Finally, in her study of Jewish refugees and the West Indies, Joanna Newman explores the West Indian response to Jewish immigration from both a religious and racial perspective. She concludes that:

> For many West Indians, Jews were an abstract image, an absent stereotype which connotated negative attributes. In addition to religious prejudice, there was a racial element to the reception of Jewish refugees: there was no way of distinguishing them from white West Indians, and no knowledge or understanding of Jewish religious custom. Accounting for black antisemitism in Martinique Kurt Kursten interviewed West Indians who claimed that if white people were persecuting Jews, and Jews were white people, Jews must indeed be deserving of their persecution. In other words, Jews were unwelcome as an additional white group, yet were also seen as inferior to other whites.[90]

These observations suggest that the ambiguous nature of whiteness was not just the concern of the (perceived) colonial racial elite, but also a factor of influence across the colonial social and racial spectrum.

Although the move to a more unified perception of 'Caucasian' took place in the 1930s and 1940s, there was still a prioritisation in perceptions. Jews remained an 'other', albeit white, and this was important in the racially codified world of the

[88] Melissa Steyn, *'Whiteness Just Isn't What It Used To Be': White Identity in a Changing South Africa* (New York, 2001), p. 26.
[89] Hughes, 'Contesting Whiteness', p. 51.
[90] Newman, *Nearly the New World*, pp. 258-259.

colonies, where there were concerns about racial mixing and a desire to support and uphold British settler dominance.

**LAND SETTLEMENT IN KENYA**

Sherman has covered some aspects of the settlement of Jewish refugees in Kenya; however his observations are made from the perspective of the Foreign Office.[91] Broadening the investigation to the Colonial Office and the policy that unfolded in the colonies, we are able to distinguish the influence of specific ideologies including race. The following account will therefore outline Jewish refugee settlement in Kenya from a colonial perspective, focusing on racial perceptions and the policy that followed. An assessment of this issue highlights that racial thinking significantly impacted policy in several ways: the prioritisation of 'white' British over other racial categories; the perception of the Jewish 'other' as a potential problem and benefit; and the concern regarding the susceptibility of indigenous 'others' to Jewish influence.

Land settlement in Kenya, including the settlement of refugees, was considered in relation to the needs and demands of three groups: Kenya's indigenous African population; the small but powerful group of white settlers; and a vocal Indian settler community. In the spirit of trusteeship, the British felt that the African population needed protection from both economic hardship and the potentially dangerous influence of the wrong kind of European settlers. White settlers demanded government investment to generate more white British settlement in order to help secure their dominant and advantageous position. Indian settlers, who were denied settlement options in the White Highlands, reacted strongly against proposed Jewish settlement, seeing it as one more manifestation of inequality. The Indian response invoked the crisis in Palestine and highlighted the international consequences of an otherwise internal problem. It was thus the Colonial Office's responsibility to balance: the political implications of Jewish settlement within the colony; the diplomatic imperative of British action towards the refugee crisis; the international reaction to Palestine; and growing international anti-imperialism.

[91] Sherman, *Island Refuge*.

Prime land in the White Highlands was reserved for the white settler community, and Indian settlers were denied rights by laws that prevented land passing between different races. Paskin explained that a 'provision in the Crown Land Ordinance' gave the Governor a 'right to veto transfers of land in the Highlands between persons of different races, and the veto has invariably been exercised to prevent the acquisition of land by Asiatics'.[92]

When it was learned that the proposed settlement schemes for Jewish refugees were to be based in the White Highlands, there was an outcry among Kenya's Indian population, who argued that 'by permitting the settlement of Jews in the Highlands, the Government' was 'departing' from the established policy of white-only settlement in the Highlands. Paskin minuted that:

> [r]ecently the protests of the Indians have taken the line that it is wrong that in a British Colony access to the land should be denied to British Indian subjects while it is not denied to foreigners such as Germans and Italians. I am afraid that the decision to permit the settlement of a number of German Jews in the Kenya Highlands will add fuel to the fires of this controversy.[93]

This complaint was linked to broader controversies over the fact that Indian settlers, citizens of the British Empire, were consistently denied rights afforded to foreign nationals. However, it was Paskin's racial assumptions which framed his response: 'The answer to such an argument would, of course, be that the Jews who are being allowed to settle in Kenya are European Jews who will be specifically selected for their personal suitability'.[94] The refugees were European, not Indian, and therefore he saw no conflict of interest and no need for action. This highlights the fluid nature of racial identity in the minds of officials as well as the pragmatic nature of this sort of comparative identification.

Indian settler interests, however, were not completely abandoned. The Colonial Office was prepared to limit non-agricultural Jewish settlers. It was argued that 'Jewish artizans [sic] in any considerable number could [not] make a living without jeopardizing the interests of the existing residents'. These existing residents

[92] Paskin, minute, 10 September 1938, CO533/498/1, TNA.
[93] *Ibid*.
[94] *Ibid*.

were the 'large Indian and Native population of Kenya'.[95] Governor Brooke-Popham stressed this point further when he reminded Whitehall that his 'Government has recently been urged by the East African Indian National Congress to enact legislation providing for a working week of a maximum of forty five hours for the purpose of mitigating the effects of rising unemployment'. Furthermore, he argued, 'there is [...] no shortage of labour in those trades and occupations in which German Jewish refugees are most likely to engage themselves'.[96]

The stereotypes used to frame racial perceptions were directly echoed in policy. Brooke-Popham stressed the importance of:

> [j]udging [...] whether the settlers will be able to adapt themselves to rural conditions [...] whether they will be able to make out of agriculture a profit which will satisfy their ambitions, or whether they will tend to desert agriculture and compete uneconomically in other trades and occupations.[97]

The Colonial Office was clear that Kenya's Indian population would be protected in economic matters, if not over land settlement.

Although Paskin described the issue as 'essentially one of Kenya-India politics', Brooke-Popham wrote to MacDonald to highlight the international political implications of unrest among the Indian population.[98] Although initial reports argued that the Indian population was 'not taking much interest in events in Palestine', new 'indications' suggested this was changing. Therefore, Brooke-Popham wrote, 'any belief that we are encouraging Jewish immigration will give agitators a handle and possibly lead to some form of demonstration'.[99] This view was re-emphasised by the Indian Overseas Association which warned MacDonald that 'further difficulties' could 'arise in both Kenya and in India in connection with the vexed problem of differential treatment between the white and Indian settlers in the Kenya Highlands'.[100]

An article in *The Leader* (India's largest English-language newspaper in the interwar period) reported that the Bombay Legislative Council had seen a motion

[95] Brooke-Popham to MacDonald, 18 June 1938, CO533/497/8, TNA.
[96] Brooke-Popham to MacDonald, 14 March 1939, CO533/511/7, TNA.
[97] *Ibid*.
[98] Paskin, minute, 10 September 1938, CO533/498/1, TNA.
[99] Brooke-Popham to MacDonald, 18 July 1938, CO533/497/8, TNA.
[100] Indian Overseas Association to MacDonald, 12 December 1938, CO533/498/1, TNA.

for a message to be conveyed to the British government of 'the emphatic opinion of the house that the proposed scheme was detrimental to Indian interests and that it should not be permitted'. The article, written after Winterton's public speeches about possible Jewish settlement in Kenya at the Évian Conference, specifically asked, 'Is it not curious that while Earl Winterton and his compatriots feel so deeply for alien communities, the grievances of Indians who are their fellow-citizens leave them unmoved?' The article also adopted racial stereotypes used by British officials and, building on Chandrasekhar's identification of German settlers as problematic, specified the Jewish aspect of the issue.[101]

In regard to South Africa, the article cited Professor Arthur Berriedale Keith (a prolific historian at the University of Edinburgh and a former Colonial Office official between 1901 and 1914, who was particularly involved in Dominion affairs) who claimed that 'many of the Europeans who oppose the success of Indians as traders so bitterly are really Jews of very low and undesirable class'. In regard to the African population, the article reminded the Colonial Office of the 'paramountcy of native interests which is supposed to guide their policy' and asked, 'Is it in accordance with that doctrine that not content with depriving the natives of their best land and transferring them to white settlers, those in power may now invite aliens to share in the loot?'[102] The questions raised in *The Leader* exemplified how colonial populations (especially in India) were increasingly questioning the nature and legitimacy of colonial rule. This was an unsettling and unwelcome experience for the Colonial Office, particularly as the question of Jewish settlement in Kenya threatened to drag an African colony into a broader state of discontent that was starting to develop across the empire.

Clearly, refugee settlement threatened to agitate already fraught international relations. With the prospect of 'another Palestine in Kenya' and the difficult questions raised about the nature of British colonial rule more generally, the conclusion was simply to limit Jewish settlement options. Therefore, while Kenya had seemed to be the most promising location of large-scale settlement at

[101] 'Government Prefer Aliens?', *The Leader* (Allahabad), 31 October 1938, CO533/498/1, TNA.
[102] *Ibid*.; C. Brad Faught, *The New A-Z of Empire: A Concise Handbook of British Imperial History* (London, 2011), p. 133.

Évian in July 1938, attention by November had been diverted to West Indian colonies, such as British Guiana, and the only settlement scheme pursued in Kenya was that of the PSA (see chapter two).

The racial politics of land settlement was highlighted further by the fact that at a similar time to these discussions over Jewish settlement, there were calls from the white settler community for Colonial Office action to support, including financially, more British white settlement in the Highlands. Reference was made to the established policy, endorsed by the Empire Settlement Act, of funding white settlement in the colonies. Ultimately, a loan of £250,000 was approved to this end in July 1939.[103]

When the request for financial assistance was originally received, MacDonald argued that attempts should be made to connect the question of white settlement and refugees. He felt 'that "two birds can be killed with one stone" by encouraging the Jewish plan'.[104] Months later, he noted, 'I am very doubtful whether we shall get an adequate number of British settlers. Our people have somehow lost their inclination to go, in large numbers, to settle on land overseas. Even 150-200 may be hard to find'. Therefore, he argued, 'I attach importance to settling refugees'.[105] However, other colonial officials thought that MacDonald's aim of connecting white settlement with Jewish refugee settlement was unrealistic and unsuitable for the circumstances of Kenya. Paskin responded directly to MacDonald's suggestion, minuting, 'I am afraid that the two birds are of such widely different character that they will hardly fit into one scheme'.[106]

The issue was also opposed by established settler groups. Strong white settler feeling against Indian settlement was exacerbated by the latter's powerful lobby within Whitehall via the Indian Office. While the subject of Indian unrest was given considerable attention in Whitehall because of its connection to Anglo-Arab relations, white settlers often felt voiceless, despite their disproportionate amount of power. As Paskin observed:

[103] Dawe, minute, 7 July 1939, CO533/511/6, TNA.
[104] MacDonald, minute, 3 July 1938, CO533/497/7, TNA.
[105] MacDonald, minute, 23 July 1939, CO533/511/6, TNA.
[106] Paskin, minute, 9 July 1938, CO533/497/7, TNA.

> The fact is that the present settler population is acutely conscious of the fact that they cannot possibly hope to retain the privileged position and the amenities which they now enjoy in the Highlands unless some means can be found to fill up that sparsely inhabited area with good honest British farming folk.[107]

Many of the requests for government support for increased white British settlement were considered to be important enough that they were included in the letter to the Treasury which asked for approval of the £250,000 investment. The letter explained that:

> [t]he European community in Kenya is still in some sense a pioneer community. It has not reached a state of economic and social equilibrium. If it does not consolidate its position by increasing its numbers and strengthening its resources, there is reason to fear it might suffer decline.[108]

Furthermore, the letter explained that:

> [m]any of the existing settlers having undoubtedly made their homes in Kenya on the strength of Government assurances about the future of the Colony, might contend that the Government of Kenya bears a responsibility towards these earlier settlers to continue the policy with regard to white settlement with the ultimate aim of establishing a British community strong enough to ensure its own future economically and socially.[109]

The language of these appeals played on key stereotypes that helped confirm white superiority, especially in contrast to colonial 'others'. The use of terms such as 'pioneers' and 'farming folk' to describe those needed to fill 'sparsely populated' areas of land helped support the racial hierarchies of whiteness by creating an idealised image of white, hard-working British settlers in a land undeveloped by an 'absent' colonial population. These idealised settlers embodied positive virtues, unobtainable by colonial 'others', at least not without the help of the British.[110]

Colonial Office action towards white settler claims for practical assistance provides an interesting counterpoint from which to scrutinize the way colonial official perceptions of race guided policy. Although Jewish land settlement was more acceptable than Indian settlement, Brooke-Popham was still firmly against the

[107] Paskin, minute, 29 April 1939, CO533/511/6, TNA.
[108] Creasy to the Secretary of the Treasury, 31 May 1939, CO533/511/6, TNA.
[109] *Ibid*.
[110] Schwarz, *The White Man's World*, pp. 20-22.

creation of a 'Jewish enclave' in the colony. He consistently argued in favour of keeping the British character of the White Highlands.[111] Lord Dufferin similarly 'agreed that "nests of Jews" were very dangerous to all concerned'.[112] Brooke-Popham gave specific reasons for this: 'The real benefit which the African derives from his association with the European farmer lies not so much in the financial return but rather in the education and experience gained'. In his letter to MacDonald, Brooke-Popham argued that:

> [b]elieving as we must to in our British ideals of freedom and justice, there would appear to be no better way of contributing to the advancement of the native peoples than by imparting these ideals to them. This can best be done by forming in their midst a British settlement where British principles may not only be preserved but also extended throughout Kenya and other East African territories.[113]

Driving the point home, he concluded that:

> [f]or the reasons outlined [above] [...] it is in my view important, I would even say essential that white settlement should retain its British character, and I therefore urge that it is the duty of H.M. Government to do all that it can to foster the emigration from Great Britain to Kenya of the type of farmer-settler who will be not only an economic asset but also a guide to his African compatriots.[114]

His ranking was clear: white British, white European (including Jews) and then Indian. This prioritisation was based on his perception of the groups: British values, the need of Africans to be 'educated' and the 'questionable influence' of Jews and Indians alike. Brooke-Popham had privately observed to Ormsby-Gore that:

> I have found a genuine desire amongst all classes for the betterment of the African natives. But the most difficult problem I feel is that of the Indians. There undoubtedly is amongst most of the settlers an intense hatred of the Indian which, being quite illogical, is very difficult to argue about.[115]

Writing in *The Spectator*, Cleland Scott offered a summation of these racial perceptions. He argued that:

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[111] Brooke-Popham to MacDonald, 9 June 1939, CO533/511/6, TNA.
[112] Record of a meeting held in Secretary of State's room, 15 May 1939, CO533/511/6, TNA.
[113] Brooke-Popham to MacDonald, 6 April 1939, CO533/511/6, TNA.
[114] *Ibid*.
[115] Brooke-Popham to Ormsby-Gore, 24 April 1937; Brooke-Popham to Ormsby-Gore, 20 September 1937, Box 1 III/3, MSS.Afr.s 1120, Brooke-Popham papers.

> [n]umbers of Jewish refugees might very easily suffer [...] from an inferiority complex. If they did, they might not then be ideal people to come in close contact with the African, who can extremely easily be adversely influenced by too much 'kindness.' The Jewish refugee might, quite unintentionally perhaps, regard both the African and the Indian as 'oppressed' races, which would do no good to any race in Kenya.[116]

The prioritisation was clear, but the pressure for limiting non-British (i.e. Jewish) settlement was also clear. There were indeed concerns regarding the nature of Jewish influence, especially given Jewish stereotypes of association with the left and the fear that this might ultimately influence burgeoning nationalist movements in the colonies. In a colony where racial tensions were high and where there was already growing agitation, politically uncertain refugees were the last thing colonial officials wanted.

**INTERNMENT**

The centrality of racial perceptions was also evident in the policy adopted towards internment in the colonies. The internment crisis helps further illuminate two factors in contemporary racial frameworks: (1) the difficulty (and fluidity) of defining race and (2) entrenched perceptions of indigenous colonial populations as inherently vulnerable. Regarding the first, British officials had to decide whether Jewish people in the colonies were to be defined by their Jewish identity or their national identity. Regarding the second, British officials debated the way in which indigenous populations would respond to the internment policy, particularly whether they were capable of understanding a quick change in policy direction, and whether they were more or less at risk from potential 'enemy alien' fifth-column activity.

The debate which took place on the first of these issues highlights how racial thinking (in connection with liberalism) defined official interaction with refugees and their plight: Jews were persecuted for being Jewish by the Nazis, but their Jewish identity was not enough to raise them above suspicion for British officials. For example, Shuckburgh wrote that he was:

> sceptical about the 'anti-Nazi' German, whether in this country or elsewhere. Germans are first and foremost Germans. Some of them may

[116] Cleland Scott, 'Jewish Settlement in Kenya?', *The Spectator*, 30 September 1938, CO533/497/8, TNA.

> dislike the Nazi regime, but I would not trust a single individual among them not to help the German government [...] when it is fighting for its life.[117]

A piece in *The Spectator* similarly asked:

> in what spirit would these Jews come to Kenya? Would they remain first and foremost *German* Jews whose heart and soul stayed with 'The Fatherland'? Do they consider themselves persecuted by the Germans *as a race*, or by the Nazi *regime?* If they feel their exile is due only to the latter there always will be left with them their love of the Fatherland, and the longing to go back in more auspicious circumstances. Possibly they might set about trying to create a second Fatherland in Kenya, or aim to link up with the Germans, of whom there are many, by no means all Nazis, in Tanganyika Territory. Finally, do they feel Jews racially or Germans?[118]

These concerns were evident in the treatment of Dr Gigliolo, an Italian doctor who had been researching in British Guiana for some years and was part of the commission that investigated possible refugee settlement there in 1938/39 (see chapter five). In June 1940, he was 'arrested in his laboratory' and 'confined to his home, under police guard, for ten days and interned, ever since, as a prisoner of war'.[119] A year later, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lord Moyne, who had been 'greatly impressed by [the] value of his work', enquired about his release, writing to the Governor of British Guiana:

> I should have thought that, especially in view of small number of persons concerned in British Guiana, it would be possible for similar modification of policy to be made if suitable explanation were given publicity. [120]

The Governor's response explained that:

> it must be remembered that he had not severed his connections with Italy and sent his children to be educated there and according to [the] report they came back with strong Fascist sentiments which have reacted unfavourably on opinion as regards the father.[121]

However, the Governor ultimately justified the continued internment of Gigliolo 'on grounds of effect on public feeling', rather than 'any harmful activity on

[117] Shuckburgh, minute, 9 June 1941, CO968/33/13, TNA.
[118] Cleland Scott, 'Jewish Settlement in Kenya?', *The Spectator*, 30 September 1938, CO533/497/8, TNA.
[119] Gina J.M. Ferret-Giglioli to Blacklock, 26 March 1941, CO968/35/9, TNA.
[120] Moyne to Jackson, 3 June 1941, CO968/35/9, TNA.
[121] Jackson to Moyne, 4 June 1941, CO968/35/9, TNA.

his part'. He observed: '[t]his might seem strange but it must be remembered we are dealing with an ignorant and excitable people amongst whom ideas and rumours [...] spread like fire'.[122] This was a feeling mirrored by others, including those in Whitehall. K.E. Robinson noted 'once you have interned people, the native mind is very likely to consider their release "defeatist"'. In other words, while the loyalty of German Jews could not be trusted, African people were not 'educated' enough to 'accept a general change of policy'.[123]

This last aspect, the assumption about the response of the native population, highlights the second issue raised by internment: whether colonial populations were more susceptible to fifth-column activity than the largely white population of Britain. Although widespread internment of enemy aliens was quickly reversed in the Britain, many questioned whether similar action should be taken in the colonies. Many colonial officials did not 'agree with the idea that the UK policy is a proper guide for the action to be taken'. This, Arthur Dawe explained, was down to differences in population: 'In [Britain] we have a united population all of the same flesh and blood and we can afford to take certain risks with enemy aliens in the knowledge that the general spirit of the population would make it very difficult for [them] to undertake any really dangerous activities'. On the other hand, 'in Africa the situation is entirely different', as 'there we have large populations of alien blood who cannot be counted upon in the same way as the population of our own island'. This led him to the conclusion that 'we cannot therefore, afford to take the risks which might be involved in the application of a liberal policy which may be perfectly safe' in Britain.[124] Colonial loyalty – based not on race but nationalist aspirations – proved to be a legitimate concern. As outlined, the loss of Far Eastern territories in December 1941 were a significant blow to the British and was, at least in part, put down to actions of local populations who aided the Japanese advance.

The racial concerns, particularly in regard to issues of indigenous loyalty and trustworthiness, were also evident in the internment of the Japanese in America. According to Ben-Ami Shillony, European Jews and Japanese living in the US were

[122] *Ibid*.
[123] Robinson, minute, 5 June 41, CO968/35/9, TNA.
[124] Dawe, minute, 8 June 1941, CO968/33/13, TNA.

'both victims of a similar kind of demonization by the West'. He argues that although the most obvious connection between the Jews and the Japanese was the help that certain Japanese authorities afforded Jewish refugees fleeing persecution in Europe, there were also important connections between the two groups. He argues that '[h]aving rejected Christianity, yet nevertheless having prospered in the Western world, the Jews and the Japanese have stirred similar racist phobias and have appeared as the two great threats to white Christian society'.[125] While this argument perhaps oversimplifies (and is uncritical of) the relationship between Japanese and Jews – for example, new literature, specifically by Gao Bei, suggests that Japanese policy towards Jewish refugees was actually inherently antisemitic – there are clearly parallels to be made about how Jews and the Japanese were treated as internees.[126]

When the Japanese government attacked Pearl Harbor in December 1941, those Japanese people living in America were soon associated with this act of violence and were viewed as a threat. Shillony explains that '[a]lthough no Japanese Americans were involved in acts of sabotage or treason, the Americans were gripped by the fear that the Japanese in their midst would become a fifth column and assist Japan in conquering the United States'. The government responded to this fear with a policy of internment. In the spring of 1942, 112,000 Japanese were ordered to be held in camps. This was despite the fact that two-thirds of this number were actually American-born and that no such action was taken against German Americans. Like those British officials, such as Shuckburgh, who questioned the loyalty of Jewish refugees both in the colonies and in Britain itself, many American officials, including those in the military such as Lieutenant General John L. De Witt, believed that '[a] Jap's a Jap. You can't change him by giving him a piece of paper'. Another argued that '[a] viper is nonetheless a viper wherever the egg is hatched – so a Japanese American, born of Japanese parents, grows up to be a Japanese not an American'.[127] The language used by both British and US officials not only highlighted the contradictions of liberalism – that foreign populations who

[125] Ben Ami-Shillony, The Flourishing Demon: Japan in the Role of the Jews?', in: Wistrich (ed.) *Demonizing the Other*, p. 295.
[126] Gao, *Shanghai Sanctuary*.
[127] Ami-Shillony, 'The Flourishing Demon', p. 300.

were expected to assimilate were inherently incapable of doing so – but also that race was the defining factor of their inability to do so.

The issue was also of importance in the British Dominion of Canada, where after Pearl Harbour officials in the western state of British Columbia pushed for a strict policy against Japanese settlers. Although there had been general fear of the 'Yellow Peril' since Chinese migration started in the nineteenth century, anti-Japanese feeling started to solidify during the interwar years. As well as concern over the supposed economic threat they posed, increasing Japanese militarism raised fears, particularly on the west coast of Canada (and America). As a result, Japanese settlers in the Dominion were increasingly identified as a danger. After Japan declared war on the US and the British Empire on 7 December 1941, tightened immigration procedures were followed by more decisive action, with anti-Japanese feeling peaking at key points between 1937 (the Japanese attack on China) and 1942 (after the fall of European colonies to the Japanese). By 1942, discussions were held about moving Japanese settlers from coastal areas. Total evacuation was ordered on 24 February 1942, and all Japanese in Canada were ordered to relocate away from 'protected zones'.[128]

In the official mind, Japanese Americans were first and foremost Japanese, as German Jews were first and foremost German. In each case, past action or current persecution did not change the way this was understood by the British or the Americans. The connections, particularly in ideas about the dangers of racial enemy aliens, between British and American internment policy highlight important ways in which race mattered in interwar years and during the war. The threat of fifth-column activity raised fears of the enemy within, and therefore racial stereotypes and coding became ways of directing policy. The imperial dimension made the issue even more complex in the colonies, but again race was an important guiding factor for many officials.

**REFUGEE PERSPECTIVES**

Colonial racial hierarchies and tensions were experienced and understood by those who found safety right across the empire. The lived experiences of Jewish refugees confirm how pervasive racial thinking was in the colony, both by showing the ways

[128] Ward, *White Canada Forever*, p. 155.

in which refugees did or did not adopt a position in the racial hierarchies as well as the ways in which they recall how their own Jewishness mattered. This section will consider the refugees' adoption of the role of 'quasi-colonialists' as well as their experiences of arrival, schooling and internment in Kenya, Cyprus and Jamaica.[129]

On departure, children had little or no knowledge of the places to which they were going. Jill Pauly recalls how, before they left Germany, her mother took her to the library to look at books about Kenya, perhaps aware just how different the children would find the British colony. Jill remembers only having seen one black person before her family fled to Kenya: a woman in Cologne, who was wearing a black dress, white polka dots and red accessories.[130] Walter Zweig also suggested to his wife that 'you will have to explain to [Stefanie] that not all people are white'.[131] However, this proved to be little preparation for the changes, and Stefanie describes herself on arrival in Kenya as a 'stunned, frightened little girl – who until then had thought all people were white-skinned and everybody talked German'.[132] These reactions were not confined to those children who found refuge in Africa. Silbiger recalls that during their approach to Trinidad, black police officers came on board. He describes how '[t]he men were wearing sparkling white uniforms and helmets, which gleamed in the bright sunlight, but under those helmets their faces were pitch black, or so they appeared. I had never in my life seen a black person in the flesh, only in picture books like *Little Black Sambo*'.[133] These childlike memories of racial encounters reflect the particularity of experience for young people who fled to the colonies and whose worlds soon came to encompass the centrality of race.

These sorts of observations were not limited to children. Sara Frankel, a university-educated refugee from Poland, found safety in various African colonies via Siberia, Tehran and Pakistan. In an interview, Frankel contrasts the experience of

[129] Eppelsheimer, *Homecomings*, p. 6.
[130] Jill Pauly, personal interview with author, 30 July 2012.
[131] Zweig, *Nowhere in Africa*, p. 5.
[132] Stephanie Zweig, 'Strangers in a Strange Land', *The Guardian*, 20 March 2003, <http://www.theguardian.com/culture/2003/mar/21/artsfeatures>.
[133] Silbiger, *Our Great Escape*, 2006.27, USHMM.

first seeing a black person at university with that of witnessing the large African population in Mombasa, Kenya, which she describes as 'a black wall'.[134]

Many of the memoirs and oral testimonies of refugees highlight the racial hierarchies that existed in the colonies, identifying the dominance of the white community, the middle position of the Indian settlers and that black Africans occupied the very lowest position. For example, Helen Berger, in an interview, describes her colonial refuge, Trinidad, as a 'typical' colony with a 'very strict social structure'. Berger recalls that white people there were either employed in a government position or were wealthy merchants, military or worked in the oil fields. This, she summarises, meant that 'there were no poor whites in Trinidad'. Helen also identifies another social structure at play on the island: race. She recalls in the interview that it mattered 'how black you were' and that 'you could be black if you were rich' but that most black people were very poor.[135]

Furthermore, refugees often ended up adopting the language and the racial discourse of the empire. For example, Heinz Bauer discussed in his memoir the best way to interact with the African people:

> They were certainly not like children, a popular and patronizing misconception, but they were also not, at least in an employer-employee relationship, quite like our idea of a typical adult. They needed the consideration one gave an adult, but coupled with the firmness and understanding so essential in any successful parent. Like children, they had a keen sense of justice, and like intelligent individuals of any age, they could be persuaded by discussion [...] To be accepted and respected as a person in authority, an order had to be firm, clear, consistent, and, except in rare and special circumstances, irrevocable [...]I learned this time-tested colonial and diplomatic attitude quickly.[136]

Bauer, while rejecting the wholesale 'patronizing misconception' of Africans as 'children', nevertheless appropriated significant aspects of the racist stereotype into his own perceptions of black Africans. Just as British officials had questioned whether the indigenous populations could understand a reversal of policy (i.e. regarding internment), Bauer too believed that orders had to 'irrevocable', in order

[134] Sara Frankel, interview no. 16809, Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education, University of Southern California.
[135] Helen Berger, interview no. 12416, Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education, University of Southern California.
[136] Bauer, memoir, RG-02.083, USHMM.

to maintain acceptance and respect (i.e. the superior position) in the eyes of the Africans.

Furthermore, Bauer's recollections provide an excellent insight into colonial racial structures, especially in regard to the hierarchies involved in employment. From his senior position on several different farms, he observed:

> I have often employed native craftsmen for building, some masonry, brick making, carpentry and similar jobs. I preferred them to the Indian artisans who typically watched the hours more closely than their workmanship and who, unlike the Africans, focused their minds narrowly on the job with little grasp of, or interest in the overall objective of the employer.[137]

Similarly, several refugees used the word 'boy' to describe African men. Bauer notes that '[t]he only strange thing was that these men were always called 'boys', which seemed peculiar at first, but we soon got used to it'. Likewise, both Jill and Inge recall their daily walk to school during which they were accompanied by Kenyan men who worked for their family. Jill explained that 'white children were not walking alone, so there was always an African boy that accompanied us'. However, Inge reminds her sister in the interview that 'they weren't boys, they were men'. Nonetheless, Jill goes on to say that the 'black boys', who were 'so protective' of the sisters and 'took pride in walking [them] and bringing [them] home'.[138]

Zweig also engages with the colonial hierarchies in relation to Indian settlers. In *Nowhere in Africa*, she writes that 'Patel, the Indian who owned the shop, was a rich and dreaded man', who 'had discovered very quickly that people from Europe were as avid about their letters and newspapers as his compatriots were about their rice, of which he never had a sufficient supply anyway'.[139] This idea is elaborated further in relation to the hiring of black help. Stefanie notes that their Indian landlord's 'cleverly thought-out psychological coup' ensured that his white European tenants were 'still able to afford help, which an unwritten law required for the white upper classes'. This not only served the purpose of the British, who wanted to ensure strong racial boundaries, but it also maintained for the refugees

[137] *Ibid*.
[138] Eppelsheimer, *Homecomings*, pp. 199, 205.
[139] Zweig, *Nowhere in Africa,* p. 63

'the illusion that they were on their way to integration and had the same standard of living as the English in the houses at the edge of the town'.[140] The 'psychological coup' implicitly recognises that Jewish refugees needed access to certain resources to affirm their whiteness. The complexity of this is highlighted by the fact that it was an Indian settler who provided this, a British citizen excluded from the British white world.

Natalie Eppelsheimer argues that Zweig's *Nowhere in Africa* displays 'an internalized colonial mentality' and a romanticisation of colonial Africa.[141] This was perhaps manifested most clearly in Zweig's relationship with Owuor, the African farmhand who not only saved her father's life before Stefanie and her mother arrived in Kenya, but who also became the family's essential guide. In the account of her first meeting with Owuor, Stefanie describes that:

> Owuor was wearing a long, white shirt over his trousers, just like the cheerful angels in the picture books for good children. Owuor had a flat nose and thick lips, and his head looked like a black moon. As soon as the sun shone on the droplets of sweat on his forehead, the droplets changed into multicoloured beads [...] Owuor's skin smelled of delightful light honey, chased away any fear, and made a big person out of a little girl.[142]

Her language draws on racial stereotypes (especially about Owuor's physical appearance) that would have been common in British writing at the time.

However, Zweig is not the only example of this. Walter and Helen Amelie Easton, Austrian Jewish refugees who lived and worked in Kenya from the late 1930s to the late 1940s, have also displayed evidence of this 'internalized colonial mentality'. Walter Easton recalls a fondness for the British way of life from his days as a young man working and studying in England. When visa restrictions prevented him from remaining in England on his student visa, he determined to become a British subject in 'one of the Dominions or Colonies'. Although he initially planned to move to Australia, he was offered work in Kenya and moved there. Helen Amelie joined him in 1938, after which they married. They both provide vivid accounts of

[140] *Ibid*., p. 164.
[141] Eppelsheimer, *Homecomings*, p. 12.
[142] Zweig, *Nowhere in Africa*, p. 19.

their lives in Kenya, where they enjoyed a relatively comfortable life, coming from Walter's prominent business role in the coffee industry.[143]

Commenting on colonial hierarchies, Walter recalls that before the Second World War, 'the natives looked up to the whites and thought they were pretty good'. He describes British colonialism as a 'a very benevolent dictatorship' and that this was engaged with local populations. Walter explains, 'There was no corporal punishment or anything like that because it really wasn't necessary'. This was because 'the natives had a great deal of respect for their elders and they transferred that to the whites'.[144]

In the interview, Walter and Helen share an exchange about whether white women felt threatened by African men. Walter concludes that European (white) women did not 'expose' themselves 'too much because they [the African men] were still male'. He continues, 'But you wouldn't expose yourself in front of an orangutan, because he's male and you know, the instinct is there, and that's how you regard the native'. Taking the analogy further, Walter explains that African men were known as 'Branch managers' as 'they had just come off the branch of a tree'. Despite this, and the acknowledgment of 'a very strict colour bar', both agree that relations were 'very, very friendly', a clear indication of the paternalistic racial attitudes they mirrored from many British officials.[145]

Despite the adoption, at least in part, of the racial hierarchies of colonial Kenya, refugee identity was connected with feelings of otherness. For young refugees, these feelings started even before the moment of departure from Europe. Even very young children understood that their Jewish status was problematic, and Jill and Inge and Alexander Silbiger all identify feelings of fear as they left Europe. While many refugee children recall positive memories of their time in exile, a sense of 'otherness' also permeates their recollections. In the case of Kenya, this was highlighted in two clear examples: the British school system and the experience of internment.

[143] Helen Amelie and Walter Easton, interview (1999), Austrian Heritage Collection, Leo Baeck Institute, AHC1147.
[144] *Ibid*.
[145] *Ibid*.

Schooling was deeply important for many Jewish families, and re-establishing education after they entered the colony was a top priority. However, in Kenya, the foreign boarding school system separated refugee children from the educational and cultural traditions of their parents and threatened the religious life of Jewish families. As a result, for most refugee children, schools became sites of inter-cultural tensions. The boarding schools made no provisions for practising Jews; Sabbath was not observed, and kosher food was not provided.

The Bergs countered these challenges by enrolling their children as day students, but this only highlighted their sense of otherness, something which both Jill and Inge identify. Moreover, Jill specifically recalls antisemitic responses from teachers and pupils in her school, including a teacher who told her class that there was a '[l]ittle German Jewish spy in our midst'. Another incident involved outright violence from a member of staff, who used a ruler to beat her on the legs.[146]

Stefanie Zweig's encounters were no less mixed. She recalls some of the areas of tension, including the type of uniform refugee children were likely to wear. She wrote that they 'were made from inexpensive material and had certainly not been purchased at the appropriate store for school supplies in Nairobi: instead they were sewn by Indian tailors. Almost none of the children wore the school insignia'.[147]

Stefanie speculates that the differences between the Jewish and English students must have been observable to the head-teacher at her school. Refugee children:

> hardly ever laughed, always looked older than they really were, and were driven by excessive ambition when measured by English standards. These serious, uncomfortably precocious creatures had barely mastered the language, and that had happened surprisingly fast, when, through their curiosity and drive, which even to devoted teachers could be annoying, they became outsiders in a community in which only success in sports counted.[148]

Stefanie's observations reflect her perspective on the differences between white British and refugee 'others'. These recollections also adopt various stereotypes: Jews as 'masters' of language, 'curious' and with 'drive' and ambition,

[146] Pauly, personal interview with author, 30 July 2012.
[147] Zweig, *Nowhere in Africa*, p. 73
[148] *Ibid*., p. 73.

in opposition to the more physically powerful British, to whom success in sport was most valued. This shows not only the ambiguous position Jewish refugees occupied in the colony (as part of the white world but never fully accepted) but also how this was internalised and understood by refugees.

Internment was another experience that highlighted refugees' precarious role in colonial society. Zweig recalls that '[t]he only important thing now was to protect the country from people who by birth, language, education, and loyalty might be linked more closely to the enemy than to the host country.[149] This identity change particularly affected Jill Pauly who speaks passionately about the subject: 'nobody there was bright enough to figure out that the Jews were being persecuted by the Nazis, that they were not spies for Germany'.[150] Such feelings, again, were not limited to child refugees. Helen Berger recalls her father's reaction at being interned in Trinidad: 'He was so deeply hurt that the British could think of him as an enemy alien when he was a refugee'. Berger then explains that this limited his interaction with others in the camp and blinded him to the struggles others faced in the difficult conditions of the internment camp.[151]

Refugee recollections attest to a contradictory experience: being forced to be part of the colonial community and yet always set apart from it was the reality of the lived experience of many refugees in colonial settings. No matter how fully refugees adopted their designated role in the colonies, they were always perceived as 'other', a consequence of both racial perceptions and the tensions over assimilation influenced by liberalism. The contested whiteness of the Jews forced the British to compromise some of the rigidity of the racial hierarchies of the colony to preserve the overall dominance of white over colonial 'others', including indigenous black African populations, as well as other colonial populations such as Indian migrants. The financial and ideological cost of ensuring that Jewish refugees conformed to the necessary functions of white settlers (e.g. having black servants) was a relatively small price to pay for maintaining (at least in the official mind) the British imperial system.

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[149] *Ibid*., pp. 43-44.
[150] Pauly and Katzenstein, *USHMM First Person Podcast Series*.
[151] Berger, interview no. 12416, Shoah Foundation Institute.

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Rather than Richard Breitman's observation that 'British policy did not rest primarily on prejudice' but was 'rather, a question of priorities', this chapter has shown that the two were in reality difficult to separate. In the British colonies, priorities were often based on racial assumptions. Ideas about different groups (i.e. Jews, indigenous black populations and Asiatic settlers, particularly Indians) formed an important context in which decisions were made.

Specifically in the question of land settlement, the prioritisation was clear: white British over Indian settlers and black indigenous populations. These priorities were highlighted and tested when Jewish refugees became part of the discussion. On the one hand, Jews, distinctly not 'British', were white Europeans and therefore prioritised over Indian settlers in terms of land, largely because it supported white dominance in the colonies. On the other hand, Jews were also seen as a potentially malign influence, from which Britain sought to protect Indian artisans and black Africans. Finally, in all these discussions, the sense of British whiteness was affirmed and perpetuated. In the case of internment, the fear of negative Jewish influence, particularly in relation to fifth-column activity, as well as stereotyped images of local populations as particularly susceptible to negative influence, created the boundaries of policy.

However, much insight is lost if we simply write off the Colonial Office as a racist institution; rather, as outlined in the introduction to this chapter, it is necessary to try to understand the intent of policy rather than just its manifestation. Louise London argues that while 'prejudice against Jews was considered [to be] unacceptable if it formed an explicit part of a social or political programme', 'moderate indulgence in social anti-Jewish prejudice was so widespread as to be unremarkable'.[152] This is a vital point. Those making policy did so in the belief that they were being helpful. Many were genuinely concerned that mass Jewish migration would cause more antisemitism and that uncontrolled immigration to the colonies threatened indigenous populations who were in British 'trusteeship'.

[152] London, *Whitehall*, p. 276.

Moreover, by examining where these racial perceptions met and the prioritisation of one over the other, much is revealed about the complex ways in which race impacted policy. It offers new insights into the ambiguities and ambivalence of British refugee policy and their response to the Holocaust. Racist assumptions were part of a broader social framework in which colonial officials operated. It was not impossible for officials to feel genuine sympathy towards refugees, paternalistic instincts towards indigenous populations as well as holding (what we would identify today to be) racist attitudes. This chapter demonstrates that racial perceptions were key to colonial policy-making decisions. Officials understood the world in which they functioned in racial terms. This was not a simple division between black and white; even whiteness had shades. Jewish refugees were not simply European; they were considered to be something 'other' as well. The perceived otherness of Jews manifested itself in ways that are easy to label as antisemitic (which they often were) but more importantly, official actions should be viewed as a response to the broader racial world.

## Chapter Four:
## Empire and Refugees: A Clash of Humanitarianisms

In the previous two chapters, this thesis established that the extent and nature of British policy towards Jewish refugees were shaped by the contradictions and constraints of liberalism, which were also, in part, a response to racial perceptions, specifically of Jewish refugees, of imperial citizens and of white British policy-makers. Liberalism and race also both helped define the British response to the wider question of humanitarianism that the refugee crisis prompted. This chapter will outline the tensions in British policy regarding various kinds of humanitarianisms. It will explore the conflict between immediate refugee relief (emergency humanitarianism) and longer-term colonial development (alchemic humanitarianism). Within this conflict, the influence of national and international relations will also be assessed, as humanitarian action was both a manifestation of domestic and national goals and a broader engagement with the world. Britain's reputation, particularly in the US, was challenged by action (and inaction) in the colonies as well as towards refugees. These interactions will be assessed more fully through two case-studies: the British response to vessels carrying refugees towards British colonies and the policy of internment. A study of the clash of humanitarianisms provides the final stepping stone to understanding the policy of compromise that emerged among colonial officials – that of linking refugees to colonial development – which is the subject of the final chapter.

For scholars who look to explain the Allies' responses to the Holocaust, humanitarianism (or the lack of it) has featured highly in their assessments. Although much of this work makes important observations about the place of humanitarianism in policy-making, it presents action or inaction as a *failure* of humanitarianism, implicitly viewing the issue from our contemporary perspective. This chapter will avoid the issue of 'presentism', a potential danger in assessments of this nature, by seeking to understand more fully the international humanitarian context of the interwar years.

Wasserstein criticises the *lack* of humanitarianism shown by officials (and governments) in response to the Holocaust when he argues that only '[a] few

flashes of humanity by individuals lighten the general darkness' of British refugee policy.[1] Both Marrus and Sherman outline that humanitarianism was prioritised below a number of other factors. Marrus argues 'restrictionist and anti-immigrant sentiment', 'economic depression', 'nationalistic priorities' and a 'fear of foreigners' all 'blunted [...] humanitarian appeals'.[2] Sherman, in regard to Britain, argues that high levels of unemployment in Britain, 'anti-refugee' attitudes 'of certain organised professions and associations', resentment caused by helping foreigners with government funds and the fear that offering help would establish precedents for aiding other groups in the future, all overrode '[t]he humanitarian issue' as well as 'the older British tradition of asylum for the political refugee'.[3]

Louise London also identifies an absence of humanitarian drive in British government policy towards Jewish refugees. Although 'Nazi persecution of European Jews confronted the world with an unprecedented humanitarian challenge', she argues 'countries around the globe resisted the pressure to take special measures to relieve Jewish suffering'. Although London acknowledges that some action was taken to help and that, at an individual level, humanitarianism was sometimes the motivating factor for this action, she stresses that it did not form a central part of state policy-making decisions. London instead reasons that British policy was 'an expression of the values of the society that produced it' and that '[r]adically different policies would have required a different set of values'. As such, London concludes that 'humanitarianism was hardly one of the determining values of the political civilisation from which it sprang'.[4] While London provides an unparalleled account of the British political and bureaucratic culture, her conclusion could perhaps be explored more fully by a deeper assessment of the 'political civilisation' she mentions, of which international humanitarianism was a part.

Both Feingold and Kushner crucially identify the connection between humanitarianism and the interwar political environment. For Kushner, *Realpolitik* and international reputations were crucial: 'The democracies engaged in

[1] Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews*, p. 311.
[2] Michael R. Marrus, *The Holocaust in History* (London, 1993), p. 166.
[3] A.J. Sherman, *Island Refuge: Britain and Refugees from the Third Reich 1933-1939* (London, 1973), p. 266-267.
[4] London, *Whitehall*, pp. 1, 15.

humanitarian one-upmanship while restraining their help to the Jews within increasingly narrow bounds'.[5] Indeed, the perception of action, both at home and abroad, was a key factor in the development of 'humanitarian' policy in the interwar period.

That said, Feingold identifies the difficulties of attributing political bodies with human (contemporary) responses. In relation to the US, he explains that:

> When there was no clear-cut legal responsibility, it proved difficult to elicit from the nations a voluntary response on humanitarian or moral grounds. Nation states like the United States are man-made institutions, not man himself. They have no souls and no natural sense of morality, especially when it concerns a foreign minority which is clearly not their legal responsibility.

He takes the argument further, arguing that:

> It is difficult to separate the charge that the Roosevelt Administration did not do enough to rescue Jews during the Holocaust years from the assumption that modern nation-states can make human responses in situations like the Holocaust. One wonders if the history of the twentieth, or any other century, warrants such an assumption, especially when the nation-state feels its security threatened.[6]

This chapter will unpack the assumption identified by Feingold more fully, exploring whether during the interwar years a nation-state could and should have acted against perceived national interests in response to humanitarian need. First, it will argue that international humanitarianism was at a particular stage in its development and, as such, judging its perceived failures by contemporary standards is as unhelpful as it is anachronistic. More broadly, it will argue that humanitarianism was not a singularly-defined idea, and therefore a consideration of different kinds of humanitarianisms is necessary to understand Britain's response to the refugee crisis. These issues will be considered by assessing the history of humanitarianism, the place of humanitarianism in international relations and the connections between humanitarianism and empire. The colonial context adds complexity to the argument that humanitarianism simply failed in the 1930s; instead, it shows that various kinds of humanitarianisms existed and that action was a result of the prioritisation of these within a general framework of *Realpolitik.*

[5] Kushner, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination*, p. 60.
[6] Feingold, *The Politics of Rescue*, p. 304.

## A HISTORY OF HUMANITARIANISM?

The assumption that liberal democracies failed to act humanely towards Jewish refugees stems in part from the fact that humanitarianism in the interwar period has not been properly historicized. More generally, academic studies of humanitarianism focus on recent (particularly post-1990) events, while histories of humanitarianism have largely described events after the Second World War, although recently, a growing body of literature on specific events in other periods has developed.[7] Furthermore, scholars such as Michael Barnett, Brendan Simms, David Trim and Johannes Paulmann have started a discussion on the longer history of humanitarianism as an idea and in action.

For example, Barnett has identified three ages of humanitarianism: imperial humanitarianism (1800-1945), neo-humanitarianism (1945-1989) and liberal humanitarianism (1989-present).[8] After examining these, Barnett offers the following definition of humanitarianism:

> We can certainly understand it as a form of compassion, but in practice it has three marks of distinction: assistance beyond borders, a belief that such transnational action was related in some way to the transcendent, and the growing organization and governance of activities designed to protect and improve humanity.[9]

Barnett's views are not fully accepted by all scholars. For example, Johannes Paulmann identifies a different way of mapping the development of humanitarianism. Paulmann identifies three 'historical conjunctures': (1) the changes produced by the First World War 'when the collapse of empires on the European continent and its peripheries coincided with the establishment of the

[7] Simms and Trim make the observation specifically in regard to 'humanitarian intervention' (*Humanitarianism Intervention*, pp. 2-3), and Barnett focuses on the post-1990 period (*Empire of Humanity*, p. 7). Barnett is a political scientist, and he is potentially referring to works in that area. Historians have produced studies of humanitarianism for specific periods and in relation to specific topics. The interwar period, for example, has recently received more attention. See Keith Davis Watenpaugh, 'The League of Nations' Rescue of Armenian Genocide Survivors and the Making of Modern Humanitarianism, 1920-1927', *The American Historical Review*, 115/5 (2010); Michelle Tusan, '"Crimes against Humanity": Human Rights, the British Empire, and the Origins of the Response to the Armenian Genocide', *American Historical Review*, 119/1 (2014); Antonio Donini, 'The Far Side: The Meta Functions of Humanitarianism in a Globalised World' *Disasters* (2010).

[8] Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*; Paulmann, 'Conjunctures', p. 221.

[9] This definition of humanitarianism highlights what Barnett views as its essential elements. He recognises that '[t]his classification [...] differs from many books on the subject, which define it as the impartial, neutral, and independent provision of relief to victims of conflict and natural disasters' (*Empire of Humanity*, p. 10).

League of Nations as a focal point for humanitarian efforts'; (2) the '[p]ostcolonial conflicts, the demise of large-scale development schemes, and societal mobilization in the West changes the humanitarian field' in the 1960s and early 1970s; and (3) the end of the Cold War in the 1990s, which witnessed 'increased dynamism' in 'international humanitarianism'.[10]

Whatever the periodisation adopted by historians, these more recent studies of humanitarianism highlight a much longer history than previously presented. Humanitarianism is an idea that has evolved over time, and the interwar years are considered to be a significant moment in the development of international humanitarianism. A brief overview of the development of humanitarianism, with a detailed assessment of the interwar years, helps illuminate why this period was of such importance and how shifting ideas about humanitarianism interacted with liberalism and views on race and helped to produce a distinct colonial policy towards Jewish refugees.

Individual acts of compassion, motivated by religion or ideology, are as old as humanity itself. The traditional starting point for organised humanitarianism involves Henry Dunant, a Genevan businessman who stumbled across the horrors of war when travelling as part of his commercial endeavours in 1859. The battle he witnessed in Italy between French and Austro-Hungarian troops left Dunant appalled. In response, he established the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in 1863, an organisation that was heavily involved with the development of the first Geneva Conventions.[11]

The creation of the ICRC is representative of the broader origins of humanitarianism. The nineteenth century was a period of great change, when new political, social and economic forces were breaking down existing communities and connecting people across bigger distances. The horrors of war (and the fact that these were more readily known about away from the front line) as well as the growth in religious (especially non-conformist) groups are important factors in this change.[12]

[10] See Paulmann, 'Conjunctures', p. 223-230.
[11] Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*, p. 1.
[12] For more information on the development of humanitarian action in the nineteenth century, see Paulmann, 'Conjunctures', p. 217.

The First World War marked an important turning point, when humanitarianism started to move away from voluntary, often religiously-motivated action. The violence and destruction of the First World War led to the development of an internationalism which sought political and economic integration in the pursuit of peace. However, this internationalism was based entirely on Western notions of civilization, which included liberal and racial ideas discussed in previous chapters.[13] The League of Nations nonetheless made significant contributions to the development of international humanitarian aid on issues such as refugees, epidemics and famine.[14] A particularly lasting legacy of this was the work of Fridtjof Nansen and the structures of refugee advocacy he helped create in the interwar years (see chapter one), including the creation of the role of High Commissioner for Refugees.[15]

The League of Nations, while making some positive contributions to the humanitarian concerns of the interwar years, also represented one of the potential problems with an expanding international humanitarian community: an intrusion into state sovereignty. For many European states, the League was not a genuine tool for action but rather a forum in which they could appear to be taking action, while actually protecting national interests.[16] This, when connected to the refugee crisis where international intervention on both the creation of refugees by nation-states (e.g. when this was caused by persecution or expulsion) as well as the reception of refugees in other countries, challenged the cherished ideal of state sovereignty. Clearly then, in the interwar years, refugees were not simply a humanitarian problem, but also one of international relations.[17]

The history of refugees bears this out. It was only in the context of the emerging nation-state that refugees became a problematic issue. Before the

[13] For more on Western culture in the understanding of 'civilization', see Mark Mazower, 'An International Civilization? Empire, Internationalism and the Crisis of the Mid-Twentieth Century', *International Affairs*, 82/3 (2006), pp. 553-566.
[14] Susan Pedersen, 'Back to the League of Nations: Review Essay', *American Historical Review*, 112/4 (2007), p. 1108.
[15] Skran, *Refugees in Inter-War Europe*, p. 7.
[16] Pedersen, 'Back to the League', p. 1097.
[17] Tommie Sjoberg references Elisabeth Ferris's work, *Refugees and World Politics* (1985), and provides an overview of how international relations interacted with more modern humanitarian crises (*The Powers and the Persecuted: The Refugee Problem and the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees (IGCR), 1938-1947* (Lund, 1991), pp. 7-9.

widespread creation of political, economic and cultural hegemons, refugees did not exist in the same way; without a nation-state to which to belong, people simply crossed borders without becoming a legal, political or social 'other'.[18] In the interwar years, concepts of national identity and belonging became more rigid, and therefore immigration and refugee controls were issues that threatened national identity and challenged notions of 'belonging'. It was this context that allowed refugees in humanitarian need to be seen as a dangerous 'other' with the charge of fifth-column activity or potential spies appearing frequently in the discourse.

Non-governmental action also continued in the interwar period but increasingly took on a new international dimension. The creation of 'Save the Children' (SCF), established by Eglantyne Jebb and her sister Dorothy Buxton (co-author of *You and the Refugee*) in the summer of 1919, exemplifies this. The movement, originally established to help the victims of war in Germany and Austria, soon expanded and offered aid to women and children victims of the 1921-22 famine in Russia. However, SCF, an 'explicitly populist and avowedly apolitical' movement, helped formulate 'one of the most potent arguments for international humanitarianism' in the interwar years, particularly in Britain where it helped to 'expand the notion of British humanitarian responsibility to encompass not just relief but reconstruction'. Moreover, it was responsible for the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, which was ratified by the League of Nations in 1924 and was one of the first statements of its kind.[19]

Similar organisations developed in response to other specific crises, for example in the context of the Near East. Near East Relief (NER) took action to help Armenian Christians, particularly children, by establishing orphanages, schools and training. Importantly, the methods used in this process came from experience of 'educational programs implemented in the Southern states' of the US. Pointing to the embedded 'paternalism and colonial stances' evident in NER history, Davide Rodogno observes, '[t]he local context for NER activities was certainly different

[18] Marrus, *The Unwanted*, pp. 3-13.
[19] The document outlined a child's right to food, shelter, education, medical attention, and freedom from exploitation. Ellen Boucher, 'Cultivating Internationalism: Save the Children Fund, Public Opinion and the Meaning of Child Relief, 1919-1924', in: Laura Beers and Geraint Thomas (eds), *Brave New World: Imperial and Democratic Nation-Building in Britain between the Wars* (London, 2011), pp. 171, 177, 187.

from the American South, but nonetheless, NER saw the Near East as an under-developed region to which American "modernity" could be brought'.[20]

The fact that international organisations such as the League of Nations flourished alongside non-governmental bodies is suggestive of the different ideas about humanitarianism present in the interwar years. These included the (sometimes imperial) politics of the League of Nations, the social causes of charities (e.g. Save the Children and NER), and the religious motivations of missionary groups. While the commonalities between these organisations will be discussed in a moment, they also represented variations in the expression of humanitarianism. Indeed, the interwar years can most helpfully be viewed as a period of 'humanitarianisms'. Scholars have certainly noted this. Specifically, Barnett identifies two distinct strands of humanitarianism. The first, emergency humanitarian action, responds to specific events and seeks to alleviate suffering in an immediate sense. This would include intervention in the case of war or after natural disasters. The second strand, which Barnett calls 'alchemic' humanitarian action, seeks longer-term answers to humanitarian needs and, as such, intrinsically links ideas of development and social welfare (e.g. health and education) to bigger questions of state-building, including the creation of Western-style democracy.[21]

These two strands are not completely distinct, as both emergency and alchemic humanitarianism share some fundamental beliefs, particularly in the interwar period. First, both of these strands assumed that Western intervention, whether in the short or long term, was the best way of helping those in need. Second, models of help were taken from Western experiences and often imposed on those in need with little reference to local needs, beliefs or cultures. The foundation of these fundamental beliefs was the view that 'civilization' was Western, and recipients of aid required guidance towards this end. This meant that

[20] Davide Rodogno, 'Beyond Relief: A Sketch of the Near East Relief's Humanitarian Operations, 1918-1929', *Monde(s)*, 6 (2014). pp. 3—5.

[21] Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*, pp. 10-11; R, Skinner and A. Lester argue that studying humanitarianism in the context of empire 'unsettle[s] existing interpretations' of the split between the two kinds of humanitarianisms. Specifically, 'European humanitarians' political desire to change the world arose out of their colonial encounters and activities, while their desire to save individual lives in peril, outside the arena of politics, had more Eurocentric origins' ('Humanitarianism and Empire: New Research Agendas', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 40/5 (2012), pp. 731,730); Paulmann argues that the differences between emergency and developmental humanitarianism only seem to emerge in the 1980s ('Conjunctures', p. 216).

humanitarianism, particularly in the interwar years, was connected very closely with paternalism. Barnett outlines this in the following way:

> The humanitarian spirit also incorporated ideologies of paternalism. Although humanitarianism contained discourses of human equality, they also existed alongside discourses of Christianity, colonialism, and commerce that deemed the 'civilized' peoples superior to the backward populations. This superiority, in turn, gave them a moral obligation to assuage their suffering and help them improve their lot by ridding them of the traditions that had condemned them to a life of misery. Intervention, in other words, was intended to produce emancipation and liberation as defined by the civilized. In this way humanitarianism's emancipator spirit also contained mechanisms of control.[22]

These ideas underscored action across the range of humanitarianisms including the League of Nations mandate system (discussed below) as well as action taken by charities such as NER to help educate – on Western models – children in Eastern Europe. Although liberalism dictated a preference for meeting the needs of individual Jewish refugees, when it came to education, racial 'others' were grouped together and responded to with shared policies.[23]

Moreover, the connections between humanitarianism and paternalism are relevant to the colonial sphere and warrant further investigation. The imperial context offers a unique framework through which to analyse the limitations of British action towards refugees through the study of a clash of two humanitarianisms: emergency and alchemic.

**HUMANITARIANISM AND THE EMPIRE**

Within the last five years, scholarly attention has turned to the connections between empire and humanitarianism. Michael Barnett's *Empire of Humanity* is one of the first texts to explore the connections between the two ideas, but he is not alone in identifying the importance of looking at these issues together.[24] The

[22] Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*, p. 55.
[23] See Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations* (Princeton, NJ, 2009); Rodogno, 'Beyond Relief', pp. 4-5.
[24] A special edition of *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth Studies* (40/5, 2012) focuses entirely on 'Empire and Humanity', with articles including an introduction by Skinner and Lester ('Humanitarianism and Empire'). Other relevant articles include Rebecca Gill, 'Networks of Concern, Boundaries of Compassion: British Relief in the South African War'; Emily Baughan, 'The Imperial War Relief Fund and the All British Appeal: Commonwealth, Conflict and Conservatism within the British Humanitarian Movement, 1920-25; Kathleen Vongsathorn, 'Gnawing Pains, Festering Ulcers and Nightmare Suffering: Selling Leprosy as a Humanitarian Cause in the British Empire, c. 1890-

connections between empire and humanitarianism are wide-ranging. They touch on both the imperial nature of the global humanitarian networks that have developed in our society, as well as how humanitarianism was both underpinned by and used to justify imperial rule, particularly in the interwar years. It is this second connection that this thesis explores more fully. R. Skinner and A. Lester outline the ways interwar humanitarianism and imperialism were connected:

> Empire remained a powerful reference point and model for international humanitarianism well into the twentieth century. The architects of international organisations following the First World War saw bodies such as the League of Nations as a means to secure imperial (which tended to mean *British* imperial) interests rather than undermine the power of empire. [...] While humanitarianism had begun to operate within an international arena, the ideological foundations of liberal internationalism were themselves shaped by the moral and political frameworks of empire.[25]

British humanitarianism – and the impetus for action – was also frequently used as a justification for empire. Again, Skinner and Lester observe:

> By the end of the nineteenth century, the focus of metropolitan humanitarians had become fixed on the perceived need to protect indigenous peoples from the malign effects of imperialism and settler colonialism. To an extent, this might be interpreted as a result of an increasingly pessimistic view of the intractability of humanitarian issues, combined with a burgeoning popular support for biological explanations of racial difference. In the intellectual climate of the early twentieth century, the protectionist position of metropolitan humanitarians converged with developing ideologies of segregation and indirect rule, which seemed for some to offer a modicum of security against the worst excesses of imperialism.[26]

These ideas played out in real imperial examples. In relation to humanitarian responses to leprosy in the empire, K. Vongsathorn argues that '[h]umanitarianism during the colonial period was grounded in the idea that the British, with their superior culture and civilization, had a moral obligation to improve the lives of their colonial subjects by drawing them out of backwardness through the teaching of

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1960'. Mark Mazower has also written on the connections between empire and humanitarianism, specifically from the perspective of how interwar (and post-war) international and humanitarian organisations, such as the League of Nations and the United Nations, were influenced by the frameworks of colonialism and imperialism (*No Enchanted Palace*).

[25] Skinner and Lester, 'Humanitarianism and Empire', p. 738.

[26] *Ibid*., pp. 733, 735.

civilization: the civilizing mission'. As outlined earlier, this 'civilizing mission' (and the responsibility it implied) was, in the nineteenth century, linked to international prestige.[27]

Another key example in which the empire met with humanitarianism was in the context of the League of Nations mandates. US President Woodrow Wilson challenged the traditional idea that territorial gains were the natural spoils of war when he called for the internationalisation of former German and Ottoman territories at the end of the First World War. The territory lost by the Germans was eventually divided between three categories: 'A' Mandates included 'Arab provinces' that 'were on the threshold of independent statehood'; 'B' Mandates included Germany's former territory in tropical Africa and was thought to be in an 'intermediate' category of development; and 'C' Mandates were the least developed territories, including former German islands in the Pacific and territory in South-West Africa. Although there was opposition to League involvement from both Britain and France, they both ultimately agreed to the mandate system, largely as Wilson had imagined it.[28]

As a result, the creation of the mandates was considered to be a victory for anti-imperialists and humanitarians who viewed the First World War as evidence of the failure of European imperialism. As Callahan argues:

> They were a departure from the nineteenth-century pattern of extending European national sovereignty into Africa. The Wilsonian goal of systematic accountability and international supervision for European imperialism remained intact despite two years of powerful and active resistance by some Europeans and passive resistance by many others.[29]

While the mandate system did challenge traditional imperialism, the new mandates were still 'predicated' on the notion that Western powers (collectively) had the ability (and right) to guide others to 'civilization', and in this sense, the

[27] K. Vongsathorn, 'Gnawing Pains, Festering Ulcers and Nightmare Suffering: Selling Leprosy as a Humanitarian Cause in the British Empire c. 1890-1960', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 40/5 (2012), p. 874.
[28] Michael D. Callahan, *Mandates and Empire: The League of Nations and Africa, 1914-1931* (Brighton, 1999), pp. 3-4, 58.
[29] *Ibid*., pp. 2, 58-59.

justification for imperial and development forms of humanitarianism had not necessarily disappeared.[30]

Mark Mazower takes this even further, connecting the ideological origins of the League as well as the subsequent United Nations to an imperial framework. He offers an assessment of the role of Jan Smuts, the South African politician and father of the apartheid system, who was a strong supporter of the League and infamously wrote the preamble to the United Nations Charter. The appeal of international bodies like the League (and then the UN) to Smuts was that he believed that they would bolster British imperial power and, with a characteristically racial angle, that it was the responsibility of white Europeans to guide the rest of humanity to civilization. He believed that the 'Commonwealth' was an ideal model for international co-operation, and his legacy can be seen in the resulting bodies.[31]

The empire formed a crucible for the complex array of perceptions and differences that dominated British colonial policy, as well as providing some of the ideological foundations of how Western powers conceived their humanitarian role. Skinner and Lester argue that 'European humanitarians' political desire to change the world arose out of their colonial encounters and activities, while their desire to save individual lives in peril, outside the arena of politics, had more Eurocentric origins'.[32] Thus, by looking at the empire and humanitarianism together, we are afforded the opportunity to analyse the true role of different humanitarianisms in the formation of policy.

The clash of emergency and alchemic humanitarianisms in the context of the refugee question in the empire points to the conclusion that it was not so much a failure to engage in emergency humanitarianism but a prioritisation of alchemic humanitarian action which ultimately limited British action in the Jewish refugee crisis. This was particularly clear in the treatment of refugees who attempted to enter British colonial territory without the correct documentation.

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[30] Emily Baugham, 'The Imperial War Relief Fund and the All British Appeal: Commonwealth, Conflict and Conservatism within the British Humanitarian Movement, 1920-25', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 40/5 (2012), p. 849.

[31] For the role of Smuts, see chapter three, 'Jan Smuts and Imperial Internationalism' (Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace*).

[32] Skinner and Lester, 'Humanitarianism and Empire', p. 730.

**ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION, REFUGEE BOATS AND EMPIRE**

The clash of emergency and alchemic humanitarianism is most dramatically seen in the way that colonial officials responded to the sailings of vessels carrying refugees who more often than not did not have the right kind of documentation to afford them legal entry into their destinations. The following examples from the West Indies and Cyprus show how liberalism and race played an important part in the way officials responded to this particular immigration and humanitarian challenge.

The ill-fated sailing of the SS *St Louis* from Hamburg to Cuba and back to Europe again has become symbolic of British and American failure to help refugees and of the failure of Allied humanitarianism in response to the Holocaust more generally. Although there were many other vessels which carried refugees to places of safety only to be refused entry, it is this particular event that has come to represent 'the failure of rescue before the Second World War and the unwanted status of the Jewish refugees'. Kushner argues that although 'the Nazis are responsible for the urgency to escape [they] are rarely part of the main storyline once the ships left Hamburg', which in turn has allowed 'others to take their place as the villains of the piece'.[33] These 'villains' have emerged as the British and American governments. Indeed, the story of the *St Louis* appears in numerous museums and, along with the suggested bombing of Auschwitz, has become symbolic of bystanders' failure to help victims of the Holocaust.[34]

The *St. Louis*, a luxury cruise ship from the Hamburg-American Line (Hapag), left Hamburg on 13 May 1939 with 937 passengers, many of whom were Jewish.[35] When the vessel arrived at Havana Harbor on 27 May, it was not allowed to dock and was forced instead to anchor in the middle of the harbour for six days. It

[33] Kushner, 'Britain, the United States and the Holocaust', pp. 253, 257.

[34] The exhibit detailing the story of the *St Louis* at the USHMM is described in the following way by Sarah A. Ogilvie and Scott Miller: 'Designed quite purposely to be tight and claustrophobic, thus mimicking the narrowing of options experienced by German Jews during the late 1930s, the display dedicated to the *St Louis* [sits] [...] wedged in a narrow corner on one of the Museum's upper floors. The exhibit used contemporary newspaper articles, passenger belongings, and original documents together with cutting-edge multi-media to deliver a condensed rendition of the *St. Louis* saga' (*Refuge Denied: The St. Louis Passengers and the Holocaust* (Madison, WI, 2006), pp. 5-6).

[35] C. Vincent, 'The Voyage of the St. Louis Revisited', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 25/2 (2011), p. 255. Figures for the numbers of passengers on board vary. For example, Breitman and Kraut record 933 (*American Refugee Policy*, p70); Feingold records 930 (*Politics of Rescue*, p. 65); and Wyman records 900 (*Paper Walls*, p. vii).

departed Havana on 2 June to travel slowly in the waters between Cuba and Florida, during which time negotiations took place over the future of the refugees on board. This included communication from the refugees to US President Franklin D. Roosevelt, to which he infamously remained silent. Although the American government was reluctant to approach publicly the Cuban government, an 'informal conversation' did take place between Ambassador J. Butler and the Cuban Secretary of State, in which 'the humanitarian aspects of the situation and the danger of negative publicity for Cuba' was stressed.[36]

With no resolution forthcoming, on 6 June, the ship began its return to Europe. At this time, Belgium, France, the Netherlands, and Britain agreed to provide the passengers refuge. While even in the 1990s, it was assumed that many of those who returned to Europe had perished, work by historians at the USHMM uncovered individual stories of many of the passengers. In total, 620 passengers were returned to Europe and of these 365 survived the war.[37] Like all those caught up in the Holocaust, the fate of those on board varied greatly. Clark Blatteis, for example, was a seven-year-old child when his parents left Germany for Cuba. After being returned to Europe (Antwerp), the Blatteis family began an odyssey that took them from Berlin (via Buchenwald and Dachau for Clark's father Ernst [Elias]) to Brussels and Toulouse, through Spain and into Morocco. In 1948, the family received visas for the US. Less fortunate were Herbert and Vera Ascher, Naftali Begleiter, Arthur Blanchmann and Walter Friedman. Records note their arrival at Auschwitz, after which their names disappear, suggesting that they perished in the gas chambers.[38]

Although it has been argued that those on the *St Louis* could have been allowed to enter America, Breitman and Kraut explain:

> The passengers of the *St. Louis* could not have entered the United States legally without new legislation or some kind of executive order. They could not be considered visitors or tourists, for both of these categories had to have a home country to which to return. They could not be given

[36] Breitman and Kraut, *American Refugee Policy*, p. 71.
[37] Vincent, 'The Voyage', pp. 254-255.
[38] Ogilvie and Miller, *Refuge Denied*, pp. 8-13, 31.

immigration visas without depriving other German applicants, who had registered earlier, of their visas.[39]

This final point is significant, especially when considering the role of humanitarianism in policy-making. As a result of the political culture (shaped by liberal ideas of fairness) and the economic circumstances of the 1930s, refugee entry was a question of priorities. Therefore, to allow the disembarkation of refugees on board the *St Louis* would have jeopardized the fate of others who were waiting in Europe for their quota number and the chance to leave for safety in the US. For example, historian Marc Aronson uses the example of his mother, who might have been trapped in Europe instead of being allowed entry to America on the quota number she had received.[40] There was also a genuine fear among Allied government officials that the acceptance of refugees in circumstances like those of the *St Louis* would only encourage both further discriminatory action by Germany as well as more and more people to attempt illegal entry. This was not an unfounded concern, as Nazi attempts to hasten emigration led to their encouragement of the issuing of fraudulent paperwork by various South American and Caribbean consulates.[41]

Moreover, the entry of large numbers of refugees (not to mention the illegal entry of such people) was believed by many officials to cause a rise in domestic antisemitism, creating difficulties for those refugees who had already been granted entry. In 1938, the British Cabinet was made aware of an M.I.5 report which warned that 'the Germans were anxious to inundate this country with Jews, with a view to creating a Jewish problem in the United Kingdom'.[42] In the case of the West Indies, Norman Bentwich 'expressed the opinion privately that the German authorities were actively conniving at the departure of refugees to any country where the immigration laws permitted the entry of aliens upon payment of so many pounds deposit money', and he agreed that immigration regulations should be tightened as a result.[43] Bentwich was an important campaigner for European Jewry, and as a

[39] Breitman and Kraut, *American Refugee Policy*, p. 73.
[40] Vincent, 'The Voyage', pp. 273-274.
[41] Feingold, *The Politics of Rescue*, p. 65.
[42] Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews*, p. 11.
[43] Hibbert to Brooks, 20 January 1939, CO295/612/1, TNA.

former colonial official (with experience in Palestine) and League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees from Germany (1933-1935), was well placed to comment on the refugee question in the empire.[44]

Whether or not the German government was actually trying to create problems for Britain through German Jewish immigration, or if it rather reflected officials' own anti-Jewish sentiment, the question of generating a domestic (or colonial) Jewish problem featured in many written justifications of inaction.[45] With hindsight it is easy to suggest that unlimited numbers of refugees should have been granted entry; however in the context of the 1930s, it was a dilemma for officials that required them to make a prioritisation of needs. Although not exactly the same, the dilemma was one that colonial officials also faced.

By examining three examples of ships carrying refugees that specifically sought entry into British colonies, the realities and limitations of humanitarian concern are made clear. As these ships approached various colonial ports, officials were forced to make decisions which provide evidence of the tensions between and prioritisations of different humanitarian needs.

**THE SS *KÖNIGSTEIN* AND SS *CARIBIA***

The SS *Königstein,* owned by the Red Star Line, was chartered to leave Hamburg for the British West Indies on 23 January 1939 with 297 (other accounts put the figure at 165) Jewish refugees. It was organised by a travel agency in Vienna, possibly under instruction from a local Jewish organisation.[46] It was originally planned that the vessel would sail for Trinidad on 20 January, but when Trinidad's newly-implemented (see below) tight immigration restrictions were made known, sailing was postponed until 2 February, on which date it left for Barbados.[47] The sailing of this vessel and those refugees on board were enough to prompt defensive action in destination territories across the West Indies. Several officials warned that should the *Königstein* be refused entry in Barbados, it would 'try some other [West Indian]

[44] For details of Norman Bentwich's life, see Walter Zander, 'Bentwich, Norman de Mattos (1883-1971)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

[45] Wasserstein identifies this fear as being particularly important to the Labour Home Secretary, Herbert Morrison (*Britain and the Jews*, pp. 131, 346-347).

[46] Hibbert to Brooks, 20 January 1939, CO295/612/1; draft telegram to the Governor of Barbados, 23 February 1939, CO28/325/4; Telegram from Sir N. Henderson (Berlin), 18 February 1939, CO28/325/4, TNA.

[47] Hibbert to Reilly, 11 February 1939, CO295/612/1, TNA.

colony'. The decision was therefore made to 'warn them all', providing colonies in the West Indies with the opportunity to take any action deemed to be necessary to limit entry in the event of the arrival of the *Königstein*.[48]

There were already general concerns about refugee entry in West Indian territories, linked to unrest seen in the area in 1936, when economic difficulties manifested themselves in violent riots. The British government established a Royal Commission, headed by Lord Moyne, to report on the causes of the riots, which were a concern particularly because of the territories' geographical proximity to the US. The commission's report was considered to be so damning that its publication was postponed until after the war; however the problems that it raised reinforced for officials in Whitehall and on location the preference for restrictive refugee entry. In this case, the needs of the colonies, particularly in such a volatile area, were prioritised over the emergency needs of refugees. However, more fundamentally, it was the nature of the attempted entry of refugees on vessels such as the *Königstein* that also contributed to the decision for restriction. The attempt to 'force' entry challenged liberal principles of fair play, and therefore the Colonial Office maintained a firm line and encouraged those on location to do the same.

The Trinidad government, which was warned of the impending arrival of the *Königstein*, had already accepted about 600 refugees and identified several resulting problems: a 'serious shortage of housing accommodation', which ultimately 'constituted a danger to the health of the community'. As a result, it was argued that 'the absorptive capacity of the Colony in regard to alien refugees had been reached'.[49] Moreover, those refugees who had already arrived described how 'some 2,000 Jews in Germany had applied for passages to the Colony', raising fears of a mass influx of refugees with which the colony could not cope.[50] Bennett concurred, explaining that '[in] the interests of refugees themselves as well as of Trinidad I feel convinced that this indiscriminate immigration, which has gone far

[48] K.E. Robinson, minute, 10 February 1939, CO28/325/4, TNA.
[49] MacDonald to Colonel H.L. Nathan, 13 March 1939, CO295/612/1, TNA; Other estimates placed the number of refugees to have entered Trinidad at 500, making the population density about 225 per square mile (Robinson, minute, 10 February 1939, CO23/325/4, TNA).
[50] Hibbert to Brooks, 20 January 1939, CO295/612/1, TNA.

beyond "infiltration" must be stopped'.[51] In territories that had experienced economic hardship and unemployment problems, colonial officials felt a duty to solve alchemic problems, both for the sake of colonial populations and for Britain's international reputation. These were both prioritised more highly than the emergency needs of the refugees, particularly as refugees not only threatened to diminish funds available for solving the (perceived) more pressing needs, but also fundamentally added to these existing problems.

The policy was further endorsed when, only three days after the departure of the *Königstein* had been discussed, the Governor of Trinidad was made aware of the SS *Caribia*. The *Caribia*, also of the Hamburg-American Line, had learned that it would not be allowed to land in Belize and subsequently set course for Trinidad, due to arrive on 29 January. Many of its passengers had departed after learning that their landing permits were invalid. When the vessel arrived in Trinidad, only two female passengers (along with their babies) were allowed to disembark, a decision thoroughly endorsed by Malcolm MacDonald:

> I fully appreciate the unfortunate circumstances of these refugees but I am satisfied that the Trinidad Government have acted as sympathetically towards them as they could in the circumstances, having regard to conditions in the Colony and the impossibility of absorbing further refugees for the time being.[52]

In this example, MacDonald placed social stability in the colonies above the immediate need of refugees. This once again illustrates the prioritisation of the imperial version of humanitarianism, developmental in nature, above emergency relief. Drawing on views of assimilation and race, MacDonald concluded that the colonies had acted sympathetically enough to refugees when considering the needs of the colony.

The discussions surrounding the arrival of these vessels corresponded with a growing anxiety about the perceived open nature of the West Indian colonies' immigration legislation. Indeed, in early January 1939 (coinciding with the proposed departure of the *Königstein* and *Caribia* for the West Indies), the Governor of Trinidad called for the enactment of emergency legislation that would 'prohibit the

[51] Bennett, minute, 9 January 1939, CO295/612/1, TNA.
[52] MacDonald to Colonel H.L. Nathan, 13 March 1939; Nathan to MacDonald, 7 March 1939, CO295/612/1, TNA.

immigration of refugees for a period of six months from 15 January 1939'.[53] This successfully reversed the situation in which the colony was open to any immigrant who had $250 for the 'immigration deposit'.[54] In so doing, it 'declared that alien refugees would be deemed on economic grounds to be undesirable immigrants'.[55] Although technically approved by Whitehall, when changes were made by the Governor, officials in London were 'a little surprised to find that the terms of the Order [...] discriminate against a number of countries by name'.[56] These included 'Germany, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Danzig, Memel, Lithuania, Romania and Italy'.[57] Whitehall had thought that 'the scope of any Order would be general', but in the form it was presented, it was 'by no means certain that the Order [...] may not conflict with commercial treaties and arouse justifiable protests'.[58] The growing international community, both humanitarian and legal, placed obstacles in the path of complete government control. Nonetheless, limited refugee entry was still achieved.

While the *Caribia*'s journey had ultimately ended in Venezuela, the *Königstein*, having postponed sailing for Trinidad, eventually set sail for Barbados in early February. Barbados was also keen to limit refugee entry. Again, this was justified by the problems in the region and the findings of the unpublished Royal Commission. It was explained that 'the overcrowding of the island is the main problem [...] There are between 1100 and 1200 persons per square mile'. According to Robinson, this very fact 'merits every justification for Barbados to restrict any influx of refugees'.[59] Added to this concern was the Colonial Office's warning that the:

> possibility of refugees being able to return to Germany if required is exceedingly remote and it is also very doubtful whether and if so, how soon, they could arrange to proceed to another country if accepted by Barbados as transmigrants. Further, there is grave danger that if any

[53] Newman, *Nearly the New World*, p. 43.
[54] MacDonald to Colonel H.L. Nathan, 13 March 1939; Nathan to MacDonald, 7 March 1939, CO295/612/1, TNA.
[55] Newman, *Nearly the New World*, pp. 43.
[56] Poynton, minute, 9 January 1939, CO295/612/1, TNA.
[57] Newman, *Nearly the New World*, p. 43.
[58] Poynton, minute, 9 January 1939, CO295/612/1, TNA.
[59] Robinson, minute, 10 February 1939, CO28/325/4, TNA.

> substantial number of refugees is allowed to land, it would almost inevitably encourage the sending of further ship loads from Germany.[60]

Overall, it was argued that 'a serious population problem in Barbados unfortunately forces this Government to adopt the attitude that all immigrants to Barbados are unwelcome unless they come as visitors or as persons who will assist in the economic development of the Colony'.[61]

Like Trinidad, existing immigration regulations in Barbados left entry open to those who could find 'guarantees from local residents'. Again like Trinidad, this prompted Barbados to speedily generate new regulations that would afford the Governor 'absolute discretion to prohibit the entry into the Colony of any aliens'.[62] Officials in Whitehall disagreed, arguing that existing regulations were 'strict enough to deal with any attempted influx'.[63] Indeed, as Trinidad tightened its own immigration legislation, applications to other West Indian colonies, including Barbados, increased. This points to the connectedness of the region and the value of examining at the area as a whole, particularly in relation to refugee policy.[64]

While officials in London were not calling for unlimited refugee entry, complications caused by the changing international system meant that they preferred to work within existing parameters to solve refugee problems. This point is also made by Newman, who argues:

> Whilst the Secretary of State had concurred with the Trinidad legislation, justified in his view because of the large numbers present in the colony, he was unwilling to allow other colonies to specifically exclude certain groups be introducing new legislation. Existing legislation had already provoked protest from Chinese and Indian governments (over the amounts of deposits asked for) and given the international attention focused on Britain's part in solving the refugee crisis, specific legislation barring refugees would provoke criticism from refugee bodies and foreign governments.[65]

Ultimately, S.J. Waddington, the Governor of Barbados, made an explicit prioritisation of colonial needs over those of the refugees. He explained that:

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[60] Draft Telegram to Waddington (Governor of Barbados), 10 February 1939, CO28/325/4, TNA.
[61] Waddington to Colonial Office, 17 January 1939, CO28/325/4, TNA.
[62] Robinson, minute, 25 February 1939, CO28/325/4, TNA.
[63] Robinson, minute, 20 February 1939, CO28/325/4, TNA.
[64] Newman, *Nearly the New World*, p. 44.
[65] Newman, *Nearly the New World*, p. 45.

> while the Government would wish to bear its share in helping the refugees in their unhappy plight, I do not feel justified in suggesting that a policy, which I regard as essential for the well-being of the Colony should be relaxed in the special case of refugees.[66]

When the *Königstein* arrived in Barbados on 18 February, no passengers were permitted to land, as none could produce the necessary landing permits.[67] The Colonial Office supported the position taken by the Barbados government.[68] Although there were times when the Secretary of State would try to override local decisions, when it came to the well-being of the colony, refugee policy was always a lower priority. In fact, Robinson suggested that Barbados was a 'special case'. He argued that restrictions should be implemented, even after MacDonald's instructions to the colonies on 1 December 1938 to make every effort to help Jewish refugees.[69]

The response to the *Königstein* and the *Caribia* evidence the tension within British policy over different kinds of humanitarianisms and how this was resolved. Many officials felt that the persecution of the Jews in Europe was wrong. However, as one official nonetheless stated, 'it is absurd going off to the West Indies "on spec" and then trying to bludgeon ones' [sic] way in on grounds of special hardship'.[70] Clearly refugees, even those escaping persecution in Nazi-controlled Europe, were not believed to be entitled to special help because of their particular and difficult circumstances. Officials felt strongly that there was a right way and a wrong way to seek entry and that 'jumping to the front of the queue' was unacceptable. In this, we get to the heart of the reasons behind the prioritisation: the liberal indignation that Jews (not refugees) would try to gain unfair precedence in terms of entry. Added to this, officials, worried about the local problems in the West Indies, understood to be linked to population problems, responded by further limiting the entry of refugees. Attitudes towards Jewish refugees, while sometimes harsh, were constantly viewed in relation to the needs of the colony, highlighting

[66] Waddington to Colonial Office, 17 January 1939, CO28/325/4, TNA.
[67] Waddington to MacDonald, 23 February 1939, CO28/325/4, TNA.
[68] Moore, minute, 25 February 1939, CO28/325/4, TNA.
[69] Robinson, minute, 25 February 1939, CO28/325/4, TNA.
[70] Poynton, minute, 25 February 1939 , CO28/325/4, TNA.

not a rejection of humanitarianism per se, but certainly a preference of one kind over another.

**CYPRUS AND 'JEW-RUNNERS' TO PALESTINE**

A similar prioritisation can be seen in relation to refugee entry into Cyprus. In the early summer of 1939, the British Colonial Office was asked to assess the possibilities of establishing a temporary camp in Cyprus for Jewish refugees that were stuck on board the SS *Frassola,* an illegal 'Jew-runner' bound for Palestine. The boat had left Sulaiva, Rumania for Haifa in April 1939, carrying approximately 750 Czechs, of which about two-thirds were Jewish.[71] Illegal immigration sought to bypass the immigration restrictions imposed by the 1939 White Paper. Although a source of tension since 1934, the problem reached new levels in 1938-1939. Indeed, in 1939, out of 27,561 immigrants to Palestine, 11,156 had entered illegally. From this point onwards, the British government worked tirelessly to reduce illegal immigration to Palestine, and Wasserstein argues that after September 1939 this amounted 'almost to a war within a war'.[72] Cyprus, geographically close to Palestine, became part of the frontline.

The context of war only increased the feeling in the British government, particularly in the Colonial Office, that sailings of illegal immigrants into Palestine were part of German aggression, either by the infiltration of enemy agents or by provoking illiberal (and thereby politically and diplomatically embarrassing) British action. One Foreign Office memorandum described such illegal sailings as: 'an organised invasion of Palestine for political motives, which exploits the facts of the refugee problem and unscrupulously uses the humanitarian appeal of the latter to justify itself'.[73] Wasserstein emphasises that some colonial officials were especially 'paranoid' about Jewish intentions when it came to Palestine and illegal entry. For example, Shuckburgh argued in 1940 that:

> I am convinced that in their [Jews'] hearts they hate us and have always hated us; they hate all Gentiles. [...] So little do they care for Great

[71] Daniel Oliver (director of the Daniel and Emily Oliver Orphanage), Roger Soltau (professor of history, American University of Beirut), and Irene Soltau (vice president of the Beirut Child Protection Society), 'Memorandum on the '*Frassola*' Refugees, Beirut, July 1939', CO67/302/14, TNA.
[72] Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews*, p. 26.
[73] Memorandum, 17 January 1940, FO371/25239/150, TNA, cited in: Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews*, p. 49.

> Britain as compared with Zionism that they cannot even keep their hands off illegal immigration, which they must realise is a very serious embarrassment to us at a time when we are fighting for our very existence.

In fact, Wasserstein identifies a 'departmental view' within the Colonial Office that not only favoured the White Paper but that took 'every practicable administrative, diplomatic, and legal device to counter illegal immigration to Palestine'.[74]

It is infamously known that the first British shots fired in the Second World War were at Jewish refugees fleeing persecution in Europe. The *Tiger Hill,* a vessel carrying 1,400 illegal immigrants from across Eastern Europe, was shot at after landing the immigrants on a beach in Tel Aviv.[75] The action contravened orders that vessels carrying illegal immigrants were not to be fired upon.[76] When MacDonald was questioned about the incident in Parliament, he explained:

> The ship in question attempted deliberately to ram and sink a Government patrol launch, which was therefore obliged to fire on the ship in self-defence. To authorise the indiscriminate landing of refugees in Palestine would worsen rather than improve the security position there, which is at present satisfactory [...].[77]

However, the *Tiger Hill* was only the first of several vessels which attempted to land in Palestine and against which Britain took action. For example, in December 1939, the *Rudnitchar*, a Bulgarian river steamer which had originated in Varna was unsuccessfully intercepted. It landed, and its 505 passengers were able to disembark. Even after those on board were captured, their deportation back to Bulgaria, as recommended by the High Commissioner, was deemed to be 'impracticable', and many of them ultimately settled in Palestine. The British also attempted to intercept the S.S. *Hilda,* a Greek vessel which carried some 728 illegal immigrants, of which 675 were German or Czechoslovakian, supposedly bound for Paraguay. British officials were prepared to go to significant lengths to prevent the illegal entry of those on board, including the arrest and internment of the vessel's passengers. Even after it was discovered that the British had no legal grounds for

[74] Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews*, pp. 34, 50.
[75] *Ibid*., p. 40.
[76] Fritz Liebreich, *Britain's Naval and Political Reaction to the Illegal Immigration of Jews to Palestine, 1945-1948* (London, 2005), p. 180.
[77] Commons, *Hansard*, 7 September 1939, 351, col. 566.

this action, it was suggested by some that 'retrospective legislation' could be used. The *Sakarya*, which sailed under the Turkish flag and carried 2,176 refugees, including 801 women and children, had a similar experience.[78]

After the failure of the interceptions of the *Rudnitchar*, *Hilda* and *Sakarya*, the Colonial Office resorted to ever more desperate measures, including the suggestion that assistance be withheld from ships carrying illegal immigrants which had become stuck in ice on the river Danube. Mass deportation to the country of origin was also proposed. Both of these ideas were never enacted, but the High Commissioner of Palestine called for stricter immigration regulations. These were approved by the Colonial Office and allowed for the issue of severe fines (up to £1000) and three years' imprisonment for those responsible for any vessel carrying illegal immigrants. The illegal immigrants themselves were subject to a £100 fine and up to six months of imprisonment. Britain's reaction to Jews' attempted entry has been heavily criticised by some scholars.[79] However, by looking at the question from the perspective of Cyprus, a clearer understanding emerges as to why Britain's constructive policies were so limited and its obstructive ones so severe.

The *Frassola,* having been refused entry into Palestine, 'wandered from port to port, forbidden to land anywhere'. As a memorandum for the Colonial Office outlined, '[f]ood soon got scarce, drinking water became [...] unusable, there were no washing facilities, and the heat in the holds of an iron-built boat in the Mediterranean summer was indescribable'. In July 1939, scurvy broke out onboard, and the ship was temporarily allowed to dock in Beirut; the French doctors who examined the ship compared its conditions to slave ships. Towards the end of July, the vessel was asked to move on – a bomb had been thrown in the Jewish quarter of Beirut, signifying local dissatisfaction with the situation – but the ship was in such bad condition that they were once more allowed to renew their period of stay. It was nevertheless feared that those on board would ultimately be forced to return to Rumania.[80]

[78] Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews*, pp. 54-57.
[79] *Ibid*., pp. 57-59, 350.
[80] Oliver, Soltau and Soltau, 'Memorandum on the '*Frassola*' Refugees', CO67/302/14, TNA.

At this point, a group of concerned members of the Society of Friends who were all in Beirut appealed to Lady Astor (the first female MP in Britain, 1919-1945) to intercede on the refugees' behalf. She complied and corresponded with colonial officials, including MacDonald, about the plight of the refugees.[81] During this correspondence, Lady Astor passed on the powerful pleas for aid which explained that:

> It seems impossible to allow all those people to return to what may mean death and at best a miserable existence, not to speak of the waste of socially useful material: there are 26 doctors among them, a number of lawyers, of regular army officers and other highly trained people, including a former representative of his country at the League of Nations.[82]

The phrase 'socially useful material' is jarring; more so as it was written by a group of people who fit the traditional profile of interwar internationalists and humanitarians. The appeal's pragmatic discourse reflected at least the perception of what drove official British humanitarianism; the authors of the appeal sought to convince British officials not with moralist or ideological arguments for emergency relief, but with the practical benefits these Jews would bring to Britain and its empire.

The plea also made specific reference to temporary entry into Cyprus: 'If we mention Cyprus in the telegram, it is because of its nearness, and because we believe that there would be there plenty of room for a temporary refugee camp'. The letter acknowledged that Cyprus had already refused them entry but argued that this was for 'ordinary settlement' and that they hoped that Cyprus could be approached once again, this time on the basis of 'temporary landing under strict camp conditions'.[83] Essentially, they requested special treatment, because of the extreme difficulty of the refugees' situation.

When the Colonial Office referred the request to the Cyprus government, the Acting Governor replied that the establishment of such a camp was not possible. He argued that:

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[81] Lady Astor to MacDonald, 1 August and 15 August 1939; draft letter, MacDonald to Lady Astor, 9 August 1939, CO67/302/14, TNA.
[82] Oliver, Soltau and Soltau, 'Memorandum on the '*Frassola*' Refugees', CO67/302/14, TNA.
[83] *Ibid*.

> Refugees are feared by the Cypriot with such peculiar [...] force that assurance respecting [the] temporary nature of [the] proposed settlement would have little effect and it would certainly be felt that this was not only a breach of recent promise but [a] threat to destiny which would not have arisen if Cyprus had not been part of the British Empire.[84]

The Cyprus government's response, which clearly ignored the pleas for special treatment by and on behalf of the refugees, was welcomed by the Colonial Office. In fact, Bennett commented that 'unless it was decided for reasons of high policy to press Cyprus further, offsetting the harm done there by the major embarrassment avoided' was not necessarily worth it, and therefore the plan to settle refugees in Cyprus should be abandoned. Generally, therefore, the perceived political dangers for Cyprus and a broader reluctance to aid illegal immigrants to Palestine meant that the plan was never supported.[85] Hibbert, in characteristically plain speech, wrote that:

> I do not think we could have expected any other reply from the Acting Governor of Cyprus, and I will say without making any bone about it that I am extremely glad he has taken the line he has. I imagine the Foreign Office will accept his views. If they don't, I sincerely trust we shall insist upon their doing so. Otherwise we shall be in for a whole packet of trouble.[86]

More broadly, the response highlights Colonial Office prioritisation of different humanitarianisms. Harold F. Downie (the head of the Colonial Office Mideast Department) and A.B. Acheson outlined their support for the Acting Governor 'if only on the ground that we owe a greater duty to our Cypriot citizens than to alien Jews'. Those on board the *Frassola* were seen as 'alien' rather than 'refugees', again reinforcing the view that they were not to be afforded any special treatment. Downie and Acheson went on to note that:

> If diseases break out on these ships it will no doubt be a terrible thing, but presumably the crew will dump their cargo into the sea and I cannot see that any responsibility can be attached to us because the

[84] OAG, Cyprus to MacDonald, 30 May 1939, CO67/302/14, TNA.
[85] Bennett, minute, 5 June 1939, CO67/202/14, TNA.
[86] Hibbert, minute, 6 June 1939, CO67/302/14, TNA.

> immigrants fail to survive what they well know to be a dangerous adventure.[87]

This statement encapsulates the British colonial priorities: a recognition that the plight (and disease) suffered by the refugees was awful but that no special action could be expected of Britain in response to it. Moreover, the blunt terms in which this was stated highlighted the acceptability of this view.[88]

Ironically, Cyprus did become an important location for post-war displaced persons camps, which held Jewish refugees who attempted to enter Palestine illegally. By 1943, refugees were accepted in significant numbers into Cyprus: 4,833 extra persons, including 4,630 refugees from Greece. Cyprus acted 'as a clearing station for refugees from the Balkans, taking up to 400 at a time, vacancies being filled as parties were dispersed to other areas'. During the war, political difficulties were compounded by practical restrictions: 'beds, bedding, furniture and every kind of household utensil are in extremely short supply'. A report suggested that Cyprus 'cannot do more on account of shortage of materials, potential enemy action and politics'.[89]

In the pre-war period the question of illegal immigration was one of liberal principle for officials, and because of the perceived risks it posed, officials were reluctant to allow refugees who sought to enter Palestine illegally to settle. In fact, over the question of illegal immigration, Bennett noted that 'whatever may be the merits of individuals, the ship-load as a whole deserve no sympathy whatever from H.M.G.'.[90] This feeling must have only provided further motivation to prioritise the needs of the local population (i.e. alchemic humanitarianism) over the needs of refugees (i.e. emergency humanitarianism).

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[87] Downie and Acheson, minute, 8 June 1939, CO67/302/14, TNA. Such heartless and antisemitic rhetoric was unsurprising from Downie, who infamously minuted that illegal Jewish immigration into Palestine 'makes one regret that the Jews are not on the other side in this war' (Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe*, p. 50).

[88] Downie's antisemitism, however, did not go unnoticed. According to one Foreign Office official, Downie considered 'the Jews as no less our enemies than the Germans' (Tony Kushner, *The Persistence of Prejudice: Antisemtitism in British Society during the Second World War* (Manchester, 1989), p. 152).

[89] Unsigned memorandum, 'Directive to Sir Bernard Reilly', undated, CO323/1846/12, TNA.

[90] Bennett, minute, 27 July 1939, CO67/302/14, TNA.

**INTERNMENT**

The question of refugee internment also presented challenges for officials in which humanitarian concerns for refugees were set against broader domestic (and imperial) concerns. Chapter three established that perceptions of race were central to the policy of internment both in terms of questioning Jewish identity and in the way that local populations responded to it. It was in this context that internment presented the most explicit clash of the emergency humanitarian needs of the refugees and the alchemic needs of the colonies.

Internment also offers an insight into external factors that impacted humanitarianism, particularly the way that state sovereignty and international relations also helped tip the scales in the preference of one kind of humanitarianism over another. This is particularly clear in the details of the practical implementation of internment. Concern for the 'emergency' humanitarian needs of Jewish refugees who found themselves interned is evident in policy discussions. However, this was always placed alongside the specific needs of the colonies, both in terms of security during the war and regarding colonial populations. Ultimately, whether interned or left at liberty, the presence of Jewish refugees in the colonies, particularly during the war, presented officials with an humanitarian as well as political challenge, and this is evident in both the records of official policy and in the refugee experience.

This section will explore these challenges by, firstly, outlining the internment crisis and the challenge to humanitarianism it represented in both Britain and the colonies. It will then use specific examples from the colonies and refugee testimony to illustrate policy in practice (i.e. prison uniforms, holding Jews and non-Jews together). The examples used here include refugee testimony from Kenya, Cyprus and Jamaica. Refugees place their experience in the context of a lack of humanitarianism in British policy and raise questions regarding how they, having escaped persecution (and sometimes captivity) once before, should find themselves treated as such once again. When these accounts are juxtaposed with official accounts, the clash of humanitarianisms becomes clear. Refugee internees were conceptualised by their relation to the colonies (i.e. as enemy aliens) rather than by their own personal status as refugees in need of help. This reality is telling of the period of transition in international humanitarianism and international relations

that this thesis covers and offers further evidence of how war can be a point of 'conjuncture' (or not) for government-led humanitarian action.

As established in chapter one, in May 1940 mass internment was called for in Britain following the fall of France and the fear of 'enemy aliens' in Britain. Many thousands of 'enemy aliens', including Jewish refugees, found themselves no longer at liberty. Although policy changed again by the summer of 1940, internment marked the former internees as well as British policy itself. However, internment as a policy in war was not unique to the Second World War. The British first used internment camps in the empire during the Boer War. In December 1900, it became official policy that Boer farmers and their families who had surrendered would be held in camps. However, because 'Africans were part of the Afrikaner economy, lived and worked on Boer farms, the British were forced to create policy to accommodate thousands of displaced Africans as well', resulting in camps for both black and white inmates.[91]

At the end of the war, nearly 28,000 white inmates had died in the camps, the majority of whom were women and children. 14,000 black inmates also perished, with black victims dying at much higher rates than white inmates. Although the death rates shocked many, well-established views on race were evident in the fact that the much higher African death rate was hardly reported in the British press. In the South African War, when two white minorities fought each other in the context of a territory with a black majority, the fear of the 'other', especially when they looked so physically similar, was a turning point in how 'other' groups could and would be treated in times of war.[92]

Although controversial, a policy of internment was also followed in the domestic context during the First World War when up to 30,000 people were held as 'enemy aliens'. The action, however, points to a changing dynamic in British policy, marking a move away from a policy of refuge and asylum, to one of increasing restrictions for immigrants. Indeed, as Kushner and Cesarani argue, it represented 'the surrender of a Liberal government to xenophobic public opinion

[91] Paula Krebs, *Gender, Race and the Writing of Empire Public Discourse and the Boer War* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 35-36.
[92] *Ibid*., pp. 5, 33, 52.

that articulated stereotypes of the foreigner as conspirator, criminal and degenerate that had been present in popular culture for decades'. Even after the war ended, 'many thousands of "enemy aliens" remained interned and there was determination inside and outside of parliament to remove the alien presence altogether', a push that was institutionalised in the 1919 Aliens Act.[93]

In the later interwar years, as another war approached, officials once more contemplated how to deal with 'enemy aliens'.[94] Attitudes had clearly moved on since the end of the First World War, and internment was not initially envisioned, either for practical reasons such as cost or, for fewer officials, on humanitarian grounds. As a result, at the outbreak of war, wholesale internment was not adopted, and instead a series of tribunals were established which sought to categorise 'enemy aliens' according to risk they were believed to pose.[95] However, when Britain felt most vulnerable, the general internment of enemy aliens was called for and took place in both Britain and the colonies. As Aaron L. Goldman puts it:

> After the disaster at Dunkirk at the end of May invasion and air attack became serious possibilities [...] during these months when invasion seemed likely [and] it appeared that the very existence of the country and its democratic system were endangered, tolerance reached its lowest point.[96]

However, during the Second World War, British action towards internment was significantly impacted by concerns over its reputation with other international powers, particularly the US. Burletson argues that the Home Office 'had to remain permanently aware of the allied and neutral countries' attitude towards internment in Britain' as '[a]n alienated American public could seriously affect Britain's military

[93] Tony Kushner and David Cesarani, 'Alien Internment in Britain during the Twentieth Century: An Introduction', in: David Cesarani and Tony Kushner (eds), *The Internment of Aliens in Twentieth Century Britain* (London, 1993), pp. 2-3, 12.
[94] *Ibid*., p. 3.
[95] Richard Dove, 'A Matter which Touches the Good Name of this Country', in: Richard Dove (ed.), *'Totally Un-English'?: Britain's Internment of 'Enemy Aliens' in Two World Wars* (Amsterdam, 2005), p. 12.
[96] Aaron L. Goldman, 'Defence Regulation 18B: Emergency Internment of Aliens and Political Dissenters in Great Britain during World War II', *The Journal of British Studies*, 12/2 (1973), p. 123.

position'.[97] Internment , while not popular, did not generate as widespread discontent as did specific events, such as the infamous sinking of the Blue Star Liner, the *Arandora Star*, which was carrying internees from Britain to Canada. The *Arandora Star* had set sail for Canada on 30 June 1940, carrying 473 Germans and 717 Italians, all of whom had been selected for deportation for security reasons. En route to Canada, the vessel was hit by a German torpedo and went down somewhere off the west coast of Ireland. Large numbers of those on board drowned, including 146 Germans and 453 Italians.[98]

The *Arandora Star* was part of a larger movement of internees, refugees and civilians from the UK to the Dominions. This was undoubtedly connected to the more general pattern seen in this thesis of Britain displacing domestic issues to the colonies when possible. During the height of the internment crisis, when many in Britain feared imminent invasion and were concerned about fifth-column activity, the British government had asked Dominions including Australia, Canada, Newfoundland and South Africa to help by taking category 'A' internees, those considered to be most dangerous to Britain. Canada and Australia agreed to this. Refugee internees were also included in those to be relocated.[99]

In total, Canada agreed to receive 2,633 German internees from category 'A', 1,823 prisoners of war and 1,500 pro-fascist Italians.[100] In July 1940, Australia accepted 2,732 male internees.[101] Later, internees in Britain's African colonies were moved to South Africa, an issue that was to present colonial governments with problems as war and internment persisted. The sinking of the *Arandora Star*, along with 'scandals' on other vessels transporting internees to the Dominions – including *The Duchess of York* (carrying 2,108 German and Austrian internees and 523 prisoners of war) on which two men were wounded and one shot dead by a British officer, and the SS *Dunera*, which set out for Australia with 2,532 German and

[97] Louise Burletson, 'The State, Internment and Public Criticism in the Second World War', in: David Cesarani and Tony Kushner (eds), *The Internment of Aliens in Twentieth Century Britain* (London, 1993), p. 109.
[98] Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews*, p. 98-99.
[99] Burletson, 'The State, Internment and Public Criticism', pp. 112-113.
[100] Michael Seyfert, 'His Majesty's Most Loyal Internees', in: Gerhard Hirschfeld (ed.), *Exile in Great Britain: Refugees from Hitler's Germany* (Leamington Spa, 1984), p. 174.
[101] Birgit Lang, '*The Dunera Boys*: Dramatizing History from a Jewish Perspective', in: Richard Dove (ed.), *'Totally Un-English'?: Britain's Internment of 'Enemy Aliens' in Two World Wars* (Amsterdam, 2005), p. 179.

Austrian internees and 200 Italians, all of which were kept in 'appalling conditions' and 'were robbed and beaten' – generated public anger at the policy.[102] The movement of refugees between Britain and the Dominions was stopped, which also coincided with the reversal of the general policy of internment. In Britain, and also internationally, the mass internment of people, including many refugees, was growing increasingly unpopular and could no longer be justified by Britain which wanted to maintain its liberal, humanitarian reputation.

While the main contours of British policy have been outlined, the question of how far these were replicated in the colonies has yet to be explored. When the decision was made for mass internment in Britain, the colonies were informed of this. A circular telegram sent to those territories considered to be in most imminent danger stated that '[i]n view of possible attack and similar enemy activities, [the] Home Secretary has ordered [the] internment of all male German and Austrians over 16 and under 60 years old (excluding infirm or invalid) in [the] Eastern Half of [the] United Kingdom'. It went on to explain that such 'measures are defence measures taken as a matter of urgency in an area which must be regarded as a zone of possible operations'. Similar action was encouraged in the colonies where it was felt that 'there is possibility that in the event of war with Italy parachute attacks and subversive activity might be attempted'. Therefore, the colonies were instructed, 'you should consider, in consultation with local service authorities, whether in that event it would be desirable that restrictions on similar lines should be placed in aliens resident in the territory with which you are concerned'. Although it was explained that 'it is intended that measures will be relaxed should circumstances permit', the feeling of panic was clearly conveyed to the colonies and the mass internment of enemy aliens soon followed. [103] In the context of the colonies, this decision for mass internment reveals the ways in which the perceived needs of the colonies, particularly in relation to alchemic views of economic and democratic development, were prioritised over the treatment of Jewish refugees who, in the context of the war, had become 'enemy aliens'.

[102] Burletson, 'The State, Internment and Public Criticism', p. 115.
[103] Lloyd to the OAGs of Gibraltar, Malta, Cyprus, Aden, Kenya, Somaliland, Tanganyika and Palestine, 15 May 1940, CO323/1797/4, TNA.

Refugees themselves note the change in circumstance that the war caused. However, refugee testimony suggests that internment was experienced much earlier in the colonies than in the UK. Although 'Advisory Committees' were established to check the credentials of 'enemy aliens', the recollections of Zweig, the Berg sisters and Bauer all suggest that they experienced internment very soon after the outbreak of war. Zweig recalls that:

> The war brought new challenges. The only important thing now was to protect the country from people who by birth, language, education, and loyalty might be linked more closely to the enemy than to the host country [...] Within three days, all enemy nationals from the towns and even those from the remote farms had been handed over to the military forces in Nairobi and informed that their status had been changed from 'refugee' to 'enemy alien'.[104]

As established earlier in the thesis, refugees entered various colonies as immigrants rather than refugees, which made it easier for officials to prioritise local concerns over the humanitarian concerns of a 'foreign immigrant', especially one from an enemy country. Bauer, as an older male whose internment was inconvenient and relatively light, accepted the government's decisions, whereas the Bergs and Zweig, as young children who had harder times vis-à-vis the British, were more critical. This highlights that there was no humanitarian framework established to identify and protect refugees by limiting government action against them.

However, for other refugees, no humanitarian framework was needed to help them cope with their experiences. Hedi Heim, in her account of internment in Cyprus remembers emphatically that the very fact that they were in a British colony reassured her during her experience. In an interview, Heim recalls feeling 'shock' at her husband's internment but that she 'knew they would not treat him badly' as Cyprus was 'still a British colony'. Heim expands, 'it was not the Germans who were there, it was the British Government', emphasising 'British' in her oral testimony. Finally, Heim concludes, 'And since the British Government had allowed us to come in, we were still under their protection. We were not at all afraid about it'.[105]

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[104] Stephanie Zweig, *Nowhere in Africa: An Autobiographical Novel* (Madison, WI, 2004), pp. 43-44.
[105] Hedi Heim, interview no. 40352, Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education, University of Southern California.

Similarly, Hertha Klinger, when asked if she was scared of internment while a refugee in the West Indies, responded, 'not really, no, not really, because we knew the British would not do anything drastic'.[106] Helen Berger, in reference to her internment in Trinidad directly linked the internee experience with Britain's wider colonial humanitarianism, explaining the lack of support the refugees received when in camp by saying the 'British colonies were something else in those days' as 'they didn't help their own people'.[107]

It is clear that, unlike in the UK where mass internment was abandoned after 'the harshness of the government's policy was being denounced', the movement to a policy of release in the colonies was less quickly and less consistently adopted.[108] In a minute dated 5 April 1941, Robinson recorded that 'the Secretary of State has recently discussed the whole question of internment policy in the Colonies and has expressed serious misgivings as to the extent to which policy in many Colonies has been allowed to diverge from the policy adopted in the United Kingdom'. Robinson went on to explain at length that:

> in some cases Advisory Committees had been presented with no evidence whatever in support of the detention of the individual and instead of reaching the proper conclusion, namely that the man should be released, the committee came to the extraordinary view that they were unable to make any recommendations.[109]

Whitehall's unease but ultimate acceptance of certain aspects of colonial internment policies was clearly based on their appreciation of the fact that an empire comprising fifty-five territories and '60,000,000 people of different races, religions, civilisations, in different stages of development' required individual policies tailored to the specifics of each territory.[110] In a meeting of important colonial officials (including Colonial Secretary Moyne, Parkinson, Dawe, and other senior colonial officials, Boyd and Calder), it was decided that the best way to deal with the 'difficulties of bringing the Colonies into line with the more liberal policy adopted here since last autumn' was for Moyne to send a telegram to 'all colonies

[106] Hertha Klinger, interview no. 33212, Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education, University of Southern California.
[107] Berger, interview no. 12416, Shoah Foundation Institute.
[108] London, *Whitehall*, p. 170.
[109] Robinson, minute, 8 April 1941, CO968/33/13, TNA.
[110] Commons, 24 June 1942, *Hansard*, 380, cols. 2002-2020.

[...] drawing attention to the change of policy [...] and indicating that he would wish serious consideration to be given to the possibility of similar action being taken in the colonies'.[111] Examples from across the colonies clearly suggest that in the imperial setting the reversal of the policy raised problems for officials in terms of the way it was viewed by those outside of the government. Examples from three colonies – Cyprus, Kenya and Jamaica – illustrate in different ways that the implementation of internment in the colonies constantly saw the policy placed in the context of humanitarian concerns as well as political expediency.

Documents on internment in Cyprus provide a telling starting point for this assessment. Given Cyprus' location in the Mediterranean and in close proximity to Greece and Palestine, there were significant security concerns on and about the island. Nonetheless, officials in Whitehall were pleased with the efforts made in Cyprus to follow the example of British policy, noting that: 'the Governor of Cyprus has made a real effort to apply the general policy'.[112] As in Britain, the summer of 1940 witnessed large-scale interment on the island, and 171 enemy aliens were interned. In official files, this total number was broken down and categorised by nationality and racial identity:

| Germans and Austrians | Italians |
|---|---|
| Jews: 84 | Of pure Italian descent: 7 |
| Aryans: 22 | Not of pure Italian descent: 58 |

Table 1 – Cyprus Internees in summer 1940[113]

By March 1941 'all but 46' had been released after the cases had been considered by an Advisory Committee.[114] Jewish internees were more numerous in the original internment, which was in part connected to the higher concentration of Jewish refugees on the island resulting from several years of small-scale refugee entry. However, figures from January 1941 show that of the thirty-six Jewish

[111] Robinson, minute, 8 April 1941, CO968/33/13, TNA.
[112] Robinson, minute, 29 March 1941, CO968/35/12, TNA.
[113] Battershill to Lloyd, 8 November 1940, CO323/1797/4; Robinson, minute, 29 March 1941, CO968/35/12, TNA
[114] Robinson, minute, 29 March 1941, CO968/35/12, TNA.

internees still held in November 1940, twenty-five had since been released. Of the fifteen 'Aryan' internees held in November, none had been released by January 1941.[115]

Although later pressure ensured that attempts were made to release genuine refugee internees, no initial distinction was made between those who had fled to the colony seeking refuge and those who had migrated for other reasons. As one official noted: '[t]he chief difficulty in carrying out the investigations arose in the cases of Jews and Italians. The principle adopted in all cases of doubt was that the onus lay upon the internee to prove his sympathies and ties of association with the British Empire'.[116]

Implementing internment in Cyprus in the summer of 1940 was initially a security concern, at which point the needs of the colony and the British war effort were placed above the needs of Jewish refugees. Later efforts to respond to individual cases were, for some, an expression of concern for refugees. Calder minuted in December 1940 that 'Cyprus and Tanganyika have been able to investigate individual cases and release considerable numbers' of internees. He pushed for other colonies including Kenya and Jamaica to do the same, in order 'that considerable hardship and injustice would [...] [be] avoided' but in such a way that 'the security of the territories in question would not [...] [be] adversely affected'.[117]

Calder's parameters exemplify the way that different kinds of humanitarianism (and practical politics) were in tension in the implementation of internment policy and points to the compromise that defined colonial refugee policy more generally. Liberalism was clearly an underlying influence, with the mass internment of 'enemy aliens' necessary on security grounds but the 'hardship' of individual Jews also a concern. Race was also present in the discussions, as seen in the use of 'Jews' and 'Aryans' to categorise groups in official documents.

Frederick Wohl was interned in Cyprus and his experiences mirror the narrative established in official files. He recalls how he was interned when the

[115] Battershill to Lloyd, 7 January 1941, CO968/35/12, TNA.
[116] Battershill to Lloyd, 8 November 1940, CO323/1797/4, TNA.
[117] Calder, minute, 20 December 1940, CO323/1797/4, TNA.

Germans occupied Greece. At this point, 'every refugee and every person who had arrived [...] on Cyprus with German papers was interned'. An all-male internment camp was opened next to the prison in Athens and was populated largely by Jews. Wohl estimated that there were 'maybe about twenty real Germans who were kept strictly to themselves'. Those in camp were forced to stay in tents, in dusty conditions, and had to decide between themselves what to eat from the food they were provided. Because of his language skills, Wohl was put in charge of creating a menu each week. He describes how:

> after about a month in that tent camp, the authorities realized that [it] was not a good place to leave us because people got sick. [So] they moved the camp to a hotel up in the mountains. [...] [I]t was naturally behind [a] wire fence; but otherwise it was just like a vacation.

At this point, the government started to check individual papers. His father was one of the first to be released, and Wohl himself was released about three weeks later. Wohl also describes the impact internment had on the Jewish community: 'the Jews, Jewish refugees – thanks also to [internment] – [...] got to know each other, and they drew together'. This reflects a pattern seen in other refugee memoirs that suggests there was a redefinition, or a reclaiming, of Jewish identity for many refugees. Jewish refugees did not just impact the colony; the place of refuge also impacted the refugee.[118]

Wohl's experiences foreground the practical difficulties that internment presented to following a policy that responded to the 'emergency' needs of the refugee internees. The initial camp was not considered to be suitable, and the refugees were therefore moved. This points to the fact that internment was a hastily constructed policy that resulted from the changing nature of the war as much as genuine feeling against all enemy aliens. That the refugees were subsequently placed in a hotel and that the experience 'was just like a vacation' suggests that the needs of the refugees were not so much as ignored as shifted in line with the difficulty of implementing internment policy. Likewise, the presence of 'real Germans' in the camps seems to have been a rather minor issue for Wohl;

[118] 'Oral History Interview with Fred R. Wohl', RG-50.030*0255, USHMM.

despite the fact that they were identified as different in official files, the status of the refugees did not necessarily impact their treatment.

Kenya's record of following Britain's internment policy was not as strong as that of Cyprus. For a particular group of internees in Kenya, the story became more complicated still when they were, along with others from various British African colonies, transferred to South Africa in 1941. The continued internment of these 'enemy aliens' included those classified as Jews, or of Jewish descent, and generated much debate in the Colonial Office. This was acknowledged at a senior level. Shuckburgh, who had written passionately about the nature of German 'enemy aliens', articulated this in a minute from the summer of 1941, when he explained:

> The general trend of opinion in this Office during the last few months, if my impression is correct, has been in the direction of a more lenient attitude towards these interned enemy aliens; and there seems to be the feeling that, in many cases, Governors acted harshly and hastily during the crisis of 1940 and that the time has come in which the balance ought to be redressed. I know that I am in a minority, possibly in a minority of one, but I should like to record that I have not the least sympathy with the sentiment to which I have referred. I have always been profoundly sceptical about the "anti-Nazi" German, and I believe that, in nine cases out of ten, he is just as dangerous as the men who does not pretend to be anything but the Hun he is. We are dealing with a race of savage beasts, and the fact that some of its members whine and fawn when in captivity does not mean that they can safely be set at large.[119]

Other officials called for a more open-minded response, including Calder who, as discussed in relation to Cyprus, felt that the continued policy of internment 'causes unmerited hardship in individual cases'.[120] Calder once again expressed the tension within liberalism that made the treatment of individual internees more problematic for officials that the principal of general internment. Other views centred on the changed security situation in the Mediterranean and Africa. Although initial concerns about African territories' security had prompted the call for internment in the colonies, by 1941 Moyne felt that 'the situation in Kenya had changed as Kenya was now far removed from an operation area', and therefore

[119] Shuckburgh, minute, 28 July 1941, CO968/36/8, TNA.
[120] Calder, minute, 28 July 1941, CO968/36/8, TNA.

officials there must be pressed 'strongly to consider on their merits the cases of their German refugees'.[121]

As late as 1942, the Colonial Office was still dealing with unresolved cases of 'anti-Nazi' internees, and they received many enquires about individuals who were yet to be released. Although these came from a variety of people, officials in Whitehall were keen to provide information and often prompted officials in the colony to take speedier action in order to provide this. However, it was not just concerned citizens who raised the issue of the continued internment of enemy aliens with the government.

For example, the Joint Secretary of the Central Council for Jewish Refugees contacted Emerson (the League of Nations Commissioner for Refugees) about a group of twenty-four male detainees who had been moved from British African colonies to South Africa, and who, at the end of 1941, remained interned. The group was of 'Jewish or partly Jewish descent', and 'at least fourteen' were practicing Jews. While their anti-Nazi credentials were not in doubt, they had become entangled in a bureaucratic web which meant they were yet to be released. A Colonial Office memorandum explained that South Africa acted as a 'custodian' of the refugees on behalf of the African territories from where the refugees originated. It was explained that South Africa had no objection to their release, 'provided they would be re-admitted immediately to the territories where they lawfully resided prior to their internment'. However, '[i]t appears that the Administrations in question equally have no objection against the release, provided they remain in the Union [of South Africa] for the duration of the War'. Thus the refugees remained interned, caught in the middle of these debates. As the memorandum summarised:

> From this it appears that these men suffer prolonged internment not on account of their activities or sentiment, but chiefly as the result of legal and administrative difficulties. Had they been interned in their territories, or would they come under the jurisdiction of the Union, in all likelihood they would have been released long ago.[122]

[121] Calder, minute, 31 July 1941, CO968/36/8, TNA.
[122] Unsigned memorandum, 'Memorandum Concerning Jewish Internees In S.A. [South Africa] Transferred To Union Camps From Adjacent Territories', 12 November 1941, enclosure of: J.W. Rich (Secretary, South African Jewish Board of Deputies) to Brotman (Secretary, the Board of Deputies of

Like with the movement of internees from Britain to the Dominions, the displacement of internment questions from Kenya to South Africa was a problematic policy. Refugees were caught in official limbo and raised humanitarian questions that officials in Whitehall then had to answer and justify once attitudes turned against mass internment. Once again, the challenges posed by the continued interment of individuals were in tension with general security concerns, and the policy that resulted was one of compromise.

The testimony of refugees who experienced internment in Kenya highlight other aspects of internment policy that challenged policy-makers. The Zweigs, Bergs and Bauer tell of a sudden internment, a brief spell of captivity and then release. Given European refugees' role as 'quasi-colonists',[123] internment presented practical challenges for those administering the policy, such as where to hold the 'enemy aliens' and what they should wear.

For example, Zweig observes that there had been no white inmates in Kenya's prisons, which raised questions about where to keep European Jewish (and other) internees and how to dress them. Specifically, Zweig writes that '[i]n Kenya [...] it was immoral as it was tasteless to put whites into the same clothes as black inmates'. However, this resulted in 'the interned men [...] wearing the same kind of khaki uniforms as their guards. In military circles, especially, the unwanted but necessary similarity in appearance between the defenders of the homeland and their potential aggressors created a lot of annoyance'.[124]

These observations highlight just some of the challenges internment presented officials who perceived the world in racial categories. British policy-makers were less concerned with the confusion caused by dressing 'enemy aliens' like British guards and more concerned with undermining the racial foundation upon which their colonial power was based. For black indigenous populations, the message was clear: even as 'enemies', white people were racially superior. For the Jewish refugees, the message was less clear: their status as refugees fleeing

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British Jews), 12 November 1941, enclosure of: Stephany (joint secretary, Central Council for Jewish Refugees) to Emerson, 23 December 1941, CO968/36/7, TNA.

[123] Eppelsheimer, *Homecomings*, p. 8.

[124] Zweig, *Nowhere in Africa*, pp. 44-45.

persecution only mattered in certain situations and even then did not guarantee a sympathetic, or humanitarian, response.

More generally, the episode of internment shows, particularly in Kenya, that British action was dictated by several issues: how the action was perceived to outside parties, including its own citizens, as well as other international powers; how the practical details of internment impacted colonial hierarchies; and finally the concern for those interned. Humanitarian concern for refugees was the last in the list of these priorities. The legal and administrative difficulties that were so frequently discussed shows that the internees, whether Jewish refugees or not, were a problem for the colonial system and that solving it would have required a humanitarian prioritisation that was conceptually impossible in a time of war.

Like in Cyprus and Kenya, the implementation of internment policy in Jamaica was a source of tension where the needs of the refugees were prioritised against security concerns, the needs of the colony and Britain's wider (changing) war aims. Jamaica's association with refugee issues, and specifically internment, was (and is) closely linked to the Gibraltar Camp, established in 1940 to hold civilian evacuees from Gibraltar, a small area of British territory off the Spanish coast. In May and June 1940, the approximately 13,000 Gibraltarians were taken to French Morocco. However, after the fall of France, a new destination was necessary. Various parts of the British Empire were considered, but the changing context of a Europe at war led to the arrival of almost 11,000 evacuees to Britain. By August, it was decided that the evacuees should be sent to Jamaica, where a camp to house several thousand people had been constructed in just seven weeks. However, by the end of 1942, the camp was only occupied by approximately 1,700 people. During the war, the camp housed several Dutch Jewish refugees as well as about 200 Polish Jews, who Britain, with working with the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and the Polish government-in-exile providing the financial backing for their move from Lisbon, Portugal to Jamaica.[125] Along with these groups, the Gibraltar Camp also housed, in a separate location, German prisoners of war.

[125] Newman, *Nearly the New World*, p. 72; London, *Whitehall*, p. 180. See also, Bartrop, 'From Lisbon to Jamaica'.

The arrival of Jewish refugees and, as a result, 'enemy aliens' was supported by officials in London, who, Newman argues, pushed the colony to build the camp. However, she also argues that the camp is an 'example of how a compromise could be reached between enabling British Government objectives and satisfying local conditions'. She continues:

> The camp was erected in Jamaica because of the priority placed by the British Government on evacuating the civilian population of Gibraltar, and was carried out with scant attention paid to local opinion (as we have seen, its building was completed in a very short time). Yet the Jamaican Legislature was appeased by two factors, that the building the of the camp benefited the local economy, contracting local construction firms and employing Jamaican labour, and that none of the inhabitants could seek employment or residence in Jamaica. The camp was, in a sense, off Jamaican limits: its inmates were not immigrants to Jamaica but temporarily housed for the duration of the war; their status as evacuees under Defence Regulations meant that the boundaries between the camp and the island were absolute.[126]

In 1943, it was recorded that the additional population totalled over 3,058 people, including 558 refugees and 1,500 evacuees from Gibraltar, who were in turn made up of 572 prisoners of war and 588 civilian internees.[127] Despite the implementation of increasingly tight immigration restrictions before the war, at the height of the worldwide conflict, Jamaica hosted a significant number of refugees and internees. Although Newman identifies this seeming contradiction as 'ironic', this policy outcome was actually in complete alignment with wider tensions in British policy between domestic needs, colonial priorities and humanitarian concerns.[128] The camp environment indeed offered a 'safe' space in which these competing needs could coincide. As we shall see, the refugee perspective on the 'camp experience' was not ignored, but was also not the most important consideration for policy-makers.

Despite debate about the impact that the camp had on the island's economic and material resources, it without doubt had important political consequences. Sir Arthur Frederick Richards, the Governor of Jamaica, was aware of negative

[126] Newman, *Nearly the New World*, pp. 242-243.
[127] A.W.G. Randall (Foreign Office) to Washington, draft telegram, 12 January 1943, FO371/36648, TNA.
[128] Newman, *Nearly the New World*, p. 70.

portrayals of the situation, particularly internationally. He even informed Colonial Secretary Cranborne in October 1942 that:

> among various other mis-representations of Jamaica now being given currency in the United States of America are references to Gibraltar Camp as a sort of 'Concentration Camp', not widely different from similar institutions in Germany. There is no doubt that this campaign has been instigated by Polish Jews who have left the Camp for the United States of America, and who hope by telling harrowing and untruthful stories to persuade the United States Authorities to grant entry permits to a large number of Polish Jews now in Gibraltar Camp.[129]

While the Gibraltar camp offered the facilities to accommodate refugees and internees in a way that was suitable for the colony, the fear of how this was perceived by others, particularly the US, was central to British action. As the war progressed, British reliance on the US increased, and by 1943, attention was turning to post-war planning. However, Britain was keen to both assert itself and maintain a strong line in regard to colonial internment policy, particularly at the Anglo-American Bermuda Conference. Randall explained to the conference:

> that Jamaica would be prepared to take a share of refugees if other people would participate. If Jamaica took more refugees from Spain without their being vetted, they would have to be put in a concentration camp for security reasons. There was also a problem of accommodation and supplies.[130]

Although action, like that taken in Jamaica, was sometimes more severe than some colonial officials preferred, they ultimately allowed it because it seemed that the decisions were based on the interest of the colony.[131] It remained Colonial Office policy that the release of internees and other issues about the treatment of refugees were decisions 'for the Governor subject only to the right of the Secretary of State to invite the Governor to reconsider his decision'.[132] Clearly, a significant amount of control remained with the local administrators, but in the case of Jamaica, this was sometimes to the benefit of refugees seeking entry.

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[129] Richards to Cranborne, 13 October 1942, CO323/1846/6, TNA.
[130] Foreign Office, memorandum, 'Record of Discussions at Bermuda Conference', 'Discussion No. 4', 21 April 1943, FO371/36725/W6785, TNA.
[131] Colonial Office, Defence Department, memorandum, 'Internees in Jamaica', 14 January 1943, CO968/68/13, TNA.
[132] Poynton, minute, 29 June 1943, CO968/68/13, TNA.

For example, in 1941, the Governor requested to establish a married-person internment camp in his territory. After receiving the request, colonial officials in Whitehall turned their attention to the camp established on the Isle of Man, and the Home Office was asked to provide advice. Although the correspondence suggests that people were 'all in favour of the establishment of a similar married camp' in Jamaica, it was felt that the obstacles facing the Governor 'appear to be almost insuperable'.[133] Nonetheless, the Governor was sent 'a copy of a letter from the Home Office explaining the arrangements which have been made in this country [Britain] for the accommodation of married aliens who have been interned together'.[134] He was not instructed to abandon the plan; however, progress was slow, and as late as 1943, Jamaican policy was still being discussed. Lord Wedgewood stated in the House of Lords that:

> Just consider [...] Jamaica. There you had a number of Jews (I think 34 altogether) who were interned who were no more guilty than those interned here and who of course were unable to give any assistance to Hitler, even if they wished to give it. Here I should think two-thirds of these people who were interned have been got out. They have been examined by board after board and some 4,000, I should say, have been released in this country. But in Jamaica these 34 have remained year after year in prison. After exhaustive inquiries extending over two and a half years, ten have been released and it is hoped to complete inquiries soon about the other 24.[135]

Clearly, the more liberal policy hoped for in London had not yet been fully adopted in Jamaica. Nonetheless, as the plan for a married camp demonstrated, this did not mean a complete lack of compassion on the part of the colony or a complete separation from London. Rather it is illustrative of the complex connection between the two and forms part of the explanation for a distinct colonial policy. Moreover, individual agency also clearly mattered. Richards (as opposed to the Governors of Trinidad, Barbados and Cyprus) was keen to make some allowance for refugees.

[133] Biddulph, minute, 29 May 1941, CO968/34/5, TNA.
[134] Moyne to OAG, Jamaica, 15 July 1941, CO968/34/5, TNA.
[135] Lords, 10 September 1942, *Hansard*, 124, col. 348.

Despite Richards's concerns, the experience of internment in Jamaica was not easy for refugees. For example, Silbiger's recollections of his time in the camp strike at the very heart of the refugee experience. Upon arrival in Jamaica, he recalls that:

> After coming ashore, we were transferred to a set of buses. Soon we left the colourful chaos of the town behind and headed into the mountains. We must have been driving for perhaps an hour when a wide valley surrounded by mountains came into view. Suddenly several people in our bus started to scream. We seemed to be heading for a large complex of unpainted wooden barracks surrounded by fences. It resembled all too closely the nightmare we thought we had left behind: a concentration camp. This was the Gibraltar Camp, where the Jamaican authorities had decided to house us.[136]

Silbiger's experiences are confirmed by other refugees. Another Jewish refugee from the Netherlands, Johanna Zeelander, stayed at the Gibraltar Camp for six months. Although she recalls in her interview that ultimately the camp and the barracks where they stayed were 'nice barracks', she also makes the observation that '[b]ut you come from Europe, you see those barracks, you think what are they going to do with us?'.[137] Jenny Lieberman had a similar reaction. Lieberman arrived in Jamaica with her mother having initially found safety in Portugal before moving on to the West Indies. They were 'besides ourselves' upon hearing that they would be placed in camps when they arrived in Jamaica. She explains that '[w]e had heard so many bad things about camps'. Although they did not know about extermination camps, her father had died in Dachau, understandably leaving traumatic associations for the young Lieberman.[138]

Silbiger also describes the restrictions imposed on the refugees:

> Movements in and out of the camp were carefully controlled. Everyone received a passbook that had to be brought along to the exit gate and within which leaves and returns were recorded. One could go out of the camp only during the day and had to be back before the night-time curfew. To stay out overnight required special permission. No one was allowed to search for a home or work outside the camp. The only way to be released from the camp was to be granted residency in another country.

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[136] Silbiger, *Our Great Escape*, 2006.27, USHMM.
[137] Johanna Zeelander, interview no. 1009, Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education, University of Southern California.
[138] Jenny Lieberman, interview no. 41039, Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education, University of Southern California.

He, like others, questions the legitimacy of such a policy: 'while the camp provided safe refuge for a group of people who had fled from persecution in their homeland and who had nowhere else to go, it at the same time violated their basic human rights. We were detained without being charged with a crime'.[139]

His memories of this time, however, were not all bad. He recalls the friendship of other children his age and the community that soon developed in the camp. He describes how '[a]mong the adults, councils and committees were formed and friendships were established, some which were to last long after everyone had scattered across the world. A Dutch flag was permitted to be flown, near which ceremonial gatherings took place'. Moreover, he describes a one-week holiday in Montego Bay as a 'highpoint' of the family's internment. This was paid for by the Dutch exiled government. Silbiger asks, 'Was it to soothe its guilty conscience for failure to get us admitted to its colonies?' Either way, it was considered to be a real treat and was much enjoyed by those families who experienced it.[140]

The experiences of Jenny Lieberman also suggest that, despite some difficulties, the camp experience in Jamaica was not an entirely negative experience. For example, Lieberman recalls that she was allowed to attend business school and fashion school, for which she had to leave the camp. Like Silbiger, Lieberman also recalls a curfew. However, Lieberman was told that it was for her own protection, as it was believed that some areas of the island were dangerous because Jamaicans would 'kill you' or 'knife you'. Whether or not it was true, Lieberman's acceptance of this justification shows some internalisation of colonial ideas, where personal restrictions imposed by the British have been remembered as protection against colonial 'others'.[141]

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Historians often fail to acknowledge the complexity of the decisions made by officials regarding refugees or judge them by post-1945 standards. This chapter has shown that the interwar years were a time of transition. A growing international system emerged from the collapse of the Ottoman and Hapsburg empires and

[139] Silbiger, *Our Great Escape*, 2006.27, USHMM.
[140] *Ibid*.
[141] Lieberman, interview no. 41039, Shoah Foundation Institute.

Britain, at the greatest extent of its empire, was at the centre of this change. International humanitarianism was changing in nature too, and Britain had to grapple with old forms of religiously- and ideologically-motivated humanitarianism as well as humanitarianism manifested through the forum of the League of Nations. In this specific interwar context, Britain's relative inaction was not simply a failure of humanitarianism, but the prioritisation of one humanitarianism over another. In the colonies, humanitarianism was just one ideological framework through which officials conducted policy.

Alchemic humanitarianism, or development of the colonies, was prioritised and shaped by the contradictions of British liberalism, where refugee groups were deemed to be less deserving than colonial peoples. This contradiction was justified by racial ideas and attitudes of paternalism, which ensured British officials viewed their colony policy less as one of exploitation than of guidance and aid. That there was some kind of prioritisation undertaken by officials is suggestive of the nuance so often discernible in British policy more generally but less often assessed. Therefore this study of rival humanitarians in the colonial setting adds shade to an otherwise black and white understanding of British action.

More specifically, while post-1945 international reputations became intrinsically linked to human rights records and humanitarian responses, the interwar years saw the continuation of earlier imperial traditions. The very nature of international co-operation was conceptualised from a Western, Eurocentric, imperial perspective. Both emergency aid and alchemic humanitarianism were dominated by paternalism. The idea of the 'civilizing mission' and the absolute right of Western, particularly British, modes of government were well established and therefore guiding principles for action.

Within the empire, it simply does not make sense to assume that governments would have acted contrary to perceived national interest. Emergency relief of refugees, particularly in reference to unlimited refugee entry into the colonies, was seen as a risk, threatening security, causing economic strain and unsettling local communities. These things were a clear contravention of national (imperial) priorities. However, alchemic humanitarianism, an expression of what was undoubtedly the focus on colonial development and welfare in the colonies,

offered potential benefits. As will be discussed in the next chapter, the Colonial Office, especially its Secretary of State, Malcolm Mac Donald, envisaged, and in some cases implemented, a synthesis of humanitarianisms, by carefully selecting Jewish refugees for their skills and/or finance to aid the development of a particular colony. Thus Colonial Office officials could justify emergency relief of refugees because it ultimately benefited the empire.

## Chapter Five:
## A Policy of Compromise: Colonial Development and Jewish Refugees

Having outlined the international context in which British colonial immigration policy was formulated as well as the ways in which three central intellectual schemas – liberalism, race and humanitarianism – influenced policy, this final chapter turns its attention to the specific policy initiatives and directives adopted by the colonies towards Jewish refugees. Rather than large-scale re-settlement projects, small targeted policy initiatives emerged, reflecting the compromise necessary to respond to the international refugee crisis as well as to specific British and British colonial concerns. Jewish refugees were welcome in the colonies as long as they at most added something to the territories, or at least did not create an extra burden. While an open policy of refuge was never adopted, several officials tried to expand the opportunities for refugee entry by linking it explicitly with colonial development. These attempts, including the use of refugee doctors and the possible colonisation of British Guiana, are the subject of this final chapter.

In the context of the problems facing colonial policy-makers, linking Jewish refugees and colonial development appeared to be a mutually beneficial exercise. There was undoubtedly precedent for such action, both in colonial policy itself and in the domestic sphere. A new language of 'development' emerged in the interwar years, in both the international and colonial contexts. In the latter, development was directly linked with questions of demography and the movement of people into and between the colonies.[1] However, as has been established, developmental (and emergency) manifestations of humanitarianism were undertaken in a way that served the interests of the state most directly. Driven by the work of Colonial Secretary Malcolm MacDonald, plans for utilising refugee skills and assets were pursued across the empire, some more successfully than others, and these provide evidence of a clear colonial policy agenda towards refugees.

This chapter will first outline the history of colonial development and welfare policy from the late 1800s to the 1940 Colonial Development and Welfare Act. This will provide the context in which attempts to link refugee settlement and colonial

[1] Karl Ittman, *A Problem of Great Importance: Population, Race, and Power in the British Empire 1918-1973* (Berkeley, CA, 2014), pp. 53, 67.

development were made. The chapter will also examine the role of MacDonald who, as well as taking an active role in the formation of colonial development policy, was also pivotal to other colonial issues such as Palestine, tensions in the West Indies, economic uncertainty and geopolitical concerns. Finally, the nature of the compromise between the emergency needs of Jewish refugees and the perceived developmental needs of indigenous colonial populations will be examined through two case-studies: refugee doctors and the development of British Guiana.

The question of utilising refugee doctors in the colonies is illustrative of the way in which colonial officials took direct action in order to connect the refugee question and development. It was a small but successful example of what could have been achieved. In contrast, British Guiana and the grandiose plans it prompted were never realised, but that they were pursued as actively as they were tells us something important about how the issues of re-settlement and development had taken hold in the interwar years. Moreover, these examples highlight the emergence of a distinct colonial policy towards refugees that was not simply a foil to domestic or foreign policy concerns, but rather a genuine attempt, at least by individuals such as MacDonald, to connect the recognised needs of the empire with those of refugees.

**A HISTORY OF COLONIAL DEVELOPMENT AND WELFARE**

Changes in the 1930s followed a longer evolution of colonial development policy and framed (and challenged) the older idea that colonial development should serve the metropole (seen in earlier attempts to utilise colonial development to tackle Britain's domestic problems, particularly unemployment). These changes, which ultimately shaped the Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1940, took place in parallel to the refugee crisis, and debates on both issues occupied the minds of officials. Therefore, a brief overview of this earlier policy sets the stage for an exploration of colonial development and refugee policy in the 1930s and 1940s.

From the late 1800s until the outbreak of the First World War, colonial development policy had been piecemeal, essentially ad hoc. Even in the 1920s, there was little in the way of government funds for economic development in the colonies. For some at the Colonial Office, including Lord Milner, Leo Amery and

William Ormsby-Gore, this was an unsatisfactory state of affairs. These men stressed the importance of colonial development and, as economic difficulties increased, did so by linking it to unemployment in the metropole.[2] This had also been, in part, the rationale behind the Empire Settlement Act. Discussed earlier in the context of the influence of liberalism on re-settlement plans, the Act was also connected to ideas about colonial development, as the movement of British settlers to the Dominions was supposed not only to help reduce domestic unemployment, but also to provide a work force for the development of agriculture and industry in the empire.[3] Both of these examples also highlighted a precedent of officials looking to the empire to help solve domestic economic and demographic concerns.

Although the Colonial Development Act of 1929 passed with the explicit intention to help domestic unemployment by creating a higher demand for British exports, this was not a particularly successful endeavour. Opposition to the changes at a local level within the empire meant that opportunities for business development were not always taken. Officials on location feared that changes brought by development projects (e.g. industrialisation) would threaten 'indirect rule' and the existing status quo.[4] Moreover, the onset of the economic depression and resulting unemployment ensured that colonial development was in no way commensurate with the level of need. Statistics bear this out. For example, the Act directly ensured employment for 13,000 men, when around 2,671,000 were unemployed.[5] More generally, the economic climate was dictated by those who argued 'expenditure should be reduced, budgets rigidly balanced, and a natural recovery of trade awaited'. In this context, the 1929 Colonial Development Act and the £1 million a year that it made available to dependent imperial territories made little difference to the British economy.[6]

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[2] Michael Havinden and David Meredith, *Colonialism and Development: Britain and its Tropical Colonies, 1850-1960* (London, 1993), p. 140; Stephen Constantine, *The Making of British Colonial Development Policy 1914-1940* (London, 1984), p. 44.

[3] See Stephen Constantine, 'Introduction: Empire Migration and Imperial Harmony', in: Stephen Constantine (ed.), *Emigrants and Empire British Settlement in the Dominions between the Wars* (Manchester, 1990), p. 6; Daniel M. Stephen, '"Brothers of Empire?" India and the British Empire Exhibition of 1924-25', *Twentieth Century British History*, 22/2 (2011), p. 169.

[4] See, for example, David Meredith, 'The British Government and Colonial Economic Policy, 1919-39', *The Economic History Review*, 28/3 (1975), pp. 484-499.

[5] Meredith, 'The British Government', p. 487.

[6] Pearce, *The Turning Point*, p. 3.

However, by the mid-1930s, old policy motivations came under review. MacDonald, during his first tenure as Colonial Secretary between June and November 1935, observed that:

> Our policy had sauntered along as if the world had not altered at all. I felt concerned, for instance, that we were doing very little to aid the economic, social, educational and other related advances of the people for whom we were trustees [...] I soon decided that we must make a widespread review, and in some cases an overhaul, of our whole attitude to the Colonial Empire, to be followed by a practical expansion of our creative activities throughout it.[7]

These observations reflected the changing context of the 1930s: recovery from economic depression, a growing international humanitarian community and changes in (and deterioration of) international relations. British action in the empire was open to closer scrutiny than ever before, especially as a member of the League of Nations and a mandatory power. Criticism was particularly strong from the US, despite the fact that it never joined the League. Even within the empire itself, growing discontent was evident in important territories such as India and the West Indies. The prospect of 'advances' in social, educational and economic issues offered the potential to quell many of these emerging problems.

Moreover, as the geopolitical context of the 1930s evolved, Britain's imperial actions became a defining feature of Britain's projected image. Fascist Italy's colonial claims in North Africa and Nazi Germany's demands for the return of its pre-1914 colonial possessions (several of which Britain now ruled as League of Nations mandates) raised questions about the nature British imperial rule. Although some form of colonial appeasement was considered between 1936 and 1938 (see chapter one), a large-scale return was never envisioned, and Italy's and Germany's colonial claims were repeatedly rebuffed by criticism of their domestic racially-discriminatory policies. In order for Britain's claims to hold weight, amendments were deemed to be necessary, by some, to their own imperial policy, which was increasingly open to criticism on issues of race and oppression. In the face of League and American interest, Britain was encouraged to adopt a new position on colonial questions, including development and welfare policy.

[7] Sanger, *Malcolm MacDonald*, p. 145.

Growing labour unrest in West Indies had developed since the early 1930s but reached new levels in 1938 when riots ensued after claims of ill-treatment by a group of men seeking work at the Tate and Lyle Sugar estate. Four men were killed in a week, and later protests broke out in the Jamaican capital of Kingston. Ultimately, eight people were killed and 170 injured in the course of the protests. Low wages and a general level of 'workers' frustration' were at the root of the problems.[8] Not only were Britain's responsibility for and reaction to these events now open to international scrutiny, the disturbances prompted within the Colonial Office itself a genuine debate about the future direction of colonial policy.

MacDonald, whose return to the Colonial Office in 1938 coincided with these debates, moved to the centre of the issue and made three key decisions in response to the problems in the West Indies. He established a Royal Commission, under the chairmanship of Lord Moyne to investigate the riots in the West Indies. The Commission was not only charged with dealing 'with the immediate disorders' but was also asked to investigate 'underlying causes of discontent', including 'bad working conditions and low wages, unemployment, poor housing, and overcrowding'. His second decision was to establish a committee within the Colonial Office to review funding for colonial development and welfare. The work of this committee laid the foundations for the 1940 Colonial Development and Welfare Act. Lastly, MacDonald attended a summer school at Oxford University, where colonial administrators on leave heard him declare self-government as the ultimate aim for Britain's colonial dependencies.[9]

The new Colonial Development and Welfare Act was presented for approval to the House of Commons on 2 May 1940. MacDonald had the opportunity to help its passage before he was moved to the Ministry of Health as a result of Chamberlain's resignation and Churchill's assumption of the premiership. That the act survived the change in government at this pivotal point in the war highlights, to some extent, the acceptance of its general premise, but also the ideological value seen in the change it represented. The change in direction was evident in the Act's allocation of funds and can be seen as a serious attempt to develop the basic

[8] *Ibid*., pp. 143-144.
[9] *Ibid*., pp. 146-147.

infrastructure and needs of the colonies. Between July 1940 and October 1942, nearly £2 million was spent under the terms of the Act. Significantly, the allocation breaks down as follows: forty-five percent of the projects granted money aimed to develop agriculture, forestry and veterinary services; thirty-six percent was dedicated for social amenities such as education, health, sanitation, water supply and housing; and nineteen percent was awarded to schemes for transport and communication.[10]

Although this change in direction can be connected to alchemic humanitarianism, colonial development policy was, of course, not entirely altruistic. Without doubt, it served political ends, and as will be discussed later, development schemes were conceptualised in a way that would not compete (particularly economically) with Britain. This was why agricultural development was often preferred to industrial schemes (see below). In many ways, Britain successfully adapted its earlier brand of repressive and exploitative colonialism to a progressive and developmental kind. By doing this, Britain could therefore justify the continued existence of its empire, quell rising colonial nationalism and counter growing international criticism. Moreover, although it is important to understand the change in views that the passing of the 1940 Colonial Development and Welfare Act represented, it cannot be said to have reversed the latent paternalism which still formed the foundation of colonial rule. The League of Nations mandates as well as other forms of humanitarian action were based on the assumption that Britain was responsible for those in need of 'civilizing' and that this meant action was taken on an explicitly Western model.

**MACDONALD, COLONIAL DEVELOPMENT AND JEWISH REFUGEES**

MacDonald was at the centre of many of the key debates that were underway at the Colonial Office during the interwar years. Not only did his return to office in May 1938 coincide with the West Indies crisis, the following months saw a rapid deterioration in international relations, particularly with Germany (i.e. the Munich Agreement) as well as the ever-growing difficulties in Palestine that led, a year later, to the passing of the 1939 White Paper.

[10] Havinden and Meredith, *Colonialism and Development*, p. 218.

MacDonald was, in the tense and emotive months of 1938-39, initially believed by many Zionists to be supportive of their cause, particularly because of his role in the 1930 Passfield White Paper (which sought to clarify Britain's position on Jewish and Arab claims to Palestine) and the '[s]trong and personal working relationship' he had developed with Chaim Weizmann during the 1920s and 1930s.[11] His oversight of the 1939 White Paper was therefore the source of much disappointment and criticism.

Martin Gilbert argues that MacDonald supported Arab claims to Palestine over those of the Jews. As evidence of this, he cites MacDonald's views as expressed in a Cabinet meeting on 14 November 1938 (just after *Kristallnacht*):

> The government has to choose between its commitments to the world of Jewry and [...] to the world of Islam. [...] [T]he British Empire [...] was to a very considerable extent a Moslem Empire, some 80 millions of our fellow subjects in India were Moslems. From the defence point of view it was literally out of the question that we should antagonise either the Moslems within the Empire or the Arab Kingdoms of the Near East.[12]

In later personal reflections, MacDonald fleshed the opinions he expressed in Cabinet out:

> We could not let emotion rule our policy; we must accept the facts of the extremely dangerous prospect with absolute, unsentimental, and some would say even cynical, realism. The Jews would be on our side in any case in the struggle against the tyrant Hitler. Would the Arab peoples of the Near and Middle East adopt the same attitude?[13]

MacDonald was a pragmatist torn between a Jewish lobby at home (several of whom he counted as friends, as well a moral imperative to help those facing Nazi persecution) and a major Muslim population in the empire (upon whose goodwill colonial stability and thereby British imperial power was based). He wrote that:

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[11] Sanger, *Malcolm MacDonald*, pp. 87-97. Chaim Weizmann was a bio-chemist and active Zionist, who in 1910 became a naturalised British subject. His 'profound admiration' for Britain 'never blunted his criticism of Britain's Palestine policy', and this was certainly the case in his role as a Zionist leader (he was elected president of the World Zionist Organization in 1920) (Norman Rose, 'Weizmann, Chaim (1874-1952), Zionist leader and president of Israel', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ueaezproxy.uea.ac.uk:2048/view/article/36820>).

[12] Martin Gilbert, 'British Government Policy towards Jewish Refugees (November 1938 -September 1939)', *Yad Vashem Studies*, 13 (1979), pp. 128-129.

[13] Malcolm MacDonald, *Constant Surprise. A Twentieth Century Life* (1970s), MAC121/1/1-637, *Malcolm MacDonald papers* (GB-0033-MAC), Archives and Special Collections, Durham University Library.

> A considerable number of its [Parliament's] Members in both the House of Commons and the House of Lords were Jews, whilst other non-Jewish Members of the former House had large numbers of Jews among the voters in their constituencies. Many of those M.P.s were therefore ardent champions of the Zionist cause in debates and in the division lobbies at Westminster. But not a single M.P. was an Arab, and the Arab electors in the constituencies were negligible in numbers. Some non-Arab members did earnestly advocate the Arabs' case; but they were very few. So a considerable balance of prejudice in favour of the Jewish case existed in Parliament, which increased to some extent my problem in seeking to maintain an impartial policy as far as possible towards both sides.[14]

This observation suggests MacDonald was aware of the domestic political ramifications as well as international political consequences of the policy adopted in Palestine. He therefore constructed policy in the knowledge that he could not please all those involved but tried to balance more vocal Zionist views with those of the Muslim populations of the empire. His comments do, however, also display the undertones of the ambivalence towards Jews as a group which were generated within a liberal democratic framework.

However, in other ways, MacDonald worked hard to find ways to help Jewish refugees. In his unpublished autobiography, MacDonald explains that:

> I felt profoundly sad that, in fairness to the local Arabs, we could not be far more helpful to the Jews. They were suffering the appalling tragedy of the Nazis' imprisonments and massacres of their kith and kin in Germany. Deep in my heart I wished that we could allow much larger numbers of those who escaped to enter Palestine; but we British were duty bound to honour our pledges to the long settled Palestinian Arabs as well as to the incoming Jews. So we had to urge the diversion of shiploads of the refugees elsewhere. I arranged for many of them to settle in several of our underdeveloped colonies, whilst many others came to Britain itself.[15]

The influence of MacDonald's personal views appears throughout various examples discussed in this thesis. As MacDonald noted, the comments he made on contemporary files 'contain my spontaneous views on events and people at the moments when my opinions on them were fresh; and so they describe as accurately as is possible the essence of my contemporary thoughts and actions in each given

[14] *Ibid*.
[15] *Ibid*.

situation'.[16] Despite the failure of many ideas, it is clear that MacDonald took decisive action to aid the entry of refugee doctors in the colonies and offered unwavering support for settlement schemes in British Guiana.

More broadly, MacDonald was a key advocate of colonial development. His claim – that he 'felt concerned [...] that we [the British] were doing very little to aid the economic, social, educational and other related advances of the peoples for whom we were trustees in such places as the Caribbean Islands, Ceylon, Malta, numerous lands in Africa, and many other under developed countries' – was borne out by action, particularly in his leading role in pursuing a more active colonial development and welfare policy and the final passing of the 1940 Colonial Development and Welfare Act.[17]

Understanding MacDonald's views on Palestine and Jewish refugees, as well as colonial development, help to contextualise the policy of compromise he pushed in colonial refugee policy. As Colonial Secretary, MacDonald had a voice at the highest levels of British power, including the Cabinet. Therefore, the ideas he had, the way these were responded to and how they were ultimately expressed (or not) in policy offers an important insight into British colonial and refugee policy more generally. In the specific cases of refugee doctors and development in British Guiana, MacDonald's views and the challenges he met provide an insight into the contradictory ways liberalism, race and humanitarianism helped form policy.

**JEWISH REFUGEES AND DEVELOPMENT**

MacDonald's desire to link Jewish refugees and colonial development had precedent in British domestic policy where efforts to link refugee entry to the needs of the metropole were already underway. British domestic policy had always given priority to talented or powerful émigrés, but in April 1933, Sir John Simon made this preference explicit when he argued in the House of Commons that 'Britain could combine self-interest with sympathy by encouraging the selective immigration of economically active refugees'. This involved the targeted selection of certain groups such as scholars, domestics and technicians.

[16] *Ibid*.
[17] *Ibid*.

In the case of scholars, Britain was the first place of refuge for about half of the 2,200 refugee academics who emigrated from Germany by 1938. Created in 1933, the Academic Assistance Council (AAC), which became the Society for the Protection for Science and Learning (SPSL) in 1936, helped find work for academics. One of those 'displaced scholars' was Heinz London, the father of historian Louise London. He was a physicist working in the area of low temperature physics and was able to come to Oxford University with a fellowship to continue his work.[18] More generally, evidence suggests that the targeted selection of refugees by the AAC was successful, with eighteen of those chosen for entry going on to receive Nobel Prizes, fourteen were knighted, and over 100 became Fellows of the Royal Society or the British Academy.[19]

James G. McDonald, the League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Coming from Germany, similarly called on member governments to open their doors to displaced academics. McDonald worked with 'several organizations assisting intellectual refugees, including the Academic Assistance Council in Britain and national committees in France, Holland, Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden, and the United States'. Largely because of McDonald's advocacy, these committees raised some £250,000 and by October 1935, facilitated the settlement of nearly 700 German academic refugees, 'including 212 in Great Britain, 143 in the United States, and 47 in France'.[20]

Elite professions were not the only sought-after type of refugee. For example, the continued demand for domestic servants was partly met by implementing a scheme of rescue for domestic servants from Nazi-controlled Europe. Although this scheme was biased in gender and age, over 20,000 refugees were employed as domestic help in Britain between 1933 and 1939.[21]

Kushner argues that the use of refugees in domestic service reveals 'the generosity' and 'the selfishness' as well as 'the ambivalence of the liberal

[18] London, *Whitehall*, pp. 46, 48-49.
[19] Ralph Kohn, 'Nazi Persecution: Britain's Rescue of Academic Refugees', *European Review*, 19/2 (2011), p. 256.
[20] Skran, *Refugees in Inter-War Europe*, p. 200.
[21] Tony Kushner, 'Politics and Race, Gender and Class: Refugees, Fascists and Domestic Service in Britain, 1933-1940', in: Tony Kushner and Kenneth Lunn (eds), *The Politics of Marginality Race, the Radical Right and Minorities in Twentieth Century Britain* (London, 1990), p. 54.

democratic response to the Jewish crisis before World War II'. Even before the onset of the refugee crisis, Britain was part of an international movement of women for domestic service. However, as a result of the persecution of Jews in Germany (and later Austria), increasing numbers of Jewish women sought safety in Britain in the role of domestic servants. In discussions before and after the Évian Conference, refugees entering Britain as domestic servants were considered to be more desirable than other migrants, as the former suited, in the words of the Refugee Co-ordinating Committee, the '*policy of selected admission* [Kushner's italics]' that dominated British policy-making circles. In the case of domestic workers, the argument that 'demand for labour is vastly bigger than the supply' was used by the Central Office for Refugees to procure a large number of entry permits for Jewish women. After Kristallnacht, regulations from 1931 on domestic service were relaxed for refugees, lowering the age restrictions on refugee girls from eighteen to sixteen as well as allowing a (still limited) number of permits for married couples. In the first three weeks of January 1939, these changes resulted in the issuing of some 1,400 permits.[22]

However, this was not an example of emergency humanitarianism; such policy changes were 'more designed to meet the demands of the middle-class women of this period'. This was further confirmed when regulations were implemented that meant 'refugees could only enter on condition that they remained as domestic servants'.[23] For many of those that came to Britain as domestic servants, the transition to this kind of labour was hard and outside their previous middle-class experiences. (Indeed, some of those working as domestic servants had employed their own domestic help in Germany). The regulations to ensure that those who entered Britain as domestic servants remained in that area of employment further confirm that '[f]illing the gaps in the British labour market and the possibility of disguising the refugee presence were more important factors than satisfying the personal aspirations of the refugees'.[24]

[22] Kushner, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination*, pp. 91, 96-97, 99.
[23] Kushner, 'Politics and Race, Gender and Class', p. 54.
[24] Kushner, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination*, pp. 93, 104.

Domestic service was the most significant but not the only case of utilising refugees' skills and money in order to serve British interests. In April 1933, 'ministers recognised the potential gain' from moving Leipzig's fur trade to Britain. Although this was ultimately dismissed by the Cabinet committee, it is nevertheless suggestive of the way in which those skills and trades associated with Jews were linked to the benefit of the metropole. Similarly, Sir Maurice Hankey, a minister without portfolio in the War Cabinet, was keen to save the machine tool industry in the Netherlands and Belgium or at least deny it to the advancing German army. Efforts were made to remove both material assets, such as tools and diamonds, as well as those people with the skills to work them. These efforts had direct benefits to the war effort, as these refugees often had knowledge of utilising diamonds for military purposes. Moreover, this action laid the foundations for establishing a post-war diamond industry in Britain. Louise London argues that despite the difficulties raised by this group of refugees, the government ultimately decided to act in order to benefit, both militarily and economically, from their diamond stores.[25]

Despite liberalism's inherent rejection of preferential treatment (which was often used to counter pressure to grant entry to greater numbers of refugees), the British government was willing to prioritise profit over principle when it directly benefited the state. Targeting scholars, domestic servants and tool and diamond workers made sense militarily and economically; that these individuals were German Jews fleeing persecution mattered primarily because it justified domestically the amendment of immigration regulations and could be heralded internationally as part of Britain's humanitarian response.

Along with the precedent in British domestic policy, MacDonald was not alone in identifying the benefits of trying to link refugee assets with colonial needs. In January 1939, Emerson, the League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, suggested the potential benefits of linking colonial development with a solution to the refugee problem. He believed that although the refugee was 'a liability', this was only the case until the latter was 'placed in a position at least to support himself and his dependents'. In reality, Emerson observed, refugees were 'an asset of great potential value', as '[a]mong the refugees almost every profession, interest,

[25] London, *Whitehall*, pp. 46, 181-182.

trade and occupation are represented', and '[t]here is an unparallelled [sic] supply of brains, enterprise, industry and skill on which to draw'. Emerson argued that these skills and talents could be directed towards colonial development, claiming that '[t]here certainly exists almost unlimited material for Colonial Development on a scale which has not been possible for many years'. This meant that the British Colonial Office had the potential to 'convert a present liability into a potential asset', as such a scheme would 'give an immediate stimulus to private endeavour' by promoting 'the ultimate interests of the colonies and will encourage other countries and the Dominions to follow this example'.[26]

Emerson's suggestion was based on his view that the then current scheme of aiding refugees through private funds alone could not be sustained and that government intervention was therefore necessary. Emerson suggested that government funds used to help refugees could also be connected to colonial development in two main ways: the more conservative assimilation of agricultural settlement and the more radical idea of industrial settlement. Emerson's suggestions were based on a report produced by Political and Economic Planning (PEP). Established in 1931 by a group of academics, businessmen, civil servants, economists and journalists, the organisation viewed 'planning as a means of solving the nation's social and economic problems'.[27] PEP's report outlined plans for potential industrial development in countries including Malaya. Emerson doubted:

> whether the initial stages of industrial settlement will be traversed much more quickly than those of agricultural colonisation, but if both met with success in the beginning, the subsequent acceleration would be greater in the industrial settlement which could absorb greater numbers at lower individual cost.

He concluded that a 'controversy of the nature of agricultural versus industrial settlement is, however, to be deprecated. There is ample room for both'.[28]

Emerson warned that in the case of agricultural settlement, 'financial return to Government will be rarely satisfied' and that 'experience shows that for a big

[26] Emerson, memorandum, 'Refugee Problem and Colonial Development', 31 January 1939, CO323/1688/1, TNA.
[27] Matthew Hilton, *Consumerism in Twentieth Century Britain. The Search for a Historical Movement* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 99.
[28] Emerson, memorandum, 'Refugee Problem and Colonial Development', 31 January 1939, CO323/1688/1, TNA.

agricultural settlement to be even moderately successful it must have a very considerable measure of Government support in the way of direct financial backing, or, indirectly in the provision of certain services, or in both'. Emerson's comments present the success of potential settlements judged, in part, on the potential financial reward (which had, to some degree, been disproved by the PSA in Kenya). Moreover, the effort he deemed to be necessary for the success of an agricultural settlement reflects the inherent view that, apart from in Palestine, Jews were not agricultural settlers.

In considering possible industrial settlement, Emerson recognised that it was not a widely-supported option. The colonies had traditionally produced raw materials in a 'complementary' relationship with industrialised countries like Britain which then manufactured the goods. However, with the change in the economic situation in the 1930s (specifically as a result of the abandonment of free trade and the Ottawa Agreements), the colonies became open to competition, and concern developed over the creation of industries, particularly in colonies such as Malaya. Official attempts to resolve some of these problems were still incomplete in 1938, and therefore must have been part of the contemporary colonial world in which officials responded to ideas of connecting industrial development with Jewish refugees.[29]

Another important context was, of course, the pre-existing attitudes towards Jewish refugees. As outlined in chapter three, many officials viewed Jews as essentially urban. While the Jewish Kibbutzim in Palestine had produced a thriving export market for citrus produce and a strong domestic industrial sector producing household goods, this was a success bought at a heavy price, both in terms of finance and labour. Therefore, many felt that Palestine was a 'special case', with the success achieved there unlikely to be repeated away from the Jewish spiritual home.[30] Furthermore, the importance of large-scale investment to the development of Palestine as well as the twenty years of hard work that had ensured its success suggested colonial development would not produce an immediate solution to the

[29] Meredith, 'The British Government', p. 495.
[30] Rita Hinden, 'Palestine and Colonial Economic Development', *The Political Quarterly*, 13/1 (1942), pp. 96-99.

pressing refugee problems. Perhaps even more ominously, the more immediate concerns of officials would have focused on the major political problems caused by Jewish settlement in Palestine, along with the potential of powerful and troublesome settler groups in other territories such as Kenya and Northern Rhodesia.

Emerson must have presented a compelling case. Although pre-occupied with the problem of Palestine, MacDonald was keen to discuss the issue and agreed to meet with Emerson. MacDonald minuted that 'I have read all these papers with great interest' and asked for Lord Dufferin and other members of the Colonial Office to read the papers too. He stressed that they should consider them 'as sympathetically as possible from the point of view of Colonial development'.[31] However, many were critical. For example, Campbell was sceptical about the scale of possibilities outlined by Emerson, writing:

> I have no solution. I doubt if the problem admits of any. The only line of hope seems to me to be infiltration where that is politically practicable; agricultural settlements, on organised lines, where the climate and conditions otherwise promise reasonable success; possibly industrial settlements in a very few rare cases where again the circumstances permit. I see no hope of harnessing this question to the problem of colonial development except in a few – I am afraid a very few – individual cases.[32]

Immigration and refugee practices were built around what those seeking entry could offer the country of settlement. Suitability was judged either by specific skills and trades or financial independence. These requirements were underwritten by the preference for assimilation. Therefore, adopting a *quid pro quo* attitude in refugee affairs in the 1930s was hardly a new or radical departure. However, the way this was encouraged in the empire had a very specific application; refugee entry was targeted to meet the needs of the emerging colonial development and welfare plan. In the examples of refugee doctors and the large-scale settlement plans for British Guiana, the balancing of liberalism, racial thinking and humanitarian concerns resulted in a policy that actively sought to connect the needs of the colonies with refugees.

[31] MacDonald, minute, 5 February 1939, CO323/1688/1, TNA.
[32] Campbell, minute, 10 February 1939, CO323/1688/1, TNA.

**REFUGEE DOCTORS**

Utilising the skills of refugee doctors offered a particularly helpful way of aiding the colonies. It suited the shift in focus of colonial development policy towards enhancing social services rather than investing in big business initiatives that would benefit the metropole. That is not to say that these actions were wholly altruistic; rather, it was hoped that, by developing the colonies, new markets and consumers would emerge. Improved health services were an important prerequisite for this. To this end, MacDonald wrote to the colonies on 30 September 1938 that:

> I am sure that you will agree with me that the possibility merits careful consideration, of making use of this reserve of professional talent [i.e. Jewish refugee doctors], where this can be done to the advantage of Colonial communities.[33]

MacDonald sold the idea to the colonial governments not in terms of emergency humanitarianism for the benefit of the refugees but rather in terms of developmental humanitarianism for the benefit of the colonial populations and (implicitly but more importantly) the colonial governments. He wrote that:

> there is much to commend the idea that an excellent opportunity is here afforded of utilizing the services of these practitioners (many of whom are very highly qualified) to supplement the existing medical organization in the Colonies where there is admittedly much that could be done, but for shortage of staff and funds.[34]

MacDonald's active support for this plan successfully navigated the contradictory frameworks created by liberalism, race and humanitarianism. The individual, case-by-case nature of the policy fitted within the limits of liberalism. The policy also played on Jewish stereotypes, this time in a positive way, highlighting the unusual skill and talent of many Jewish medical practitioners. Such a policy also helped Britain's humanitarian reputation (which often translated to power in the context of the League of Nations) by aiding two groups who were understood to be in need – Jewish refugees and colonial subjects.

However, legal restrictions meant that only qualifications from Britain or Italy were recognised in the colonies. Italian qualifications were accepted as the result of

[33] MacDonald, circular despatch to the colonies and enclosure, 30 September 1938, CO152/474/10, TNA.
[34] *Ibid*.

an agreement between Britain and Italy in 1925 to regulate the professional practice of medical staff in their respective territories. The relevant clause of this agreement provided that medical practitioners holding diplomas issued in Italy could be included in the 'foreign list' of the register of British medical practitioners and thus undertake work in Britain, the colonies, India, British possessions and the Dominions.[35] This meant that refugee medical practitioners from Germany, Austria or Czechoslovakia were therefore ineligible to work in the colonies and were refused entry, at least in part, on this basis.

For example, in April 1938, Dr Bernhard Bauer, a 'thoroughly scientific doctor' and 'a highly experienced surgeon' from Austria, applied to enter Kenya to practice medicine.[36] E.B. Bowyer, a Colonial Office official, explained that Bauer 'is not qualified for registration in Kenya'. While acknowledging that it would 'presumably be legally open to the Kenya Government [...] to appoint Dr. Bauer to the Medical Service of the Colony without requiring him to qualify for registration in the United Kingdom', Bowyer believed that such action 'would probably be highly inexpedient' for a number of reasons. Specifically, he outlined that:

> It would violate our invariable practice of appointing only persons of British nationality to Government posts, it would cause an outcry from the Kenya Branch of the British Medical Association (BMA) which would no doubt be supported here, and it would moreover be an evasion of registration provisions which must be presumed to have been enacted in public interest.[37]

Colonial officials were obliged to balance the development of the colonies where there was a need for improved medical facilities with domestic political pressures, including objections from the British Medical Association. In fact, as Bowyer also commented, 'it will be inadvisable in any case to take up the general question [of medical practitioners] with regard to the Colonies, until it has been settled in regard to the United Kingdom'.[38]

The employment of refugee doctors and dentists had proved problematic in Britain. The differences in attitudes and action adopted towards the same issue in

[35] Bowyer, minute, 13 September 1938, CO323/1564/7, TNA.
[36] Dr. Erich Pistor to Dr Bernhard Bauer, letter of recommendation, 29 July 1938, CO323/1564/7, TNA.
[37] Bowyer, minute, 19 August 1938, CO323/1564/7, TNA.
[38] *Ibid*.

the domestic and colonial spheres offer an important point of comparison. The BMA 'opposed the admission of more than a small number of refugee doctors'.[39] As a result of anti-refugee sentiment, the Home Office 'undertook to consult the medical organisations if the number of refugees studying medicine threatened to become too large'. However, the BMA, by applying restrictions to its licensing procedures, were able to limit the number of refugees allowed to enter Britain to work in medicine. Even in 1938, the BMA 'adamantly refused to agree to the admission of more than a very limited number of refugee doctors, some of world-wide repute, streaming out of Vienna' and even established 'a committee to advise the Home Secretary on the conditions under which such refugees were henceforth to be allowed into Great Britain'. Dentists, who were actually in short supply in Britain in 1933, faced similar challenges. Attempts to limit medical practitioners entry into Britain were obviously successful, as in May 1937, it was recorded that only seventy-eight dentists and 183 doctors had been allowed to practice.[40]

Moreover, in the case of Bauer, racial attitudes were also important, as the deference to the BMA shows that Britishness was still considered to be best. Lastly, despite Bauer's direct reference to the difficulties for 'nonarian [sic] physicians' caused by increasing legal persecution, amendments to the law were not initially made, an expression of the prioritisation of domestic and colonial needs, over the emergency needs of refugees.[41]

Dr Jakob Wilczek (who sent a letter of application addressed to King George VI) received a similarly negative response from the Colonial Office: 'I am [...] to inform you that for Government appointments in the Colonial Service[,] preference is given to applicants of British nationality. The Secretary of State regrets therefore that he can see no prospect of his being able to offer you such an appointment'.[42] Bowyer explained the standard response to individual applications from Jewish medical practitioners:

[39] Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews*, p. 10.
[40] London, *Whitehall*, p. 52.
[41] Dr Bernhard Bauer, letter, 6 August 1938, CO323/1564/7, TNA. The letter also explains that Bauer, born in 1882, worked as a specialised army surgeon during the Second World War and was a highly-qualified obstetrician and gynaecologist. Despite adopting Catholicism twenty-six years previously, he was discriminated again as a non-Aryan.
[42] Draft letter to Dr.Wilezek, 14 October 1938, CO323/1564/7, TNA.

> we usually reply to the effect that the laws governing the registration of medical practitioners in the Colonies vary from Colony to Colony as do the immigration laws which have to be complied with, and we, therefore, suggest that the enquirer should communicate direct with the Colonial Secretary or Chief Secretary of any Colony or Colonies to which he specifically thinks of proceeding.

He went on to explain that 'this is perhaps not a very sympathetic way of dealing with the problem, but with the enormous number of enquiries we receive it would be quite impossible to deal with them in any other way'.[43]

Bowyer framed the decisions made in bureaucratic, 'common sense' terms, and does not reference other factors of influence. Again, the Colonial Office's general preference for British doctors, as with land settlement in Kenya, was an expression of their understanding of 'white British' and what this meant, particularly in comparison to a Jewish (European) 'other'. Moreover, that requests were re-directed to individual colonial governments allowed those on location to make the decision based on perceived local needs and limitations. This followed a liberal preference for individual entry in which the benefits to the colony could be assessed in the context of other humanitarian concerns.

At the time of MacDonald's circular telegram, only the Bahamas, Barbados, Bermuda, British Honduras and Tanganyika recognised foreign qualifications.[44] For example, in Tanganyika, the law provided that the holder of any medical diploma would be allowed to practice as long as the local authorities were satisfied that he or she possessed 'the requisite knowledge and skill for the efficient practice of medicine, surgery and midwifery'. Following MacDonald's lead, action was then taken to expand this to other colonial territories. In early 1939, the Governor of Nyasaland was informed that the Secretary of State, due to 'the special circumstances', wished that 'the law should be amended to correspond with [...] Tanganyika'.[45] Gambia was put under similar pressure, where it was 'becoming more and more difficult to obtain British doctors' and 'increasingly difficult to bear

[43] Bowyer, minute, 19 August 1938, CO323/1564/7, TNA.
[44] Eastwood, note, undated, CO525/182/22, TNA.
[45] Eastwood, minute, 14 February 1939, CO525/182/22, TNA.

the rising cost of them'.[46] Colonial Office officials therefore agreed to 'go ahead and suggest to the Gambia that they should alter their law'.[47]

Across the empire, attempts were made to follow MacDonald's call to action. In the Bahamas, there were 'three temporary vacancies for Medical officers in the Government Service in the Out Islands' that the Governor considered 'filling by the appointment of refugee doctors'. Although it was stressed that the positions were 'only [temporary] for one year' and employment came with the restriction that medicine could not be practised privately, there were still reservations.[48] For example, Poynton noted, that 'any Colony taking a Jewish refugee from Germany has got to be prepared to keep him – at any rate as long as the Nazi regime lasts'.[49] Nonetheless, attempts to fill medical vacancies with Jewish refugees showed that the principle of linking colonial development and refugees became active policy, even if only in an informal capacity.

Closer inspection of this offer, however, reveals the limited nature (particularly in terms of scale) of its implementation. The Bahamian Out Islands, which comprised 700 islands dotted over 15,000 square miles of the Atlantic Ocean (only a handful of which were inhabited), were an unpopular destination for professional Britons. The inhabitants of the Out Islands suffered 'isolation and poverty', had 'limited occupational options available' and were divided between a number of (often blurred) ethnic and racial lines.[50] The one-year time-frame of the posts was included to meet a specific need while protecting long-term local, especially white British professional interests. Poynton's point that such a restriction was folly was not a humanitarian suggestion (i.e. to persuade the government to keep the refugees in safety for as long as possible) but a warning that refugee entry was a long-term cost.

Similar appointments in the Leeward Islands are also illuminating. The Governor contacted the Colonial Office about a temporary opening for a medical practitioner at the Cunningham Hospital at St Kitts. After several different people

[46] Jones, minute, 22 February 1939, CO87/247/15, TNA.
[47] Hibbert, minute, 13 March 1939, CO87/247/15, TNA.
[48] Shuckburgh to Lord Hailey, 20 May 1939, CO23/681, TNA.
[49] Poynton, minute, 1 May 1939, CO23/681, TNA.
[50] Michael Craton and Gail Saunders, *Islanders in the Stream: A History of the Bahamian People. Volume 2: From the Endings of Slavery to the Twenty-First Century* (Athens, GA, 2000), p. 131.

were considered for the role, the Colonial Office, along with M. Stephany of the German Jewish Council, recommended Dr. E.V. Strisiver, an Austrian doctor who had previously worked in Jamaica before gaining British qualifications in Edinburgh in 1938. Strisiver's character reference came from Dr Lightbourne, a 'coloured woman doctor with whom [he] worked for some months in Jamaica'. Beside the fact that officials needed to identify Lightbourne as black and female (highlighting many of the racial and gender preoccupations prevalent at the time), her report also illuminates other frameworks, both ideological and practical, that helped shape policy. Her report pointed out that Strisiver had been unable to practise medicine in Jamaica as he did not have the correct qualifications (a practical limitation). Lightbourne explained that Strisiver:

> was not a registered Medical Practitioner in this country, and could do nothing except under my immediate personal supervision. Independent action was therefore denied to him, but from his ability to offer me valuable suggestions and from his general bearing I have no hesitation in pronouncing him thoroughly competent. He had sound anatomical knowledge, and seemed especially well versed in Midwifery and Gynaecology. He assisted in the operating theatre [...] on occasions when I was myself present [...]and he certainly seemed to know what he was about.[51]

Importantly, Strisiver's appointment fitted with influential frameworks; his appointment was carried out on an individual basis and with a time limit. Moreover, he had worked in the colonies before and shown himself to be capable and willing to function in a tropical climate. Although there was some concern regarding his inter-personal skills, this was not deemed to be enough to disqualify him. More broadly, agreement to filing this position with a refugee might have been, at least in part, because of the limited number of candidates for the job (there were only three), in a location hardly desirable for a British applicant.

Ann Hugon's investigation of Jewish refugees and medical practitioners in the Gold Coast highlights how the needs of the colonies were always given precedence, even if this meant going against the general trend in policy. Hugon explains that in West Africa the use of refugee doctors was unpopular as it was felt that to employ Jewish refugees in medical positions would threaten a local project to establish a

[51] Dr. Hyacinth Lightbourne, report, undated, CO152/474/10, TNA.

medical school for African students. It was argued that filling medical jobs with Europeans in the short term would discourage African people from taking up medical study in the long term.[52] Although there were clearly differences between the expectations of development in East and West African territories, when the emergency needs of refugees were juxtaposed with the developmental needs of the empire, the latter was always prioritised. As a result, colonial policy adapted to local need.

In the minds of British officials, African medical practitioners were generally perceived to be less able. This was most evident in the response to complaints made by three German women (the records do not state whether they were Jewish or not) held in an internment camp in Northern Rhodesia after the outbreak of war. They were unhappy with their medical treatment by 'African medical staff'. The Colonial Office explained that 'on the two occasions mentioned it was necessary to make use of African medical staff, as no European or Indian medical practitioners were available.' The 'African medical staff' involved an orderly and an 'African Hospital Assistant', and it was explained that:

> these men have all had systematic training in medicine and are often put in charge of small district hospitals. In cases of urgency in which it is not practicable to obtain the services of a fully qualified European or Indian medical practitioner, they are accustomed to treat Europeans.

With ten and twelve years' experience respectively, they were described as 'men of exceptional ability and the highest character'.[53] This reveals an implicit ranking of race in terms of ability to practice medicine – European and Indian were viewed as better than 'African' – by both those held in the camp (whose attitudes may well have been entirely racist) and many officials. This is suggestive of the importance of racial and humanitarian perceptions in the formation of colonial refugee policy.

The example of amending legislation to facilitate the employment of refugee doctors shows that the Colonial Office pursued independent policy initiatives in response to refugee issues. In Britain, domestic pressure was such that refugee doctors represented a threat, while in the colonies they were sometimes

[52] Anne Hugon, 'Les Colonies, un Refuge pour les Juifs? Les Cas de la Gold Coast (1938-1945)', *Vingtième Siècle, Revue d'histoire*, 4/84 (2004).
[53] L. Tester (Acting Chief Secretary to the Government) to G.C. Senn (International Red Cross), 15 November 1941, CO968/36/6, TNA.

considered to be a potential asset, although this did vary from colony to colony. While the colonial response to refugee doctors helped a small number of refugees, the action must be seen in the context of Colonial Office concerns. Increased levels of persecution did not induce the adoption of a completely open immigration or refugee policy. Within the frameworks established in this thesis, officials did try to adopt a variety of policies that were more helpful to refugees while still conforming to existing liberal, racial and humanitarian ideas. This response clearly centred on the pragmatic (economic benefits) that Britain derived. However, that they were encouraged and legislation actively changed is evidence of a response prompted by sympathy but manifested in the ideological context of the empire and interwar concerns.

**BRITISH GUIANA**

The benefits and limits of large-scale settlement were outlined in chapter two, where the impact of liberalism on British domestic and colonial immigration policies was assessed. British Guiana was arguably the most practical locations of large-scale re-settlement of Jewish refugees in the empire, at least in the minds of officials in the 1930s and 1940s. This was because it offered not just potential safety to refugees but also benefits for the British government, which wished to develop the territory. The following section will outline the progression of the idea of Jewish re-settlement in British Guiana, the role of MacDonald and why large-scale settlement plans were ultimately unsuccessful. It will further emphasise the specific nature of British colonial policy that was defined in both its conception and implementation by questions of liberalism, race and humanitarianism.

British Guiana, which measured some 83,000 square miles, was one of Britain's largest 'undeveloped' territories from the 1850s until the 1950s. During this time, eighty-five percent of the country was still virgin forest.[54] The colony nonetheless had an active local population, which by the interwar years, was under increasing control from Whitehall. British Guiana was a former slave colony, and a significant number of its population were ancestors of slaves brought from Africa. After slavery was abolished in the 1830s, the constitution allowed for the emergence of a more diverse colonial elite. For example, a significant East Indian

[54] Havinden and Meredith, *Colonialism and Development*, p. 31.

population was present on the island, many of whom first arrived in the colony as indentured labour. The impact of the First World War and a fall in sugar prices encouraged greater control from London, and in 1928, despite protest from locals, the constitution was amended to bring it in line with many other crown colonies.[55]

Despite the presence of different established communities, as well as its import and export markets, British Guiana was perceived in the West as an 'undeveloped' territory, ripe with potential. This was a long-standing view. For example, after a visit to the colony in 1859, author Anthony Trollope was very hopeful about the development potential of the territory. A little later, in 1896, Joseph Chamberlain presented a plan to the Cabinet to use the profit from the Suez Canal shares to develop British tropical colonial territory, specifically British Guiana.[56] In a debate in the House of Commons in 1928, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Leo Amery described the territory in the following way:

> It is a country as large as the United Kingdom, possessing very great natural resources, a soil of extraordinary richness [...] great mineral resources and immense resources in timber. Yet, somehow, that colony has, in the century and a quarter of British occupation [...] made no appreciable progress. Its record is one of almost continuous stagnation [...] In spite of the immigration into British Guiana of over 350,000 people in the course of a century, the population today stands at only 300,000 [...].[57]

Amery's description is suggestive of the view that British Guiana was undeveloped, with untapped natural resources and a limited local population. In the 1930s, official and unofficial attention turned to the development of British Guiana, particularly in relation to refugee questions. Along with the official investigations that were conducted in British Guiana (discussed below), interested outsiders also identified British Guiana as a place of possible settlement. For example, W.S. Barclay, the secretary of Tower Hill Improvement, was in regular contact with the Colonial Office on the issue. He argued that settlement in British Guiana had the potential to do 'more than merely "open up" the country'. He argued that sending Jewish refugees to British Guiana would also 'give England a positive and not merely an absentee-landlord interest in South America', be 'a gesture of help to outlawed

[55] Raymond Smith, *British Guiana* (London, 1962), pp. 42-45, 57.
[56] Havinden and Meredith, *Colonialism and Development*, pp. 32, 87-90.
[57] Commons, 6 March 1928, *Hansard*, 214, col.990.

and suffering innocent[s]' and prompt praise from 'every citizen in the Americas and the Empire'.[58]

Barclay was not alone; a piece in *The Times* in November 1938 commented:

> In British Guiana, for instance, a great country the size of Britain, with less than half a million inhabitants and only the coastal regions developed, an invasion of Jewish brains, energy and capital similar to that experienced in Palestine would be a godsend, and thus developed there would be room also, and work, for the surplus population of the West Indian islands.[59]

The potential of re-settlement in British Guiana was often discussed in grandiose terms. For example, another article by the same author, W.E. Simnett , made reference to a 1826 speech by Foreign Secretary George Canning, which called 'the New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old'. Simnett wrote:

> With capital and energy, and above all, people, it could become the New Palestine, a daughter settlement looking towards the ancient Zion for its spiritual and cultural ideals. Now that the prospects of Jewish development in Palestine are unfortunately restricted, it would be a compensating gesture on our part [...] to redress the balance of the old world by calling in the new.[60]

These positive views of the potential for Jewish settlement in the British West Indian territory, particularly as a proposed alternative to Palestine, was, naturally, anathema to Zionists, both inside and outside of the Jewish community. For example, Chaim Weizmann opposed the settlement in British Guiana. He told Lord Lugard in January 1939 that '[w]hat the poor refugees require is immediate help and that will take a very long time with an exotic country [...] We could receive a fresh many thousands in Palestine, but the doors are closed'. Lugard responded in a more positive light:

> I am sorry that you think that the British Guiana project would take years to mature. I had hoped that in view of the remarkable work of the colonists in Palestine, and the terrible position in which the refugees find themselves, the project might have been put through with the assistance promised by the British Government without great delay. It

[58] W. Barclay (Tower Hill Improvement), report, 16 November 1938, CO111/756/2, TNA.
[59] W.E. Simnett, 'Land for Refugees', *The Times*, 22 November 1938, p. 15.
[60] W.E. Simnett, 'Jews in British Honduras? Letter by *The Sunday Times*', MSS. Brit. Emp. s.332, box 25, file 8, Arthur Creech Jones papers, Bodleian Library of Commonwealth & African Studies at Rhodes House, Oxford University.

would be a great thing to have a self-governing Jewish State, even though not in Palestine. [61]

The correspondence is revealing on a number of levels. Lugard's response to Weizmann foregrounds the importance British officials placed on the Jewish response to settlement plans, particularly in the context of a liberal expectation of self-help. Essentially, he argued that, particularly given the awful situation in Europe, Jews should be ready and willing to take immediate action on any opportunity given to them. Furthermore, both Weizmann and Lugard made reference to racial stereotypes. Weizmann played on the very British stereotype that Jews (and other Europeans) were fundamentally unsuited to tropical living as an argument in favour of removing restrictions on entry to Palestine, while Lugard used Jewish success there to promote the feasibility of a speedy settlement in British Guiana. Finally, the whole discussion was prompted by the tension between the need for emergency humanitarian aid and the longer-term benefits of state-building. While Lugard referred to British Guiana as potentially being a 'Jewish State', the British more generally were hopeful that it would be developed as a British colony first and foremost.[62]

Despite this long-standing and sometimes contentious interest in the potential of the colony, Jewish refugee settlement in British Guiana was not investigated fully in preparation for the Évian Conference in July 1938, although it had been on the Colonial Office's radar as a possible place of settlement since the early 1930s when the territory was discussed in relation to Assyrian refugees.[63] This was not in deference to Zionist concerns, but rather more likely due to the riots that had recently erupted in the British West Indies over economic hardships. The Moyne Commission's examination into the causes of these riots resulted in a cautious attitude toward settlement projects in the area. One of the main causes of

[61] Weizmann to Lugard, 3 January 1939; Lugard to Weizmann, 13 January 1939, MSS Lugard, box 131, file 5, Bodleian Library of Commonwealth & African Studies at Rhodes House, Oxford University.
[62] For another perspective on the hope that British Guiana might become a well-developed part of the empire, Sir Arthur Salter (Conservative MP for Basingstoke) argued that Britain should aid Jewish settlement in the colony because '[s]uccess would also bring prestige both in the United States and elsewhere: and in a few years the result might well be the addition of both political and economic strength to the British Commonwealth of Nations by the accession of a new and prosperous Dominion' ('The Case of the Refugees: A Final Solution Needed: New Settlements', *The Times*, 27 December 1938, p. 9).
[63] Newman, *Nearly the New World*, p. 52.

unrest identified by the Commission was overpopulation. Unsurprisingly then, colonial officials felt that 'if suitable schemes can be devised for settlement in that area, prior consideration must be given to the needs of the surplus population of the more overcrowded West Indian Islands'.[64] In fact, when settlement plans for another West Indian territory, British Honduras, were discussed in 1939, it was decided that 'any opportunities for settlement [...] should be reserved for West Indians'.[65] Thus, it was considered to be 'desirable that the question of any possibilities of Jewish immigration into the West Indian Colonies or the adjacent territories, namely, British Guiana and British Honduras, should be excluded from the discussions' at Évian.[66]

While local considerations in the summer of 1938 were enough to ensure British Guiana was excluded from discussions of possible refugee settlement, in the aftermath of *Kristallnacht* in November, MacDonald announced at an inter-departmental meeting 'the necessity' of 'making a further examination of the possibility of settling Jewish refugees in the British Empire', and British Guiana was one of the options discussed at length.[67] As a concession to previous concerns, it was decided that the Royal Commission would need to be kept informed. Nonetheless, serious examination of the options for settlement was thereafter undertaken. While restriction of refugee entry remained at the heart of British action, the shift in attitude over British Guiana shows that the clash of emergency and alchemic humanitarianisms was not static, but rather was in constant flux which ultimately impacted the specificities of policy towards refugees in the colonies.

In early November 1938, a telegram was sent to the Governor of British Guiana, Sir Wilfrid Edward Francis Jackson, asking him to outline possible settlement options in the colony. The Governor's response was reasonably

[64] Unsigned, 'Memorandum of Instructions for the United Kingdom Delegation to the meeting of an Inter-governmental Conference at Évian on July 6th to discuss the question of emigration from Germany and Austria', draft, undated, CO323/1605/3, TNA.
[65] Mayle, minute, 15 November 1938, CO111/756/2, TNA.
[66] Unsigned, 'Memorandum of Instructions for the United Kingdom Delegation to the meeting of an Inter-governmental Conference at Évian on July 6th to discuss the question of emigration from Germany and Austria', draft, undated, CO323/1605/3, TNA.
[67] Mayle, minute, 15 November 1938, CO111/756/2, TNA.

balanced, focusing on the perceived positive as well as the negative consequences of refugee settlement. He wrote that:

> I am profoundly sceptical as to the possibility of establishing self-supporting agricultural or pastoral settlements in either Rupununi or [the] north west district and consider careful survey from agricultural, economic and health standpoints would be an essential preliminary but if His Majesty's Government feel impelled in view of the urgency of the situation to offer these areas for examination[,] I consider local opposition should not be allowed to stand in the way as these areas have remained for many years undeveloped and there is no immediate prospect of their development by the people of the colony.[68]

The Governor's response articulates the contradictions present in the discussions and ultimate failure of large-scale settlement in the colonies. Although Jackson was not opposed to the idea of Jewish settlement in principle, he was not optimistic about its success. This, it seems, had little to do with local opinion. In fact, Jackson was willing to dismiss local opinion, almost as punishment for their supposed inability and/or unwillingness to develop land on their own and on British terms. Jackson's concerns were practical, although these were rooted in racial perceptions. He emphasised the need for agricultural development and was also keen to assert in the same telegram that Jewish settlement in coastal towns would not be welcome. The government's support of Jewish settlement was based specifically on the development of the land, and, thereby, the infrastructure and economy of the colony and his scepticism was based on his assumptions about the (in)abilities of Jewish refugees.

In London, however, Jackson's gesture was met with hesitation. Hibbert wanted to 'be very careful what we say because there is a very real danger at the present time of arousing false hope'.[69] Nonetheless, there was the realisation that settlement plans reduced domestic as well as international pressure on the Colonial Office, a powerful motivating factor in Britain's humanitarian actions. Shuckburgh, who agreed with Hibbert that expectations should not be unduly raised, also argued that 'there may be more advantage in reminding the world that we are being active on the Colonial side'.[70]

[68] Jackson to MacDonald, 17 November 1938, CO111/756/2, TNA.
[69] Hibbert, minute, 2 December 1938, CO111/756/2 , TNA.
[70] Shuckbrugh, minute, 2 December 1938, CO111/756/2, TNA.

Other colonial officials condemned the idea outright. In a private letter to MacDonald, Arthur Creech Jones (Labour MP and co-founder of the Fabian Colonial Bureau) wrote that although 'Jewish capital and enterprise may contribute substantially to the economic well-being of the colony, and therefore help any West Indian people who may be transferred there later on', the more immediate impact of refugee settlement had to be checked. He reiterated 'the problem of surplus population in the West Indies and the lack of outlet in these days for these people'. He concluded that:

> It seems to me that British Guiana is one of the possibilities for dealing with the problem of poverty, unemployment and surplus population in the West Indies and I am only anxious that in the popular agitation in respect to the refugee problem, there shall be no development which will seriously prejudice the opening out of land for the absorption of the people our forefathers took to the West Indies who cannot now be usefully employed.[71]

Creech Jones's view, that development should be solely for the benefit of local populations, did not just concern British Guiana. His letter to MacDonald also mentioned Kenya and the 'irony' that land could be found for 'German subjects' but not for 'our own wards in respect to their ancestral lands'. MacDonald clearly believed that the emergency needs of refugees and the development of the colonies could be resolved in a mutually beneficial way. However, Creech Jones did not. This seems to stem from the tensions within liberalism that rejected the idea of special treatment of Jewish refugees, for he explains that '[i]t is most important that the exclusive principles of colonisation in Palestine should not be repeated there and that a condition should be made that West Indian labour should also be found employment in any scheme'. While Palestine was an example of development for some, Creech-Jones and his strong left-wing politics ensured that an equality of treatment for all who sought space to live, including local populations, was a top priority.[72]

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[71] Creech Jones to MacDonald, 21 January 1939, CO111/763/5, TNA.

[72] *Ibid*. Creech-Jones was not anti-Jewish however. In 1938, as part of the Worker's Travel Association, he was heavily involved with the rescue of hundreds of Czechoslovakian socialists and Jews from Prague after the Munich Agreement of September 1938 (Patricia M. Pugh, 'Jones, Arthur Creech (1891-1964), politician', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ueaezproxy.uea.ac.uk:2048/view/article/34224?docPos=1>); L.J. Butler, 'The Ambiguities of British Colonial Development Policy, 1938-48', in: Anthony Gorst, Lewis

After British Guiana was specifically mentioned by Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain during a House of Commons debate on refugees on 21 November, the Co-ordinating Committee for Refugees looked to arrange for experts to visit the colony and investigate the possibility of settlement. They ultimately accepted an offer from the US President's Advisory Committee on Refugees 'to nominate a Commission of American experts to visit and report on any areas that might be available for the settlement of refugees, and that this Commission, whose expenses would be defrayed from American sources, would be able to proceed to the Colony almost immediately'.[73] MacDonald agreed but insisted that Britain was represented, which was motivated by two factors. American-led international pressure for action on the refugee question could be quelled by British involvement. Moreover, British candidates on the committee would have offered some reassurance that British interests were represented and protected.[74]

Ultimately, two British representatives were appointed. Sir Crawford Douglas Jones (a former Colonial Secretary of British Guiana) and Sir Geoffrey Evans (an economic botanist at the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew and a former Principal of the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture in Trinidad) joined an American delegation made up of six experts. One of those experts was Dr. Joseph A. Rosen, who was described as a 'Jewish colonisation specialist and agronomist' and was heavily involved with the Jewish settlement in the Dominican Republic.[75] Rosen proved to be controversial. A known territorialist, it was feared by some, including pro-Zionist Jews, that the Committee would not produce a fair assessment of settlement potentials, a tension that played out at the time of the publication of the report.

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Johnman, and W. Scott Lucas (eds), *Contemporary British History, 1931-1961: Politics and the Limits of Policy* (London, 1991), p. 123.

[73] Parkinson to Evans, 31 January 1939, CO111/763/5, TNA.

[74] MacDonald to Jackson, 31 January 1939, CO111/763/5, TNA.

[75] Parkinson to Evans, 31 January 1939; Warren to Finlayson (Rothschild's secretary), 20 January 1939, CO111/763/5, TNA. Dr. Joseph Rosen, as director of the American Jewish Joint Agricultural Corporation (Agro-Joint), was involved in the re-settlement project in the Dominican Republic in the late 1930s. He was an experienced settlement expert, having played a pivotal role in settling 250,000 Jews on farms in the Crimea and Ukraine after the First World War ('Dr. Joseph Rosen, Agro-joint Director Who Resettled 250,000 Jews in Russia, Dies in N.Y.', obituary, 3 April 1949, *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, <http://www.jta.org/1949/04/03/archive/dr-joseph-rosen-agro-joint-director-who-resettled-250000-jews-in-russia-dies-in-n-y>).

In February 1939, MacDonald discussed a supplementary estimate (i.e. to seek additional capital for Colonial Office expenditure) for the purpose of paying for the two British representatives. He explained that '[w]e are all aware of the seriousness of the problem of the refugees in Central Europe, and Parliament and the Government have been anxious that the British Empire should make the maximum contribution which it can towards a solution of this refugee problem'. He emphasised the importance of having 'an expert opinion as to the numbers of refugees which might be taken, and the kind of settlement which we might give in future in the case of other settlers'. After outlining that Douglas-Jones and Evans had been appointed to the roles, he requested £1,000 to cover 'personal expenses and subsistence allowances'.[76]

This capital investment in the commission is important to note. It highlights the level of involvement Britain sought in the project and serves to confirm the interest in its ultimate success. However, Whitehall was also keen to ensure that this initial financial involvement would not commit Britain to further finance later on. This was specified on several occasions. For example, Sir John Simon, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, wrote to MacDonald in January 1939 that 'meeting the expenses of these two members of the American Mission' should not 'commit [...] public funds to financing any ultimate settlement in British Guiana'. He believed that '[i]t will indeed be a very serious business if the British taxpayer, in addition to paying everything else which he is asked to pay for just now, has to pay for the settlement in various parts of the world of enormous numbers of foreign refugees'.[77]

Simon's concerns were obviously domestic, and his use of 'various parts of the world' to describe part of the empire is telling of this perspective. His concern for the 'British taxpayer' also eludes to his role as a member of Parliament, where he was answerable to ordinary British citizens more than the needs of colonial 'others' in far-flung tropical territories. Unsurprisingly, policy-makers approached the question of colonial refugee settlement with a mind to their own concerns, and this

[76] Extracts from House of Commons Official Report, 23 February 1939, CO111/763/5, TNA; Henry L. Feingold, Bearing Witness: How America and Its Jews Responded to the Holocaust p122
[77] Simon to MacDonald, 30 January 1939, CO111/763/5, TNA.

must be taken into consideration when looking at the varying views expressed in official documents.

Douglas-Jones and Evans left England on 4 February, arriving in British Guiana on 14 February, and stayed for three months. Their task was to:

> To study and report upon the suitability and practicability of large-scale colonisation in British Guiana for involuntary emigrants of European origin, from the physical, climatic and economic points of view; to estimate the approximate numbers that might be settled there (a) immediately [and] (b) over a term of years; to calculate the probable cost of such settlement; if mass colonisation appears feasible, to recommend a general plan of settlement.[78]

This official remit of the Commission's investigations is telling of the inherent difficulties in attempts to link refugee settlement and colonial development. There was clearly a difference between the nature and extent of schemes that could be achieved immediately (as the scale of the refugee crisis warranted) and those that could be pursued if time and finance were not an issue. Indeed, the stated purpose of the Commission almost sealed its own fate; refugee advocates could push for smaller, immediate settlement plans while officials in Britain (who were less keen on such schemes) could, within the frameworks of liberalism and race, claim no special allowances for Jewish settlers and therefore stall plans based on how long they would take to implement.

The main area that the Commission examined was the Rupununi savannahs, some 40,000 square miles that the British had offered for agricultural refugee settlement, which 'was within five degrees of the equator and 250 miles from the sea'. The Commission was asked to 'discover whether large areas of good soil existed, whether health and climatic factors were favourable, whether transportation routes could be developed at reasonable cost, and whether sources of power and materials for industrial development existed'.[79] After examination, several key issues emerged, including access to the area: '[m]eans of transportation to the coast, obviously crucial to any proposed settlement, were limited to airplane,

[78] Extracts from House of Commons Official Report, 23 February 1939, CO111/763/5, TNA; 'Draft press announcement, not to be published before the 4th February 1939', CO111/763/5, TNA.
[79] Desmond Holdridge, 'An Investigation of the Prospect for White Settlement in British Guiana', *Geographical Review*, 29/ 4 (1939), p. 624.

a canoe and motor launch combination in the wet season, and a crude cattle train suitable for horses and pack animals'.[80]

While the Commission was asked to study potential options for agricultural settlement in the Rupununi area, it also examined possibilities for industrial development. There was support for this action from Jackson, who wrote to the Colonial Office explaining that the committee was somewhat:

> more impressed with the idea of industrial development[,] possible in forest areas using local wood as raw material for manufacture of various kinds now carried on in Central Europe. They recognise that very large capital outlay would be required to finance this and [the] agriculture scheme and that no remunerative return on capital could be expected but appear to consider that very large funds might be forthcoming on these terms.[81]

Jackson went on to stress how this idea was received within the colony. He wrote:

> I have tentatively sounded the Executive Council on the subject and their feeling was that we should not stand in the way of any project promising large industrial development which would secure employment for any surplus local labour and also probably offer considerable openings for immigrant labour from the West Indies, as under climatic conditions here local labour would be required for many operations.[82]

The Colonial Office agreed with the governor's argument that:

> the commission should be encouraged to investigate possibilities of industrial development referred to in your telegram especially as they are likely to secure employment for surplus local labour and offer openings for immigrant labour from West Indies in addition to refugee settlement, but I hope that they will be under no illusion regarding the various difficulties which are likely to attend such developments.[83]

Support for industrial development would have been a meaningful concession on behalf of the Colonial Office which, as established earlier, was not keen on industrial development in the colonies due to the potential economic impact this would have on domestic markets. However, several aspects of the telegram suggest that the response was not necessarily a concession. The possibility of providing employment for 'immigrant labour from West Indies' would have been appealing in

[80] Wyman, *Paper Walls*, p. 60.
[81] Jackson to MacDonald, 9 March 1939, CO111/763/5, TNA.
[82] *Ibid*.
[83] MacDonald to Jackson, draft, 15 March 1939, CO111/763/5, TNA.

the context of recent local unrest. However, the reference to the 'various difficulties' associated with such action and the caution at the end of the communication that '[y]ou will no doubt make it clear to [the] commission that over-riding consideration must necessarily be interests of existing inhabitants of the Colony' are important to note.[84] Although concentration on the needs of the colony and local populations was sometimes a manifestation of real, alchemic humanitarianism, it was also an easy political tool with which to maintain the status quo. With the concern for 'existing inhabitants of the Colony', policy-makers had a powerful veto for action they were not keen to pursue.

In April 1939, the Commission presented its report. It contained four key recommendations. First, trial settlements for between 3,000 and 5,000 'carefully selected young men and women' should be established in the first place in 'properly chosen locations'. Second, 'competent leadership' should be appointed to offer assistance in all 'technical, financial' concerns. Third, the settlement should consist of settlers with knowledge and skills to make the settlements self-sufficient. Finally, the report estimated the cost of 'establishing and maintaining' these kinds of trial settlements to be about USD3,000,000.[85]

After the report was received, the government organised its response, outlining that it was 'prepared to offer the fullest facilities for such settlement on the lines indicated'. They also confirmed that the land deemed to be suitable for settlement would be 'leased on generous terms' and that 'the Government of British Guiana would be prepared to appoint such administrative officers as may be necessary and otherwise to cooperate to the fullest possible extent'. Enquiries into potential 'industrial employment' in 'other areas in the interior of British Guiana' were also outlined. Finally, it was decided that 'His Majesty's Government envisage the settlement of refugees over the whole of the interior of British Guiana in so far as it may prove practicable save in areas as have already been alienated or in respect of which rights have already been granted'.[86] The Commissioner's report indicated that the best time for settlement to proceed was in October, and

[84] *Ibid*.
[85] Mayle, minute, 28 April 1939, CO111/764/1, TNA.
[86] Unsigned, 'Draft statement of His Majesty's Government's views regarding the British Guiana Refugee Commission's Report', undated, CO111/764/1, TNA.

MacDonald was eager to have plans in place for the first group of experimental settlers to arrive in the late autumn of 1939.[87]

Despite these positive developments, there was concern among some of those responsible for implementing the action outlined in the report, specifically regarding 'the equatorial climate and the danger of tropical diseases'.[88] Afraid to commit fully to settlement in the Rupununi district, attention turned to other areas considered to be more suitable for immediate settlement, including near the Berbice River and Anchor Ranch. Evans (one of Britain's appointed representatives on the Commission) felt that an experimental settlement on the Berbice River 'would provide some indication of the possibilities of European settlement in [the] climate; it would demonstrate the agricultural possibilities of the savannah while it would be a convenient base for parties to explore the agricultural and industrial possibilities of the interior'.[89] Indeed, he viewed settlement in the Berbice River area as an ideal short-term option, a sort of 'base camp' to be 'used as a jumping off ground for settlers proceeding to the Rupununi'.[90]

However, the Berbice River settlement was not in the area outlined for investigation by the Commission and was much nearer to the coast, an area that the Governor had placed off-limits in earlier communication. Hibbert echoed Jackson's fear that 'German Jewish refugees are not fitted by training or environment for an agricultural life. Their heart will not be in it. And they will inevitable tend to drift to the towns where they feel their real metier can find scope'.[91] This was a real concern, especially given the vocal objections raised by Asian migrants who would be particularly threatened by Jewish settlement in towns.

These concerns highlight the tensions between those who sought to link colonial development and refugees for the sake of the refugees and those who wanted to do so for the benefit of the colonies. The basic assumptions of refugee committees which were expected to fund planned settlement were different to

[87] Rothschild to Strauss, 17 July 1939, CO111/764/2, TNA.
[88] Wyman, *Paper Walls*, p. 60.
[89] 'Report of the British Guiana Sub-Committee', undated, CO111/764/2, TNA.
[90] Hibbert, minute, 31 May 1939, CO111/764/1. See Evans, memorandum, 'Scheme for an experimental farm for the refugee settlement proposed on the Middle Berbice River in British Guiana', CO111/764/2, TNA.
[91] Hibbert, minute, 30 January 1939, CO323/1688/1, TNA.

those of colonial officials. For example, in August 1939, Rothschild's refugee committee requested that the British government pay for the medical and veterinary services that were needed in a prospective settlement. He went on to say that:

> I venture to remind you that, as the benefits of the knowledge acquired from the experimental farm and the experience gathered by the medical and veterinary experts will inure to the permanent advantage of the whole colony, the cost of such a farm and services could properly be borne by the Colonial Development Fund or other appropriate fund.[92]

While many in the Colonial Office had assumed that outside funding (largely Jewish) would be utilised for the colony's benefit, the committee challenged this by requesting development funds to aid refugee settlement in recognition of the long-term benefits that Jewish settlement would bring to the colony.

Similarly, the response of the Colonial Office to enquiries made by the Marudi Mountain Goldfields Company regarding the possibilities of settling Polish settlers in the colony highlight the emphasis that the Colonial Office put on the benefits of refugee settlement. J. Robert Robinson, an MP and supporter of the company, lobbied MacDonald on the benefits of the scheme in direct relation to Colonial Development. Robinson wrote:

> From the Colonial point of view the emigration of a hardworking body of men backed by adequate capital will be invaluable in developing the undeveloped resources of a long neglected area of the Colony. Their work should open up this section of the interior, for they will have to build their own roads and develop their own communications. Agriculture will be developed and furthermore geological evidence indicates a successful mining venture which should make a substantial contribution to the resources of the Colony in the future.[93]

Moreover, this was connected to the government's own investigations into possible refugee settlement. Robinson continued:

> Here is an opportunity of making a practical experiment with similar labour at the expense of private enterprise. The Government cannot lose by it, and will acquire without cost valuable information which in a

[92] Rothschild to MacDonald, 10 August 1939, CO111/764/2, TNA.
[93] Robinson to MacDonald, 8 March 1939, CO111/763/9, TNA.

> most practical way would show the potentialities of settling Jewish Refugees in the interior of the Colony.[94]

Indeed, the possibility of shifting the cost of developing transport links to the interior, a major concern of the Commission in regard to settlement in Rupununi, must have been appealing. However, concerns regarding the financial viability of the company (and its proposals) meant that the Colonial Office would not support the scheme. Clauson minuted his two main concerns:

> (1) to British Guiana, to see that the Colony does not get loaded up with a lot of indigestible non-returnable refugees;
> (2) to the Polish Jews, to see that they do not get involved in a swindle which may cause them losses which they can ill afford [and] suffering which they ought not to be allowed to undergo under our auspices.[95]

Clauson expressed concerns for both alchemic and emergency humanitarianism and the order given to these shows that attempts to connect refugees with colonial development was a way of expressing the humanitarian concerns for refugees in a constructive way in the context of the empire. The influence of liberalism and race were also once again clear, evidenced in the reference to 'indigestible' refugees, which implicitly raised questions about the nature and ability of Jewish assimilation. Connecting colonial development and refugees was indeed a policy of compromise that that saw officials work hard to make it as mutually beneficial as possible.

Plans for refugee settlement in British Guiana were ultimately disrupted by the outbreak of war. Although not the sole reason for the failure of settlement schemes, the war played a pivotal role in changing the focus of government support and resources. As mentioned earlier, timing was important. The need to find quick and workable answers to the refugee question meant long-term development (probably in the best overall interest of the colony) could not easily be reconciled with this aim. This context of war gave those who questioned the benefits of connecting the two issues the cover needed to divert attention towards the loftier aim of winning the war and thereby defeating the Nazis and ending Jewish persecution. War, however, did not stop the process immediately, and it was still

[94] *Ibid*.
[95] Clauson, minute, 24 March 1939, CO111/763/9, TNA.

planned to send the first 500 settlers to British Guiana by June 1940.[96] Relations also soured between Rothschild's refugee sub-committee and the Colonial Office. Tension over the financing of the scheme was the main problem, specifically concerning 'the cost of setting up and maintaining the experimental farm which they want to establish at the refugee base in the Berbice district, the cost of import duty on goods or material required by the settlers, and the cost of medical and veterinary services'.[97] By 13 November 1939, Mayle minuted that:

> I gather that no proposals for carrying out the British Guiana project are likely to materialise [...] and that there is still no prospect of the voluntary organisation here proceeding with their proposals. These proposals have not been finally abandoned but their suspension clearly creates a new situation which seems to involve some modification of the policy regarding proposals for the development of the interior of the Colony.[98]

Wyman outlined that by November 1941 'a small refugee settlement had been planted 50 miles from the coast', and this really 'marked the end of the dream of a major refugee haven in this tropical region'.[99] Nonetheless, some officials believed that settlement schemes might take place after the war. While studies of the Allied response often dismiss colonial settlement attempts as a government manoeuvre to relieve pressure or dispel criticism, the longevity of such plans, such as those in British Guiana, suggests some sincerity in the ideas behind them.[100]

Refugee settlement in British Guiana received MacDonald's active support, and in his prominent role as Secretary of State for the Colonies, he pushed for government action on the matter. Even as the scheme was put on hold due to the outbreak of war and as Rothschild informed the Colonial Office that the Refugee Committee would not be taking the project any further, MacDonald commented, '[b]ut I think we should proceed with the scheme as soon as conditions permit. The refugee problem may get worse, not better'.[101]

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[96] Wyman, *Paper Walls*, pp. 60-61.
[97] Hibbert to Hale (Treasury), 15 August 1939, CO111/764/2, TNA.
[98] Mayle, minute, 13 November 1939, CO111/764/2, TNA.
[99] Wyman, *Paper Walls*, p. 61.
[100] Mayle, minute, 8 December 1939, CO111/764/2, TNA.
[101] MacDonald, minute, undated, written on: Rothschild to MacDonald, 7 September 1939, CO111/764/2, TNA.

However, MacDonald did not just advocate for the refugee settlement in and of itself; he was also keen to deepen the connection between refugee settlement and colonial development in any such plans. To this end, MacDonald felt that '[i]f the British Guiana plan developed and if similar settlements were set up in other Colonial areas', he was keen to set 'up a special department in the Colonial Office to deal with this'.[102] This was also noted in the Colonial Office record of the meeting, where it was explained that MacDonald was 'prepared to advocate further machinery being set up in the form of a special Department in the Colonial Office with a whole time senior officer in charge of it'.[103]

MacDonald's motivation must have included the desire to 'dispel the doubts which are understood to exist in American circles as to His Majesty's Government's attitude towards refugee settlement in the Colonial Empire, and in particular in British Guiana'.[104] Mirroring a preference for experts and scientific planning that had developed in the Colonial Office, MacDonald was keen to support settlement 'experiments' for the potential mutual benefit of colonies (both in terms of development and international relations) and refugees, not simply humanitarian motives.

In reality, settlement in British Guiana was no more successful than that proposed for other territories. The plan's failure was caused by an array of issues. While, even at the highest level, there were those who believed in the potential of linking refugee settlement and colonial development, other concerns restricted possibilities of success. Ultimately, the need for quick responses would have necessitated policy-makers making exceptions for Jewish refugees, something that contravened liberal principles. Potential areas of settlement were linked to racial perceptions of Jewish refugees as inherently urban, and the concern that arose from this pushed officials to either genuinely prioritise the colony or use it as an excuse to limit plans, including the development of industry, to suit domestic and colonial concerns.

[102] H.C.F.F., minutes, 'British Guiana. Interview with the Colonial Secretary 14th July 1939', 24 July 1939, CO111/764/2, TNA.
[103] 'Note of Interview, 14th July, 1939', CO111/764/2, TNA.
[104] Mayle, minute, 23 June 1939, CO111/764/2, TNA.

**REFUGEE PERSPECTIVE**

The importance and value of refugees providing skills or finance was not lost on the refugees themselves. Indeed, refugees were keen to highlight their assets in their attempts to enter the colonies. The thesis has so far primarily included the perspective of the refugee through the use of memoir or oral testimony. However, in this chapter, the most telling evidence is found in Colonial Office files. These contain many personal (and painful) details of Jewish people and families seeking safety, utilising their resources to 'sell' themselves to the new developmental ideology of the Colonial Office and the British Empire.

Dr. Ludwig Reinheimer sent his particulars to the Colonial Office in reference to medical openings in the Bahamas. In early spring of 1939, Sir Charles Dundas, the Governor of the Bahamas, was keen to fill a one-year temporary post with a refugee doctor. The Bahamas recognised all foreign medical qualifications, and Reinheimer was viewed favourably. He was well-qualified, provided a pre-paid ticket, and confirmed that his relatives in America were willing to finance his move. In his letter to the Governor of the Bahamas, he explained that his 'irreproachable but unlucky family' were 'eager for assimilating as soon as possible' into life in the colony. He explained that he was a public health official, 'of course a specialist' and keen to 'work further in this territory, if possible'. He also listed his other skills:

> I have a sound knowledge of medical massage and orthopedic gymnastics, of all the photographical technics [sic], of the working in chemical, bacteriological laboratories, of the field work and other methods of public Assistance and Health Surveying, of the technical Hygiene (Water Supply, Prevention of the Tropical and other Epidemic diseases etc. etc.).

Finally, Reinheimer added, 'I write and speak rather fluently English and perfectly French'.[105]

British officials, however, were sceptical that he would be able to leave Germany. Thus, more serious consideration was given to two applicants who were already in Britain. This would also have appeased the Home Office's calls to prioritise moving refugees already in Britain over allowing entry to those in other

[105] Reinheimer to Dundas, 25 March 1939, CO23/681, TNA.

countries. Ultimately, and rather unsurprisingly, Reinheimer was not given the position in the Bahamas.[106]

Records at Yad Vashem, Israel's memorial and museum of the Holocaust, holds records of many of the victims of the Holocaust. Among these, it shows that Reinheimer died on the 15 February 1945 at Flossenbürg camp in Germany. The information was provided by his daughter, Dr. Wilma Reinheimer in 2000.[107] With the help of colleagues at the USHMM, it was possible to find Reinheimer on the German 'Minority Census' for 1938-1939 where it detailed that his wife, Helene (née Lange) was not Jewish.[108] The 1935 Nuremberg Race Laws institutionalised Nazi racial ideas and excluded Jewish people from citizenship in Germany. The laws made great efforts to define who exactly was considered Jewish. The Nuremberg Laws also forbade sexual relations and marriage between Jews and non-Jews. Although many Jews and non-Jews remained married (e.g. the famous diarist and academic, Victor Klemperer), other families did split up. However, Jewish spouses and relations of German citizens remained one of the most challenging group for the Nazis to include in the implementation of the Final Solution. The records available for the Reinheimer family do not provide the full details of their story, but the fact that Helene Reinheimer was not Jewish perhaps explains why other family members, including his children, survived the Holocaust and were able to bear witness to his death.

Reinheimer's story also shows the means by which some Jews utilised their skills and assets to apply for entry into British colonies by appealing to official concerns, for example, by highlighting skills, finance, and/or a willingness to contribute to and assimilate in the colony. These attempts reveal much about their plight as well as their understanding of the restrictions that were in place. This reality was to have a lasting impact on some refugees, especially on those who sought to enter the colonies as children. For example, Alexander Silbiger recalls that:

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[106] Hutchinson, minute, 8 May 1939, CO23/681, TNA.
[107] Yad Vashem Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names, < http://www.yadvashem.org>.
[108] 'Reichssippenamt Volkszählung vom 17.05.1938 Durchgeführt, 1939' [German 'Minority Census' 1938-1939], RG 14.013M, USHMM. Special thanks to Jan Lambertz of the USHMM, who took particular time and effort to help me pursue records of Dr. Ludwig Reinheimer, through both her expertise and knowledge of the records and of German.

> [t]he life lesson was that one must choose a profession that will always be in demand, no matter where one ends up. Engineering obviously fills the bill. Music, for instance, does not. It was because of this doctrine that I, my brother, and also my cousin Tommy started out with degrees in physical science or engineering, although all three of us subsequently earned degrees in less transportable fields (music, psychology, and law respectively).[109]

The refugee response serves to highlight recognition, and perhaps even internalisation, of Britain's economic, racial and liberal valuation of non-British human life. It is also powerful evidence of the way that attitudes towards liberalism, race and humanitarianism allowed refugees to be discussed in relation to their relative benefit to an existing policy agenda rather than as individuals in need.

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The attempts to link colonial development and the refugee question did not result in the saving of a large number of refugees. Often doors to the colonies remained firmly shut. However, the fact that attempts were made reflects that the Colonial Office pursued its own policy objectives and should be studied as a branch of government separate to the Foreign and Home Offices (although, at the same time, intimately connected to them). Indeed, domestic policy followed similar patterns of targeted entry; academics and scientists, diamond workers and domestic help were all allowed entry because they offered something to the metropole. However, entry into Britain for refugee doctors was limited because they seemed to threaten the status quo for existing doctors. This was in direct contrast to the colonies and highlights that colonial priorities were different and specific to the context of the empire in the interwar years.

Moreover, MacDonald's role offers important insights into policy formation. MacDonald's conflicting priorities, his public support for the Arab view in Palestine, his private encouragement and support of attempts to place medical workers in the colonies, and his support of settlement in British Guiana all present a challenge to the historian. Without question, they show that MacDonald consistently prioritised the welfare of the empire and British colonial subjects over refugee concerns. In this context, it is less difficult to marry the two very different views held by MacDonald.

[109] Silbiger, *Our Great Escape*, 2006.27, USHMM.

There was clearly an attraction to using the colonies as a way of easing some of the pressure for increased immigration to Palestine; refugee entry into the colonies, even on a very small scale, helped lessen a problem that threatened to engulf Britain's Arab empire, including India.

The racial 'traits' attributed to Jewish people by officials also played a significant part in the latter's perception of the ways in which Jewish settlers could help colonial development, for example, as either particularly skilled medical professionals or, based on Palestine, a skill for colonisation. Finally, as in the case of Ludwig Reinheimer, British officials could dismiss personal applications for practical reasons. His skills and suitability were not enough to overcome official perceptions of Jewish refugees and the preference for one kind of humanitarianism over another that was so pervasive in British, especially colonial, thinking.

## Conclusion:
## Race, Liberalism and Humanitarianism

Kushner argues that the lack of nuance in bystander studies is 'dangerous' because rather than advancing 'our understanding of the complexity of human responses during the Holocaust, the bystander category is in danger of aiding the tendency to see the subject in Manichean terms, as a symbol of mass evil alongside much less prevalent absolute good'.[1] These black and white distinctions allow no room for Primo Levi's 'gray zone' and much less room for a holistic understanding of the motivations behind Allied (in)action, which was in fact full of ambiguities and ambivalence.[2] Nowhere were these ambiguities more clear than in a colonial setting; nowhere is nuance more necessary. Britain's colonial responses to the interwar refugee crisis ranged from unrealised grand plans (e.g. large-scale settlement in British Guiana), unbending rejection (e.g. towards illegal refugee boats) to cautious compromise (e.g. refugee doctors), and included the actions of individual activists (e.g. MacDonald) to individual obstructionists (e.g. Brooke-Popham).

Rather than arguing that Colonial Office policy was restrictive, anti-Jewish and/or unresponsive to the humanitarian needs of refugees, this thesis offers a more nuanced explanation. It has argued: that restrictive policy was a manifestation of the contradictions of liberalism; that Jewishness mattered, especially within officials' constructed racial hierarchies; and that humanitarianism was not completely rejected but prioritised according to various colonial and domestic interests. Colonial development was the policy produced in response to these ideas. Although individual policy-makers were sometimes anti-immigrant, racist or uncaring, more often than not they were those things only in part. The refugee question engaged with other profound issues in the UK (and US), and policy-making must be assessed in these contexts. While we, with hindsight, might wish more had been done, hindsight can be misleading. For most of the period under study, the events that have become known as the Holocaust were not yet underway. Officials

[1] Kushner, 'Pissing in the Wind', pp. 60-61.
[2] Primo Levi, 'The Gray Zone', in: Omer Bartov (ed.), *The Holocaust: Origins, Implementation, Aftermath* (London, 2000).

were not knowingly abandoning Jewish refugees to the fate of Auschwitz, but rather were acting, as governments still do, by adopting policy to fit their broadest domestic, colonial and foreign policy needs.

In exploring these important issues, this thesis makes important contributions to both Holocaust studies and imperial history. By looking at the Jewish refugee crisis of the 1930s in the context of the British Empire, a new dimension has been added to the story of Britain's response to the Holocaust, providing explanations and nuance to British limitation and restriction. For imperial studies, British policy regarding the Jewish refugee crisis highlights important developments in the understudied inter-war period. This was a particular moment in imperial policy-making in which the long-held desire (and practice) of officials displacing domestic concerns to imperial spaces was increasingly challenged. The tensions this caused, expressed in questions regarding liberalism, race and humanitarianism, offer new insights into important areas of colonial history.

Although the importance of liberalism (in its broadest sense) has been identified by Kushner and other scholars (including Bill Williams, David Feldman and John Garrard), this thesis, by placing the question in the colonial setting, has taken the assessment further. The contradictions and tensions within Britain's liberalism were nowhere clearer than in its empire, where British authority was based on the 'benevolent' oppression of others. The influence of liberalism on immigration and refugee policy was particularly evident in the discussions that emerged regarding policy for individual entry and large-scale settlement schemes. Refugee entry into colonies like Kenya, Northern Rhodesia and Cyprus were all judged by the ability of refugees to assimilate into the established racial and social order. In Kenya, this meant refugees had to walk a fine line between adopting standard 'white' behaviour without challenging the place and role of black Africans or Indian imperial subjects. In Northern Rhodesia, refugees' ability to assimilate was judged in the context of a powerful white British settler community. In Cyprus, Jewish refugee entry was influenced by political concerns that made it hard for them to be viewed as anything other than a potential problem.

Large-scale colonisation plans were at the forefront of both official and public imaginations; interest in them was undoubtedly connected to the growing

importance placed on questions of population and demographics by the Colonial Office. This was reflected in the numerous large-scale settlement plans discussed (specifically for Kenya, Northern Rhodesia and British Guiana). However, these plans rested on liberal exceptions being made for refugee groups as well as plans being rushed through in order to provide the immediate places of safety required by refugees. This went against liberal ideas and challenged expectations of assimilation, necessary (but complicated) in the imperial context. Clearly, it raised ideological as well as practical difficulties which ultimately meant large-scale settlement plans failed to develop beyond the stage of discussion or investigation. Still, the records left for them provide vital information for scholars who wish to understand how Britain's liberal identity impacted refugee policy.

The connection between liberalism and imperialism has been emphasised by other scholars. This thesis's focus on the inter-war period moves the established historiography into the twentieth century and provides new ways of understanding how Britain's liberal identity impacted important issues of the past, including questions of importance to the imperial centre (the metropole) and the periphery (the colonies). For example, although Jewish, black, and Chinese migrant groups had challenged British domestic policies by their presence during the nineteenth century, it was only after the end of the Second World War when colonial migration to the UK started to increase that questions of how to engage with different racial groups was brought fully into the domestic context. Some ten years earlier, the proposed entry of Jewish refugees into divided and different racial orders in the colonies raised new questions of multiculturalism, and the imperial response to these offers insights into how policy-makers would respond to the challenges of decolonisation (and increasing indigenous power) as well as domestic immigration and race questions in the post-1945 world.

Although, as has been stressed, antisemitism alone does not explain British inaction towards Jewish refugees, this thesis has shown the value of assessing the issue from the colonial perspective, because in this particular space, it is clear that understandings of Jews (along with many other groups) were racialised and that this impacted policy. In the empire, Jews challenged the rigid racial hierarchies on which British power was based, and it is evident that Britain's liberal form of

antisemitism was active. It is not enough to say that racial thinking in the 1930s was not monolithic or simply 'racist'. Rather, official perceptions of different racial groups in the empire were varied, complex, multifaceted, and based on a comparison to each other. Understanding these aspects of racial thinking is crucial to furthering our understanding of British refugee policies (or the lack thereof).

The arrival (even in theory) of white European Jews (and the accompanying multitude of antisemitic and pseudo-scientific stereotypes) into a social hierarchy defined by skin colour created considerable problems for colonial officials. From prison uniforms to hiring black help, officials went to extreme (and explicit) lengths to protect first and foremost the imperial system in the face of these problems. In the course of debates and policy formation, officials connected whiteness to national identity, class and politics.

This definition of whiteness was not just something understood and experienced by the policy-makers. Not only did refugees experience, interact with, and internalise British racial views (e.g. the Berg sisters' experiences at school in Kenya or Silbiger's views of 'usefulness'), they also challenged and reinforced racial hierarchies, especially official (and local) perceptions of whiteness. Indeed, it was through the challenges the refugees presented to white imperial identity that we are afforded important insight into areas of relevance to British colonial studies, including whiteness. As established in chapter three, the refugee question did not just prompt discussion of Jewish refugees, but also of indigenous populations and white settlers.

In its focus on humanitarianism, this thesis has shown that the needs of Jewish refugees were ignored or marginalised not simply because they were Jewish, but rather because their humanitarian needs were considered to be less important than other concerns. This is important for both Holocaust historians and imperial scholars. For the former, it helps steer them away from assessments of the actions of liberal democracies in the 1930s and 1940s based on contemporary expectations of national and international responses to humanitarian emergencies. Such expectations were not present in the interwar years, when a growing internationalism was consistently and effectively challenged by the geopolitical convulsions seen in Europe and the Far East, and ideas of help were still firmly

rooted in Western (imperial) conceptions of development, society and culture. Prestige was a central part of the equation, but this was the case in an imperial context, where might (and white) was believed to be right. The failure to help persecuted Jews and the firm line taken with refugees on board vessels sailing illegally are perhaps jarring now but were hardly surprising then. They were justified by a liberal, imperial understanding of the world.

In the official mind, Britain's responsibility to the development and welfare of its imperial citizens (dictated by liberal and racial ideas as well as political and economic self-interest) was a far greater humanitarian priority than that of offering refuge to persecuted European Jews. This prioritisation offers important insight into colonial policy formation during the interwar years. Undoubtedly, allowing the unrestricted entry of Jewish refugees into the colonies would have appeased international pressure and saved thousands from persecution (keeping in mind that officials had no idea of what was to come in Nazi-occupied Europe). However, British colonial officials determined that the impact of refugee entry on existing colonial racial and social hierarchies – by supposedly threatening the trade of Indian artisans (as well as raising questions over the rights of Indian 'citizens' or 'subjects') and 'confusing' or undermining the welfare of black Africans – were too problematic to compete with the emergency needs of an outsider group like Jewish refugees.

Therefore, the preference given to developmental and alchemic concerns for the colony over the emergency needs of the refugees was a choice based on contemporary understandings of the world rather than a rejection of humanitarianism generally (or Jews specifically). Or put another way, the needs of the state were the central justification in any action taken on behalf of refugees by officials. Even when genuine expressions of humanitarianism were made (e.g. by MacDonald), the potential benefits to the state or to the larger 'imperial project' were central to the suggested response (e.g. linking the entry of refugee doctors to colonial development needs).

Together, these three influences – liberalism, race and humanitarianism – helped lay the foundation for the policy that was ultimately adopted towards refugees in the empire: linking refugee settlement with opportunities for

development. This, however, was a policy of compromise, in which officials found ways around the limitations and agendas set by liberalism, race, humanitarianism and pragmatic state interests. On the one hand, refugee doctors fitted the preference for controlled, individual migration, while also offering the potential to develop colonial social services which were increasingly sought after in a time of changing understandings of colonial welfare and development. On the other hand, while there was support for the refugee colonisation of British Guiana both in the territory and Whitehall, such large-scale settlement schemes were ultimately stifled because of the importance attached to the specific selection of the right kind of settler, racial attitudes that impacted who these were deemed to be, and the desire to pursue settlement without detriment to existing inhabitants.

Clearly then, in colonial settings, policy-makers were not presented with bilateral choices but rather multifaceted ones: the perceived needs of different races had to be considered; humanitarian action towards refugees (and its foreign policy consequences) had to be weighed against paternalism; and liberal tolerance, universalism and the belief in progress had to be squared with a firm belief in imperialism. Imperialism, like Allied inaction in the face of the Holocaust, offers us unsettling questions about Britain and the US, places generally conceptualised as 'liberal', 'democratic' and 'free'. To seek a fuller understanding of bystander inaction is not to condone or to excuse that inaction. Rather, seeking a thorough understanding of the reasoning behind the policies adopted or not adopted by bystanders – including a range of sometimes conflicting ideologies – reveals how events like the refugee crisis and the Holocaust challenged contemporaries' perceptions of the world and forced them to prioritise and act based on these perceptions.

Of course, these historically significant findings are also of particular relevance to the contemporary world. 2015 was in many ways the year of the refugee. Between 1 January and 7 December 2015, over 911,000 refugees and migrants arrived in Europe, with 3,550 people perishing as they made the journey.[3] Headlines

[3] William Spindler, '2015: The Year of Europe's Refugee Crisis', UNHCR Tracks, <http://tracks.unhcr.org/2015/12/2015-the-year-of-europes-refugee-crisis>, accessed 8 January 2016.

were dominated first by the perilous movement of refugees via the Mediterranean Sea, then by the sheer scale of the refugee movement, and finally, by the end of the year, terrorist attacks that were linked to perpetrators who had found their way into Europe as refugees. The modern refugee question clearly remains unanswered. However, public opinion and social media as well as politicians all made deliberate references to the past when discussing the ways in which modern Europe, Britain and America should respond. As Richard Breitman explains in an introduction to a special 'Refugee' edition of the academic journal *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, '[w]e have no option but to use past events, since we lack sufficient knowledge or instincts to solve present problems without any frame of reference'. However, as Breitman suggests, there are similarities rather than direct parallels.[4]

Therefore, it is my hope that rather than this thesis offering 'lessons', it adds to an ongoing dialogue between the past and the present, in which a careful consideration of both can help illuminate the world that was and the world which might be.

[4] Richard Breitman, 'Introduction', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 'Refugees' special issue (2015), <http://www.oxfordjournals.org/our_journals/holgen/refugees_intro.pdf>, accessed 8 January 2015.

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