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**Author**

Crago-Schneider, Kierra Mikaila

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Jewish “Shtetls” in Postwar Germany:  
An Analysis of Interactions Among Jewish Displaced Persons,  
Germans, and Americans Between 1945 and 1957  
in Bavaria

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction  
of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy  
in History

by

Kierra Mikaila Crago-Schneider

2013

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2013

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Jewish “Shtetls” in Postwar Germany:  
An Analysis of Interactions Among Jewish Displaced Persons,  
Germans, and Americans Between 1945 and 1957  
in Bavaria

by

Kierra Mikaila Crago-Schneider

Doctor of Philosophy in History

University of California, Los Angeles, 2013

Professor Saul P. Friedlander, Chair

After the Holocaust, 250,000 Jewish survivors settled into Displaced Persons (DPs) centers throughout occupied Germany. The housing in Jewish only DP camps in the American occupation zone provided a perceived safe and protected space, attracting the majority of the Jewish Displaced Persons. In these centers survivors rebuilt their lives that were destroyed during the Shoah. DPs also developed a sense of power and entitlement that they invoked in negotiations with international aid organizations, the Office of the Military Government, United States, and later, the West German Federal Republic. Jewish DPs made their first contacts with their American overseers as well as German neighbors in the centers, usually through trade and barter. Some of these interactions grew into lasting personal, criminal, and business relationships while others led to increased anti-Semitism. The Jewish DP centers were beneficial to their

residents. However, their extraterritorial nature, the increased and better rations received by Jewish DPs, and their exclusion from the German judicial system before 1951 acted to segregate the inhabitants from the German population. The extralegal nature of these centers threatened the sovereignty of the newly formed Federal Republic prompting the West German government to close the remaining camps. This led to tension, aggression, and conflict between these parties after the German takeover of the remaining centers. Despite this, the Jewish Displaced Persons, Federal Republic, and the Jewish aid organizations, worked together allowing the majority of Germany's displaced Jews to resettle on their own terms even though this meant that Föhrenwald, the last camp, remained open until 1957. This dissertation uses memoirs, letters, oral histories, and reports to examine the creation of the Jewish DP centers at Landsberg, Feldafing, and Föhrenwald to better understand the role these camps played between 1945 and 1957. This work focuses on the Jewish DP centers to recreate the relationships between the Jewish DPs, Germans, and Americans in both legal and illegal activities. It also focuses on the reemergence of anti-Semitism. Finally, this narrative analyzes the arduous process of ending Jewish DP life in Germany that left more than a thousand Jews stateless for years while they awaited resettlement.

The dissertation of Kierra Mikaila Crago-Schneider is approved.

Todd S. Presner

David Sabean

David N. Myers

Saul P. Friedlander, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2013

To my family and friends who supported me throughout this project, especially my mother who read every page. To Nellie and Adelaide who were born at just the right moment to motivate me to finish, and to James Jardine III who gave me nothing but unconditional love and understanding even when I did not deserve it. You are all my world.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

AJJDC	American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee. Shortened to the JDC or the Joint. The AJJDC was the major American charitable aid organization providing supplemental rations for the Displaced Persons in the American-run DP centers.
BayHStA	Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv sometimes shortened to HStA
CDPX	Combined Displaced Persons Executive
CK	Central Committee of Liberated Jews in Bavaria
DP	Displaced Persons. The individuals classified as DPs, and later UNDPs, had been made homeless by the war. They were evacuees, political refugees, forced laborers, and concentration camp survivors who could not or would not return to their former homes. They were labeled as stateless persons and received care and assistance from the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration and its successor, the International Refugee Organization.
HIAS	Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society
HICOG	United States High Commissioner for Germany
ICD	Information Control Division
IfZ	Institut für Zeitgeschichte
IRO	International Refugee Organization
JTA	Jewish Telegraphic Agency
MG	Military Government
MInn	Ministerium des Innern
MP	Military Police
NACP	National Archives and Record Service, College Park
NARA	National Archives and Records Administration
OMGB	Office of the Military Government, Bavaria
OMGUS	Office of Military Government, United States
RG	Record Group

## ABBREVIATIONS (CONT'D)

SDP	Social Democratic Party
SHAEF	Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force
StK	Bestand Bayerische Staatskanzlei
TB	Tuberculosis
UN	United Nations
UNA	United Nations Archive
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNRRA	United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration
U.S.F.E.T	United States Forces European Theater
USNA	United Services for New Americans
YIVO	Institute for Jewish Research
ZK	Zentral Komitet fun di bafreite yidn in datyshland or the Central Committee of Liberated Jews in Germany.

## VITA

### EDUCATION

- 2007 University of California, Los Angeles, M.A., Modern Jewish History  
2004 University of California, Riverside, M.A., Modern European History  
2002 University of California, Davis, B.A., Modern European History and Religious Studies

### LECTURE POSITIONS

- 2012 University of California, Davis,  
HIST. 113 – History of Modern Israel, Spring 2012.

### PRESENTATIONS

“Forgotten or Unwanted? The Final Remnant of Jewish DPs in Germany.” Presented at The Memory of Trauma: After the Holocaust and an Era of Genocides. Davis, California. March 2013.

Exploring the Plight and Path of Jewish Refugees, Survivors and Displaced Persons. USHMM Workshop. Washington D.C.. July - August 2012.

“Emigration By Any Means Necessary: Jewish Displaced Persons and Their Attempts to Leave Europe, 1945-1950.” Presented at To Stay or To Go? Jews in Europe in the Immediate Aftermath of the Holocaust. Warsaw, Poland. May 2012.

Bringing up Babies Behind Barbed Wire: Jewish Parenting in German Camps, 1944-1947. Presented at the International Conference on Detained Motherhoods, Fatherhoods: Parenthood in Imprisonment and Conflict Situations, Marseilles, France. October 2011.

The “Decline” of Jewish Morality in Germany as Presented in Rabbi Abraham Klausner’s Report in 1948. Presented at the GSA, Louisville, Kentucky. September 2011.

“Day to Day Interactions Between Jewish Survivors, Germans, and American Soldiers in Postwar Munich.” Presented at the 3rd Annual Summer Workshops for Holocaust Scholars, Yad Vashem, Jerusalem, Israel. July 2011.

“Separation Through Daily Interaction? Economic Competition as a Barrier to Jewish DP Integration.” Presented at the Conference of the Association for Jewish Studies, Los Angeles, California. December 2009.

## PUBLICATIONS

“Anti-Semitism or Competing Interests? An Examination of German and American Perceptions of Jewish Displaced Persons Active on the Black Market in Munich’s Möhlstrasse,” Spring 2010  
Yad Vashem Review, v1, 38 pages (167-194). Spring 2010.

## FELLOWSHIPS & AWARDS

2012 & 2013

- UCLA Graduate Division Fellowship, Winter Quarter.

2010-2011

- Kagan Claims Conf. Academic Fellowship in Advanced Holocaust Studies, 2010-2011.
- UCLA Jewish Studies Travel Funding, 2011.
- UCLA History Department Writing Fellowship, 2010.
- Jewish Studies Skirball Fellowship, 2010.
- “1939” Club Fellowship, 2010.

2009-2010

- Claims Conf. Academic Fellowship in Advanced Holocaust Studies, 2009-2010.
- Leo Baeck Institute Fritz Halbers Fellowship, October 2009.

2008-2009

- Mellon Program on the Holocaust in American & World Culture Fellowship, 2008-2009.
- Center for European and Eurasian Studies Pre-dissertation Grant, 2008.

2007-2008

- UCLA Teaching Fellowship, 2007-2008.
- Tel Aviv University Yiddish Intensive Summer Language Course Scholarship, 2007.
- UCLA History Department Distinguished Teacher Award, 2007-2008.
- Graduate Summer Research Mentorship Award under the direction of Saul Friedlander, 2007.
- Center for Jewish Studies Summer Travel Grant, 2007.

2006-2007

- GHI summer seminar in Germany, 2006.
- Berkeley Pre-Dissertation Grant, 2006.
- DAAD summer Intensive Language Grant, 2006.

2005-2006

- Center for European and Eurasian Studies Summer Travel Grant, 2005.

## INTRODUCTION

They [Jewish DPs] constituted themselves a small, independent community- as somebody once said a Jewish “shtetl”- where life became routinized, where a roof, food, clothing and other necessities of life were guaranteed them, where they felt secure in their own group...<sup>1</sup>

Alexander Harkavy’s Yiddish-English-Hebrew Dictionary translates the term *shtetl* as a “small town.”<sup>2</sup> The Merriam-Webster dictionary gives a slightly richer definition as “a small Jewish town or village formerly found in Eastern Europe.”<sup>3</sup> While both of these meanings are correct, they provide a minimal explanation of what a Jewish shtetl before the war actually was. For the majority of Germany’s Displaced Jews living in German camps after the war, who originally came from Eastern Europe, the idea of a shtetl was so much richer than just a small Jewish town. It was a Jewish community where the residents could find everything they needed: Religious facilities, schools, butchers, tailors, and grocers. Within the shtetl the Jewish resident felt secure and at home. He or she knew the goings on of the other residents and knew just who to turn to when in need of a certain service. While the attempted annihilation of European Jewry brought with it the destruction of Eastern Europe’s shtetl life, elements of these Jewish communities remained with the survivors of the Shoah.

The final flowering of Europe’s shtetl life happened in the most unlikely of places: post-Holocaust Germany. The rebirth of Jewish shtetl life could never have taken place had it not been for the creation of Jewish-only Displaced Persons centers throughout the American occupied zone in Germany. These camps were established in the late summer of 1945 and created pockets of Jewish life throughout the German countryside. They housed approximately 200,000 Jewish Displaced Persons over their existence from 1945 to 1957 and acted as centers of

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<sup>1</sup> The American Joint Distribution Committee, "The Foehrenwald Story," in *Germany, Displaced Persons, Camps: Foehrenwald, July-December 1954* (New York: AJJDC, 1954), 3.

<sup>2</sup> Alexander Harkavy, "Yiddish-English-Hebrew Dictionary," in *Yiddish-English-Hebrew Dictionary* (New York: YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, 2006), 497.

<sup>3</sup> Gramercy Books (Firm), *Webster's Universal College Dictionary* (New York: Gramercy Books, 1997). 1198.

religious, commercial, and cultural life for a sizable portion of Germany's displaced Jews. The Jewish Displaced Persons (DP) camps in the American occupation zone in Germany provided the space, care, and supplies necessary to rebuild both the Jewish community and spirit in the immediate postwar period. These Jewish centers allowed the Jewish Displaced Persons to live their lives anew after the Holocaust, and provided them with the protected environment they needed in order to develop their own "autonomous" communities. The isolated nature of the camps provided the Jewish DPs with a sense of separation from the German population that made them feel protected in the wake of the Shoah. Although they lived within the larger legal system active in Germany, they could not be prosecuted in German courts, leading many of the camp inhabitants to believe they were autonomous before 1951. Their artificial environment combined with the suffering experienced by all of the Jewish Displaced Persons during the Shoah, fostered a sense of entitlement within the camp inhabitants regarding their treatment and their futures. However, the shift in legal power from the Allies to the Federal Republic in the late 1940s, and the eventual transfer of total control over the remaining Displaced Persons in the country in 1951, resulted in a change in the position and agency held by the Jewish DPs who remained in Germany.

The dynamic of the Jewish DP centers altered significantly with the mass migration of Germany's Jews between 1948 and the early 1950s. Although these migrations led to a great reduction in the number of remaining Jewish DPs, the centers continued to provide a safe and secure living space for the thousands of displaced Jews who were unwilling or unable to leave Germany and refused to move out of the camps to integrate into the larger German society. Many of the last Jews in Germany were sick, elderly, and infirm and could not qualify for immigration to any country other than Israel. These Jews clung to the hope that their continued

stay in the DP camps in Germany would help convince a “more attractive” country to accept them for emigration. In the majority of cases, the last Jewish DPs were in fact resettled abroad or agreed to integrate into German society over the course of the 1950s.

Ironically, the continued existence of these Jewish centers in the late 1940s and 1950s also acted as beacons for several thousand former Jewish Displaced Persons who had emigrated abroad. The “returners” as they were known, came back to Germany individually in the hopes of resettling in the Jewish DP centers and regaining their DP status. They wanted to obtain emigration visas abroad, and understood it would be easier to secure these papers as DPs than as “free-livers” who did not qualify for the American DP Act. They decided that the shtetl life offered by the DP centers was better than the life they had experienced even if meant they had to continue to live among their “enemies.” Interestingly this continued even after the transfer of power from the United States High Commission in Germany (USHCG) to the Federal Republic. For both the remaining Jewish DPs in Germany, and the returner population in the country, the life provided for them in the Jewish centers throughout the American zone of occupation was more attractive than the lives they faced away from the “accursed” soil of Germany.

Despite all of the benefits that the Jewish centers provided for the camp inhabitants, their continued existence in Germany and the extraterritorial nature of these camps proved to be detrimental to the development of the relations between the Jewish Displaced Persons and the newly formed Federal Republic, both of whom worked to assert their power after 1948. While the Jewish DPs insisted on remaining in the last centers until they were satisfied with the arrangements made for their futures, and the West German government and aid organizations were impatient to close the camps, the residents were not hurried or forcefully resettled. This is especially evident in the last period of camp existence when, after 1956, only the hardest of



“hardcore” cases remained. These last Jewish DPs included individuals too sick with tuberculosis and other diseases to qualify for emigration anywhere but Israel, as well as elderly and disabled people who argued that they could not integrate into the war-torn and unsettled Jewish state. Their family members who would not leave them joined these “problematic” cases. Although the last two years of camp life had less to do with rehabilitation and more with resettlement, the continued security offered by the camps allowed these Jewish DPs to prepare themselves for their integration in Germany. The handful of remaining Jewish DPs living in the last DP center at Föhrenwald spent the final months before January 1957, preparing for their future lives outside of the center and fought to ensure that their resettlement took place on their own terms. The various German government ministries worked with all of the international aid organizations to ensure that as many Jewish DPs were resettled according to their wishes as possible. In the end only an estimated 800 Jewish DPs who felt they had no choice but to integrate into Germany chose to settle in the country.

### **In the Beginning**

The early Allied-run assembly centers established at the close of the war in Germany attracted Displaced Persons (DP) from throughout Europe. The term Displaced Persons became widely used between 1939 and 1947 when more than 55 million people were forced to leave their homes in Europe.<sup>4</sup> The Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces (SHAEF), defined this term to include anyone who was forced to evacuate their home because of the war: Actual fighters or political refugees, forced laborers, prisoners of war, stateless individuals, former troops who had been under German authority, concentration camp survivors, and civilian

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<sup>4</sup> Eugene Michel Kulischer, *Europe on the Move: War and Population Changes, 1917-47* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1948). 305.

internees.<sup>5</sup> With the dissolution of SHAEF in July 1945, the Allied militaries became responsible for the Displaced Persons found within their respective zones. The governments of the Western zone created a Combined Displaced Persons Executive (CDPX) along with the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), and the Intergovernmental Committee of Refugees (IGC) to deal with the DP situation in the absence of SHAEF.<sup>6</sup> There were an estimated seven million Displaced Persons residing in the occupied territories at the close of the war.<sup>7</sup> This number grew quickly in the weeks following the war's end. This seven million did not include the more than 12 million *Volksdeutsche*, or ethnic Germans, expelled from Eastern Europe after the Potsdam conference in July 1945.<sup>8</sup>

The Allies and the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration quickly repatriated the vast majority of the more than seven million DPs in the first months after the war.<sup>9</sup> This left an estimated one million DPs who were categorized as either United Nations Displaced Persons or ex-enemy DPs depending on which side their country of origin had fought.<sup>10</sup> These DPs were initially housed together in assembly centers with no regard to their role during the war. This meant that Jewish Holocaust survivors often lived in camps with their former persecutors and among people with intense feelings of anti-Semitism. Allied classifications changed as the occupation period progressed and as DPs were able to prove that they were victims of Nazi persecution regardless of their former homelands. This new distinction

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<sup>5</sup> Mark Wyman, *DPs: Europe's Displaced Persons, 1945-1951* (Ithaca Cornell University Press, 1998). 25.

<sup>6</sup> Officials in the Soviet zone never established a system for caring for survivors of the Shoah. They argued that they had no DP problem.

<sup>7</sup> The mass movement of so many individuals throughout Europe means that the statistical information from the period is far from precise. Seven million is a conservative estimate of the number of Displaced Persons. Some scholars argue that there were as many as 14 million Displaced Persons in postwar Germany immediately after the war. Leonard Dinnerstein, *America and the Survivors of the Holocaust*, Contemporary American History series (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982). 9.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Michael Robert Marrus, *The Unwanted: European Refugees in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985). 310.

<sup>10</sup> The designation of a United Nations DP allowed the bearer of the title to receive housing, clothing, and rations from UNRRA.

was especially important for the Jewish DPs who needed special care because they were ill and infirm as a result of their war experiences. A marked change in their treatment came with their new classification. In the late summer of 1945 the Office of the Military Government, United States (OMGUS) mandated the creation of Jewish-only Displaced Persons camps through its military zone of occupation and increased the amount of care given to the Jews living under its control.<sup>11</sup> These changes were motivated by the publication of the Harrison report, which argued that the Office of the Military Government, United States treated the Jewish Holocaust survivors under their care just as the Nazis had except that they did not murder them.<sup>12</sup> While sensational, the Harrison report was successful at bringing about change in the status and care of Germany's displaced Jews in the American zone.<sup>13</sup>

Unable or unwilling to return to their former homes, the *She'erit Hapletah*, or surviving remnant of European Jewry, settled in the DP camps in the American occupation zone. These centers attracted the last living inhabitants of the former East European shtetls with the promise of a new future and a second chance at life. The Displaced Persons camps displayed many of the same defining characteristics found in Eastern Europe's former shtetls, such as the existence of a purely Jewish community seemingly protected from its neighboring population. Both were places where all of life's necessities were guaranteed and the inhabitants believed they had autonomy over their futures. The camps did in fact provide a safe haven under the protection of the U.S. military until 1951. It was within the gates of these camps that Europe's displaced Jews could reunite with a sizable portion of the continent's former Jewish community and could feel a connection with the Jewish life destroyed by the Shoah. The Jewish DP centers also allowed a space in Germany where Jewish Displaced Persons could reestablish the fundamental systems

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<sup>11</sup> Wyman, *DPs*: 136.

<sup>12</sup> Dinnerstein, *America and the Survivors of the Holocaust*: 40-44.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

necessary for a community. They recreated the social, religious, political, and cultural structures of their former lives.

Like the shtetls of Eastern Europe, the Jewish Displaced Persons' camps in the American occupation zone were not totally isolated from the communities around them, and the inhabitants within bartered with, traveled among, and interacted with the Germans living in the towns bordering their camps. These interactions took place on a regular basis and included all manner of exchanges from the trade of goods, to marriage, and criminal collaborations. The closed nature of the Jewish DP centers that existed until 1951 meant that no German or American could enter the camps without the proper paperwork or without the arrangement of a Jewish inhabitant of the center. This does not mean that Germans and Americans did not enter the camps. In fact, German nurses, doctors, maids, merchants, and customers entered the centers on a daily basis.

Though the number of Jewish Displaced Persons in Germany was initially rather low, between 36,000 and 50,000 immediately after the war, it grew quickly in 1946 with the influx of East European Jewish *infiltrates* who fled westward escaping anti-Semitism and hoping for a chance to emigrate abroad.<sup>14</sup> The majority of these infiltrates had survived the war in the Soviet Union and often came to West Germany as intact family units. They tended to settle in the American zone of Germany because OMGUS offered Jewish-only Displaced Persons camps, supported the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine, and provided the items needed for these Jews to continue to live religious lives in Germany. The influx of the Jewish infiltrates into the American-run Displaced Persons camps changed the demographic there to one dominated by East European Jews. These Jews also increased the total Jewish DP population to around

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<sup>14</sup> The constant movement of Jewish Holocaust survivors who left one camp upon hearing news of a friend or family member, meant that these individuals were occasionally counted more than once in different DP facilities. Angelika Königseder and Juliane Wetzel, *Waiting for Hope: Jewish Displaced Persons in Post- World War II Germany* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2001). 43.

250,000 in West Germany. Whether they were Jewish Holocaust survivors or Jewish infiltrates, the Jews who called DP centers in Germany home after 1945, did so out of necessity. They could not, or would not, return to their former homes because their property had been “aryanized,” their families had been murdered, or because of the growing anti-Semitism in postwar Eastern Europe. These Jews argued that anywhere was better than the “cemetery” that remained in the east.

The Nazi efforts to kill Europe’s Jews on account of their Jewishness had initially erased the lines that differentiated these Jews by regional or language background prior to the Holocaust. Samuel Gringauz, the president of the Jewish Committee in Landsberg, argued that a new Jewish universalism had emerged from the war.

A Jewish tailor from Rhodes who could find no one in the camps to understand him, and a Hungarian druggist baptized thirty years before, lay in the same wooden bunk with me, shared their experiences as Jews with me, and died only because they were Jewish. That is why the *She'erit Ha-Pletah* feels itself to be the embodiment of the unity of Jewish experience.<sup>15</sup>

Unlike other DP groups, the displaced Jews in Germany did not define themselves by their former nationality, but rather by their Jewishness. Instead of asking to be resettled in their own countries, the Jewish DPs in postwar Germany demanded to “be evacuated to Palestine now, just as other national groups are being repatriated to their homes.”<sup>16</sup> These Jews argued that there was no home for them in Europe. Instead they claimed that they must emigrate abroad where they could rebuild their lives anew.

The sense of Jewish universalism often led the camp inhabitants to protect one another when a perceived threat presented itself. This was the case in the Stuttgart incident in 1946, the German raid on camp Föhrenwald in 1952, and the Jewish demonstration in downtown Munich in 1954. Despite this sense of Jewish camaraderie shared by camp inhabitants, there was group

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<sup>15</sup> Wyman, *DPs*: 135.

<sup>16</sup> Dinnerstein, *America and the Survivors of the Holocaust*: 42.

factionalism among the Jewish DPs based on shared illnesses, religious practices, political and ideological beliefs, and emigration demands. While the Central Council of Liberated Jews in the American zone of Germany was the representative body of all Jewish Displaced Persons in the zone, the Camp Committee acted as the elected voice representing all inhabitants in a given center. The Camp Committee was comprised of several smaller groups representing the interest of the various factions within the camp. These groups included the Zionists and Bundists, the Tubercular community (TBers), the orthodox Jewish faction, and the Jews who returned to Germany after being resettled abroad. These smaller committees worked to satisfy their own specific demands for their future, but also protested and demonstrated along with the whole Jewish DP community on matters affecting the future of displaced Jews in Germany. The crossover between groups was common, and the Camp Committee often involved itself in the affairs of the various factional committees in order to lend them support when working with the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC or Joint), OMGUS, and the West German Federal Republic. Members of one group were also often members of the other committees. This was especially true of the TB community whose members were not only representatives in the TB committee, but were also often Zionists or Bundists, orthodox, or returners. The unity shared by the Jewish Displaced Persons throughout the American zone kept the sense of community alive throughout the DP period and even after the dissolution of the DP centers.

It is important to remember that while these Jewish Displaced Persons lived within occupied Germany and after 1951 became stateless residents of the country, the DP centers afforded them the continued feeling of being a separate society within Germany. They were a group of “Others” who lived in locations clearly within the borders of Germany but outside of German society. This separation from the larger Germany population even extended to the legal

standing of Jewish Displaced Persons. German police could not arrest these DPs while they were within the confines of the camp, and Jewish Displaced Persons arrested outside of Jewish centers could not be kept in German jails for more than a few hours, tried by German courts, or sent to German prisons. This legal separation ended in 1951 with the transfer of power over the DP population in West Germany from OMGUS to the Federal Republic. Despite the handover of control, displaced Jews living in postwar Germany continued to have the option of appealing for their case to be heard by an American military court. The plea was very rarely heeded, but the fact that it continued to be a possibility illustrates the continued separation of the Jewish DPs in postwar Germany. These displaced Jews viewed their stay in Germany as temporary. They argued that they would only remain in Germany long enough to secure visas abroad. Even the former Jewish DPs who were integrated into German society in the 1950s claimed that this was only a transitory situation until they were able to emigrate to the countries of their choosing mainly the United States.

### **Questions, Method, and Structure**

The purpose of this dissertation is to develop a fuller image of the life of Jewish Displaced Persons in postwar Bavaria than those provided by previous studies. It started as an effort to better understand the complex nature of exchanges, social, economic, romantic, etc., between Jewish DPs, Germans, and Americans during the DP era, paying special attention to the perspective of the Jewish DPs themselves. Postwar Germany counted millions of foreigners living among the German population. For this reason it is impossible to discuss the “German” history of this period without the inclusion of an examination of these immigrant populations and the role they played in the country. It is equally impossible to conduct a micro-ethnic history on the various foreign groups who called Germany home during this time without discussing their

lives within the broader study of Germany in the 1940s and 1950s. For this reason, an analysis of life in Jewish DP camps must be placed within the context of German society. While it is true that Jewish Displaced Persons considered themselves distinctly separate from the larger population, this dissertation works to place them back into German history. No scholar working on Jewish DPs would argue, as Jewish aid workers once had, that these DPs lived in camps totally apart from German society, but the study of the interactions of these Jews with the larger populations living outside of their centers is still fairly new. This study examines life in three Jewish Displaced Persons camps in Bavaria, Landsberg, Feldafing, and Föhrenwald, as well as the “Jewish center” on Möhlstraße, from 1945-1957. By examining both the internal life of these Jews living in the abovementioned centers and their interactions with their neighboring Germans and American “caretakers,” this dissertation places Jewish DP history within the larger German framework. The narrative examines DP life over the course of the entire DP era, providing a fuller view of the experiences of Jewish Displaced Persons than those studies that stop at 1950 or earlier.

The discussion centered on two central questions posited at the beginning of this project. These questions focus on the perception and understanding of Bavaria’s displaced Jews regarding their continued “forced” stay in Germany. In order to really grasp the postwar Jewish situation, one must ask whether or not the perception held by these Jewish DPs pertaining to their residence in Germany changed as their stay in the country stretched on, and if so, how? The ways in which the Jewish DP population in postwar Germany defined their own status throughout the period of 1945-1957 is analyzed throughout the dissertation. It examines the opinions of Jewish DPs regarding their prolonged stay in Germany as presented in their own words. It also looks at how they envisioned their role when it came to matters such as



emigration, integration, and welfare. Some of the earliest studies that mentioned Jewish DPs in postwar Germany argued that these Jews were supplicants who contributed very little to their own lives and took whatever was given them. Such histories treated the Jewish DPs as objects of their surroundings without any autonomy of their own. The discussion moves away from these past works that positioned the Jewish DPs as secondary actors in their own lives and instead closely examines their postwar activities in order to create a clearer picture of the actual role played by DPs during their stay in Germany. It looks at the thoughts, desires, and understandings of these Jews regarding their situation over the entire period of postwar Jewish DP life. This in turn allows for a strong examination of any shifts or changes to their understanding of their lives that took place over the course of the DP period.

The second question addressed throughout the dissertation deals with an examination of power in postwar Germany. Traditionally, the person or government with the recognized legal power is the one who dictates decision-making, regulatory developments, and welfare allotments, among other things. Power and control in Germany changed hands over the course of the DP period. The transfer of power was a slow process, and eventually allowed for German authority over the Jewish Displaced Persons in the country. This study then asks whether the transfer of power from the Office of the Military Government, United States to the West German Federal Republic affected the relationships between Jewish Displaced Persons, Germans, and Americans. In order to fully answer this question, I examine several aspects that changed as control in Germany was being transferred. Major changes include economic shifts and the “economic miracle,” the reemergence of anti-Semitism, changes in inter-Jewish relations, especially with the establishment of the *Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland* as the one representative voice for all Jews living in Germany, modified social interactions between Jews

and Germans, emigration, and finally, the consolidation of Jewish Displaced Persons camps in the 1950s. All of these developments were related to powers outside of the control of the Jewish Displaced Persons in Germany, leading to questions of if, and how, they affected the displaced Jews in the country? These questions also relate back to the first topic of interest by looking at how the external changes occurring throughout Germany may have affected the Jewish DPs' understanding of their position in the country. In order to fully grasp the perception of displaced Jews relating to their continued stay in Germany, their interactions with non-DP Jews, non-Jewish DPs, and their relationships with Germans and Americans, one must explain their situation within the larger context of their surrounding environment. This of course included all of the power changes and struggles that seemed to occur outside of these Jewish Displaced Persons centers, but that must have affected life within the gates of these camps.

The discussion follows trade through the height of the grey market to the emergence of the black market, the reestablishment of the German economy, and the economic miracle in Germany.<sup>17</sup> By analyzing the reemergence of thinly veiled anti-Semitism in the guise of arguments about Jewish criminality mainly focused on their involvement in trade in black market goods, it answers whether or not these claims increased over the course of the DP period and with the shifts in power. It examines whether these accusations influenced inter-Jewish relations, and finally, if they affected the relationships between Jews, Germans, and Americans.

This analysis of Jewish involvement in crime is not one of Jewish heroism where Robin Hood type Jews stole from the more fortunate, or "evil," Germans and committed crimes for the good of the larger community. Nor does it villainize the DPs as lazy, demoralized, immoral

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<sup>17</sup> In order to trace the evolution of Germany's black market, this dissertation uses works by economists who study illegal trade. Some of the works by these economists are, Kay Boyle, *The Smoking Mountain; Stories of Postwar Germany* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1951). Vincent Bignon, "Cigarette Money and Black-Market Prices during the 1948 German Miracle," in *Economix* (2009), 1-38; Peter J. Senn, "Cigarettes as Currency," *The Journal of Finance* 6, no. 3 (1951): 329-32.

offenders as is so often seen in the later documents of the West German police and the Joint. Instead, this dissertation portrays DP involvement in “crime” within the broader context of life in postwar Germany, examining the role of Jewish DP “criminals” in relation to other groups involved in the same activities at the same time. It examines statistical information from the period pertaining to Jewish involvement in activities deemed illegal by the authorities, to conclude that these Jews were not in fact the main participants as claimed by several German organizations. It also answers whether these individuals participated in these activities out of necessity or for profit, dispelling arguments of Jewish inherent criminality prevalent at the time.<sup>18</sup>

Working on the assumption that external changes affect the perception of the Jewish DPs, as well as their relationships with Germans and Americans, several different types of “personal” sources created by the DPs themselves are used to reconstruct the complex nature of Jewish existence in postwar Germany. These sources include Yiddish language newspapers published in the Jewish Displaced Persons camps, memoirs, telegrams sent by these displaced Jews, camp committee minutes, and letters. Unfortunately, personal letters and diaries dealing with life in postwar DP camps are rare. These accounts tend to record memories about the author’s experiences during the Shoah, their lives before the outbreak of the war, or the rebuilding of their lives after their emigration abroad. Very little attention is paid to their time in postwar Germany. This dissertation uses oral histories in order help fill the gaps left by the absence of these materials and to gain the fullest picture of the lives of these DPs. The author conducted a portion

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<sup>18</sup> In order to understand the development of German perceptions of Jewish criminality, the author turned to works in the field of German criminology and anti-Semitism. These included, Richard F. Wetzell, *Inventing the Criminal: A History of German Criminology, 1880-1945* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Michael Berkowitz, *The Crime of My Very Existence: Nazism and the Myth of Jewish Criminality*, The S. Mark Taper Foundation Imprint in Jewish Studies (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007); Marie Syrkin, *The State of the Jews* (Washington, D.C.: New Republic Books, 1980).

of these oral histories, while the rest were done as part of the Spielberg oral History project or came from the collections of testimonials held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM). These interviews covered various topics dealing with life in the Jewish Displaced Persons camps, including their interactions with Germans and Americans, anti-Semitism, and occasionally, the involvement of some of the interviewees in “illegal” activities. The oral histories conducted by the author paid special attention to the stories of Jewish involvement in the grey and black markets as well as those discussing criminal exchanges in luxury goods and for profit, a development that emerged later in the postwar period. These oral histories helped to create a more complete picture of the DP era and provided more detail for particular events.

While oral histories allow scholars to ask specific questions of interviewees, they carry with them their own problems. Oral histories are often considered a less reliable source than documents written at the time of an event.<sup>19</sup> Memories change, become cloudy, and sometimes biased or nostalgic as the time between a given event and its recounting lengthens. Historians using oral history must always keep in mind that the interviewee may omit information or give a skewed account in order to show themselves in a better light. They may not be entirely candid about their involvement in a particular incident if they believe that it might reflect on them negatively. However, this does not mean that oral histories have no use in a historical examination. Accounts written at the time of an historical event can also be biased and untrue. It is for this reason that oral histories, like any source, must be used in conjunction with other evidence when reconstructing a given event. Oral histories are used alongside the “official” accounts recorded by governmental authorities as well as Jewish aid organizations. I rely on

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<sup>19</sup> For more on the use of oral histories and problems inherent with these sources please see, Kenneth R. Kirby, "Phenomenology and the Problems of Oral History," *Oral History Review* 35, no. 1 (2008): 22-28; Paul Thompson, "Problems of Method in Oral History," *Oral History* 1, no. 4 (1972): 1-47.

accounts provided in DP records as well as those collected by American, German, and Jewish officials who were involved in incidents in order to provide the most accurate portrayal of an event. By using several different accounts of the same incident, the author is able to reconstruct the history of a given experience.

I used the materials created by displaced Jews, and their testimonies are cited as much as possible when reconstructing Jewish life in Germany. The discussion also utilized the materials created by international Jewish aid organizations and the American and German governments in order to contextualize and balance events within the larger setting of postwar life in Germany. The comparative nature of this study required the use of various types of materials collected by all of the parties involved in Jewish life in the DP centers in Germany, including official documents written by the American and German governments, OMGUS reports, police statements, legal briefs, JDC inter-departmental discussions, Ministry of Work and Social Welfare statements, newspaper articles, and United Services for New Americans' letters. These sources help to tell the story of the Jewish DPs from their own perspective as well as those of the parties tasked with their care and control. They also explain the relationships of Jewish DPs with Germans, Americans, non-Jewish DPs, and non-DP Jews living in their surrounding environment. The comprehensive analysis of the development of Jewish DP life within the larger German context provided in this dissertation allows scholars to better understand the full picture of this period.

The discussion is loosely modeled on the works of three authors who examine elements explored in this dissertation. It builds on some of the ideas presented in this literature and uses these first explorations as the starting point for further research and analysis. These scholarly examinations are Frank Stern's "The Historic Triangle: Occupiers, Germans, and Jews In

Postwar Germany” and “The Whitewashing of the Yellow Badge: Anti-Semitism and Philosemitism in Postwar Germany,” Atina Grossmann’s seminal work, “Jews, Germans, and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany,” and Michael Berkowitz’s “The Crime of My Very Existence: Nazism and the Myth of Jewish Criminality.”<sup>20</sup>

Stern’s studies explored the absence of Jewish survivors in works that examined postwar history in Germany and argued that this omission has prevented authors from telling the whole story of life in Germany after the war. The important postwar “historic triangle” created by the interactions between Jews, Germans, and occupiers, help, Stern argued, to explain both the social and official interactions between these groups. His examination of anti-Semitism and philosemitism in the immediate postwar also brought to life the very real presence of anti-Jewish feelings throughout Germany immediately after the war’s end. He provided a clear picture of the reemergence of anti-Semitism in postwar Germany and looked at how American policies for reeducation had aimed at changing German thinking but ultimately failed. His investigation examined the official approaches to this anti-Semitism in Germany and why the positions taken by the governments active in the country allowed German anti-Semitism to continue.<sup>21</sup> Finally, Stern showed how these sentiments were occasionally transformed to illustrate the need and benefits of a continued Jewish existence in the country.

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<sup>20</sup> Frank Stern, "The Historic Triangle: Occupiers, Germans, and Jews in Postwar Germany," *Tel Aviver Jahrbuch für deutsche Geschichte* 19(1990): 47-77; Frank Stern and Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism (Universitat ha-Ivrit bi-Yerushalayim), *The Whitewashing of the Yellow Badge: Antisemitism and Philosemitism in Postwar Germany*, 1st ed., Studies in antisemitism (Oxford ; New York: Published for the Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism (SICSA), the Hebrew University of Jerusalem by Pergamon Press, 1992); Atina Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007); Berkowitz, *The Crime of My Very Existence*.

<sup>21</sup> Please see Anthony Kauder’s, *Democratization and the Jews: Munich 1945-1965*, for more information on official policies and the approaches to anti-Semitism taken by religious and political authorities in postwar Munich. Anthony Kauders, *Democratization and the Jews: Munich, 1945-1965*, Studies in antisemitism (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press for the Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism (SICSA), the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2004).

Picking up where Stern left off, Atina Grossmann's work on Jewish DPs in postwar Germany examines the lives of displaced Jews in relation to the larger societies. Grossmann's discussion of the "entangled" history of Jews and Germans in postwar Germany as a continuation of Jewish life in Germany before the war helps to link these periods.<sup>22</sup> Her inclusion of the non-German occupiers completed the examination by building on Stern's "historic triangle," and showed that the study of postwar Germany cannot only be understood as German History. Grossmann's book examines the relations between Jews, Germans, and the Allies, focusing on their interactions in postwar Berlin and the American zone between 1945 and 1949. She investigated what she terms "close encounters" by using gender history to examine these relationships. Her book pays special attention to sexual interactions in this period including rape, romantic relations, motherhood, and pregnancy.

Finally, Berkowitz's book examines the development of the German idea of inherent Jewish criminality from its inception in the late nineteenth century into the immediate postwar period. He shows that there is a continual use of the same anti-Semitic ideas in German thinking throughout modernity. While his study focuses on the use of these claims in the Jewish disposition toward criminality by the Nazis, his argument that Nazi ideas persisted immediately after the war allows for the continued examination of anti-Semitic claims from the Holocaust into the postwar period.

Like the works of Stern and Grossmann, my dissertation also looks at the "historic triangle" and "entangled History." However, it focuses on Jewish life in postwar Bavarian shtetls in the form of Jewish Displaced Persons camps. Additionally, this narrative spans the course of a 12-year period from the creation of these DP camps in 1945 to 1957 when the last Jewish center in Germany came to a close. Rather than stop this study at the beginning of the "economic

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<sup>22</sup> Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies*: 11.

miracle” or before the American transfer of power to the Germans, perhaps the most significant change to take place during this period, this study is able to thoroughly analyze the various internal and external changes affecting the Jews over the complete era of Jewish DP life in the country.

The study of Jewish Displaced Persons in postwar Germany is positioned within several different historical disciplines. This is equally true for this dissertation, which employs elements from social, cultural, political, economic, ethnic, institutional, transnational, and demographic history in order to fully explain the Jewish Displaced Persons era in Germany. It also relies on studies conducted in numerous other fields including criminology, psychology, sociology, and law.<sup>23</sup>

The discussion in this work is divided into three parts. Each part corresponds to a period of significant change in the lives of Germany’s displaced Jews. The first part covers the period from 1945-1948, beginning with the end of the Second World War and the mass movements of millions of individuals across Europe. It explains the classifications and divisions of all of the Displaced Persons in Germany and discusses the creation of the American-run assembly centers that would later evolve into the Jewish-only DP camps in the country. Next it includes a discussion of rations in the immediate postwar period, the total collapse of Germany’s economy, and the organic development of Germany’s second economy, or grey market. It then examines the political parties that quickly emerged in Jewish DP camps throughout Germany as well as the establishment of both camp committees and a central Jewish representative body located in Munich.

The main focus of this section of the dissertation is on the creation of a series of Jewish “safe havens” in the form of Jewish-only centers throughout the zone that provided the Jewish

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<sup>23</sup> See footnotes 14 and 15 for some of the studies regarding this topic used in this dissertation.



DPs with a sense of security and protection from their German neighbors. The establishment of these communities or “shtetls” within Germany allowed the Jewish DP to begin rebuilding his life anew and to plan for his future away from the “accursed soil of Germany.” The Jews who considered the Jewish DP centers their home did so under the assumption that their stay in Germany would be temporary and that they controlled their futures. They believed that they would be able to secure visas abroad and that once they had done so, their departure would be conducted on their own terms. The ever-increasing protection provided in the late 1940s by both the IRO and the Americans fed the Jewish belief that they controlled their own lives and were autonomous. By 1948 the DP camps seemed to be off limits to everyone, including American military police (MPs), unless they were able to acquire the correct warrants from the proper authorities. The Jewish DP was able to dictate with whom he or she interacted and on what terms within the confines of their International Refugee Organization (IRO) center.

This section ends with a case study of one of Bavaria’s notorious black market areas in order to show the contrast between the ever-growing security shared by the DPs within the camps, and the reality of Jewish life outside of these centers. While the Jewish DP camps were a “safe” space, off limits to German and American police entry without warrants, Jewish DPs outside of the camps were subject to German authority. While the thriving illegal market located around Möhlstraße had started as an area of barter and exchange, it quickly became the center of commerce in Bavaria, and set prices throughout the region. The continued success of the market on Möhlstraße, while only one of several similar black markets throughout Western Germany, was argued to be a main obstacle blocking the reemerging German economy. This section provides a view of the evolution of one of Germany’s most notorious black markets. It also provides the reader with a picture of re-emerging anti-Semitism in Germany, which, like the

Nazi propaganda of the war period, targeted the Jews as criminals corrupting German society and profiting off of poor, hardworking, and honest Germans.

The period from 1948 to 1951 was one of monumental change in Germany. It was during this time that the Office of the Military Government United States, which governed a substantial portion of Western Germany and Berlin, began to shift from a military based government to one run by American civilian officials (USHCG). These changes to the existing government included the gradual transfer of official control from OMGUS to German politicians, and later, to the newly formed West German Federal Republic. It was during this time that the majority of Jewish Displaced Persons were resettled abroad with the creation of the state of Israel and the United States DP Act created in June 1948.<sup>24</sup> This period was significant for the Jewish DPs who continued to remain in centers throughout the American zone, as it became ever clearer that the imminent transfer over Germany's Displaced Persons from OMGUS to the Federal Republic would soon take place. For the Jews remaining in Germany, these years leading up to the handover of their control marked the gradual end to their feelings of separation from, and protection against, their neighboring Germans. This sense of growing insecurity was simultaneously reinforced as expressions of anti-Semitism became more and more frequent and seemingly more accepted by the American and German authorities.

Part two analyzes this shift in power and the rise in anti-Semitism, which resulted in both the publication of the Adolf Bleibtreu letter and the Auerbach Affair. These events led aid organizations caring for the Jews in Germany and the DPs themselves to call for Jewish DPs' immediate emigration abroad. By examining the two major public events deemed anti-Semitic

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<sup>24</sup> While the initial DP Act favored non-Jewish East European DPs and ethnic Germans, it also allowed some Jewish Displaced Persons to qualify for immigration to the United States. There are many sources that discuss the Displaced Persons Act in relation to the anti-Jewish DP bias contained within it. For more see, Dinnerstein, *America and the Survivors of the Holocaust*; Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies*.

by Jews around the world, this section looks at the very public rise of German anti-Jewish sentiments in the postwar and the Jewish response in Germany. While the period from 1948-1951 corresponds with the mass migration of many of Germany's Jewish DPs, DP camps continued to exist with thousands of residents who were ineligible or unwilling to emigrate. This section explains how these changes in Germany affected the Jewish DP population in Bavaria and the measures these DPs were willing to take in order to see to their resettlement abroad.

Finally, the handover of the control of all Displaced Persons from OMGUS to West Germany in 1951 brought with it an end to the sense of security shared by the Jewish DPs. The Displaced Persons camp had once acted as a safe zone of sorts. At this time these centers became open to German search and seizure, and the Jewish Displaced Persons found themselves under the care and control of their former persecutors. These Displaced Persons became known as *Heimatloser Ausländer*, or stateless foreigners, and rather than remaining as a separate part of German society, they were brought into the German economy and under German law.

The final part of this narrative examines the last groups who lived in Jewish DP camps in the American zone and the efforts of the Jewish organizations in Germany and the Federal Republic to resettle them away from Europe. It contains an examination of three "problematic" groups of Jewish DPs in the only remaining camp at Föhrenwald. These include the returner population, or the former Jewish Displaced Persons who attempted to resettle in the German DP camps after their emigration, and the TB and orthodox communities in Föhrenwald. Many of the last Jewish DP inhabitants of Germany remained in the country despite their best efforts to settle abroad because they were deemed undesirable by the countries that had taken other Jewish DPs. Their age, ill health, and criminal records made them incredibly hard to place, forcing the parties involved with their care like the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), the

Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), and the Federal Republic, to plan for their integration into German society regardless of their calls for immediate emigration. Many of these last Jewish DPs refused integration, and occasionally emigration, pushing for a continuation of camp life. These efforts stalled the closure of camp Föhrenwald stretching out its existence beyond the German and JDC calls for its dissolution. Despite these attempts, the camp was finally closed in February 1957 bringing with it an end to the Jewish DP era in postwar Germany.

### **Sources and Literature**

The arguments presented in this dissertation are the result of almost a decade spent in archives in the United States, Germany, and Israel. The sheer numbers of materials collected by all of the parties involved in the care and control of the Jewish Displaced Persons left many sources. The collections held in Germany, the U.S., and Israel consist of millions of reports, letters, newspaper clippings, notes, memoranda, charts, graphs, and photos from the period. Each of the governments and organizations that dealt with Displaced Persons kept their own records, which are now located in archives around the world. The presence of so many fine collections relating to Jewish DP life in postwar Germany allowed for the following account.

While the discussion contained herein focuses on the experiences of Jewish DPs in the postwar period, it does so within the broader history of life in Germany at the time. The story of the Jewish DPs cannot be fully understood without also analyzing the events and changes affecting the wider population in Germany. It contributes to the mapping of a crucial aspect of Jewish life in Germany after the war, important to understanding the economic, social, and psychological negotiations through which the Jewish survivors began to resurrect their lives in the wake of the Shoah. The comparative nature of this study requires the use of numerous sources collected by the parties living and working in Germany at the time. This allows for the

creation of a clearer picture of the postwar period in Germany and the place held within it by these displaced Jews.

Several archives were used in order to reconstruct the DP era in Bavaria, and to provide the picture of Jewish life in postwar Germany discussed throughout the dissertation. The sources used to portray the experiences of the displaced Jews, which were written and collected by the DPs, were found in the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee collections (AJJDC), the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum files (USHMM), the Leo Baeck Institute records, and those held by the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research (YIVO). The documents collected by these archives included letters, memoirs, camp posters, newspapers, and reports.

The materials dealing with the institutions and governments that worked with these DPs, as well as official statements issued in the press, were collected in the National Archives at College Park, the United Nations archives, the Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, the Stadtarchiv München, the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, the Stadtarchiv Wolfratshausen, and the Stadtarchiv Landsberg am Lech. While containing many of the personal documents used to explain the experiences of Jewish DPs in postwar Germany, the AJJDC also holds a plethora of official documents pertaining to the organization's care for these Jews. These archives contained the legal, ministerial, and official records collected by the local governments in Munich, Wolfratshausen, and Landsberg, as well as those kept by Jewish organizations and the postwar governments like the JDC, HIAS, OMGUS, the Federal Republic, and the Bavarian government. The JDC archives held the internal correspondence relating to all matters of DP life. While portions of the JDC materials can be found at the USHMM, YIVO, and the city archives in Wolfratshausen, the wealth of materials for this organization are housed in New York and Jerusalem. Along with the aforementioned letters, Yiddish newspaper articles, camp committee

minutes, and formal requests, these archives also hold the JDC communications with American and German authorities as well as those with other Jewish organizations like the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, the World Jewish Congress, and the Jewish National fund. Additionally, these archives contain several thousand files pertaining to JDC correspondence with representatives of several countries with whom they hoped to secure emigration for the DPs. Paramount among these are the records of their communication with the Yishuv, and later, the Israeli government. Finally, these archives contain the newspaper articles in Yiddish, German, English, and sometimes Spanish that make any mention of the DPs under JDC care, the letters sent by the DPs and DP committees to the JDC, legal documents relating to DPs who needed help with restitution, emigration paperwork, or who found themselves in trouble with the law, as well as an assortment of fliers and internal memos written by the DPs.

The JDC archives proved to be the most fruitful for this dissertation because they held the most comprehensive and widest range of materials pertaining to Germany's Jewish DPs in the American zone of occupation. The fact that the JDC was also involved in the affairs of the Jewish DPs until the closure of the last camp meant that Joint materials cover the entire period of Jewish DP life in Germany. That having been said, the JDC has many regulations in place that make working with certain materials impossible. Researchers at the JDC sign contracts before working with documents, however, the JDC's contract stipulates that any materials that could portray the individuals discussed within, or the JDC itself, in a negative light are closed indefinitely. This means that the many legal documents collected by the JDC continue to be sealed. The exclusion of these documents made reconstructing the experiences of DPs arrested for their involvement in illegal activities difficult but not impossible. Oral histories were used to help with the absence of these materials.

The official documents pertaining to American involvement in the care and control of Germany's Displaced Jews are held at the National Archives in College Park Maryland. These files contain the military correspondence regarding DP life in the zone from 1945 to the early 1950s. The reports, surveys, official letters, and conference minutes collected at the National Archives provide a view into the running of the early assembly centers, the circumstances that led to the creation of the Jewish-only DP camps, and rationing in the early postwar period.<sup>25</sup> The American reports tracking the trends in German anti-Semitism, statistical information on Jewish involvement in criminality, and German opinion polls, which provide a view into the feelings that Bavarians held toward their Jewish DP neighbors over the course of the first few years of occupation were especially important for writing this dissertation. Finally, these records contain reports that discussed German perceptions of Jewish criminality, letters from various German organizations asking for the transfer of legal jurisdiction over the Jews to German police and the responses from the various branches of OMGUS and later USHCG. They also include accounts of raids on areas believed to be centers of crime, lists discussing the crimes most prevalent in Germany and their affects on the economy, and reports analyzing the participants in illegal trade in the country. The continued presence of the American military and later civilian government in Germany means that these documents span a significant portion of the DP era and provide insight into the American perception of events in Germany dealing with German, Jewish, and American interactions. These records are especially important when analyzing how seemingly outside changes within Germany affected the Jewish DPs in the country. Unfortunately, many of the records pertaining to the involvement of American troops engaged in criminality were closed

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<sup>25</sup> The United Nations' archive in New York also holds materials relating to the early period of DP life in Germany. These records contain documents about the mass movements of the Displaced Persons in the immediate postwar, rationing and repatriating these individuals, and caring for those who could not, or would not, return to their former home countries.

in the 1960s. These documents can be opened under the Freedom of Information act, but the process takes over two years, leaving researchers without the specific details of American participation in these activities. This is not to say that there are not records of American involvement in illegal trade. In fact, some of these records are actually available in the Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv in Munich, and the statistical information regarding American contributions to crime in Germany is open and accessible.

The German records of the Federal Republic and Bavarian governments, police reports, and public surveys relating to the interactions between German authorities, the German population, and Jewish Displaced Persons are held at the Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, the Staatsarchive München, the Institut für Zeitgeschichte, and the Stadtarchiv München. The materials held in the Stadtarchiv München and the Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv contain the minutes and reports of the various branches of the Bavarian ministry including the conference notes of the Ministry of Work and Social Welfare tasked with the integration of the DPs who could not emigrate. This archive also holds the records of the Munich chief of police along with the weekly crime reports, suspect lists and addresses, as well as arrest records. These materials allow scholars to differentiate between a suspect who lived in a Jewish DP camp and those living outside of these centers. Several of the files dealing with Jewish Displaced Persons held at the Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv include statements of DPs who had experienced German anti-Semitism, verbally, physically, and in the form of vandalism, as well as reports on the anti-Semitic desecrations of Jewish cemeteries throughout the district. While this archive contains materials relating to Jewish, German, and American interactions, German law requires that a file remain closed until the individual named therein is either ten-years dead or over the age of 90. This makes gaining permission to view these documents difficult. Postwar emigration means



that many of the individuals identified in these files have left Germany making it hard to determine if the person named in these records has met the abovementioned requirements. Additionally, many records, like those pertaining to the life and work of Philip Auerbach, the former head of the Bavarian State Restitution office remained closed until 2010, despite the fact that he has been dead since 1952. The sensitive nature of the materials and the circumstances regarding the Auerbach trial and his suicide meant that these documents continued to remain closed long after his death.

The materials acquired at the Stadtarchiv München consisted of police reports covering the demonstrations of Jewish Displaced Persons in downtown Munich against what was perceived to be two very public anti-Semitic events: the publication of the Adolf Bleibtreu letter and the Auerbach Affair. These incidents were discussed and investigated by the local government, and all manner of materials collected regarding these events, including a report on the handwriting analysis of the Bleibtreu letter, are held there. Additionally, this archive contains the local police reports on the 1949 and 1952 raid on the Möhlstraße.

The Institut für Zeitgeschichte holds numerous German opinion polls conducted throughout Bavaria. These surveys asked Germans to rank their level of anti-Semitism, their feelings about a continued Jewish presence in Germany, and their opinions about the Nazi party, providing a clear picture of the postwar sentiments of significant portions of Bavaria's population. I also used published materials collected at the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek (Stabi) to present the position of the press in matters relating to Jewish DPs and to acquire a glimpse of the public's response in the form of letters to the editors and opinion pieces.

Finally, files collected by the Stadtarchiv Wolfratshausen and Landsberg am Lech were used throughout this dissertation in order to better understand local history of the interactions

between Jews and their German neighbors. These two archives contain several materials regarding the DP centers at Föhrenwald and Landsberg including information about the creation of these centers, their roles during the Second World War, their designation as Jewish-only camps in the postwar period, and their transformation into German communities at the close of the DP era. These archives possess collections on the American military's involvement with these camps, including camp raids, images of the various phases of these centers, local newspaper articles, and personal letters acquired by a local museum curator who put on an exhibit about camp life in Föhrenwald. The Stadtarchiv Landsberg am Lech holds the city minutes, correspondence, and internal memos dealing with the interactions of the Jewish DPs and the local townspeople, as well as the complaints lodged by these town residents against this Jewish population. These complaints included references to the "illegal" markets held outside of the camps on Sundays, German claims of Jewish criminality, especially theft, and accusations that numerous Jewish DPs were milling about blocking the way of the city's residents. The materials collected in these archives provide a local history of these camps placing them squarely within the setting of these neighboring German towns. This view allows scholars to contextualize Jewish life within Bavaria and provides a glimpse of the DPs within German society.

### **Historiography**

Despite the millions of documents held in several different countries, and written in numerous languages, the study of Jewish Displaced Persons was largely ignored before the 1970s. While Jewish DPs were briefly mentioned in the context of early Holocaust and Zionist histories, they were never the central focus of these studies. The sheer enormity and horror of the Holocaust and the creation of the state of Israel often overshadowed the period bridging these

two events. This is not to say that nothing was written about the Jewish DPs in the immediate postwar period. In fact, aid workers who had firsthand interactions with the Jewish Displaced Persons in Germany wrote a handful of studies during the DP era. It appears that only those directly involved with the maintenance of the DPs understood their historical significance immediately after the Holocaust. Leo Srole, an American sociologist who was the UNRRA welfare Director for the Landsberg DP center beginning in 1946, wrote the very first account of life in the Jewish Displaced Persons centers. Srole's 11-page article, "Why the DP's Can't Wait: Proposing an International Plan of Rescue," appeared in *Commentary* and provided an account of the postwar situation for all of Germany's estimated 1,000,000 Displaced Persons, including the Jewish DP population.<sup>26</sup> It began by condemning the world for the continued "captivity" of the survivors of the Holocaust while praising these survivors for their resilience and ability to begin building their lives anew.<sup>27</sup> He ended his study with a plan for the emigration of all of Germany's DPs with special consideration given to Europe's Jews and Holocaust survivors. His plan included the designation of United Nations citizenship and passports for all DPs so that they could emigrate if they were unhappy with their future placement. This article works as both a primary source and as a political opinion piece, providing scholars with one of the first accounts of DP life in postwar Germany.

Koppel Pinson's, "Jewish Life in Liberated Germany: A Study of the Jewish DP's," followed shortly after Srole's work, also appearing in 1947. Unlike Srole, Pinson was a trained and well-respected historian who approached the topic of the Jewish Displaced Persons from a scholarly perspective. Pinson was the Director of Education for the Joint in the immediate postwar period and worked closely with Jewish DPs in both Germany and Austria. He aimed to

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<sup>26</sup> Leo Srole, "Why the DP's Can't Wait: Proposing an International Plan of Rescue," *Commentary* 3, no. 1 (1947): 13-24.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

write a clear report of the actual situation of the Jewish survivors in Germany.<sup>28</sup> While Pinson was willing to concede that Srole's study was the best to date, he also noted that it idealized the Jewish DPs. Instead, Pinson sought to present the situation as he had experienced it. His article provided information on the mass movements of Displaced Persons in the postwar and the number and background of the Jewish population among these DPs. He also provided an account of the mindset, behavior, and personality of the "average" Jewish Displaced Person, while providing a picture of the typical Jewish DP camp. Pinson ended his article with a note on the destruction of Europe's Jewish elite in the Shoah. He argued that this loss left the DPs without any cultural or intellectual leaders, which in turn pushed them into despair and moral decay. His suggestion was the immediate immigration of these DPs to Palestine and the United States because; he argued on moral grounds, that they could not be integrated into the German economy. Until then it was the responsibility of the foreign Jews who worked with these DPs to provide them with the inspiration and direction needed to continue their lives in Germany.

Very little was written between 1947 and 1953, but this changed with Leo Schwarz's publication of, *The Redeemers: A Saga of the Years 1945-1952*.<sup>29</sup> Schwarz had acted as the JDC Director to Germany from 1946-1947 and wrote his text to educate the world about the plight and struggles of the *She'erit Hapletah* as he had experienced them during his tenure. He provided the first full historical account of the Jewish Displaced Persons in Germany and his book discussed the experiences of Jewish DPs in centers throughout the country. He focused on the efforts of the Jewish DPs to see to the creation of the Jewish state in Palestine and how these DPs prepared for their future lives abroad.

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<sup>28</sup> Koppel Pinson, "Jewish Life in Liberated Germany: A Study of the Jewish DP's," *Jewish Social Studies* 9, no. April (1947): 101.

<sup>29</sup> Leo W. Schwarz, *The Redeemers: A Saga of the Years 1945-1952* (New York: Farrar Straus and Young, 1953).

The period between 1953 and 1970 again saw very little scholarship on Germany's Jewish DPs. This changed with the works of Yehuda Bauer who published *Flight and Rescue: Brichah*, in 1970 as well as, "The Initial Organization of the Holocaust Survivors in Bavaria."<sup>30</sup> Bauer examined the organized flight of an estimated 250,000 Jews from Eastern Europe into Germany and Austria, as well as the attempts of some of these Jews to illegally immigrate to Palestine. He argued that while the survivors organized these flights, they received monetary help from the JDC, a controversial argument.<sup>31</sup> He also looked at the creation of the Jewish representative bodies in the immediate aftermath of the Shoah. This study included an examination of the settlement of thousands of Holocaust survivors in camps throughout Bavaria and the formation of the Central Committee of Liberated Jews in the U.S. zone as the representative body of the DPs in the American zone. These studies marked the beginning of the flourishing field of Jewish Displaced Persons History.

The 1980s saw the emergence of a handful of books that tangentially looked at the plight of the Jewish Displaced Persons. These broad social histories of Displaced Persons focused on the movement of all of Europe's displaced in the immediate postwar period with an examination of the Jewish contingent among this group. The first work published in the early 1980s was Leonard Dinnerstein's *America and the Survivors of the Holocaust*, which presented a very negative portrayal of American actions toward the DPs in the wake of the Shoah.<sup>32</sup> While the

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<sup>30</sup> Yehuda Bauer, *Flight and Rescue: Brichah*, 1st ed., Contemporary Jewish Civilization Series (New York: Random House, 1970); Bauer, "The Initial Organization of the Holocaust Survivors in Bavaria," *Yad Vashem Studies* 8(1970): 232.

<sup>31</sup> Bauer's argument that the Jews fleeing the East had largely organized themselves continues to be contested although some other studies corroborate Bauer's original findings. Additionally, the JDC continues to deny that they ever provided any monetary support specifically for these illegal movements westward.

<sup>32</sup> Dinnerstein's work argued that Jewish DPs were mistreated and neglected by authorities from the United States because of American anti-Semitism. He argued that the initial treatment of these Jewish DPs, who were grouped together with all other Displaced Persons, was inhumane and ignored their specific needs resulting from their Holocaust experiences. He follows this argument through to the DP Act created in 1948, which Dinnerstein claimed

majority of Dinnerstein's book focused on the treatment of Jewish DPs in the American zone, it also examined American treatment of non-Jewish DPs and the effects of the DP Act on all Displaced Persons throughout the zone. Michael Marrus' *The Unwanted: European Refugees in the Twentieth Century* provided an examination of the mass movements throughout Europe, beginning before the outbreak of the First World War.<sup>33</sup> Marrus devoted nine pages to Jewish DPs in the post-Holocaust period and 46 pages to the entire DP era in Europe. Finally, Mark Wyman's, *DPs: Europe's Displaced Persons, 1945-1951*, approached the DP period from an international perspective, discussing the creation of IRO centers and the treatment of all DPs in Europe in broad terms.<sup>34</sup> However, he does provide a short examination of the Jewish DPs among the millions of non-Jewish Displaced Persons in Europe. These studies examine Europe's displaced persons as a distinct group on the continent, assigning only a very minor role to the Jewish DPs within this setting. While they provide scholars with a general view of the DP situation after the war, they do not contextualize these studies within the larger history of specific countries, instead discussing them as a separate postwar phenomenon occurring in various locations.<sup>35</sup> Despite these omissions, these works illustrate a noticeable shift in the studies of the time away from broader examinations of the war and its aftermath toward a specific study of DPs in Europe.

Several pioneering books were written in the late 1980s and 1990s that have influenced the way in which Jewish DP history is written. This period sparked the development of new

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favored Hitler's former collaborators over the Jewish Holocaust survivors. Dinnerstein, *America and the Survivors of the Holocaust*.

<sup>33</sup> Marrus, *The Unwanted*.

<sup>34</sup> Wyman, *DPs*.

<sup>35</sup> A few studies specifically look at the lives of Jewish Displaced Persons and the work of outside aid organizations helping to care for the Displaced Persons were also published in the 1980s. These works were dominated by German and Hebrew authors and include Wolfgang Jacobmeyer, "Displaced Persons." *Untersuchungen zur Besatzungspolitik in den deutschen Westzonen und zur Zuwanderung osteuropäischer Juden 1945-1947*, " *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 9(1983): 421-52; Yehuda Bauer, *Out of the Ashes: The Impact of American Jews on Post-Holocaust European Jewry*, 1st ed. (Oxford ; New York: Pergamon Press, 1989).

scholarship in Germany and Israel that centered specifically on Jewish Displaced Persons. These studies were fairly country specific with Israeli scholarship focusing on the role played by Jewish DPs in Zionist efforts to establish a Jewish homeland in Palestine and German historical studies concentrating on Jewish DPs in specific towns or areas in Germany.<sup>36</sup> Paramount among the German studies is Frank Stern's groundbreaking article, "The Historic Triangle: Occupiers, Germans, and Jews in Postwar Germany," which continues to influence authors writing on Jewish DPs in postwar Germany since its publication in 1990.<sup>37</sup> Stern's works discuss the absence of Jewish Holocaust survivors in German scholarship on the postwar period and notes the general trend in early Jewish historiography to discuss these Jewish survivors as if they were living outside of German history. The German texts written in the late 1980s and 1990s work to remedy both Jewish and German History by stressing the very real presence of non-German Jewish DPs in the postwar German picture.<sup>38</sup> These studies are some of the first to try to insert Jewish DPs back into German history by paying special attention to the relationships between

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<sup>36</sup> These early Zionist studies concentrated on the role that the authors assigned to the displaced Jews as "vehicles" for bringing about the Zionist goal. These works include Dalia Ofer's, "Holocaust Survivors as Immigrants: The Case of Israel and the Cyprus Detainees," *Modern Judaism* 16(1996); Ofer, "From Illegal Immigrants to New Immigrants: the Cypress Detainees 1946-1949," *The Holocaust and History* (1996); and Idith Zertal's, *From Catastrophe to Power: Holocaust Survivors and the Emergence of Israel* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998) and all discuss the DP period in terms of the part played by displaced Jews in convincing the world that they needed a Jewish state. These early studies have been expanded upon and contested by some of the more recent works that have appeared in the field. One of these newer studies, written by Avinoam Patt, looks at the motivations behind the large Zionist youth and kibbutz movements that arose across Europe after the Holocaust. For more on the development and attraction of these movements please see, Avinoam J. Patt, *Finding Home and Homeland: Jewish Youth and Zionism in the Aftermath of the Holocaust* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2009).

<sup>37</sup> Stern, "The Historic Triangle: Occupiers, Germans, and Jews in Postwar Germany."

<sup>38</sup> The key local studies in this field are Juliane Wetzel's, *Jüdisches Leben in München 1945-1951: Durchgangsstation oder Wiederaufbau?*, (Munich: Kommissionsverlag UNI-Druck, 1987). Angelika Königseder, *Flucht nach Berlin: jüdische Displaced Persons 1945-1948*, Reihe Dokumente, Texte, Materialien (Berlin: Metropol, 1998); Angelika Eders, *Flüchtige Heimat: Jüdische Displaced Persons in Landsberg am Lech 1945 bis 1950* (Munich: Kommissionsverlag UNI-Druck, 1998); Judith Tydor Baumel-Schwartz, *Kibbutz Buchenwald: Survivors and Pioneers* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1997); Hagit Lavsky, *New Beginnings: Holocaust Survivors in Bergen-Belsen and the British zone in Germany, 1945-1950* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2002). This book is included in the list despite the fact that it was published in 2000, because Lavsky's study of DP life in the British zone, especially in Bergen-Belsen started in the early 1990s with her publication of "The Day After: Bergen-Belsen from Concentration Camp to the Center of Jewish Survivors in Germany," *German History*, vol. 11, no 1 (1993).

Jewish DPs and Germans, and in the case of Stern the occupiers, living in the surrounding areas, a first in the field.

The study of Jewish Displaced Persons in Germany was shaped by the trends established in the seminal studies written over the last three decades. These works continue to be important for any examination of the life of displaced Jews in Germany. They have set the foundation upon which DP scholars build and expand on the study of Jewish life in the postwar period. In addition to the previously mentioned analyses written by Frank Stern, Atina Grossmann, and Michael Berkowitz, the works of Angelika Königseder and Juliane Wetzel, Michael Brenner, and Ze'ev Mankowitz were influential for the writing of this dissertation.

Examining the rebirth of Jewish life in the Displaced Persons centers, Angelika Königseder and Juliane Wetzel authored, *Lebensmut im Wartesaal: Die jüdischen DPs (Displaced Persons) im Nachkriegsdeutschland*.<sup>39</sup> This book looks at the formation of cultural and institutional life within the confines of Germany's Jewish DP centers. It was one of the first German studies to pick up Jewish history in 1945 with the end of the Second World War and to examine the recreation of Jewish life in the Displaced Persons camps throughout Germany. To date, this work acts as one of the comprehensive studies of Jewish life in postwar Germany by providing a comparative examination of the American and British zone through an analysis of the Föhrenwald and Bergen-Belsen Jewish centers. The book provides information on the rebirth of Jewish life in postwar German DP camps as well as a very brief explanation of the closing of Föhrenwald and Belsen. The appendix also provides a short, one or two sentence, explanation of the locations, make up, and number of inhabitants of many of the other Jewish DP centers throughout Germany. Throughout this dissertation I expand on Königseder and Wetzel's

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<sup>39</sup> Angelika Königseder and Juliane Wetzel, *Lebensmut im Wartesaal: die jüdischen DPs (displaced persons) im Nachkriegsdeutschland*, Die Zeit des Nationalsozialismus (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch, 1994). (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1994)



work by analyzing not only Föhrenwald, but also the centers at Landsberg and Feldafing to provide a fuller view of Jewish DP life in southern Bavaria. Additionally, while *Lebensmut im Wartesaal* does include a very brief, 18 page, examination of the final years of camp Föhrenwald, this part of the study glosses over the finer details affecting the Jewish DPs, West German administration, and Jewish aid organizations working to close the center. My study works to remedy these oversights by closely focusing on the “end” of the DP era, and the closing of Föhrenwald, the last Jewish DP center in Germany.

Like Stern, Michael Brenner worked to locate postwar Jewish History securely back into its rightful place as a part of German History. His book, *After the Holocaust: Rebuilding Jewish Lives in Postwar Germany*, provides a clear account of Jewish life, immediately after the Shoah.<sup>40</sup> This examination mainly focuses on the return of German-Jewish survivors, and the rebuilding of Jewish life in Germany in the first five years after the war.<sup>41</sup> However, his study does include a short section on Jewish life in the Displaced Persons centers. While Brenner is concerned with the Jewish communities that would permanently remain in Germany, he does not ignore the presence of the more than 200,000 Jews who used Germany as a temporary stop on their way to emigrating abroad. One of the most important contributions made by Brenner is his use of oral histories to describe life in postwar Germany through the voice of the survivors and the Jewish leaders who worked to reconstruct Jewish life in the country. Although this dissertation is centrally focused on the lives of Jewish Displaced Persons in postwar Bavaria, it does include an analysis of the interactions of these Jews with the returning German-Jewish population who would help to reestablish the German-Jewish community in Germany.

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<sup>40</sup> Michael Brenner, *After the Holocaust: Rebuilding Jewish Lives in Postwar Germany* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997).

<sup>41</sup> For a more in-depth study of the German-Jewish re-émigrés and the re-creation of the Jewish community in Germany, please see Andrea Sinn, *Public Voices. Jüdische Politik und Presse in der frühen Bundesrepublik* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013).

Brenner's work acts as a model by which the author was able to reconstruct and contextualize these relations. In addition, Brenner's use of oral histories allowed the author to conceptualize the use of oral histories in this work. Unlike Brenner's book, which concentrates on the beginning of the reemergence of Jewish life in Germany, I focus on the entire DP period thereby providing a full account of the DP era in Germany from its conception in the postwar to its conclusion.<sup>42</sup>

Ze'ev Mankowitz's seminal work, *Life Between Memory and Hope: The Survivors of the Holocaust in Occupied Germany*, was the first comprehensive historical study on the Jewish Displaced Persons in Germany since Schwarz's book nearly 50 years before. Mankowitz provides a rich examination of Jewish life within the Displaced Persons centers and portrays Jewish DPs as actors in their own futures pushing for the world to acknowledge their needs and desires. He pays special attention to the development of the internal committees and organizations created by the Jewish DPs within the camps. Mankowitz clearly locates the DPs within the context of their Shoah experiences and argues that the events of the war made Zionists out of the majority of Europe's displaced Jews. He argues that many of these DPs viewed the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine as a form of redemption for the more than 6,000,000 murdered Jews. One of Mankowitz's most important contributions to the field of Jewish DP studies is his use of the term *She'erit Hapletah*, a biblical phrase formerly used by survivors of the Holocaust when describing themselves in the immediate postwar period. Mankowitz reintroduced this expression to define the Jews across Europe who lived through the war. All

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<sup>42</sup> Michael Brenner continued his study of Jewish life after the Second World War in his most recent book, *Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland von 1945 bis zur Gegenwart: Politik, Kultur und Gesellschaft*.<sup>42</sup> This edited work examines both Jewish DP life and the lives of free-living Jews in Germany from the close of the Second World War to the present. It has compiled sections by some of the most important historians of Jewish and German history to reconstruct Jewish life since the Holocaust. It also places Jewish DP History into the larger context of German-Jewish History. This work is significant because it helps to bridge the gap between German History and Jewish Studies so often present in earlier examinations in this field.

scholars who work on Jewish Displaced Persons now use this term, especially when they discuss the formation of the early DP communities and representative bodies in Germany.

Mankowitz's book has influenced the work of all DP historians since its publication in 2002 by illustrating the importance of Jewish Displaced Persons in the creation of the state of Israel and as active players in Jewish history in Germany. His examination of the establishment of an educational system, training classes, representative bodies, and political organizations facilitated by the desires of these Jewish Displaced Persons themselves illustrates that it was the DPs who strove to recreate their lives in the wake of the Shoah; not the aid workers seeing to their care. By securely placing agency back into the hands of these Jewish DPs, Mankowitz was able to show that the Jews in fact actively participated in their own lives and futures. His work places the Jewish DPs at the center of the study, solely focusing on the role that they played as foreign Jews living in postwar Germany. However, the fact that his study concludes in 1949, when he argues, all of the institutions were in place in Germany to end DP life in the country, leaves questions of how and when the DP era finally ended, and what happened to those who did not emigrate to Israel. This dissertation is able to continue on where Mankowitz left off. Additionally, his concentration on DP involvement in Zionism is at times a bit too focused and overlooks both the non-Zionists among the DPs as well as those who claimed they were Zionists but chose not to settle in Israel. By looking at the DP experience through a broader lens and over a longer period, I am able to really analyze the people who decided that there was no future for them in Israel, sometimes even choosing to remain in Germany rather than settling in the Jewish state.

The last few years have seen an explosion of works on various aspects of the life of Jewish Displaced Persons in Germany. These studies have ranged from large general

examinations of everyday life in Jewish camps, to comparative examinations, analyses of the rebirth of Yiddish cultural life in Jewish DP centers, and works that discuss the return of former Jewish DPs to Germany after 1949.<sup>43</sup> Like all of these works, the following narrative also strives to further the field by looking at a previously understudied aspect in the study of Jewish DP History in Germany. While this dissertation has employed elements from many of the sources in the field, it builds on all of them by expanding the existing view of Jewish DP life in postwar Germany. Its examination of the entire DP period of Jewish life in the American zone allows for a thorough understanding of how the DP Jewish communities in camps under American control were established, grew, and changed over the course of the 12 years of DP life in Bavaria. The studies that mention the closing of the last camp in 1957 do so in a few sentences and do not analyze the process involved in resettling the last remaining DPs in these centers. The often-limited timeframe of earlier works on Germany's displaced Jews ignores the six years of Jewish DP life under German control and the struggle of these DPs to try and ensure that they were not forced to integrate into German society. Additionally, this study's investigation of the grey and later black market in Germany allows for a closer look at the "criminal" interactions between Jewish DPs, Germans, and Americans in postwar Bavaria. The use of personal sources in this dissertation also afforded the author the opportunity to return the Jewish DPs to their rightful place as key players in their own history by telling their stories through their words.

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<sup>43</sup> For more on the most recent studies within the field of Jewish DPs please see, Margarete Myers Feinstein, *Holocaust Survivors in Postwar Germany, 1945-1957* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press); Avinoam J. Patt and Michael Berkowitz, *We Are Here: New Approaches to Jewish Displaced Persons in Postwar Germany* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press); Tamar Lewinsky, *Unterbrochenes Gedicht: jiddische Literatur in Deutschland 1944-1950* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2011); Ella Florsheim, *The Revival of Yiddish Culture in the DP Camps in Germany through the Prism of Holocaust Survivors' Newspapers* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University 2012). See Yisrael Gutman and Avital Saf eds., *She'erit Hapletah, 1944-1951: Rehabilitation and Political Struggle*. Proceedings of the Sixth Yad Vashem International Historical Conference, Jerusalem, October 1985, (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1990) and Menachem Rosenhaft, ed., *Life Reborn: Jewish Displaced Persons 1945-1951*, Conference Proceedings, Washington D.C., January, 2000 (Washington D.C.: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2001, for more of the edited books compiled from papers given at conferences on the Jewish DPs in Germany.

Although the study of Jewish Displaced Persons has exploded in the last decades, scholars in the field continue to express their feelings that there is still so much left to be examined and discussed. This dissertation works to fill in some of the gaps left by earlier studies while answering some of the questions unexplored by these examinations. It will act as another piece of the puzzle in the analysis of Jewish DPs in Germany furthering our knowledge and understanding of this rich period that affects Jewish, German, and American history.

### **A Note on Spelling**

The majority of the Jewish Displaced Persons in Germany spoke their native languages and possibly Yiddish.<sup>44</sup> A very small percentage of these DPs also spoke German. Very few of Germany's displaced Jews had any knowledge of English, and what they did know they had often learned in the DP camps from American troops, UNRRA, and Jewish aid organization workers. It is for this reason that the majority of their correspondences and memoirs were written in Yiddish, the language adopted by these DPs because it allowed the widest range of displaced Jews to understand written flyers, newspapers, letters, and official postings. Any names used in quotes translated from Yiddish have been transliterated into English by the author. When possible, the actual transliterations used by the Jewish DPs themselves have been given.

All English quotes in this narrative were taken directly from their sources without any spelling changes by the author unless otherwise noted in the text. This means that names of individuals occasionally appear spelled differently within the narrative because they were written, and sometimes transliterated, by various individuals. Many sources written by the

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<sup>44</sup> Yiddish was the dominant language spoken among Jewish DPs because East European Jews made up the majority of displaced Jews in Germany after 1946. However, not everyone spoke the language. I have spoken with former DPs who stated that they learned Yiddish in Displaced Persons centers. This is especially true for Jews from western Europe who were often more assimilated than their brethren from the East. This was also true for Soviet Jews who were pushed to speak Russian, thereby forgoing, the Communist government believed, cultural divisions in Russia.

Americans used the abbreviation DP's as the pluralized shorthand for Displaced Persons. This abridgment has been preserved in quotes. However, I have chosen to use the contemporary DPs instead throughout the dissertation. All newspaper titles have been transliterated from the original Yiddish by Paul Glasser at YIVO or appear in the Latin letter title as they were originally written in the postwar.<sup>45</sup> Additionally, the lack of the use of a German typewriter by many of the American aid organizations involved in the care of these Jewish DPs meant that at times the official German names for a camp or location are missing an umlaut or Eszett. The authors of these reports, letters, and memorandum instead spelled out the sounds that these letters made in their writing. These spelling "errors" have also been left in the original by the author.

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<sup>45</sup> The lack of available Hebrew typewriters led to the publication of Yiddish newspapers transliterated into Latin characters. This was the case with the Landsberger Lager Caytung.

PART I:

LIFE AFTER LIBERATION:  
JEWISH DISPLACED PERSONS  
UNDER AMERICAN ADMINISTRATION,  
1945-1948

I.  
LOST AND FOUND:  
LIFE FOR DPs IN THE IMMEDIATE  
POSTWAR PERIOD

Thousands, tens of thousands, finally millions of liberated slaves were coming out of the farms and the factories and the mines and pouring onto the highways... They were all there, all except the Jews. The Jews, six million of them, the children and the women and the old men, were ashes in the incinerators and the bones in the charnel house.<sup>1</sup>

## **Background**

At the end of the war the majority of soldiers, as well as most people in the Western World, believed that the liberation of concentration and work camps in Europe would reveal that the Nazis had succeeded in their efforts to destroy European Jewry. However, they were shocked to find and liberate an estimated 200,000 survivors.<sup>2</sup> Of this number 90,000 Jewish survivors were found in Germany after living in hiding, in privileged mixed marriages or after having survived concentration camps and the death marches from the east.<sup>3</sup> This number dropped quickly in the first weeks after liberation as tens of thousands of Jews died from the long term affects of starvation and diseases like TB, cholera, and typhus. Despite the best efforts of allied doctors, it is believed that between 20,000 and 30,000 survivors in Germany died within weeks of the close of the war.<sup>4</sup> According to modern statistics, 4 out of every 10 liberated Jews died in the first weeks after their emancipation.<sup>5</sup> This left between 60,000 and 70,000 Jewish Displaced Persons (DPs) in Germany after May 8, 1945. They were faced with the question of

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<sup>1</sup> Saul Kussiel Padover, *Experiment in Germany: the Story of an American Intelligence Officer* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1946). 343.

<sup>2</sup> Yehuda Bauer, *Out of the Ashes: The Impact of American Jews on Post-Holocaust European Jewry*, 1st ed. (Oxford ; New York: Pergamon Press, 1989). 36. Statistics from the immediate postwar period were rough at best and allied surveys did not initially distinguish Jews from other groups, instead classifying refugees by their country of origin.

<sup>3</sup> It is important to note that only about 15,600 of the 90,000 Jews found living in Germany at the end of the war were originally from Germany. Executive Staff of UNRRA, "Jewish DPs," in *Problems* (New York: United Nations, 1945-1946), 1.

<sup>4</sup> Atina Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007). 1.

<sup>5</sup> Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* (New York: Penguin Press, 2005). 24.



whether to stay in Germany and await resettlement or to try to return to their former homes in search of news about their loved ones and friends from whom they had been separated by the Shoah. The majority of Jewish survivors did attempt to return home, but what they found there often motivated them to make their way back to Germany. For these survivors, any place was better than the “graveyard” they faced in Eastern Europe.<sup>6</sup>

Although the war was declared officially over in May 1945, the total surrender of Germany did not result in a cessation of suffering in Europe, especially within Germany itself. Instead, the Allied peace brought new and frightening uncertainties for both Jewish and non-Jewish survivors.<sup>7</sup> In the immediate postwar period Germany was in a state of complete devastation and millions of individuals from several different countries were dead or missing. Additionally, the sudden influx of an estimated fourteen million refugees including Holocaust survivors, former forced laborers, voluntary foreign workers, Displaced Persons (DPs), and soldiers returning to their homes, placed new strains on the German economy, housing, and agriculture. Western Germany’s resources were further stretched by the arrival of several million *Volksdeutsche*, or ethnic Germans, who had either fled the advancing Red Army or were expelled from their home countries after the Potsdam agreement.<sup>8</sup> This meant that one quarter of the total population in Germany at the close of 1945 were refugees.<sup>9</sup> The western Allies were faced with the daunting task of returning the millions of repatriable refugees to their former homes and the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF) began the task

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<sup>6</sup> 75% of the survivors liberated from death and concentration camps who attempted to return to their former homes were from Poland. Hungarian, Romanian, Baltic, and French Jews tried to return much less frequently than their Polish counterparts. Avinoam J. Patt, *Finding Home and Homeland: Jewish Youth and Zionism in the Aftermath of the Holocaust* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2009). 17.

<sup>7</sup> Although UNRRA helped supply the Displaced Persons living in Germany, and the American Joint Distribution Committee supplemented the rations provided for Jewish survivors, these organizations did not begin to supply the Jewish DPs until late 1945.

<sup>8</sup> Michael Robert Marrus, *The Unwanted: European Refugees in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985). 310.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 305.

within weeks of the armistice. By June 1945, 5.25 million of these individuals had been put on trains and sent home at a rate of 80,000 a day. This number increased by 2.75 million in July when Soviet citizens were forcefully returned, lowering the number of repatriable refugees to around two million. While this was a very good start, there were still a substantial number of Displaced Persons under Allied care who could not, or would not return to their former countries.<sup>10</sup>

By October 1946, Germany found herself with three million more people living in the occupied zones than had resided in the country before the war.<sup>11</sup> These individuals sought housing and care that could not be provided by the non-existent German government. More than half of the homes in the American zone of occupation in Germany had been destroyed during the war; firebombing of cities like Dresden and the intense fighting that took place in the streets of Berlin and Munich resulted in the loss of apartments and houses.<sup>12</sup> In total, Germany lost more than forty percent of her housing stock.<sup>13</sup> The plundering of farmlands by the advancing allied armies and the newly released victims of Nazism, combined with the total collapse of the German economy left the Allies with the daunting task of rebuilding the war-torn country with very few resources and almost no aid from Germany itself.

The refugees who had flowed into the American zone of Germany at the end of the War, and remained there after September 1945, were initially housed in former concentration camps, forced labor centers, Nazi barracks, schools, and Villas.<sup>14</sup> The locations chosen as Allied assembly centers had survived the fighting and advancing armies, and were equipped with all of

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 310.

<sup>11</sup> Philip S. Bernstein, "Address by Philip Bernstein," in *Jewish Displaced Persons* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1946), 6.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Judt, *Postwar*: 82.

<sup>14</sup> Leonard Dinnerstein, *America and the Survivors of the Holocaust*, Contemporary American History Series (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982). 9.

the necessary facilities needed for survival. All individuals in these centers were housed according to their former nationalities as either United Nations displaced Persons (UNDPs) of ex-enemy DPs. The Allies continued to deny the estimated 60,000 Jews separate camps because they were unwilling to classify the Jews as a distinct race insisting that that would be, in essence, doing the same thing as the Nazis had done.<sup>15</sup> This meant that Hungarian, Baltic, and Romanian Jews just to name a few, were classified as alien nationals but were not included in the category of “victims of Fascism,” and were thus denied the added rations and privileges enjoyed by individuals classified as UNDPs.<sup>16</sup> American Military Government officials argued that the United States was an unbiased nation and that as such, would not single the Jews out as a distinct group. Instead the Military Government (MG) would show no prejudice by housing DPs by their nationalities regardless of their religion.<sup>17</sup> This often meant Jews continued to live among their enemies because many of the individuals claiming “refugee” status were in fact Nazis who had abandoned their uniforms, collaborators, and east Europeans who had come to Germany on their own in search of work.<sup>18</sup> As Clare Lerner, an United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), worker helping the displaced wrote,

SS men, Gestapo, Nazi party members, Polish voluntary labor (not slave labor but Poles who offered their services voluntarily to the Reich for a wage), Russian voluntary labor, Yugoslavian fascist soldiers all of whom have disguised themselves as displaced persons and gone into the camps to escape detection.<sup>19</sup>

Lack of qualified personnel, resources, and intake workers prevented the Americans from initially catching the fraudulent claims of refugee status. While the American government

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<sup>15</sup> The American Military Government’s initial classification system was especially harmful to Jewish Holocaust survivors because they were often grouped in with “enemies” of the Allies due to their country of origin.

<sup>16</sup> Abraham J. Klausner, *A Letter to My Children: From the Edge of the Holocaust* (Berkeley, CA: Judah L. Magnes Museum, 2002). 34.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>18</sup> Avinoam J. Patt and Michael Berkowitz, *We Are Here: New Approaches to Jewish Displaced Persons in Postwar Germany* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press). 198.

<sup>19</sup> Harry and Clare Lerner correspondence relating to their work with displaced persons and the UNNRA cited in Michael Berkowitz, *The Crime of My Very Existence: Nazism and the Myth of Jewish Criminality*, The S. Mark Taper Foundation Imprint in Jewish Studies (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007). 147.

worked to filter out those individuals who did not fit the definition of a DP or refugee, recent studies have shown that a handful of war criminals tried in the United States and Canada made their way into those countries via DP centers.<sup>20</sup> It took the cries of concentration and work camp survivors who recognized their former oppressors to begin inquiries into the possibility of collaborators and Nazis in the guise of Displaced Persons.

### **Statistical Information**

The existing refugee problem increased with the arrival of several thousand *infiltrates*, as the Allies called the new Jewish refugees who fled from the east after 1946. The infiltrates soon joined the more than sixty thousand Jews remaining in all zones of Germany in the months after the end of the war.<sup>21</sup> The majority of these infiltrates consisted of Jews from Eastern Europe who had survived the war outside of concentration camps. While some of these Jews started to make their way to Germany in the months immediately following the end of the war, their numbers grew drastically in 1946 when an estimated 250,000 east European Jews flowed into Germany and Austria, mainly settling in the American zone. These Jews represented three distinct war experiences.<sup>22</sup> The first group was survivors who had returned to their former towns in the east, realized that their families and friends were dead, and that any life they would attempt to reestablish in these towns would result in hostility or even death at the hands of their fellow countrymen. The second cohort of east European Jews to reach Germany consisted of partisans or individuals who were physically concealed by friends or for money. The final group, totaling around 140,000, were from the east, the majority of whom had been forcefully moved from

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<sup>20</sup> Zeev W. Mankowitz, *Life Between Memory and Hope: The Survivors of the Holocaust in Occupied Germany*, Studies in the Social and Cultural History of Modern Warfare (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002). 13.

<sup>21</sup> *Infiltrates* was the term employed by the Western Allies to differentiate the Jews who had remained after the May armistice and those who arrived in Germany after trying to reconnect with family or after their liberation from the Soviet Union. Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies* 1.

<sup>22</sup> Mankowitz, *Life Between Memory and Hope*: 14.

Poland into Russia where they lived out the war in incredibly difficult conditions. However, this last group of individuals had been protected from the Nazis within their communities in the furthest reaches of the Soviet Union.<sup>23</sup> Although these groups of Jews started to trickle out of Poland right after their repatriation, the numbers swelled after a series of pogroms in Poland, the worst of which took place in July 4, 1946, and left 47 Jews dead and more than 50 others injured.<sup>24</sup> The great majority of these Jews fled westward into Germany, especially the American zone. They were joined by a small number of Russian Jews who had always lived in the USSR as well as Hungarian and Romanian Jews who took the opportunity created by the bedlam of the immediate postwar, to flee from the east.<sup>25</sup>

This rapid increase in immigration from the east is illustrated by the statistics collected in the American zone of Bavaria where an estimated 40,000 Jews (registered and unregistered) were located in early 1946 and more than 142,000 Jews resided when the year ended. It is believed that around 6,550 Jewish refugees arrived in the American zone every month for the first half of 1946.<sup>26</sup> However, this number increased by almost three times, with 17,000 new arrivals monthly after July 1946.<sup>27</sup> These waves of new immigrants changed the composition of the Jews in the country to consist of mainly Eastern Europeans who had never experienced life in

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<sup>23</sup> The Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds, "Jewish D.P.'s- Wither?," in *The Jewish Community* (Jerusalem: The Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds., 1946), 1.

<sup>24</sup> Mankowitz, *Life Between Memory and Hope*: 18.

<sup>25</sup> Philip S. Bernstein, "Displaced Persons," *American Jewish Year Book* 49(1947): 521. It is important to note that these individuals never made up more than 15% of the total number of infiltrees from the east into Germany.

<sup>26</sup> Angelika Königseder and Juliane Wetzel, *Waiting for Hope: Jewish Displaced Persons in Post- World War II Germany* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2001). 42. Please note that statistical information from this period varies greatly according to the institution conducting the count and was made further difficult to gauge because of the fairly constant movement of DPs in the first postwar years. While hundreds of thousands of Jewish infiltrees entered the U.S. zone, a portion of them only stayed long enough to join an illegal Bricha (flight) to Palestine.

<sup>27</sup> Mankowitz, *Life Between Memory and Hope*: 17. UNRRA estimated that by June 1946 an estimated 10,000 Eastern European Jews arrived in the American zone every month, UNRRA, "Jewish DPs," June 26, 1946, 1.

concentration or labor camps.<sup>28</sup> Unlike other Displaced groups, Jews could not be forcefully repatriated, so their numbers only decreased when they were resettled outside of Europe or when they chose to return home.<sup>29</sup>

The infiltrees were the healthiest element among Germany's Jewish DPs. They were both physically and mentally ready for the future and better able to adapt themselves to the situation by integrating into the camp community. Unlike the partisans and labor and concentration camp survivors, the infiltrees were all ages ranging from newborn to eighty. There were a larger number of intellectuals among them, and family units and communities often arrived at the camps intact. This is distinctly different from the postwar situation of the concentration camp survivor. According to Koppel Pinson, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC or Joint) Educational Director for Displaced Jews in Germany and Austria, the Jewish Holocaust survivors were driven by what appeared to be a "mad fury" to find any trace of their lost relatives. Pinson recorded that for these Jews, "the slightest clue would send them on a trek of hundreds of miles over many a border and without concern for personal safety."<sup>30</sup> The Jewish DPs were desperate to find any traces of their surviving family and friends after the war, and individuals from this group often spent the first few years after liberation searching.

Ironically enough, the combination of the influx of so many east European Jews into the country with the baby boom that followed shortly afterward made Germany, previously declared

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<sup>28</sup> Margarete Myers Feinstein, *Holocaust Survivors in Postwar Germany, 1945-1957* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press). 2.

<sup>29</sup> It is believed that no more than four percent of the estimated 278,000 Jews who immigrated to Germany returned to the country of their expulsion. Herbert A. Strauss: "Introductions. Jews in German History: Persecution, Emigration, Acculturation," in: Ders./Werner Röder (Hg.): *International Biographical Dictionary of Central European Émigrés 1933-1945*, Vol. II/Part 1 (A-K): The Arts, Sciences, and Literature, München u.a. 1983, S. XI-XXVI, bes. S. XV und S. XX-XXII.

<sup>30</sup> Koppel S. Pinson, "Jewish Life in Liberated Germany: A Study of the Jewish DP's," *Jewish Social Studies* 9, no. 2 (1947): 110.

*Judenfrei*, the country with the highest Jewish birthrate in the world.<sup>31</sup> The influx of these infiltrees over the course of 1946 and 1947 increased the number of Jews in all zones of Germany to around 300,000. The majority of these Jews flocked into the American Zone in Bavaria where an estimated 150,000 joined the original 40,000 Jewish DPs residing there.<sup>32</sup>

The American zone was especially attractive to east European Jewry because after the publication of the Harrison Report in August 1945, it was the only zone with Jewish-only camps, and the Americans were the only government in support of a Jewish country in Palestine. British officials had closed the borders of the British zone to refugees within the first weeks after the war. This led to incredibly stringent rules about enforcing policies on movement to and from the zone in an effort to curb illegal immigration, essentially preventing Jewish DPs housed in the British zone from traveling outside of the zone's borders and returning to the camps later without proper permission. In contrast, the camps in the American zone in Germany were not officially closed until April 1947 and even then new Jewish infiltrees could continue to enter the U.S. zone.<sup>33</sup> The after effects of the publication of the Harrison report caused the Americans to fear a backlash from American Jews if they denied east European Jews entry and care in their zone.<sup>34</sup> The British had no such concerns. The differences in policies are clearly illustrated by the number of Jewish DPs who lived in each zone. In the beginning of 1946 there were 36,000 Jewish DPs legally registered in the American zone of Germany.<sup>35</sup> There were 16,000 in the British zone, a number that remained fairly stable throughout the British occupation period.<sup>36</sup>

### **The Harrison Report and the “Betterment” of Jewish Living**

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<sup>31</sup> Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies*: 184.

<sup>32</sup> Boris Sapir, "Germany and Austria," *American Jewish Year book* 47(1947): 170.

<sup>33</sup> Patt and Berkowitz, *We Are Here*: 195 & 231.

<sup>34</sup> President Truman sent Law Professor Earl G. Harrison on a fact-finding mission in the summer of 1945 to investigate claims of maltreatment of Jewish DPs by the U.S. military. Harrison visited several of the worst DP centers and reported back to Truman that drastic changes were in order.

<sup>35</sup> Königseder and Wetzel, *Waiting for Hope*: 43.

<sup>36</sup> Patt and Berkowitz, *We Are Here*: 231.

The U.S. military's early plan to identify all Displaced Persons by their prewar nationalities and to determine their care based on whether these countries had fought on the Allied side came under intense scrutiny in the summer of 1945. President Truman was finally prompted by the outcries of American Jewry in August 1945 to send a representative to Germany to, "ascertain the needs of the stateless and non-repatriables, particularly Jews, among the displaced persons in Germany and to what extent those needs are being provided at present by military authorities, international, national private organizations..."<sup>37</sup> In the end Earl G. Harrison, a representative of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, along with a convoy was sent to Germany to evaluate the situation. Harrison arrived in the country in July 1945 with an itinerary in hand that was supposed to introduce him to the DP situation. This schedule consisted mainly of high-level discussions about DP life in Germany and omitted actual visits to the Assembly Centers. However, Colonel Richmond, a member of SHAEF's Department on Displaced Persons or G5, passed this information to Rabbi Abraham Klausner, a renegade U.S. Army Chaplain and one of the DPs' biggest proponents in the postwar period, who requested that Harrison visit him while touring the country.<sup>38</sup> Klausner then took Harrison to the camps neighboring Dachau, considered some of the worst centers in the American zone because of their overcrowding and general dilapidation.<sup>39</sup> Harrison was so disturbed by what he encountered that he cabled a message home to Henry Morgenthau stating, "In general found complete confirmation of disturbing reports concerning Jews in SHAEF Zone of Germany."<sup>40</sup> He ended his message by noting that he sent the cable in advance of his return in the hopes that

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<sup>37</sup> Mankowitz, *Life Between Memory and Hope*: 52.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>39</sup> Klausner took Harrison to visit the DP centers at Landsberg and Feldafing, as well as St. Ottilien and centers in Munich.

<sup>40</sup> Mankowitz, *Life Between Memory and Hope*: 59.



some sort of action would be taken so that at least a small number of the survivors would see that they, “have in fact been liberated as well as saved.”<sup>41</sup>

Harrison’s visit and his subsequent report was one of the most significant factors impacting change for Jewish DPs living in Germany. Not only did it stress the need for immediate and drastic changes concerning the treatment and cataloging of the Jewish DPs, but it also called for the resettlement of European Jews on Palestinian soil. Harrison argued that while the Jews had been liberated militarily, their actual liberation had still not transpired.<sup>42</sup> He described the DP as living in camps, “under guard, behind barbed wire...crowded, frequently unsanitary and generally grim conditions, in complete idleness, with no opportunity, except surreptitiously, to communicate with the outside world, waiting, hoping for some word of encouragement and action in their behalf.”<sup>43</sup> According to Harrison, the Jewish DPs could look out from their dismal, bare, and crowded camps and see happy Germans living in their own homes leading normal lives. He went so far as to claim,

As matters now stand, we appear to be treating the Jews as the Nazis treated them except that we do not exterminate them. They are in concentration camps in large numbers under our military guard instead of S.S. troops. One is led to wonder whether the German people, seeing this, are not supposing that we are following or at least condoning Nazi Policy.<sup>44</sup>

While it was understood that Harrison exaggerated some of his statements in order to stress the need for change, and his comments were less than well received by the military and American government, his report provides scholars with a view into the Jewish situation in Germany and the problems Jewish DPs were facing. According to Harrison the first and most important change that had to take place was the recognition of the Jews’ status as Jews. They needed to be separated out from the members of other nationalities with whom they were living and be settled

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Dinnerstein, *America and the Survivors of the Holocaust*: 291. Appendix B

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 293.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 301.

in sanctioned Jewish-only centers.<sup>45</sup> Without recognition and separation, the problems and difficulties facing the Jews could not be properly addressed and remedied. Harrison understood that labeling the Jews as Jews and allowing them to live in their own protected camps did not mean that they were being singled out and persecuted by the Americans as the Nazis had done, but rather that special attention needed to be paid to their “admittedly greater needs.”<sup>46</sup> As mentioned above, the Office of the Military Government, U.S. (OMGUS), continually denied Jewish claims and cries for some form of acknowledgment that the Jewish DPs were a separate and distinct group just like the Poles, Hungarians, Romanians, French, or Balts. However, their pleas were always met with the same answer: that the Allies did not categorize people because of their race and religion, but rather by nationality.<sup>47</sup> The Allies believed that this policy would protect them from claims of segregation or racially motivated treatment of the DPs, when in fact it just made them appear insensitive and unaware of the special needs of the Jewish Holocaust survivors. Harrison’s comments were a painful condemnation of the U.S. Army’s failure to ensure that the Jewish DPs were properly cared for and treated in a manner fitting their circumstances.

Fortunately President Truman took Harrison’s suggestions very seriously and immediately began implementing changes in the care, control, and treatment of Jewish Displaced Persons, even before the official report had reached him. Under Truman’s direction, Eisenhower began implementing a plan to better the conditions of the Jews beginning on August 10, 1945. He reported to the State Department that any Jew who did not wish to be repatriated would be

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<sup>45</sup> Although Feldafing was a Jewish camp, it was not officially acknowledged as such. As will be discussed later, Feldafing became a Jewish center because of the efforts of Rabbi Abraham Klausner and his colleagues who wanted to create a Jewish-only center, but could not get permission to do so. They picked Feldafing because of the number of Jews concentrated there. By moving non-Jewish residents to other camps while bringing in more Jewish inhabitants they were able to create the first Jewish-only camp in the zone.

<sup>46</sup> Dinnerstein, *America and the Survivors of the Holocaust*: 295.

<sup>47</sup> Mark Wyman, *DPs: Europe's Displaced Persons, 1945-1951* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998). 134.

moved into Jewish-only camps created on the model of the Feldafing DP center. Feldafing had originally acted as an international assembly center but the non-Jewish residents had been transferred to other facilities through the efforts of Rabbi Abraham Klausner without permission from OMGUS, resulting in an unsanctioned Jewish camp.<sup>48</sup> These newly designated Jewish-only camps were to be run by UNRRA with the help of outside Jewish aid organizations like the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (Joint or the JDC), who would work directly with the Jews.<sup>49</sup> Eisenhower also ordered all of his officers to requisition from the Germans living near by any supplies needed to bring the standard of living in the camps up to the same level as that of individuals living outside the centers. He required his senior officers to visit the camps on a regular basis. Additionally, he approved Rabbi Stephen Wise's suggestion to appoint an adviser on Jewish Affairs, an intermediary who would meet with the DPs and report their needs and concerns to OMGUS. Finally, Eisenhower had the armed guards removed from the camps and replaced them with internal security. However, these changes took time to implement and there were still Jewish DPs living under guard in substandard housing well into the winter of 1945/6.

After meeting with Harrison, Truman sent General Eisenhower a letter dated August 31, 1945, stating that the previous treatment of the DPs illustrated a failure on the army's part to stand by the victims of the Nazis while it also showed an inability to force the Germans to realize that they were responsible for their involvement in the crimes of the recent past. He ended the letter by noting that he was sure that Eisenhower would agree that the U.S. Army had a "particular responsibility" to treat the victims of Nazi persecution in their zone with special

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<sup>48</sup> Klausner, *A Letter to My Children*: 30.

<sup>49</sup> The JDC was not allowed to enter Germany until the fall of 1945. *Ibid.*, x.

care.<sup>50</sup> The changes that had already been implemented greatly improved the Jewish situation in Germany, but there was still a lot more that needed to be done in order to make their lives bearable.

Although OMGUS was assigned the task of overseeing the care and control of DPs in the American zone of Bavaria, the shortages rampant throughout Germany and the lack of incoming supplies meant that many basic needs were impossible to meet. Given that the resources available in Germany were woefully insufficient for the number of people in need of aid and that the Allies failed to import sufficient goods from their respective countries, they could not fully supply all of the refugees under their care. This situation was exacerbated by the influx of millions of ethnic Germans expelled from their former countries of residence and the hundreds of thousands of refugees who could not or would not be repatriated.

### **Surviving the Occupation: Germany in the Immediate postwar.**

“Better enjoy the War- the peace will be terrible.”<sup>51</sup>

John J. McCloy, the head of the U.S. Control Commission in Germany summed up the state of Germany at the close of the war by saying, “There was complete economic, social and political collapse...the extent of which is unparalleled in history unless one goes back to the collapse of the Roman Empire.”<sup>52</sup> Initially, under the Morgenthau plan Germany would be stripped of her military and industry while the Allies worked to reeducate her masses. The three D policy- demilitarization, denazification, and deindustrialization- was originally instituted to convince the Germans of their defeat. Many American officials argued that the mistakes made at Versailles in 1918, especially the fact that the Allies were unable to “convince” the Germans of their wrong doing and defeat, would not happen again. The Americans were not occupying

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<sup>50</sup> Harrison Report, 455. Truman’s letter immediately precedes the Harrison Report.

<sup>51</sup> This was an old German joke that proved true in the immediate postwar. Judt, *Postwar*: 21.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

Germany for liberation purposes as they had for other countries like France, Belgium, and the Netherlands, but instead because Germany had been defeated. It was essential that Germans realize their total defeat, the wrongs they had committed against the world, and the punishment being visited upon them because of these crimes.<sup>53</sup> According to the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury, Henry Morgenthau, as well as several others, lack of punishment and understanding of their defeat on the part of Germans had been one of the major failures of the Allies at the close of the First World War and had allowed the Germans to bring about the Second World War. The Germans were to be subjected to a low standard of living to help them understand their loss. In this vein industrial production was severely limited by an economic plan instituted in March 1946 and the Wehrmacht was disbanded in August of the same year.<sup>54</sup> However, this plan did not go without criticism as the U.S. Administration realized that economic reductions and the loss of German agricultural lands to the USSR meant that the Allies would have to shoulder the cost of rebuilding and feeding the Germans and refugees within the country.

By 1947 the European economy was in a state crisis as the economies of many countries began to suffer from the loss of the German market, which before the war had traded extensively with Central and Eastern Europe.<sup>55</sup> As long as Germany remained an inactive participant in the European economy, the economic recovery of the rest of Europe would remain at a standstill. The American forces had never planned on staying in Germany beyond the two years the government believed it would take for them to get the country to function without their supervision. While this was the official American policy, and reduction of the United States military forces in Germany illustrate that U.S. administration was moving forward with this understanding, the Americans continued to control Germany alongside the newly formed

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 105.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 87.

German semi-sovereign government until 1952.<sup>56</sup> Realizing the impossibility of immediate withdrawal and finally comprehending the fact that leaving Germany in a state of destruction and impoverishment would most likely convince them to return to Nazism or worse, to Communism, kept American officials entrenched in Germany. This also led the Americans, along with the British to begin rebuilding administration, communications, law, order, and civil services, as well as physically rebuilding the destroyed country, all of which had to be completely reconstructed.

### **Trying to Survive under American Control**

While the Harrison report transformed the living conditions for DPs throughout the American Zone, the majority of Jews in the country continued to find themselves living within the confines of former camps.<sup>57</sup> Eighty percent of all Jews, or 123,778 Jews, legally registered in the American zone chose to live in DP camps as it afforded them a feeling of safety from the surrounding Germans.<sup>58</sup> This sense of security was very important to many Holocaust survivors, who only felt safe enough within the “protected” confines of the Jewish centers, to rebuild their shattered lives. The Jews entered DP facilities believing that their relatives were dead or that they would be reunited when their surviving loved ones found their way to these camps.<sup>59</sup> Although the Americans had begun reforming DP facilities after August 1945, Displaced Persons continued to live in the same barracks, schools, and labor facilities as they had before the Harrison report. As such, these residences tended to be on the primitive side and had often

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<sup>56</sup> Between 1945 and 1947 the U.S. defense reduced their budget by 5/6ths and reduced their ground divisions in Europe from 97 troops to 12. Ibid., 109.

<sup>57</sup> The Jewish camps were “protected” by Jewish DP police officers instead of guarded by American soldiers.

<sup>58</sup> Bernstein, "Displaced Persons," 522.

<sup>59</sup> This is not to say that all Jews living in Germany were located in camps. The majority of the German Jews who survived the war as well as a handful of Displaced Persons, lived in free-living communities scattered throughout the country, mainly in the larger cities like Berlin, Frankfurt, and Munich.

experienced some damage during the war.<sup>60</sup> These buildings were usually unfit for the coming winter, but for a Shoah survivor recently liberated from the camps these facilities were a drastic improvement over their previous accommodations. When asked about her living conditions in the Feldafing DP camp located in Southern Bavaria three kilometers from the Starnberger See, Esther Avery noted that the barracks were from the Hitler Jugend with, “clean blocks with beautiful beds, everything clean with carpets. We were so astonished to come inside, but there were rooms for 10 people, for 12, we got a room for six, me my mother, my sister and three others... There was a piano in the lobby, it was something, luxury for us when we came.”<sup>61</sup> Even with the seemingly impressive appearance of the barracks at camp Feldafing, the inadequate insulation and coal supplies, as well as other fuel resources, in the country meant that the DPs had to find a way to keep warm throughout the winter.<sup>62</sup> In a report written in October 1946, the county Landpolizei inspector Meier noted that some of the fences surrounding a villa in the Feldafing DP camp had been removed. He postulated that the wood was burned to keep the villa’s inhabitants warm in the chilly fall weather.<sup>63</sup> German POWs were often forced to cut wood from the surrounding forests in order to heat camp buildings against the unbearably cold winters of 1946 and 1947.<sup>64</sup>

Added to the general dilapidated state of DP living spaces, lodgings were terribly overcrowded with several individuals living in one room. In an UNRRA report from 1946, the author noted, “the DPs have continued to live in the most demoralizing conditions of

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<sup>60</sup> Executive Staff of UNRRA, "General Situation of D.P. U.S. and military and German Authorities (UNRRA report)," in *DPs, Germany* (New York: United Nations, 1946), 6.

<sup>61</sup> Avny, Esther. Interview 13775. *Visual History Archive*. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. 2009. Web. 5 Feb. 2010. <<http://libguides.usc.edu/vha>>

<sup>62</sup> OMGUS, "Shortages in Germany," in *Black Market* (Munich: BayHstA, 1947), 1.

<sup>63</sup> OMGB, "Black Market Situation," in *OMGB* (Munich: BayHstA, 1945), 4.

<sup>64</sup> Irving Heymont, *Among the Survivors of the Holocaust, 1945: the Landsberg DP Camp Letters of Major Irving Heymont, United States Army*, Monographs of the American Jewish Archives no. 10 (Cincinnati, Ohio: American Jewish Archives, 1982). 81.

overcrowding, with large numbers of people in single rooms, often with mixed sexes, mixed families and with children of all ages observers of adult intimacies.”<sup>65</sup> The Army believed that as long as each individual had thirty-six square feet of space they had been provided with plenty of room.<sup>66</sup> Dressing and undressing, eating, sleeping and sexual activities were all preformed in the presence of family and strangers alike because of the utter lack of space and privacy. Millie Baran remembers the house in which she and her new husband lived in Föhrenwald, along with four families and eleven single men. Two families shared each of the small rooms downstairs and several individuals were housed together in the one larger room upstairs. In Millie’s case, “We were 13 people in one room. We were the only married couple, the rest of the people were guys from all over.”<sup>67</sup> Similarly, Frumie Cohen’s family was assigned to a villa in Feldafing.

She recalls,

This was a one family villa, but there were maybe twenty families who would have been [there]. We had one big room in which four families lived in a room, maybe twenty people. Our family had one corner...As months went on [there] were made partitions, wooden partitions, the luxury of luxuries that was. We had our own little room. There was no private bathroom, there was no private... no kitchen, a hot plate, no pots, we used cans, so it wasn’t a life of luxury, but we were just waiting.

The DP living in these facilities in the immediate postwar period with a pot, or even a spare sheet or towel to separate his or her space from that of a neighbor was considered lucky. Colonel Irving J. Heymont, the director of the Landsberg DP center, noted that there were numerous marriages when it was discovered that newlyweds were assigned better housing, illustrating that the DPs would go to any extreme to get their own space.<sup>68</sup> Even in these cramped conditions, the Jewish DPs attempted to rebuild some semblance of their prewar life within the walls of the

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<sup>65</sup> UNRRA, "General Situation of D.P. U.S. and military and German Authorities (UNRRA report)," 1.

<sup>66</sup> Heymont, *Among the Survivors of the Holocaust*: 52.

<sup>67</sup> Baran, Millie. Interview 35208. *Visual History Archive*. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. 2009. Web. 5 Feb. 2010. <<http://libguides.usc.edu/vha>>

<sup>68</sup> It is important to note that DPs throughout Europe quickly married after surviving the Holocaust. These individuals had often lost their entire family and were driven by a need to rebuild some semblance of their former lives. These DPs were alone and often married after just a few days or even hours of meeting someone they felt would help alleviate their loneliness. Heymont, *Among the Survivors of the Holocaust*: 44.



camps. The families who traded cigarettes and beer for a blanket to demarcate their portion of the room they shared, or the father who carried rations from the mess back to their room to help recreate the family dinner around a shabby broken table, are good examples of the DPs' ability to cope with the situation.<sup>69</sup> The especially fortunate family was one in which there were enough people to acquire a tiny single room, as was the case with Helen Finkel who was housed in a room with her sister and their husbands in one of the formerly German homes in the Landsberg DP center. However, this was rarely the case and numerous individuals, often total strangers were forced to live together in incredibly cramped rooms in buildings throughout the camps.

Along with the cramped living conditions, the Jewish DPs were inadequately clothed during their first years within the Jewish centers. In his report from July 1945 Harrison noted,

Although some Camp Commandants have managed, in spite of many obvious difficulties, to find clothing of one kind or another for their charges, many of the Jewish displaced persons, late in July, had no clothing other than their concentration camp garb—a rather hideous striped pajama effect—while others, to their chagrin, were obliged to wear German SS uniforms. It is questionable which clothing they hate the more.<sup>70</sup>

Those healthy enough to walk were allowed to fend for themselves immediately after their liberation from Dachau and finding new clothing was often a priority on par with eating. When asked about his release from Dachau, Ivor Perl said,

We were allowed free for about a week to go out looking for food, looking for ourselves, looking for clothes, which we did. We went around near Dachau. There were a lot of places there that were evacuated by the Germans, which we were allowed to go in and fend for ourselves until the UNRRA came in and looked after us.<sup>71</sup>

While efforts had been made to remedy the clothing situation, the problem persisted, plaguing the Jews well into 1947. Fear of disease led many UNRRA teams to force the newly arriving

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<sup>69</sup> UNRRA, "General Situation of D.P. U.S. and military and German Authorities (UNRRA report)," 6.

<sup>70</sup> Dinnerstein, *America and the Survivors of the Holocaust*: 293.

<sup>71</sup> Perl, Ivor, Interview 30945. *Visual History Archive*. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. 2009. Web. 5 Feb. 2010. <<http://libguides.usc.edu/vha>>

DPs to burn all of their clothing. In his testimony about his arrival in Feldafing, Abraham Weltman recalled,

When we came there we didn't have clothes yet, so that camp used to be a camp for the SS and they found a magazine with big boots...so they gave us that. They had little undershirts, so we took two undershirts and we made one with a little collar. We got dressed this way a little bit.<sup>72</sup>

There was no set attire for Jewish DPs who basically wore whatever they could get their hands on. This is well illustrated in the case of Feldafing where they gave the camp inhabitants “new pajamas” which had been left behind when the SS fled the advancing Allied forces. Sholem Hershkop remembered wearing those pajamas all summer. “You went to parties, you went to school, people got married, everything in pajamas.”<sup>73</sup> Helen Tichauer also recounted wearing the pajamas found in camp Feldafing. In an interview conducted in 1946, Helen said that the prisoners were relieved of their prison clothing and, “people were clothed in pajamas.”<sup>74</sup> DP clothing was a hodgepodge of items taken from Germans, donated by the American military, or left behind by the Nazis.

Rabbi Abraham Klausner reflected on the dire clothing situation of the postwar period in his report from May 1948; he stated that the International Refugee Organization, (IRO) only had a 10% replacement policy when it came to clothing, and the JDC which helped provide the extra supplies needed by DPs, “made no deliveries of clothing” in 1945 and, “in a limited quantity in 1946.”<sup>75</sup> The Joint was unable to distribute large quantities of new clothing until late 1947, and

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<sup>72</sup> Weltman, Abraham. Interview 42425. *Visual History Archive*. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. 2009. Web. 5 Feb. 2010. <<http://libguides.usc.edu/vha>>

<sup>73</sup> Hershkop, Sholem. Interview 8195. *Visual History Archive*. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. 2009. Web. 5 Feb. 2010. <<http://libguides.usc.edu/vha>>

<sup>74</sup> Jürgen Matthäus, *Approaching an Auschwitz Survivor: Holocaust Testimony and its Transformations*, The Oxford Oral History Series (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009). 171.

<sup>75</sup> The IRO was UNRRA's successor organization and took over the care and control of DP centers in 1946. Abraham Klausner, "Jewish Displaced Persons in the American Occupied Zone of Germany," (Chicago 1948), 2.

while raw materials existed for making clothes, the insufficient coal supply in the country meant that production could not resume.<sup>76</sup>

Generous soldiers often gave out their spare uniforms when they liberated the death and concentration camps. These soldiers were shocked by the extent of the devastation brought on by the Nazis and were willing to give some of their possessions to help aid the survivors. This included their extra shirt or the spare pair of trousers in their bags. Rabbi Klausner wrote about collecting other officers' rations cards to buy uniforms from the PX for the camp leaders at various DP centers.<sup>77</sup> UNRRA distributed un-dyed American army uniforms to DPs well into 1946.<sup>78</sup> These continued practices are evidenced by the ongoing dispute between OMGUS and UNRRA over the DPs who continued to wear U.S. Army uniforms. In 1946 the American Military Government introduced new directives prohibiting the wearing of army uniforms by anyone not associated with the military. In his report from May 1946, Major Director Philip L. Steers, Jr. noted that, "there has been a noticeable increase of DPs wearing US military clothing of late. Steps are being taken by this office to eliminate this in view of recent directives. UNRRA is a bit on the lazy side complying with directives regarding uniforms."<sup>79</sup> This situation had not been solved by August of that year when Mosze Friedman, a DP from Föhrenwald was tried by a military court for wearing GI cotton pants, which he claimed he had received two weeks previously from UNRRA officials.<sup>80</sup>

UNRRA workers noted that what clothing they could provide consisted of single hand me down items, i.e. every male DP received one pair of trousers, one jacket, and one pair of

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<sup>76</sup> OMGUS, "Shortages in Germany," 1.

<sup>77</sup> Klausner, *A Letter to My Children*: 115.

<sup>78</sup> These uniforms were left the color of their original materials and were never dyed the same colors as American military uniforms in order to help distinguish them from official army uniforms.

<sup>79</sup> Philip L. Jr. Steers, "Monthly Historical Report," in *OMGUS* (Wolfratshausen: Landesarchiv Wolfratshausen, 1946), 2.

<sup>80</sup> UNRRA, "General Situation of D.P. U.S. and military and German Authorities (UNRRA report)."

shoes, and women received one dress, one pair of shoes, and one jacket. These clothes were strictly for covering the body and were often ill fitting and unattractive. UNRRA workers noted that this was especially demoralizing for women and did nothing to help restore self-respect to the DP. There was also no money allotted for the cleaning of these garments or materials available to repair them, so the DPs walked around in tattered and torn clothing. According to the UNRRA report of July 1946, “the DP man or woman looks like a bum or a tramp and that is the way they are regarded.”<sup>81</sup> Interestingly, Jewish efforts to acquire the clothes they needed were labeled as black market activities, and even clothes legitimately obtained through UNRRA and other outside aid organizations were often confiscated during raids conducted by United States Military Police (MPs) and German police before 1946.<sup>82</sup>

Insufficient space and clothing were by no means the only problems faced by the DPs. Health risks abounded in almost all of the major centers throughout the country. The former uses of many of these sites as forced labor camps and barracks during the war, combined with the haste with which their occupants left them, meant that the living conditions in DP centers were often unsanitary at best. Basic hygienic requirements were lacking and the facilities were originally designed for men not women and children.<sup>83</sup> This meant that the waste disposal, toilets, and washing amenities were insufficient or inappropriate and inadequate for the sheer number of people who found themselves in these facilities. In an OMGUS historical report from April 1946 for camp Föhrenwald near Wolfratshausen, Major Steers noted “sanitation [was] bordering on dangerous.”<sup>84</sup> According to Captain Penbroke, “disease will run riot within three

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Steers, "Monthly Historical Report," 1.

months if sanitary conditions are not improved immediately.”<sup>85</sup> In the case of the Landsberg DP camp, the hygienic situation was still so bad in 1946 that resources were sent by the American military and a campaign was started within the camp to convince residents to help keep the center clean.<sup>86</sup>

The devastation of the war meant that what few building materials were left in Germany were used for German housing or were deemed substandard. The Military Government had total control over the distribution of these supplies and ranked repairs in DP centers below rebuilding Germany. Obtaining the resources and tools necessary for repairs and modernization of the camps’ sanitary facilities was often deemed impossible. It was only at the insistence of the UNRRA teams that the necessary building materials were finally acquired to repair the most badly damaged barracks, ensuring that their inhabitants did not freeze during the winter of 1946. As many OMGUS officials did not believe the sanitary situations were life threatening and only felt the need to correct those that were, these conditions continued to plague the Jewish DPs years after their liberation.<sup>87</sup>

Each camp had an adequate kitchen and mess halls large enough to feed and accommodate the thousands of Jews eating in them.<sup>88</sup> However, the food, although calorie sufficient for the Jews’ survival, left much to be desired.<sup>89</sup> In the summer of 1945, the basic DP rations consisted of bread and coffee, and according to Harrison, the bread was mainly, “black,

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>86</sup> Heymont, *Among the Survivors of the Holocaust*: 9.

<sup>87</sup> It is interesting to note that despite how scarce building materials were in Germany, almost every camp had experienced some kind of a battle over the allotment of much needed supplies for use in the building of a ritual bath or mikvah. Ibid., 83.

<sup>88</sup> Every Jewish DP camp had at least one kosher and one non-kosher kitchen with an adjoining mess hall. While not every individual chose to eat their meals in the mess hall, the sheer number of DPs living in the camps (between four and six thousand) meant that throughout the day several thousand DPs ate together in these facilities.

<sup>89</sup> This was not true for those DPs who worked, as their caloric exertion meant that the daily rations did not provide enough nutrients to meet the calories they expended on a daily basis. Steers, "Monthly Historical Report," 3.

wet and extremely unappetizing.”<sup>90</sup> This account comes from the Harrison report, but it must be kept in mind that Harrison only visited certain camps and food varied by facility. Despite that, it is clear from numerous reports that no one was overly satisfied with the bread rations they were receiving as part of their daily diet. This is clear from Olga Astor’s account of her first days in the Feldafing Displaced Persons camp hospital, “the bread, the slices were like Swiss cheese, you could see through them and this was under the Americans.”<sup>91</sup> Food continued to be scarce well into 1946, and even the American military noted that there was a “critical situation in general food supply” in the country.<sup>92</sup> UNRRA workers noted that the food provided had a “lack of balance [and that] the monotony of the diet, and the method of preparation, dispensation contribute to the general despondency” among the DPs.<sup>93</sup> Klausner reported that the Jewish DPs received 1,000 calories a day from the U.S. Army and 1,200 calories from the IRO (the successor organization of the UNRRA).<sup>94</sup> The JDC did not begin supplementing these rations until 1946, when they provided limited supplies to the Displaced Persons. They then increased these rations by 50 calories a day in 1947, and still later introduced a category system that brought with it an increase in quantities for men and those who were employed.<sup>95</sup> It is important to remember that a substantial portion of these DPs had just survived the starvation efforts of the Nazis and the diseases rampant in the concentration camps.<sup>96</sup> They were desperately in need of rations to survive, to build up their bodies, and to fight off disease. Although the supplies were

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<sup>90</sup> Dinnerstein, *America and the Survivors of the Holocaust*: 41.

<sup>91</sup> Astor, Olga. Interview 35621. *Visual History Archive*. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. 2009. Web. 5 Feb. 2010. <<http://libguides.usc.edu/vha>>

<sup>92</sup> Dr. Müller, "Black Market," in *Black Market* (Munich: BayHStA, 1946), 2.

<sup>93</sup> Steers, "Monthly Historical Report," 3.

<sup>94</sup> Abraham Klausner, "Memorandum on the Jewish Displaced Persons in the American Occupied zone of Germany," in *Correspondence Germany 1946-1949* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1948), 3.

<sup>95</sup> Klausner, "The DP Picture," (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1948), 2.

<sup>96</sup> While this might not seem like an insignificant caloric intake, it is important to keep in mind that the American Heart Association recommends the same amount for sedentary men over the age of 31 (men under 31 years old are encouraged to eat between 2,400 and 3,000 calories a day).

“calorically” sufficient, their lack of fresh meat and vegetables meant that the diet of these Jews often lacked the necessary minerals and vitamins to live healthfully, and many DPs complained that the food was tasteless.

The drastic reduction in appropriations for the United States government in Germany, which included a decrease in the number of soldiers in the American zone, also included efforts by OMGUS to decrease DP rations. According to Rabbi Philip S. Bernstein, the advisor to generals McNarney and Clark, these reductions would lead to, “increased pressure to lower standards which were already at the minimum.”<sup>97</sup> OMGUS’ efforts to limit the food available to DPs would first target infiltrees reducing their daily intake to less than 2,200 calories. Even at 2,200 calories, the Jewish DPs’ meals consisted of little more than, “coffee and bread and margarine for breakfast; a stew for dinner; coffee, cheese and crackers for supper.”<sup>98</sup> As mentioned above, the Jewish DPs were allotted enough nourishment to physically survive, but these rations lacked fresh foods. Their care packages contained mainly canned meats and vegetables, a situation that was not remedied until 1947.<sup>99</sup> In order to acquire goods like fresh meat and vegetables, the Jewish DPs, like non-Jewish DPs and Germans turned to the only functioning markets available in postwar Germany: the “people’s” market, otherwise known as the second economy or grey market.

### **Displaced Persons’ Camps in Bavaria**

In January 1946, 36,000 Jewish Displaced Persons living under the Americans made Bavaria their temporary home.<sup>100</sup> Southern Germany housed the majority of Jewish DPs

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<sup>97</sup> Bernstein, "Address by Philip Bernstein," 9.

<sup>98</sup> Klausner, "Jewish Displaced Persons in the American Occupied Zone of Germany," 1.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> This number consisted of the DPs who had been liberated in Germany or had made their way there in the days immediately following the end of the war. This number mushroomed in the following months with the influx of the hundreds of thousands of infiltrees from the east. Königseder and Wetzel, *Waiting for Hope*: 43.

throughout the DP era in the American zone, living in dozens of Jewish-only centers established in the area following the Harrison Report. In all cases except that of Feldafing, it took the Harrison report and orders from President Truman to create Jewish-only camps. Once only Jews finally inhabited these centers and the residents had gained a sense of their own autonomy, they began forming their own camp committees, police forces, and fire brigades. The centers were under the direct control of OMGUS until November 15, 1945, when the running of these camps was transferred to UNRRA. However, all of the camps' inhabitants shared a handful of common goals: resettlement outside of Europe, a Jewish state in Palestine, and self-governance in their Jewish centers. While certain elements were common for all of the camps in the American zone, each center differed in its size, structure, culture, religiosity, and make-up. The Jewish camps allowed its inhabitants a sense of normalcy and autonomy in an abnormal situation.

### **Feldafing Displaced Persons Center**

Located twenty miles from Munich at the base of the Bavarian Alps, the Feldafing Displaced Persons camp was established on the site of a former Nazi academy known as *Napola* (*Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten* or National political training institute), a few kilometers from the resort towns bordering the Starnberger Lake.<sup>101</sup> Feldafing had originally housed non-Jews along with its Jewish majority, and through the efforts of Rabbi Klausner, became the first Jewish-only camp in Germany in July 1945.<sup>102</sup> Although the Americans still had their policy of non-segregation in place at that time, and told Klausner that creating a Jewish-only camp was impossible, he was able to convince Colonel Roy, the head of the Dachau camp, that he should order the immediate resettlement of the non-Jewish nationals who were in Feldafing and send them to other centers to live among individuals of their same national background. This move

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<sup>101</sup> Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies* 135.

<sup>102</sup> Klausner, *A Letter to My Children*: 30.



allowed Klausner to transfer the Jewish DPs in Dachau into the Feldafing camp, creating an unofficial Jewish-only center.<sup>103</sup>

Napola was transformed into the Feldafing DP center on April 29, 1945, when Lieutenant Irving J. Smith entered the town of Tutzing and was confronted with thousands of starving Hungarian female survivors. With the aid of an UNRRA team in the area, he requisitioned *Napola* in the neighboring town of Feldafing and transformed it into a refugee center. The Feldafing DP camp accommodated an estimated 4,900 DPs in September 1945, consisting of the survivors from Tutzing as well as concentration camp survivors found in bombed out train cars abandoned by the Nazis fleeing from the Third Army.<sup>104</sup> These refugees were also joined by a Lithuanian group of Jews who had known each other in the Kaufering labor camp, a sub-camp of Dachau, and who upon encountering American forces in the area were directed to Feldafing.<sup>105</sup>

The conditions in Feldafing were originally substandard. In her Shoah Foundation testimony, Olga Astor remembers,

When I was in Feldafing, in that hospital... the conditions were absolutely appalling and this was now under American liberation, and we didn't get any night clothes, the room wasn't cleaned, the food was served in metal plates that were rusted, the spoons were rusty... and this is under the Americans. And no clean bed no nothing. One day a nurse, schwester Gerta runs through the thing and brings everybody a pair of pajamas, and she is going to put fresh sheets on and clean up the rooms because Herr General [Eisenhower] is coming... The next morning I started screaming and I don't know how many hours until the Herr General walks into the room... I was lying there and look, by this time I didn't care who will see me how I looked. And I told this interpreter this is how the conditions are here and I showed them the plate, I showed then the spoon, I explained the bread, and I said we are here now for I don't know how long, we didn't have a clean sheet.<sup>106</sup>

At this visit Eisenhower promised the camp inhabitants that he would remedy the situation, and two weeks later the Hotel Kaiserin Elizabeth was requisitioned as the local Feldafing hospital.

The hospital had acted as an upscale German hotel until the Nazis transformed it into a hospital

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Königseder and Wetzel, *Waiting for Hope*: 225.

<sup>105</sup> Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies* 137.

<sup>106</sup> Astor, Olga. Interview 35621. *Visual History Archive*. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. 2009. Web. 5 Feb. 2010. <<http://libguides.usc.edu/vha>>

for their wounded, and it was a vast improvement over the former camp hospital.<sup>107</sup> Along with this act came the eviction of Germans from forty villas in the area to help alleviate the overcrowding in the camp.<sup>108</sup>

Faced with a dismal situation, Lt. Smith quickly began reforming the conditions in the camp. Although opinions of Lt. Smith are varied, there is no denying that he saved hundreds of survivors through his dietary program which started malnourished DPs with a diet of gruel and gradually worked up to solid foods. This plan along with his use of German doctors and nurses (POWs) to help care for the ill allowed Feldafing the distinction of having one of the lowest death rates of any camp. With its attentive medical staff, adequate housing, and nourishing food, Smith established one of the most populated and popular Jewish Displaced Persons' Communities in postwar Germany.

As the first Jewish camp, Feldafing became the model for other Jewish centers and the site of the first Jewish DP wedding in August 1945.<sup>109</sup> The history of the camp and its achievements meant it was also the natural location for the meeting of Jewish leaders throughout the zone. In July 1945, Rabbi Klausner suggested that the Jewish leaders living in Bavaria meet there to form a representative community. This group came to be known as the Central Committee of Liberated Jews in Bavaria.<sup>110</sup> Any Jewish survivor could join the Committee as long as they supported the common goals to protect the rights of the *She'erith Hapletah*, or surviving remnant, and to ensure that they were properly represented.<sup>111</sup> The Executive Committee had twenty-one members of the council comprised of eight Lithuanians, five Poles,

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<sup>107</sup> Matthäus, *Approaching an Auschwitz Survivor*: 73.

<sup>108</sup> Königseder and Wetzel, *Waiting for Hope*: 225.

<sup>109</sup> Klausner, *A Letter to My Children*: 78.

<sup>110</sup> The Central Committee had originally been called the Central Committee of Liberated Jews in the U.S. zone, but changed it to the Central Committee of Liberated Jews in Bavaria.

<sup>111</sup> This term is roughly translated from Biblical Hebrew to mean the surviving remnant and was chosen to encompass all Jewish survivors of the war.

four Hungarians, three Romanians, and one Greek. This committee decided on policies, while an eight member Council carried them out.<sup>112</sup> Klausner was elected the honorary president, and Dr. Ginzburg was chosen for chairman of the Executive. The constitution stipulated that the group would work closely with the Zionists in order to ensure that all Jews were removed from Germany.<sup>113</sup> The Central Committee quickly aligned itself with the foreign Jewish organizations because they did not believe in a future Jewish presence in Germany.<sup>114</sup> Although the Zionist platform had changed little over the course of the preceding half-century, and the Zionist continued to rally for a Jewish State in Palestine, the Holocaust and its survivors, provided very real proof substantiating calls for a Jewish safe haven. The Zionists, in conjunction with the Central Committee and other Jewish institutes, worked to prepare the DPs for their eventual resettlement in Palestine by organizing Hebrew language classes, job training, and paramilitary exercises. On September 7, 1946, the Military Government acknowledged the Central Committee as the representative party for all Jewish DPs in the zone. This group continued to represent Europe's displaced Jews in Germany until the early 1950s.

Feldafing was not just the site of the formation of the Central Committee, but also had its own democratically elected camp government concerned with housing issues, provisions, economics, hygiene and sanitation, culture, and legal affairs.<sup>115</sup> Like other camps there was a strong Zionist element within the center. While there were Jews who had never entertained the idea of resettling in Palestine, even if it was designated a Jewish state, almost every Jewish Displaced Person supported the call for a Jewish homeland and understood the necessity of a refuge where the world's Jews could be protected from future persecution.

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<sup>112</sup> Mankowitz, *Life Between Memory and Hope*: 101.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

<sup>114</sup> Frank Stern, "The Historic Triangle: Occupiers, Germans, and Jews in Postwar Germany," *Tel Aviver Jahrbuch für deutsche Geschichte* 19(1990): 62.

<sup>115</sup> Mankowitz, *Life Between Memory and Hope*: 48.

The Jewish DP camps had an exclusively Zionist orientation. The political life of the DPs, their schools, newspapers, posters, forums, kibbutzim (collectives), children's centers, and their hachsharot (training camps) reflected only Zionist ideology. The ORT sought to gear its vocational training program to [the] Palestinian economy... To the DPS the establishment of a homeland in Palestine was an unquestioned imperative, and any minority which would question this premise would be completely submerged in the protests that would follow.<sup>116</sup>

Zionism provided survivors, especially the young without any surviving loved one with a surrogate family. The desire to prepare for their future lives in Palestine led many young Zionists to move to the forty kibbutz farms located throughout Germany. The Kibbutzim allowed residents to live communally as they imagined they would in Palestine while providing them with a sense of security, living facilities on farms with agricultural training, education and a purpose.<sup>117</sup> These Kibbutzim (Socialist collective living environments) were often located on the farms of former Nazis as was the case with the Streicher farm. The residence of Julius Streicher and the surrounding farmland were taken over by the Americans and eventually handed over to the Zionists as a sub-camp of Landsberg. Locations like these not only provided living space and plenty of land on which to grow food, but also gave the DPs a sense of justice as they worked "their" land, which had so recently belonged to such a notorious Jew hater.<sup>118</sup> The World Zionist Organization (WZO) understood the important use of the DPs as the "sore thumb" that would remind the world of Jewish suffering. Every party active in Palestine was represented within the camps and caused strife as well as administrative problems because of their ideological divisions.<sup>119</sup> However, the Zionists had the biggest following. The WZO kept in contact with the Zionist parties active throughout the camps and sent Ben Gurion to visit on more than one occasion. For many DPs, Ben Gurion was like God on earth and Zionism offered

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<sup>116</sup> Abraham S. Hyman, "Displaced Persons," *American Jewish Year book* 50(1948-1949): 470.

<sup>117</sup> Patt and Berkowitz, *We Are Here*: 123.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

<sup>119</sup> Hyman, "Displaced Persons," 470.

reprieve from the tragedy of the Shoah, while “relieving Holocaust memory.”<sup>120</sup> Over the course of 1948 and 1949, 22,000 DPs from throughout Europe enlisted in the Haganah (Jewish underground) and were sent to fight in Palestine. Of this number, 7,800 came out of Jewish camps in Germany.<sup>121</sup>

Camp Feldafing also housed a separate facility for children and young adults, and while the educational program in the center was initially not as good as those in Landsberg and Föhrenwald, by November 1945 there was a functioning elementary school.<sup>122</sup> By June 1947, there were 30 kindergartners, 170 apprentices at the Organization Rehabilitation Training (ORT) school, and 46 students enrolled at the nurses’ training institute.<sup>123</sup> Dr. Oleiski, the former ORT Director in Lithuania from 1927-1941 and a Holocaust survivor, established the ORT program in Feldafing.<sup>124</sup>

The presence of the Klausenburg rebbe at the center in Feldafing lent a religious tilt to the camp. This rebbe insisted on a *Mikvah* for the ritual purification of religious women after menstruation and a kosher kitchen.<sup>125</sup> In November 1946, the camp boasted a *Talmud Torah* school with 138 students, as well as the Bet Aaron yeshiva. Added to this, the camp housed a religious kibbutz and provided a dressmaking course for orthodox women, thereby allowing religious life to flourish within the camp walls.<sup>126</sup>

Life in Feldafing was not just political and religious; there was also a strong cultural influence. By October 1945 the camp newspaper, *Dos Fraye Vort* (the Free Word), was actively reporting on domestic and international affairs. *Dos Yidishe Vort* (The Jewish Word) and a

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<sup>120</sup> Patt and Berkowitz, *We Are Here*: 102.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 100.

<sup>122</sup> Mankowitz, *Life Between Memory and Hope*: 132.

<sup>123</sup> Königseder and Wetzel, *Waiting for Hope*: 225.

<sup>124</sup> Mankowitz, *Life Between Memory and Hope*.

<sup>125</sup> Klausner, *A Letter to My Children*: 60.

<sup>126</sup> Königseder and Wetzel, *Waiting for Hope*: 225.

magazine called *Unterwegs* (Underway) were also published in Feldafing. The camp housed three theater troops: Amcho, Partisan, and Habima, all of which put on plays about everything from shtetl life to the Holocaust and beyond.<sup>127</sup>

Feldafing housed between 4,000 and 6,000 DPs at any given time during its tenure and was an active Jewish camp for more than six years. The camp hospital was finally closed in April 1950 and the Jewish camp was shutdown in March 1953, just over a year after control of Germany's remaining Jewish DPs was transferred from the Americans to the newly formed German semi-sovereign government.<sup>128</sup>

### **Landsberg DP Camp**

Just a 31 mile drive from Feldafing, the Landsberg Displaced Persons center was established in the former Wehrmacht compound in the town of Landsberg am Lech. Its initial inhabitants were mostly survivors from Lithuania, the Baltic States, and Poland. A short walk from the center of Landsberg am Lech, the camp overlooked the idyllic river running through the town. This center was 40 miles from Munich in southwest Bavaria and ironically was established in the same town in which Hitler was imprisoned after the failed putsch and he wrote *Mein Kampf*. UNRRA originally ran the camp at Landsberg with supplies provided by the American military who took a hands off policy after the Harrison visit. It housed 5,000 Jewish and 1,000 non-Jewish DPs until fall 1945 when it became a Jewish-only center.<sup>129</sup>

On September 19, 1945, the control of the camp was handed over to Major Irving Heymont, a twenty-seven year old Jewish army infantry officer. Heymont found himself in charge of 4,976 Jewish residents who had made Landsberg their home.<sup>130</sup> Upon his first visit to

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<sup>127</sup> Feinstein, *Holocaust Survivors in Postwar Germany, 1945-1957*: 225.

<sup>128</sup> Mankowitz, *Life Between Memory and Hope*: 226.

<sup>129</sup> Königseder and Wetzel, *Waiting for Hope*: 233.

<sup>130</sup> Patt, *Finding Home and Homeland*: 21.

the center, Heymont noted, “the camp is filthy beyond description. Sanitation is virtually unknown; words fail me when I try to think of an adequate description.”<sup>131</sup> Unlike Feldafing, Landsberg already had formed an unofficial camp committee, which Heymont hoped would slowly become an autonomous ruling group within the center.<sup>132</sup> He explained that, “the army had come to Europe to fight the Nazis, not stand over its victims.”<sup>133</sup> As a former Wehrmacht artillery post, the center had a series of three-story buildings with large rooms and bunk beds, two and three high. The bathrooms consisted of rows of toilets and sinks, but the toilets and halls were covered in excrement. There were no sheets, and utensils were filthy because there was nowhere to wash them. Spare blankets, lockers, and scraps of wood divided the space and afforded the DPs some semblance of privacy. Even the upper floors of the camp stables were used to house camp inhabitants. There was initially no central mess, and both the kosher and non-kosher kitchens were filthy. Heymont made it his goal to get the DPs to clean their center and to improve the living situation there.<sup>134</sup> Surprisingly, the camp hospital, located at St. Otilien, and the schools were clean and well maintained. The hospital already had a nursing program in September 1945, and several of the former garages had been turned into classrooms for elementary education as well as skills training, even providing evening classes.<sup>135</sup>

Even after the Harrison report, Landsberg continued to have military guards on duty, barbed wire on the top of its fences, and a pass system, which allowed only a small number of individuals to leave each day.<sup>136</sup> Major Heymont abolished the pass system on September 28,

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<sup>131</sup> Heymont, *Among the Survivors of the Holocaust*: 5.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*

1945, had the barbed wire removed, and placed Jewish DP police at the gates as a means of keeping Germans out, not keeping Jews in, as had previously been the case.

With more than 6,000 inhabitants, Landsberg was the biggest DP camp in Bavaria as well as the most overcrowded center. In order to better the situation, the army moved American soldiers out of the camp to provide nicer lodging for the single women and children in the center.<sup>137</sup> When this proved to be insufficient, Major Heymont ordered a number of German families living near the camp to evacuate their homes.<sup>138</sup> These moves served as a temporary salve for the problem, but the camp's popularity spread and new DPs arrived daily. Faced with the continuous issue of overcrowding, top military officials issued a directive that 1,000 DPs had to volunteer to move to Föhrenwald or the military would decide who would go. This move brought the DP population down to 4,650 individuals, however, by December 1945 there were an additional 1,900 people above the allowed 4,000.<sup>139</sup>

After several weeks of struggling, Major Heymont was able to get the camp into some sort of working order with a new mess hall, better hygiene, and a reduced population. The first camp elections in the zone took place on October 22, 1945, and shortly thereafter the committee began demanding autonomy in the camp. Samuel Gringauz was elected the first camp committee chairman and helped establish the first self-governed Jewish center.<sup>140</sup> Gringauz would later become the Chairman of the Central Committee of Liberated Jews in Bavaria. Heymont pointed out that the committee was there to represent all of the DPs and could not take over control until they could deal with the day-to-day running of the camp. The committee's main goal, as was true for most of the DPs as well, was to see that all DPs in the camp were

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<sup>137</sup> Heymont, *Among the Survivors of the Holocaust*: 28.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

<sup>140</sup> Königseder and Wetzel, *Waiting for Hope*: 233.



resettled outside of Germany with Palestine as the first choice. Heymont reminded them that they had to live in the present and take care of their community, while simultaneously fostering their Zionist drive.<sup>141</sup>

Like Feldafing, Landsberg had a rather large religious minority community. General Smith, Heymont's successor, guaranteed the camp's Orthodox community freshly slaughtered kosher meat in December, 1945 as well as a clean kosher kitchen and later a kosher mess hall in the camp. In 1946, 2,643 of the camp's Orthodox inhabitants registered for kosher meat.<sup>142</sup> The camp housed the first *Mikvah* in the American zone, even if it was only a cemented hole, illegally built in secret by the religious community.<sup>143</sup> After requisitioning housing from the Germans, Major Heymont turned over a few of the homes to the religious so that they could establish a religious school and a rabbinical academy.<sup>144</sup> In 1946 the camp would house the Klausenburg yeshiva with 80 students, and a *Talmud Torah* school was established in 1948.<sup>145</sup>

By October 1945 Dr. Jacob Oleiski opened the first ORT school in the zone and the first issue of the camp newspaper, the *Landzberger Lager-Cajtung*, came out the same month. The lack of Yiddish type led to the publication of the *Landzberger Cajtung* in transliterated Roman characters, and the paper remained transliterated throughout its publication. The paper was renamed the *Yidish Cajtung* in October 1946 and continued to be the most popular newspaper among Jewish DPs in the American zone.<sup>146</sup> Besides the various schools and training programs in Landsberg, there was also a camp university where adults could educate themselves about more varied topics.<sup>147</sup> Members of the camp committee and UNRRA worked to develop

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<sup>141</sup> Heymont, *Among the Survivors of the Holocaust*: 47.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 106.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>145</sup> Königseder and Wetzel, *Waiting for Hope*: 233.

<sup>146</sup> Heymont, *Among the Survivors of the Holocaust*: 43.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.

community activities to help lessen the depression among the DPs. These included inter-camp soccer matches and other athletic activities, as well as the opening of the Sholem Aleichem dance café in November 1945, a large room with tables surrounding a dance floor and coffee for patrons.<sup>148</sup> Camp inhabitants came to dance and enjoy the camp's orchestra, *Hatzomir*.<sup>149</sup> The camp also boasted a theater that seated 1,300 people and its own radio station.<sup>150</sup>

As one of the largest camps in Bavaria, Landsberg is estimated to have housed 23,000 Jewish Displaced Persons over the course of its tenure.<sup>151</sup> Its camp committee laid the foundation for future Jewish self-government. Landsberg had one of the most thriving communities in the American zone, and Polish infiltrates flocked to the Landsberg camp throughout 1945, '46, and '47. The camp was finally closed in October 1950 when the final inhabitants were moved to Feldafing.

### **The Föhrenwald Displaced Persons Center**

Originally built in 1939 to house workers for the I.G. Farben munitions factories in the area, the Föhrenwald DP camp was located near the town of Wolfratshausen, seventeen miles from Munich.<sup>152</sup> As the war raged on, a portion of the camp was transformed into housing for forced laborers. The planned community was created to house no more than 3,200 residents and in July 1944 only housed 1,390 laborers of both German and foreign origin.<sup>153</sup> The facilities at Föhrenwald were better than in most other camps, with homes for families instead of barrack style living. Major Heymont described the camp as beautiful with,

semi-detached affairs [houses] containing apartments of four or five rooms. The houses are built along concentric circular streets with the inner circle containing administration and community recreation

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<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, 89.

<sup>149</sup> Königseder and Wetzel, *Waiting for Hope*: 233.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>151</sup> Heymont, *Among the Survivors of the Holocaust*: 108.

<sup>152</sup> Balder, "Lager Föhrenwald," in *Ausstellung Lager Föhrenwald Prospekt und "Begleitende Texte"* (Wolfratshausen: Stadtarchiv Wolfratshausen, 1997), 3.

<sup>153</sup> Königseder and Wetzel, *Waiting for Hope*: 96.

buildings. While a few of the buildings need minor repair—mostly window panes—the general condition of the buildings is excellent. The whole community cannot be more than a few years old.<sup>154</sup>

The facilities at Föhrenwald did not need any drastic repairs, and the only thing that changed with the American take-over was the name of the streets. The houses in the camp had central heating and shared bathrooms, all of which made the center ideal for families.<sup>155</sup> After liberating the camp prisoners, the Americans transformed Föhrenwald into an international DP center, initially housing the families of former forced laborers from the Soviet Union and Volksdeutsche. Once the Russians left in June 1945, the camp was filled with 3,000 non-Jewish east Europeans and an estimated 2,000 Jewish Shoah survivors many of whom had been able to flee the forced march from Dachau because of American air raids.<sup>156</sup>

According to Rabbi Klausner, an additional 1,000 plus liberated survivors were housed in the dilapidated shacks in the former munitions factory town of Buchberg just 3.5 kilometers away. These Jews, Klausner stated, deserved better housing than the Germans in Föhrenwald, but could not be moved into the camp without the evacuation of the center's "Volksdeutsche."<sup>157</sup> The exclusively Jewish DP camps in Feldafing and Landsberg were also seriously overcrowded, and the need to create a new Jewish center in the Munich area was evident. Through a series of communications with the press and the military, Klausner along with other concerned individuals, were eventually able to convince OMGUS to seize Föhrenwald and designate it as a Jewish-only camp.<sup>158</sup>

Because Föhrenwald was deemed such a well-maintained facility, UNRRA and the United States Army felt it should be devoted to families and orphans of all nationalities. This decision is understandable when one reads Major Heymont's description of the center. He

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<sup>154</sup> Heymont, *Among the Survivors of the Holocaust*: 24.

<sup>155</sup> Königseder and Wetzel, *Waiting for Hope*: 96.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> Klausner, *A Letter to My Children*: 20.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 57.

wrote, “Föhrenwald is ideal for a DP camp with fine housing for families. Being a compact separate community, it is well suited for maintaining control and keeping the Germans at a distance. The town of Wolfratshausen is actually a few kilometers away,” which according to Heymont would help prevent clashes between the two parties.<sup>159</sup>

The debate on the future inhabitants of the camp continued, but fortunately for the Jewish DPs in the area, the Harrison report was released a month later promoting policy changes in the treatment of Jewish DPs. This again brought Föhrenwald to the attention of the Americans. General Eisenhower visited Feldafing concurrent to the publication of the Harrison report, and in his speech to the inhabitants he expressed his indignation at the camp’s condition and the dangerous overcrowding. Everything fell into place, and Föhrenwald was transformed into Bavaria’s third major Jewish center.<sup>160</sup> The non-Jews were evacuated from the camp twenty-four hours after the decision to make Föhrenwald an entirely Jewish center, and the reshuffling of Europe’s surviving remnant began. On October 15, 1945, General McBride announced to the Landsberg population that 1,000 of the camp’s inhabitants needed to be resettled in the newly designated center.<sup>161</sup> Despite the army’s best efforts and a constant reiteration that the compound near Wolfratshausen was better than the facility in Landsberg, no one volunteered to move. Rabbi Klausner recorded a similar problem when he tried to entice the Klausenburg rebbe and his followers to move into Föhrenwald from Feldafing. The Klausenburg rebbe signed a contract with Klausner guaranteeing that a *Mikvah* and kosher facilities would be provided for the religious community in exchange for his subsequent move there.<sup>162</sup> The rebbe still refused to move until he was guaranteed a car and driver that would take him anywhere he wanted to go.

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<sup>159</sup> Heymont, *Among the Survivors of the Holocaust*: 24.

<sup>160</sup> Königseder and Wetzel, *Waiting for Hope*: 96.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>162</sup> Klausner, *A Letter to My Children*: 60.

Both Rabbi Klausner and Major Heymont soon learned why the DPs were so hesitant to transfer, even if it meant better living facilities. Heymont wrote that the people were reluctant to move to the new center because they associated the move with the transports they had lived through in the concentration camps. These forced movements during the Shoah had resulted in the death of friends and relatives and had included new selections and all of the fears associated with that experience. Heymont continued on to say, “they [the Jews] had had enough of moving and transfers in Europe. Now, they want to be secure in one place unless they know the move is a definite step along the path leading out of Europe.”<sup>163</sup> For the Jewish DPs living in Landsberg the camp provided security and a comfortable holding pattern until they could be resettled off of the continent. While the 1,000 DPs would eventually move to the new camp, transferring Jewish DPs to other centers continued to create huge logistical problems for the military and UNRRA. In order to move as many DPs as possible, the majority of Föhrenwald’s subsequent inhabitants, the east European infiltrees entering the zone at the end of October, were immediately sent to the newest center.<sup>164</sup> The number of DPs quickly exceeded the numbers that the camp was originally designed to house, and by January 1946 the population had grown from 3,000 to 5,300.<sup>165</sup>

The camp committee in Föhrenwald was appointed by Jean Hershaw, the first director of the UNRRA team in charge of the camp and worked directly alongside her. It was only after continuous requests for a democratic election that Hershaw finally consented and scheduled the event for December 16, 1945. However, because the election was conducted under the supervision of the military and changes were made to the original committee membership, the

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<sup>163</sup> Heymont, *Among the Survivors of the Holocaust*: 75.

<sup>164</sup> 1,080 of the 1,400 east European Jews who entered Bavaria in October- November 1945, made it their home. Königseder and Wetzel, *Waiting for Hope*: 97.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

election was postponed to January 7, 1946.<sup>166</sup> The Zionists proved to be the overwhelming winners of the election and the former chairman, Nachum Bakstansky, was elected the chairman for the camp. Hershaw was replaced by Henry Cohen in early 1946 and the camp leadership entered a new phase as the much more understanding director worked to transfer power to the DPs themselves.<sup>167</sup> This policy continued throughout the tenure of the camp and helped the DPs feel like they were in control of their lives again after such a long time waiting.

Whereas the inhabitants in Feldafing and Landsberg had to create their own educational system, Major Heymont and other members of OMGUS helped to establish a school system in Föhrenwald before it became an exclusively Jewish camp.<sup>168</sup> This educational program grew and expanded as children were born in the camp and east European families arrived complete to the center. Like the other camps in the area, Föhrenwald had kindergartens, elementary schools, and training facilities, and plenty of students eager to learn.<sup>169</sup> Just as in other centers, there were not enough trained teachers to meet the needs of the camp inhabitants, nor were there sufficient school supplies or books, but somehow educating the camp's residents continued. In November 1945, there were already 27 teachers educating 250 students at the Hebrew *Tarbut* school. In 1946 a secondary Hebrew school was introduced to help educate the older children living in the camp. The camp also boasted an ORT school after November 1945, providing skills training for the DPs' proposed future life in Israel. Additionally, there were several vocational training schools, like drivers-education, tailoring, nursing, shoe making, cosmetology, and agricultural training, just to name a few.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

<sup>167</sup> OMGBY, "Annual, Quarterly and Monthly Reports," in *OMGBY Wolfratshausen* (Wolfratshausen: Stadtarchiv Wolfratshausen, 1948), 22.

<sup>168</sup> Heymont, *Among the Survivors of the Holocaust*: 70.

<sup>169</sup> Königseder and Wetzel, *Waiting for Hope*: 103.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., 114.

The Föhrenwald camp became a center of religious life after the transfer of the Klausenburg rebbe in late 1945 and the arrival of more than 1,000 religious Jews from Eastern Europe. Out of nearly 5,000 camp inhabitants, 1,400 considered themselves orthodox, and the camp housed six synagogues.<sup>171</sup> Shortly after his arrival, Rabbi Yehezkiel Yehuda Halberstam aka the Klausenburg rebbe, established a Jewish religious school, and in October 1945 he opened a Beth-Jacob school for ultra-Orthodox girls in the camp.<sup>172</sup> Evening classes were offered to those girls who could not attend school during the day because it conflicted with their work schedules. There were already 90 girls at the Beth-Jacob school by February 1946, and they were responsible for overseeing all of the camp's holiday festivities.<sup>173</sup> Rabbi Halberstam also introduced a rabbinical school to help educate religious males between the ages of 14 and 25.

The inhabitants of Föhrenwald founded the first theater troupe following the war and put on their opening performance on October 28, 1945.<sup>174</sup> This group was so successful that they were asked to perform at other camps as well. Theater soon became so popular in the camp that in March 1946, young members of the Kibbutz, or kibbutzniks, living under the camp's control, formed an amateur group called *Mapilim*. While this group did not last long, it did travel and put on performances at other centers in the area. *Mapilim* was followed in June 1946 by another troupe calling itself *Bar Kokhba*, and still later *Bar Kokhba* and *Mapilim* joined forces to form *Negev*, a very successful theater group in the camp. Theater was so sought after that the camp's cultural committee constantly brought in other theater groups from the area to help entertain the

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<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid., 107.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid., 190.

camp population.<sup>175</sup> Besides all of the theater activities in the camp, there was also both a children's and adults' orchestra and choir performing regularly in the center.

Entertainment was not limited to theater and live performances in Föhrenwald. The camp also housed a library, reading room, and movie theater, and its inhabitants began publishing *Bamidbar: Wochncajtung fun di bafrejten Jidn*, on December 12, 1945.<sup>176</sup> For the more athletic individuals living in the camp, there were a series of different sports clubs with activities ranging from the ever-popular soccer, to boxing, skiing, table tennis, and track and field.<sup>177</sup> There were also a number of small underground military training groups active in Föhrenwald, aiming to prepare camp inhabitants to fight the British and any other enemies of the Jewish state in Palestine.<sup>178</sup>

Calls for the closing of camp Föhrenwald began in the early 1950s, but they came to naught. While the German authorities wanted to close the camp for monetary purposes, it was harder to resettle the remaining “hardcore” elements in the camp than anyone had anticipated, and the effort would take more than six years to come to fruition.<sup>179</sup> Additionally, Jewish DPs started returning from Israel in 1948 and resettling in the camp to await new papers to a more “desirable” country. By the late 1940s and early 1950s, several hundred Jewish DPs had returned from Israel to Germany and become squatters in the closed portions of the Föhrenwald DP camp. These Jews sparked a new debate over what should be done with returners and who should pay to care and house them. Additionally, housing in Germany was still being rebuilt for the German population living in the country, making efforts to find apartments for the DPs

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<sup>175</sup> Ibid., 121.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid., 123.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid., 127.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid., 143.

<sup>179</sup> I use the term *Hardcore* to describe the Jewish DPs who were too sick to emigrate, as well as those who did not want to leave Germany, or the safety of the Displaced Persons' Centers. The JDC and the press used this term throughout the 1950s to denote all DPs who created difficulties when it came to their placement.



incredibly difficult. In order to alleviate housing shortages for German citizens and to prompt Jewish DPs to either resettle in Germany or emigrate elsewhere, the German government sold camp Föhrenwald to the archdiocese of Munich-Freising in 1955. However, it took until February 28, 1957 for the last DP inhabitant to leave, bringing to an end 12 years of Jewish camp life in Germany.<sup>180</sup>

### **More than Just Surviving**

The struggle to help care for the Jewish Displaced Persons required the efforts of several different groups, including the Office of the Military Government, U.S., UNRRA, independent Jewish aid organizations, and the Jewish survivors themselves. It took a great deal of time, energy, and toil to finally bring about the formation of secure Jewish-only centers in the heart of “enemy” territory. However, the hardships did not end with the establishment of the camps. The formation of public works like the police and fire brigade, the creation of cultural, educational, and athletic groups, and the establishment of Jewish representative bodies all brought the Jewish DPs closer to their goal of autonomy and control over their lives. However, the internal governance of the Jewish Displaced Persons centers was still not in the hands of the camp inhabitants even after liberation. The struggle for free movement, better treatment, and adequate supplies dominated the daily lives of Germany’s displaced Jews living in centers throughout the country. Paramount among the concerns of the Jewish DPs was their immediate emigration abroad, a demand that for the vast majority of DPs would not come to fruition until 1948 at the earliest. For those most affected by their experiences during the Shoah emigration often never became a reality.

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<sup>180</sup> Königseder and Wetzel, *Waiting for Hope*: 165.

While the lives of DPs were dominated by their struggle for autonomy, their need to rebuild their families, and their chance at leaving the “accursed soil of Germany,” their everyday existence until 1947 was ruled by the need to acquire the supplies essential for their survival through any means necessary. The Jewish DPs, just like everyone else living in Germany resorted to the use of “illegal” measures that they would never have considered employing before the war. This was especially true when it came to trade and barter on the illegal markets in Germany.

II.  
A MEANS OF SURVIVAL?  
TRADE AND BARTER ON THE GREY MARKET

Despite the drastic improvements brought about to the care and control of Germany's displaced Jews in the American zone of occupation, after the findings of the Harrison report, the Office of the Military Government, United States (OMGUS) and the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) continued to be plagued with some seemingly insurmountable problems. Dominant among these were the insufficient food rations, which led to the issue of the ever-growing grey market, and later black market, rampant throughout Germany. The grey market, otherwise known as the second economy, facilitated exchange between members of every nationality in Germany and helped the country to function in lieu of a working economy. The Jewish DPs turned to the illegal economy in order to secure the resources they needed to survive, as did everyone else in the country.

The necessity of the grey market, or exchanges of goods necessary to survival, was never questioned by the occupation authorities.<sup>1</sup> However, this does not mean that the authorities ignored these activities or that they did not work to ensure that people purchased goods from the legal ration economy. The Allies, especially OMGUS, tolerated the grey market because they understood its role in the immediate postwar period, but they were only willing to allow these exchanges if they did not threaten the ration economy. When trade of agricultural goods diverted these items from the legal market to the grey market, as often happened with German farmers dissatisfied with the prices offered by OMGUS, the Americans worked to arrest the offenders and ensure that these goods were rationed in the future. This was especially true with livestock,

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<sup>1</sup> While the term grey market is used in this dissertation to denote the economic exchanges rampant throughout Germany between 1945 and 1947, aid workers, economists, government authorities, and those living in Germany often used this term interchangeably with the black market when discussing the trade occurring at the time.

which was often sold and slaughtered illegally. While willing to allow the grey market to function on a small scale, OMGUS was watchful of these exchanges. They wanted to prevent the emergence of a thriving black market, or an illegal economy on which necessities and luxury items could be bartered for or purchased for exorbitant prices, and sellers profited. The Military Government knew that if the black market developed in Germany it would threaten their efforts to reestablish a functioning economy in the country.

Driven by necessity, the Jewish Displaced Persons left the security of the camps within days of their arrival and began trading with their German neighbors to acquire the goods that they could not get in the centers. These early economic interactions were some of the first contacts made between displaced Jews in Germany and Germans. While the initial exchanges between Jewish DPs and Germans were economically motivated, they often evolved into working, sexual, and friendly relationships. However, this was not always the case. While violence between Jews, Germans, and Americans was rare, it did occasionally erupt. This was the case in Landsberg on the anniversary of the liberation of the local concentration camps when German citizens were stopped and beaten by Jewish DPs from the local DP center. Conflict occasionally occurred between German police and assembled masses of Jewish DPs outside of the camps, as well as between American soldiers and displaced Jews, although those clashes were infrequent.

The extralegal nature of the Jewish Displaced Persons centers, combined with the fact that these Jews could not be tried by the German courts, meant that the Jewish DPs developed a sense of autonomy, security, and separateness over the course of American rule. This is not to say that the Jewish DPs lived without fear of their neighbors or that their relationships with American authorities were always amicable. The reemergence of anti-Semitism soon after the

end of the war led many Jewish Displaced Persons to question their continued stay in Germany. Additionally, the interactions between Jews and Americans changed drastically over the course of 1945 and 1946. Front line soldiers were replaced by new troops who knew nothing of Nazi atrocities beyond the newsreel footage they had seen at the movies and who viewed the Jewish DPs as unhygienic nuisances rather than the victims of the Holocaust. The relations between the Jewish DPs, Germans, and Americans further deteriorated as OMGUS worked to reestablish a functioning economy in Germany, and as the German Federal Republic began to reassert their sovereignty after 1949. These shifts in power greatly influenced the interactions between these three parties over the course of the 1940s.

### **Trade and Barter for Survival: Buying on the Illegal Markets**

Wait, work? Are you kidding? Who worked? It was always the black market in camp.<sup>2</sup>

His Phobia is black market activities...he seems to be convinced that they are being conducted exclusively by the people of the camp. There is no doubt that they are involved – but all Germany is one big black market.<sup>3</sup>

If we were to imprison everyone in Germany who barter, we would have to convert Germany into one big jail.<sup>4</sup>

If all black market activities were to cease—just about all German commercial activity would cease too.<sup>5</sup>

The task of rebuilding Germany took decades and during that time the country was in a state of constant distress. According to the editor of *Foreign Affairs*, Hamilton Fish, there was “too little of everything” in Europe.<sup>6</sup>

too few trains, trams, buses and automobiles to transport people to work on time...too little flour to make bread without adulterants, and even so not enough bread to provide energies for hard

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<sup>2</sup> Finkel, Helen. Interview 8657. *Visual History Archive*. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. 2009. Web. 5 Feb. 2010. <<http://libguides.usc.edu/vha>>

<sup>3</sup> Irving Heymont, *Among the Survivors of the Holocaust, 1945: the Landsberg DP Camp Letters of Major Irving Heymont, United States Army*, Monographs of the American Jewish Archives no. 10 (Cincinnati, Ohio: American Jewish Archives, 1982). 60.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>6</sup> Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* (New York: Penguin Press, 2005). 89.

labor; too little paper for newspapers to report more than a fraction of the world's news; too little seed for planting and too little fertilizer to nourish it; too few houses to live in and not enough glass to supply them with window panes; too little leather for shoes, wool for sweaters, gas for cooking, cotton for diapers, sugar for jam, fats for frying, milk for babies, soap for washing.<sup>7</sup>

Although these comments represented all of Europe, they were especially true in Germany. Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces (SHAEF) ordered that the food and other necessities for DPs be acquired from indigenous sources, but it soon became apparent that this was impossible in the postwar environment in Germany. While camps like Landsberg were initially fed with local rations, this was not possible in many of the surrounding counties.<sup>8</sup> The destruction brought on by the war and the advancing armies left Germany's countryside in ruins. Not only was food scarce, but also only 10 percent of Germany's railways functioned in April 1945 making the country immobile.<sup>9</sup>

The defeat of Germany, the destruction of the European economy, and the lack of resources combined with the large numbers suffering from starvation throughout the country as well as abroad, made it impossible for the Allies to properly provide for all those in need. The acquisition and allocation of goods to Displaced Persons in Germany did not reach adequate levels until 1947; even after that there were still hundreds of thousands of Germans in need throughout the country.<sup>10</sup> Officials in the U.S. Military Government often noted the emaciated state of German civilians within the zone, commenting on their starved and wasted appearance. The infant mortality rate among Germans was twice as high as that elsewhere in Europe, and the number of stillborn births in the country was also elevated from the numbers recorded in the

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Heymont, *Among the Survivors of the Holocaust*: 93.

<sup>9</sup> Tony Judt describes the situation very well when he said, "the problem lay partly in destroyed farms, partly in disrupted communications and mostly in the sheer numbers of helpless, unproductive mouths needing to be fed." Judt, *Postwar*: 21.

<sup>10</sup> Executive Staff of UNRRA, "General Situation of D.P. U.S. and military and German Authorities (UNRRA report)," in *DPs, Germany* (New York: United Nations, 1946), 2.

preceding years.<sup>11</sup> In a public safety report dated March 13, 1946, the author noted that the German population was “undernourished and sickly.”<sup>12</sup> This report was followed in June 1946 by a similar account in which the author stated that 70-75% of the population was malnourished weighing between 15 and 20 kilo under what they should, leading to sickness. These illnesses carried with them stomach and intestinal problems brought on by a lack of fatty tissue caused by deficient diets.<sup>13</sup> In October 1946, the author of another report wrote that he feared that the 1,550 calories guaranteed to German citizens would soon be cut leaving them with insufficient supplies to survive.<sup>14</sup> Shortages led the foreign refugees and Displaced Persons, and their German neighbors to trade goods and surplus supplies on the local informal markets, where the participants bartered for the goods they required.<sup>15</sup> These exchanges were considered grey market trades by the Allies who did not approve of such trading but understood their necessity. Every individual living in the country depended on these illegal markets to survive.

The postwar situation was so bad in the first months after the end of the war that even the DPs living under American control continued to starve. Rations were stretched to feed as many people as possible, and everyone was left hungry and wanting. When asked about her first days of liberation Lea Gottesman remembers,

They took us to Feldafing, it was a DP camp. We were very hungry, still very hungry and uh we didn't have enough food... They gave us a little bit [of] food, but I know we were very hungry, and there was a market, like outside, you could go and buy some fruit and so we went. I don't know, we got a little bit [of] money, how we got the money, we sold something, we were changing for something else and for that we got some money, so we bought a little bit of fruit.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Munich Police, "NR. 35 (Police Report)," in *Polizeidirektion München 11411* (Munich: BayHStA, 1946), 8.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

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

<sup>15</sup> I use the term grey market to denote minor barter between individuals. These exchanges were mainly motivated by the participants' drive to survive and consisted of trade of/for food and clothing, not luxury goods or for material gain.

<sup>16</sup> Gottesman, Lea. Interview 22603. *Visual History Archive*. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. 2009. Web. 5 Feb. 2010. <<http://libguides.usc.edu/vha>>

For the average DP trade, barter, and illegal exchanges were the only way to survive in the postwar. These activities were not viewed as illegal or immoral by those practicing them, but rather were viewed as necessary.

According to an United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) report written in July 1946, the DPs received about “ten percent of the requirements necessary to achieve a minimum acceptable standard” of living.<sup>17</sup> Milk was often watered down, and meat, fat and clothing were extremely hard to purchase with rations cards because even on the rationing system there simply were not enough supplies to go around. This meant that more than a year after the end of the war and the creation of the DP centers, Jewish survivors continued to live without the supplies they needed to do any more than continue to exist from one day to the next.

In a monthly historical report from April 1946, Major Steers noted,

Clothing is bartered for food on a rather large scale, but the individual transaction is not very large. The parties to each trade: giving clothing-Jew from camp Föhrenwald: giving food-the German farmer. Numerous arrests have been made of Jews with large quantities of food for which they admit bartering.<sup>18</sup>

This lack of suitable food and clothing was especially harmful to the emaciated Jewish survivors, and their dire situation was further compounded by the incredibly harsh winter of 1946 that was the worst on record since 1880. This was followed by one of the hottest and driest summers since temperature record keeping began and resulted in a terrible harvest.<sup>19</sup> The physical landscape of much of Europe had experienced a tremendous amount of destruction during the war years and was being replanted alongside German farmland in the immediate postwar period. This meant that none of these countries could be relied on to provide for the survivors in

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<sup>17</sup> UNRRA, "General Situation of D.P. U.S. and military and German Authorities (UNRRA report)," 6.

<sup>18</sup> Philip L. Jr. Steers, "Monthly Historical Report," in *OMGUS* (Wolfratshausen: Landesarchiv Wolfratshausen, 1946), 2.

<sup>19</sup> Judt, *Postwar*: 87.



Germany, and German resources certainly could not sustain the millions of displaced refugees desperately in need of care.

An examination of the goods “sold” on the grey market helps to illustrate that it was based on an economy of necessity and not one of luxury. The majority of individuals trading on the grey market were not exchanging items traditionally considered extravagant such as jewelry or art. For many people in Europe the war had changed their understanding of “luxury” items to now include things like soap, chocolate, or razors. In a report from May 1946, officer Bosch, noted that the most wanted goods on the black market were food items.<sup>20</sup> The series of weekly reports written by the Police Presidium Munich about the black market from December 1945 to September 1946 shows that the number of luxury goods traded on the grey market was significantly lower than that of items necessary for daily life. Goods like meat, shoes, clothing, tobacco, and sugar were the most frequently exchanged merchandise on the grey market. Items such as soap, razors, fat, milk, butter, alcohol, flour, and chocolates or other candies, closely followed the above-mentioned goods. Interestingly, a maximum of four weekly police reports from the end of 1945 to September of 1946 revealed the confiscation of luxury items like jewelry, money, watches, radios, or cameras illustrating that trade in large quantities of these items was much less common at the time. In the immediate postwar period, sugar, a comb, or bar of soap from one of the Allied countries was considered luxurious. These were the most sought after items following food. In his memoir, Simon Schochet recalled that American and British soap were the most desired and expensive articles traded on the illegal markets. He also recalls receiving a comb, stating, “what a luxurious and civilized feeling it is, to be able to use

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<sup>20</sup> OMGB, "Black-Market Summary report," in *Black-Market* (Munich: BayHStA, 1945 & 1946), 1.

one again.”<sup>21</sup> Jews occasionally received these goods from UNRRA but often had to trade them for other supplies that they needed more as these items were scarce across Europe.<sup>22</sup>

While it is clear that there were individuals profiting from the black market even before the war ended, the masses in Germany turned to this medium of exchange purely out of necessity. In an OMGUS report from December 27, 1945, the author noted that, “The present situation [black market] is not serious.”<sup>23</sup> This is not to say that the American military was not watching and attempting to control illegal trade. Every police report in 1945 and 1946 mentioned the black market and military crackdowns. OMGUS feared that the independent traders might partner up to form organized gangs of black marketers, and while there was no “large scale diversion of American goods” and no evidence of organized crime syndicates, the Military Government wanted to ensure it stayed that way.<sup>24</sup>

Although the Jews lacked vegetables, clothing, and fresh meat, they were able to trade and barter the supplies they did not use for those in which their diets were deficient, making commercial interactions one of the first postwar contacts between Jews and Germans and later American occupation forces. In some instances, the food provided was foreign to the DPs motivating them to trade it for something with which they were familiar. This was the case with Pola Silver who was given oatmeal for the first time in the DP camp. She recalled, “oatmeal was for the pigs, so I traded it with a German for some flowers.”<sup>25</sup> The Germans often had a small garden plot and some of those in Bavaria lived on farms allowing them access to fresh fruits and vegetables as well as meat on occasion. However, they had lived without “luxury” items like real coffee, cigarettes, and fat for more than three years and were willing to trade their extra

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<sup>21</sup> Simon Schochet, *Feldafing* (Vancouver: November House, 1983). 40.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>23</sup> OMGB, "Black Market Situation," in *OMGB* (Munich: BayHstA, 1945), 2.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Silver, Pola, interview by author, tape recording, Oakland, CA., 30 June 2003

vegetables, clothing, and fruit to obtain said goods. Major Heymont wrote about this phenomenon in a letter from October 8, 1945,

the local Germans are somewhat better [off than the Jews]--they have the countryside to trade with. Almost every Landsberg family has connections of some sort with local farmers. The camp people do too—but on a smaller scale. They have less to offer than the Germans. There are undoubtedly a few large black market operators among the camp people. However, the vast majority of them exists solely on the rations furnished by the camp.<sup>26</sup>

While everyone in the country was in need, the Germans had a more varied array of items to exchange and better contacts than the Displaced Persons. Also, since they had not lost all of their possessions during the war, these Germans had necessities such as cooking utensils, furniture, blankets, shoes, and coats that they could trade with the Jews for the things they lacked.

This “illegal” system of trade was the only functioning economy in Germany for more than two years. Germans described the postwar situation by saying, “one lives in the so called ‘peace’ for almost two years, [and] the conditions are worse than during the war.”<sup>27</sup> The only way to make the living situation in the country even slightly better was through illegal trade. Despite the fact that Jewish Holocaust survivors and most of world Jewry believed that survivors had renounced all interactions with Germans, the reality in the country meant that these two groups were thrown into a situation that required that they interact in some form on a daily basis in order to survive.<sup>28</sup> These activities were so commonplace, and viewed as a necessary evil, that in the beginning the American army was relatively lenient on people involved in small-scale barter and trade on the grey market. This position only lasted a few short months, but the Americans continued to be viewed as overly sympathetic when it came to Jewish involvement in crime.

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<sup>26</sup> Heymont, *Among the Survivors of the Holocaust*: 46.

<sup>27</sup> Police, "NR. 35 (Police Report)," 9.

<sup>28</sup> Abraham J. Klausner, *A Letter to My Children: From the Edge of the Holocaust* (Berkeley, CA: Judah L. Magnes Museum, 2002). 160; William Hoffmann, "Möhlstraße Situation," in *Black Market* (Munich: BayHStA, 1949), 1.

Because rations were still inadequate, some individual women became “girlfriends” of American soldiers in exchange for supplies for themselves and their families. The public safety reports from 1946 are riddled with comments about the deficient food supply’s contribution to the removal of sexual restraints among young girls, and that women prostituted themselves, spreading disease, all in exchange for some food or other goods for which they were in need.<sup>29</sup> In fact, the illegal exchange of goods was so prevalent in Germany that an OMGUS report from February 1946 discussing raids in POW camps in Bavaria, revealed that the black market was also active among prisoners in camps like Dachau. Another report noted that, “A large number of Nazis who have been excluded from their former occupation and business, are now operators in the black market.”<sup>30</sup> According to Rabbi Philip S. Bernstein, the black market, “was not peculiar to the Jews, for all Germany-indeed, most of Europe-was in the throes of the black market, owing to the scarcity of necessities.”<sup>31</sup> In essence there was no way to survive legally in Germany.

Almost every account written about the postwar situation noted that there was a rations economy (legal), functioning alongside of the illegal trade centers. As Samuel Gringauz noted in 1948, there was a “breakdown of economic life into a controlled and a free (black) market,” which added to the mounting friction in Germany.<sup>32</sup> Lack of consumer goods and rations made Germany “fertile soil for the black market.”<sup>33</sup> Gringauz argued that even in, “this field the Jewish DP’s have not been conspicuous in their activities as compared to other displaced persons

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<sup>29</sup> Police, "NR. 35 (Police Report)," 2.

<sup>30</sup> OMGB, "Black-Market Summary report," 1.

<sup>31</sup> Philip S. Bernstein, "Displaced Persons," *American Jewish Year Book* 49(1947): 526.

<sup>32</sup> Samuel Gringauz, "Our New German Policy and the DP's: Why Immediate Resettlement is Imperative " *Commentary* 5, no. 6 (1948): 509.

<sup>33</sup> Abraham S. Hyman, "Displaced Persons," *American Jewish Year book* 50(1948-1949): 469.

groups or in fact, as compared to the German population itself.”<sup>34</sup> General Clay described the postwar situation in a statement he delivered on the Jewish DPs in 1947, saying,

the unsettled economic conditions in Germany have made barter trading and black market operations a common problem. Even in this field, the Jewish displaced persons have not been conspicuous in their activities as compared to other displaced persons groups or, in fact, as compared to the German population itself.<sup>35</sup>

The information that all groups were involved in black market trade was irrelevant to many Germans and Americans, who claimed that the Jews were the sole perpetrators of this illegal activity within the German economy. Abraham Hyman noted, “Although only a small fraction of the Jewish DPs engaged in the black market for profit, Germans, Austrians, and some of the occupation personnel held all the Jewish DPs collectively responsible as the principal black market offenders.”<sup>36</sup> This position was seconded by Gringauz who argued, “The DP’s themselves participate in the black market only as petty intermediaries-and the Jews play the smallest role of all.”<sup>37</sup> However, despite these arguments, the Jews were continuously pointed at as Germany’s criminal population, an idea that continued to plague Jewish life in Germany well into the 1950s. It was the early postwar situation that necessitated involvement in the black market, just as it was the early participation of Jewish DPs, alongside of almost everyone else in Germany that led to the perception of Jewish over-involvement in criminality.<sup>38</sup>

For many Jews living in Germany, legitimate work was not available in the immediate postwar period. The workshops and factories that would later become staples in the Jewish DP centers were non-existent, and many Jews refused to work to help rebuild the German economy.

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<sup>34</sup> Gringauz, "Our New German Policy and the DP's," 1.

<sup>35</sup> Bernstein, "Displaced Persons," 530.

<sup>36</sup> Hyman, "Displaced Persons," 469.

<sup>37</sup> Gringauz, "Our New German Policy and the DP's," 513.

<sup>38</sup> As will be discussed in chapter 4, these anti-Semitic ideas of a Jewish predisposition to crime were directly linked with Nazi propaganda that argued Jews were genetically engineered for criminality. For more on the link between Nazi ideology and anti-Semitism see Michael Berkowitz, *The Crime of My Very Existence: Nazism and the Myth of Jewish Criminality*, The S. Mark Taper Foundation Imprint in Jewish Studies (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

German leaders in some areas of the country tried to pass laws that only provided retail supplies to individuals who had been involved in commerce over the previous twelve years, arguing that the shortages rampant throughout Germany necessitated the sale of goods by “professionals.”<sup>39</sup> Laws like this disregarded the war experiences shared by many Jews, as well as the conditions affecting the Displaced Persons in the postwar period, discriminating against these refugees. By the end of 1946, the Jews like so many other non-Jewish DPs, Germans, and foreigners chose trade on the black market as their occupation.<sup>40</sup> What had developed out of necessity became a full-time job for many participants.

While accusations about the origin of the illegal markets settled on the Jewish DPs in the postwar period, its actual inception occurred in the first half of the 1940s when the Wehrmacht began trading goods illegally as resources in the country became scarce.<sup>41</sup> The German economy was in dire straits well before the end of the war, and daily rations had begun to approach starvation levels in the early 1940s.<sup>42</sup> According to an OMGUS report from August 4, 1945, “black market activities flourish[ed] in Munich under Military Government to no less extent than they did under the Nazis,” illustrating that the need for some medium of exchange, even an illegal one, was necessary for survival long before the occupation period.<sup>43</sup> It is important to remember that Germany was considered *Judenrein* throughout the early 1940s illustrating that the Jews were not involved in the creation of the black market. The illegal market was not new and was not at all related to the release of so many millions of foreigners, especially Jews, as was

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<sup>39</sup> OMGUS personnel noted that, “Officials have always to deal with persons who earn their living by black-market trade only.”<sup>39</sup> Boris Sapir, “Germany and Austria,” *American Jewish Year book* 47(1947): 372.

<sup>41</sup> “Report: Reasons for promulgating notice prohibiting certain activities connected with Black-Market,” in *Black Market* (Munich: BayHStA, 1945), 1.

<sup>42</sup> One scholar noted that, “hoarding, organized theft of foodstuffs, and illicit trade became increasingly open as early as 1942 and was rampant during wartime.” Berkowitz, *The Crime of My Very Existence*: 150.

<sup>43</sup> OMGUS, “Reasons for promulgating Notice prohibiting certain activities connected with Black-Marketing,” in *Black Market* (Munich: BayHStA, 1945), 1.

so often claimed. The introduction of Germany's former victims into the black market trade only changed the make up of the individuals involved and the kind of goods that were circulating, namely the new provisions sent from the United States to sustain the millions of displaced and stateless individuals in the country.

Those farmers who could grow crops or owned cattle often chose to trade them on the black market rather than sell them at reduced prices to the Allies.<sup>44</sup> OMGUS noted that the majority of farmers were unwilling to give up their cattle for the meager fees paid by the U.S. Military Government and instead traded them on the illegal markets. In a report from November 1946 a public safety officer noted, "The man who works hard is the stupid one, and the same is the case with the farmers who delivered their products as instructed. The prices for the procured food are too low in comparison to the general expense"<sup>45</sup> By this point the reichsmark (RM) was considered a useless currency, and the collapse of the German economy had made buying and selling goods with paper money an unattractive if not a useless avenue for agricultural producers. While the officials working with OMGUS understood the impracticality of handing over requisitioned agriculture, the rest of the population only resented the German farmer for his perceived excess. It was noted in a report from July 1946, that the people living in the city resented the farmer for never going without. These people argued that the farmer was never hungry, hoarded food to gain better prices on the illegal markets, and lived much better because he was able to demand such high prices for his goods.<sup>46</sup> While these individuals were themselves trading on the black market out of necessity, they felt it was unjust that the farmers did the same, especially because they believed these farmers did so only for a profit. In actuality,

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<sup>44</sup> The Allies demanded that the sale and slaughter of all cattle go through the Military Government. This meant that a farmer with cows, oxen, and horses actually had no rights over those possessions and was legally obligated to turn them over when ordered to do so. They would be paid for these goods, but only a very small amount.

<sup>45</sup> Police, "NR. 35 (Police Report)," 20.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

the number of individuals truly profiting on the illegal markets in the immediate postwar period was rather small. Instead, “Most Jewish DPs, in common with the native population, bartered commodities they could dispense with for the minimal necessities of life.”<sup>47</sup>

In order to stop the illegal trade occurring in Germany a total restructuring of the German economy was necessary. Colonel George Quarles, the Chief of Food and Agriculture Branch in Bavaria suggested that if the U.S. came up with “sufficient food to be able to eliminate entirely rationing and reopen free purchase of foods, then no reason will exist for black markets.”<sup>48</sup> The American Government strictly forbade barter and trade on the illegal markets, allowing only for the exchange of potatoes grown on indigenous soil, thereby labeling any other trade by these participants as “black marketeering.”<sup>49</sup> These strict laws governing the exchange of goods meant that “a father who might exchange a package of cigarettes for a bottle of milk for his child would be regarded as a law-breaker.”<sup>50</sup> While these activities were considered illegal, especially as the goods traded on these markets were often diverted from those earmarked for military rationing, they were initially overlooked by the Office of the Military Government, U.S. as those in charge of the U.S. zone understood the necessity of such exchanges for survival. This is illustrated in a notice issued to the public in Munich regarding crackdowns on illegal trade. In it the Office of the Military Government, Bavaria (OMGB) noted that they did not want to target small time traders, “such as when a mother gives bread to her child, when [a] housewife delivers some coffee to another housewife in exchange for some sugar.”<sup>51</sup> Those small-scale illegal activities were considered acceptable, even necessary in the immediate postwar period.

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<sup>47</sup> Hyman, "Displaced Persons," 532.

<sup>48</sup> Food and Agriculture Branch, "Illegal Disposition of Food," in *Black Market* (Munich: BayHStA, 1946), 1.

<sup>49</sup> UNRRA, "General Situation of D.P. U.S. and military and German Authorities (UNRRA report)," 6.

<sup>50</sup> Bernstein, "Displaced Persons," 527.

<sup>51</sup> OMGUS, "Reasons for promulgating Notice prohibiting certain activities connected with Black-Marketing," 1.



### **Munich and the Black Market**

Illegal transactions did not only occur in the immediate vicinity of the Displaced Persons camps; in fact, illegal markets spanned the whole of postwar Europe. Goods traded in illegal transactions originated from across Europe and the United States. Munich was the center of trade in Bavaria where Jewish DPs could bring their goods to exchange for food, clothing, or other resources that they lacked. Möhlstraße and the three streets around it constituted one of the largest and best-known black markets in Munich. Its shops specialized in hard to find items and rationed goods that could be illegally purchased without rations cards. As the postwar continued, the stores on Möhlstraße also included shops specializing in currency conversion, and items smuggled in from abroad, however, this did not happen until the late 1940s

The commercial, financial, and business district in and around Möhlstraße became inexorably linked with Displaced Persons, especially Jews. This is not to say that there were not hundreds of non-Jewish DPs on Möhlstraße at any given time; to the contrary, the presence of non-Jewish DPs on Möhlstraße at any given time is illustrated by the clashes recorded in German newspapers between these DP groups and Germans. An examination of the area helps illuminate why this happened. The assembly of several international Jewish aid organizations on Möhlstraße made it a central attraction to Germany's displaced Jews in Bavaria. The Möhlstraße area was described as, "5–7 city blocks... hous[ing] several Jewish organizations such as the AJJDC, the HIAS, JAFP, Central Jewish Committee, Jewish Restitution Successor Organization, and the World ORT Union."<sup>52</sup> These organizations chose the area for their offices, as it contained plenty of requisitioned buildings ready for use. With such a concentration of Jewish aid organizations, it is understandable that the area was associated with Jewish DPs. In his autobiography, *In Search*, Meyer Levin noted that the Nr. 12 Trolley through Munich was

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<sup>52</sup> Hoffmann, "Möhlstraße Situation," 1.

known as the “Palestine Express,” because it was filled “with wanderers from all over Europe” on their way to make contact with the abovementioned offices or to shop in the stores on Möhlstraße.<sup>53</sup> Accounts from 1946 state that very little German was heard on Möhlstraße, because there was so much Yiddish spoken by the East European Jews who were visiting Jewish aid organizations.<sup>54</sup> Jews, living in camps as well as those scattered throughout Bavaria, came to Möhlstraße fairly regularly, transforming this area into a veritable train station where DPs met. With so many refugees in need coming together in one location, it is only natural that the area would become one of trade, as these DPs attempted to get the supplies they needed but could not acquire through legal means for lack of a functioning economy.

Although camp Jews and free-livers, or Jewish DPs who chose to live outside of the DP centers, resided quite separately, their lives overlapped in several ways, especially while “shopping” in major centers throughout Bavaria, as well as on several black markets in the three other zones. In his memoir, Schochet remembers a night when he was at the train station in Feldafing awaiting his departure time when he saw two other residents of Feldafing returning from Munich clutching their bags and talking excitedly about their success on the illegal markets that day.<sup>55</sup> Helen Finkel remembered with pride her days spent on the train heading to the city to trade cigarettes in exchange for the items she needed.<sup>56</sup>

Möhlstraße was by no means the only market center associated with Displaced Persons in Munich. The ruins of the Deutsches Museum were designated as DP offices in the early postwar period and functioned as such for the first years after the end of the war. The museum originally housed the Central Committee of Liberated Jews in the American Zone, a search office, a

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<sup>53</sup>Meyer Levin, *In search, an autobiography*, 1st ed. (Paris: Authors' Press, 1950). 363.

<sup>54</sup>Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies*: 232.

<sup>55</sup>Schochet, *Feldafing*: 30.

<sup>56</sup>Finkel, Helen. Interview 8657. *Visual History Archive*. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. 2009. Web. 5 Feb. 2010. <<http://libguides.usc.edu/vha>>

placement bureau, and a medical center, thereby becoming a meeting place for newly arrived DPs in the city. In its earliest days, the museum acted as a camp for transient refugees, especially Jewish DPs. It also became a center of exchange, and as early as December 1945, OMGUS issued reports discussing the illegal activities rampant there.<sup>57</sup> Reports from 1946 noted a steady increase in illicit trade in and around the museum, illustrating that this exchange continued throughout the beginning of the postwar period.<sup>58</sup> However, unlike Möhlstraße, which was strongly associated with Jews, the Deutsches Museum was known as a black market area operated by foreigners, mainly from Eastern Europe. Interestingly, reports from the late 1940s discussing black markets in Munich also mentioned centers at the *Hauptbahnhof* (main railroad station) and Karlsplatz, but do not cite an overabundance of participants from any one ethnic group at these centers.

### **American-Jewish Relations**

The American Military Government worked tirelessly to combat anti-Semitism and illegal trade, however, American soldiers constituted a significant portion of the participants in both activities in the late 1940s. By 1946, many Jewish aid workers as well as Displaced Persons and OMGUS officials noted an increase in hostilities between American soldiers and Jewish DPs. This deterioration in relations between occupation authorities and DPs was not related to overall policy in the American zone, but rather to the introduction of new soldiers in the area. These soldiers were not from the combat army and thus had not seen the atrocities committed by the Germans in concentration and extermination camps throughout Europe nor had they participated in the liberation of Europe's remaining Jews. The liberation experience had led

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<sup>57</sup> Provost Marshal, "Provost Marshal," (Munich: BayHstA, 1945), 1.

<sup>58</sup> Grasmueller, "Public Safety Offices," in *Black Market* (Munich: BayHstA, 1946), 1.

most American soldiers to treat the Jewish survivors sympathetically and with an understanding of the crimes that had been committed against them.

Added to feelings of sympathy for Holocaust survivors was a fraternization ban in place in postwar Germany until October 1, 1945, which was meant to prevent American soldiers from becoming too close to the “enemy.”<sup>59</sup> According to Petra Goedde, interactions between American soldiers and Germans were dictated by the war experiences of both parties, arguing that the military thinking behind the fraternization law was not only for security purposes, but also as a form of punishment for the Germans.<sup>60</sup> However, it must also be noted that many soldiers were unwilling to interact with Germans because of their own war experiences. In an article written in 1944, Drew Middleton, a reporter for the *New York Times Magazine*, who had accompanied the First Army on their trek from Belgium into Germany, wrote, “two years of war have built up an intense hatred among front line troops for the Germans.”<sup>61</sup> He claimed that American troops held feelings of “contempt and indifference” toward the Germans they met. A soldier might occasionally give gum to a German child, but most of them did not.<sup>62</sup> Although it would be incorrect to argue that all American soldiers loathed the Germans, it is safe to say that their feelings toward their enemy ranged from hostility to confusion over the abundance of similarities between American and German culture. The “Pocket Guide to Germany” argued that the fraternization of American soldiers and Germans after the First World War led Americans to trust the Germans too easily, thereby leading to the outbreak of the Second World War and that any friendly gesture of Germans toward the allies was driven by hopes to deceive the occupation

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<sup>59</sup> Petra Goedde, *GIs and Germans: Culture, Gender and Foreign Relations, 1945-1949* (New Haven, Conn. ; London: Yale University Press, 2003). 76.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>61</sup> Drew Middleton, "Into Germany with the First Army," *New York Times Magazine*, October 8 1944, 5. First seen in Goedde, *GIs and Germans*: 41.

<sup>62</sup> Goedde, *GIs and Germans*: 42.

forces. The atrocities of the Holocaust contrasted so greatly with the friendly reception these troops met in German small towns that it left many soldiers utterly confused about the true nature of Germans.<sup>63</sup>

Even with these conflicting feelings, the fraternization ban was bound to fail for several distinct reasons, not least among them the loneliness of occupation soldiers. With the removal of fraternization restrictions came an upsurge in relationships between Germans and Americans and with these relationships often came a blending of existing American and German anti-Semitism. Many American officials, as well as a number of Jewish aid workers, noted that continued contact with Germans had resulted in an increased number of hostile and anti-Semitic expressions among American troops. As early as 1946, UNRRA workers and other outside observers reported that, “some American soldiers have begun to adopt the anti-Semitic attitude of the German people with whom they come into contact.”<sup>64</sup> Comments like these riddled the reports from 1946 until the withdrawal of American control of Displaced Persons in 1951. Major Heymont wrote his wife about an inspection of Landsberg during which a soldier muttered comments about the Jews saying that, “animals [Jews] are getting better treatment than the Germans and they don’t even work as Germans do,” illustrating that even right after the war there were soldiers who favored the Germans over the Jews.<sup>65</sup>

By the late 1940s the liberation and combat forces that had fought the Nazis and seen the proof of German anti-Semitism, had served their tour and were allowed to return to the United States. The occupation soldiers sent in to rebuild Germany had no knowledge of German crimes against humanity beyond the news shorts they had seen at the movies. The army instituted programs in October 1945 to educate soldiers about the groups for whom they would be caring.

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>64</sup> Geraldine Rosenfield, "Central Europe," *American Jewish Year Book* 48(1946-1947): 311.

<sup>65</sup> Heymont, *Among the Survivors of the Holocaust*: 13.

Major Heymont recorded that the army introduced a, “strong educational program to remind the men of the causes of the war and the guilt of the Germans, quite correctly, he is concerned about the growing tendency to become too chummy with the Germans and to forget what Germany had done.”<sup>66</sup> These soldiers were not evaluating Germans based on their Nazi past, but rather on their current interactions with them. In his memoir, Simon Schochet wrote,

Most of the first-line U.S. troops who were immediately responsible for our liberation have been replaced. The newer outfits are quite different in attitude towards the D.P.'s. The generosity, sympathy and help which were showered on us during the first months of our liberation by the American G.I.'s and officers regardless of their nationalities or religions are now shown towards us only by members of the occupation who are first generation American, of Polish, Jewish, Czech or Hungarian descent.<sup>67</sup>

According to Gringauz, “The young soldiers had not seen the Germans in their loathsomeness.”<sup>68</sup> Instead these soldiers met pretty and accommodating German girls, citizens with good manners and clean homes. When compared to the Jewish survivors who seemed unhygienic, disruptive, and hostile, it became confusing for these young soldiers to remember who had perpetrated the war and for whom they were supposed to be caring.

Other observers from the time noted that there were several reasons that interactions between the American military and the Jewish DPs deteriorated, and they were all attributed to the way soldiers perceived the Jewish Displaced Persons. As early as 1946, Jewish leaders like Dr. Gringauz began giving lectures to new soldiers on the DPs and the problems they faced. At these day study programs, leaders addressed the “problems” encountered by American soldiers like the Jewish resistance to obeying orders issued by anyone in uniform and the belief of survivors that had developed in the concentration camps that one needed to act outside the law in order to survive. Rabbi Bernstein wrote and published an article on Jewish DPs to help introduce

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 69.

<sup>67</sup> Schochet, *Feldafing*: 82.

<sup>68</sup> Gringauz, "Our New German Policy and the DP's," 510.

their worries, personalities, and concerns to these new soldiers, which was printed in three issues of “Stars and Stripes,” and in the occupation unit newspapers. The information and education branch of the United States Forces European Theater (U.S.F.E.T) also distributed it.<sup>69</sup> Although these seminars and articles helped in theory, a single encounter with a DP often erased any classroom learning. A camp inhabitant at Feldafing claimed, “they [American soldiers] met up with wild people who are tactless, lacking in basic manners and the elementary rules of conduct... and when they met Jews of this kind all the explanations that spoke to them earlier are undone and burst like soap bubbles.”<sup>70</sup> Outside observers noted that often once an occupation soldier met with a member of the surviving remnant all compassion and human sympathy disappeared.<sup>71</sup> Rabbi Bernstein observed that the actual policies prescribed by the upper echelons of the Military Government (MG) were excellent, but that problems arose in the field. Military order and law were confusing to the DPs who were not accustomed to military procedures. Communication broke down when this situation was added to the “foreignness” of the Jewish DP in the mind of the soldier. According to Bernstein,

The young American G.I. finds it difficult to understand the D.P. His way of thinking, his behavior patterns are foreign to him. As time passes, the Displaced Persons become increasingly burdensome to those who are responsible for their care. There is undoubtedly a subtle, unhealthy German influence, which is probably growing.<sup>72</sup>

These sentiments were seconded by UNRRA workers who noted that Jewish DPs,

are held in the greatest contempt by the Germans who lose no opportunity to discredit them in the eyes of the American Military Authorities. The effect of the derogatory influence has been strong and widespread to the point where it has seeped up from the operating levels to even the highest military echelons.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Philip S. Bernstein, "Address by Philip Bernstein," in *Jewish Displaced Persons* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1946), 1.

<sup>70</sup> Zeev W. Mankowitz, *Life Between Memory and Hope: The Survivors of the Holocaust in Occupied Germany*, Studies in the Social and Cultural History of Modern Warfare (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 257.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 255.

<sup>72</sup> Bernstein, "Address by Philip Bernstein," 2.

<sup>73</sup> Executive Staff of UNRRA, "Statement of the Executive Staff of UNRRA US Zone Headquarters," (New York: United Nations 1946), 1.

However, this lack of understanding was not the only cause for hostile relations between Jews and American soldiers. Many soldiers were already anti-Semitic when they arrived in Europe.<sup>74</sup> Others were immature and enjoyed the power they were able to wield over those in their care. This might have been the case on May 22, 1946, when two intoxicated soldiers stumbled into the wrong room at a local hotel in Wolfratshausen. Rather than apologizing and leaving, the two soldiers made the six Jewish Displaced Persons occupying the room stand at attention and sit on command while demanding that they play the accordion, all at gun point. One DP tried to grab the gun, and while no one was hurt, the incident displays the mounting animosity between some members of the American military and Jewish DPs.<sup>75</sup>

The deterioration of relations between American soldiers and displaced Jews became so worrisome that the army conducted a study among its troops to examine relations between Germans and Americans as well as racism and anti-Semitism among the troops. Out of 1,790 soldiers surveyed, 51% believed that there were definite positives to Hitler's rule. A further 22% felt that the Germans had cause to implement the final solution while 19% thought that the Germans had probable cause to go to war.<sup>76</sup> Despite American efforts to educate its soldiers about the DP situation and the evils of anti-Semitism, relations between the Jews in Germany and American soldiers continued to deteriorate to the point that Jewish DPs were often grouped together with criminals in the minds of many American troops. Raids conducted by American forces in search of black market goods became a regular occurrence in Jewish DP centers. To many DPs, these searches were just further proof that the American military favored the

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<sup>74</sup> General Patton was an example of this American Anti-Semitism. He was in charge of the largest number of Jews in Germany, yet he continued to refer to them as vermin and cockroaches.

<sup>75</sup> OMGBY, "Annual, Quarterly and Monthly Reports," in *OMGBY Wolfratshausen* (Wolfratshausen: Stadtarchiv Wolfratshausen, 1948), 23.

<sup>76</sup> Mankowitz, *Life Between Memory and Hope*: 256.



Germans over the Jews. For even the most tolerant soldier the DP situation was viewed as a nuisance, a duty that the American soldiers were not well equipped to handle, but more importantly a situation with which they believed they should not have to deal.

Perceptions of Jewish over-involvement in illegal activities were common in the Bavarian mentality and would later also take a strong hold on American thinking. This was especially true after 1948 when the Allies worked to reestablish a functioning German economy in order to ensure that Germany would become a reliable capitalist and democratic ally against the Soviets. The belief that Jewish criminality threatened Allied plans led to a further breakdown in relations between the Jewish DPs and their former liberators after 1948. On the one side, the Americans believed that everyone living under their charge should obey the law, but in reality this would remain impossible until they were better able to provide for the civilians living under their care. This is evidenced by Simon Schochet's memoir, in which he stated,

we realize that the M.P.s are acting under orders to prevent black market operations, but in view of the whole economic situation in Germany now, the black market represents the only means of livelihood, not only for us but for the Germans as well.<sup>77</sup>

Continued confusion between these two parties only led to a further deterioration of American-Jewish relations.

### **German Jewish Interactions**

With so much needed by Jewish survivors as well as German citizens these two groups were forced to interact on a daily basis.<sup>78</sup> Exchange on the grey market was often the first contact Holocaust survivors had with Germans after the concentration camps, and many times the very first meetings between "infiltrates" and Germans. As Koppel Pinson noted in an article from April 1947, the Jews and Germans had a duel attitude toward one another. It was first the

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<sup>77</sup> Schochet, *Feldafing*: 82.

<sup>78</sup> "Report: Reasons for promulgating notice prohibiting certain activities connected with Black-Market," 1.

pragmatic relationship of an individual Jewish DP and an individual German, but it also represented the collective understanding of both groups in relation to the other.<sup>79</sup> Some Jews chose to “individually carry on business relations, sex relations and there are even some cases of intermarriage.”<sup>80</sup> Other Jews owed their lives to the sympathy or care given by an individual German during the war. As a whole though, most Jews held feelings of “national bitterness against the people who are responsible for the extermination of six million Jews.”<sup>81</sup> Many Jewish DPs claimed that there was little communication between themselves and their neighbors, but they also reported that this did not extend to business exchanges. In fact, there were constant and intense contacts between the Jews in Germany and their non-Jewish neighbors.<sup>82</sup> Many Jewish DPs omitted the frequency of interactions between themselves and their German neighbors because they did not consider these exchanges social but rather necessary. These contacts continued throughout the entirety of Jewish life in postwar Germany, and individuals had their favorite Jews and Germans with whom they preferred to trade. These exchanges forced the parties to cooperate on a daily basis during a time when neither party was overly enthusiastic about talking to the other or living together, let alone working together.<sup>83</sup> Several OMGUS reports noted, with much dismay, that there was cooperation between Jews and Germans on the illegal markets. In May 1946 German police arrested a “Black Market gang” consisting of two German farmers and two Jews.<sup>84</sup> It was also in this report that the author noted, “no Jew will reveal the farmer with whom he made the transaction. Situations as this are hard to understand

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<sup>79</sup> Koppel S. Pinson, "Jewish Life in Liberated Germany: A Study of the Jewish DP's," *Jewish Social Studies* 9, no. 2 (1947): 112.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 113.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> For more information on the daily interactions between Jews and Germans, especially sexual relations please see, Atina Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

<sup>83</sup> Sapir, "Germany and Austria," 529.

<sup>84</sup> Steers, "Monthly Historical Report," 4.

as the DP always cries persecution by the German-yet protects him.”<sup>85</sup> Jews and Germans needed to interact in order to survive.

Freda Narev, who was eight years old in 1945 recalled the need among Landsberg DPs to interact with Germans to get supplies, services, and education. She says,

As children we learned a few words in German. We would go into town and talk to some people. One of the things we used to do was change bread cuz in the camp you used to get white bread and the Germans had black bread which we all loved, so we would take a loaf of white bread into town to the bakery and exchange it for black bread. And for example the people from the town would come and do certain things in the camp. The Ballet teacher, who used to teach us Ballet was a German woman from the town. Women used to come in from town to clean, [and] do housework.<sup>86</sup>

When asked about her feelings toward the Germans at the time, Freda says, “hate. I think that was the current feeling.”<sup>87</sup> Interestingly, Freda also notes a sense of satisfaction when she viewed Germans suffering. She remembers thinking, “look what you did to us, we are not going to forgive you, were going to remember, were glad your suffering now.”<sup>88</sup> This is supported by Rabbi Klausner’s statement, “in reclaiming their dignity, the survivors used their expendables in their rations as valuables they could exchange with the local German.”<sup>89</sup> For Klausner trade on the grey market was not only about securing the supplies one needed to survive, but was, perhaps more importantly, about the Jewish DPs’ need to reclaim their dignity through their autonomy and their ability to trade what they wanted with whom they chose. The knowledge that the Germans were miserable and that they were forced to work for, and trade with, Jews was often enough to satisfy Jewish cravings for vengeance. DPs desired some form of retribution, even if it only came from the knowledge that the Germans depended on work and supplies for their survival from the very same people they had tried to annihilate.

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>86</sup> Narev, Freda, Interview 38341. *Visual History Archive*. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. 2009. Web. 5 Feb. 2010. <<http://libguides.usc.edu/vha>>

<sup>87</sup> Ibid

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Abraham Klausner, "The DP Picture," (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1948), 20.

Although Jews and Germans were in constant contact that does not mean that all interactions went smoothly. According to Pinson, while the Jews held feelings of acrimony toward the Germans, “this bitterness vary rarely has led to active conflict with Germans; it has to date remained purely an intellectual and emotional attitude rather than an activating philosophy.”<sup>90</sup> However, on occasion the Jewish feelings of resentment and hatred would flair up resulting in violent contacts between the two parties. These conflicts, while infrequent in the later postwar, did erupt in the months immediately following German defeat. In his letter home to his wife on October 3, 1945, Major Irving Heymont, the American officer in charge of the Landkreise containing the Landsberg am Lech DP camp, recorded his shock at the acts of violence and looting that occurred as the American military moved Germans from their homes to make space for Jewish single mothers living in the overcrowded camp. Heymont described the eviction of the Germans as a “field day for the DPs” when the Landsberg camp residents, who had been robbed of all of their earthly possessions by the Nazis, and remembering their own eviction during the war, began objecting to what the Germans tried to take with them, claiming that they needed those goods more than the Germans did. The DPs then started entering the homes being evacuated before the Germans were even able to leave. Finally, they began entering all of the houses in the neighborhood looting and pillaging. Interestingly, Heymont argued that these DPs were not stealing for their own aggrandizement, but as an emotional release of feelings held in check until that point. He noted, “The people of the camp had an undying hatred of the Germans. Never, for the most part, had they been able to slake their thirst for revenge with some physical act. Now the tables were turned.”<sup>91</sup> These conflicts were often extremely volatile, and

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<sup>90</sup> Pinson, "Jewish Life in Liberated Germany: A Study of the Jewish DP's," 113.

<sup>91</sup> Heymont, *Among the Survivors of the Holocaust*: 39.

could have been disastrous if not for the intervention of American forces.<sup>92</sup> According to Heymont, the soldiers stationed in the area easily stopped these activities, but it was evident that feelings of resentment bubbled just below the surface for the Jewish DPs in the immediate postwar period.

Unlike these early conflicts, those that occurred later on in the occupation period were often harder to stop, were much larger, and often more violent than those that had preceded them. One of the more monumental clashes that erupted between Jewish DPs and Germans occurred in March 1946 when some 200 armed German police accompanied by dogs attempted to raid a DP camp in Stuttgart. The Jewish inhabitants of this camp presented with a situation frighteningly reminiscent of raids from the recent Nazi past, actively resisted. The raid became violent resulting in open fire from the German police and the death of a Holocaust survivor who, just the night before, had been reunited with his wife and two children.<sup>93</sup> From then on German police were banned from entering Jewish camps. The new laws preventing German police from entering Jewish centers meant that violent outbreaks between the two could not happen within the camp walls, but the DPs did not always remain within the camp gates creating ample opportunities for the two parties to clash.

The American ban on the entry of German police into any Jewish Displaced Persons center signified the total separation of displaced Jews from the German legal system. Jewish DPs were subject to the same laws as everyone else living in Germany, but they could not be arrested by German police, could not be held in German jails, and could not be tried by German courts.

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<sup>92</sup> General Clay explained that, "of course, we have had many minor problems resulting from the assembly of large numbers of Jewish displaced persons in the midst of the people who has caused their suffering." He continued on to say, "the Jewish displaced persons have on the whole established an excellent record insofar as crimes of violence are concerned, and in spite of their very natural hatred of the German people." Bernstein, "Displaced Persons," 530.

<sup>93</sup> Sapir, "Germany and Austria," 373; Angelika Königseder and Juliane Wetzel, *Lebensmut im Wartesaal: die jüdischen DPs (displaced persons) im Nachkriegsdeutschland*, Originalausg. ed., Zeit des Nationalsozialismus (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch, 1994). 138.

These DPs would instead be held in military custody or imprisoned within the confines of a camp jail until their trial, which by law happened within twenty-four hours. This proscription on Jewish confinement in German custody extended to German prisons, forcing the American Military Government to establish DP detention centers in Berlin, Bremen, and the three federal states in the American zone of occupation. German facilities were never to be used to incarcerate Jewish DPs despite overcrowding in prisons. The Office of the Military Government was also instructed to create long-term facilities for those serving longer than a one-year sentence, and, “under no circumstances will any German or other enemy persons be incarcerated in this long term penal institution.”<sup>94</sup> The extralegal status of the Jewish DPs lasted until the transfer of control over all DPs in Germany from the Americans to the German in 1951, and led to increased tensions between Germans and Jews.

Small riots occurred despite the new resolutions. Just two months after the Stuttgart raid, another conflict erupted in Wolfratshausen at the local movie theater. For many Jews, attending the theater was a sacred experience, one that they had been forced to do without during the Shoah. In an interview with Hinda Jacobs, a free liver in Bavaria, she remembered feeling “so starved for culture,” after years of living without any. She said, “we went at the beginning of the month and bought our tickets. When we paid for the tickets we paid five or ten marks and rolled two cigarettes in them. People would ask us how we got the tickets. We had learned from some people and that is how we knew to put [in] the cigarettes.”<sup>95</sup> As Schochet recalled in his memoir, “the problem is not what to see but how to get to see it. Tickets are very difficult to come by

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<sup>94</sup> OMGUS, "Maintenance of Law and Order Among UNDPs," in *DP Directives* (Munich: BayHStA, 1946), 2.

<sup>95</sup> Hinda Jacobs, Interview, Aug. 26 2009.

and have to be obtained far in advance on the black market for a number of cigarettes. This is not only for the D.P.'s but also for Germans who have been caught up in this whirlwind."<sup>96</sup>

Despite the illegality of the practice, ticket sales were just like every other enterprise in Germany: black market. However, on May 4, 1946, German police attempted to stop the sale of scalped tickets and to control Jewish DPs entering the local theater for the Saturday performance. Unwilling to be corralled by German police when trying to see a show, the 300 Displaced Persons waiting to enter the theater began to rush the theater door and the two police on duty started hitting them with rubber clubs. The crowd calmed momentarily and then proceeded to beat the German police with stones, sticks, and the pieces of window frames that they were able to rip from the building.<sup>97</sup> The following week many of the same DPs involved in the preceding riot, again came to the theater with clubs in hand, but upon seeing the American military police (MPs) waiting for them, they quickly turned around and returned home.

UNRRA workers like Leo Srole, a Sociologist, classified the DPs with a syndrome similar to battle fatigue and said that the Jews exhibited signs of excitability, jitteriness, pathological fears, anxiety, and an over-aggressiveness to counteract these fears.<sup>98</sup> Rabbi Bernstein noted that the individual Jew appeared normal in an abnormal situation, "as a mass, however, they frequently showed signs of hysteria. Wild, unfounded rumors spread like wildfire, and were devoured."<sup>99</sup> This was the case on May 22, 1946 when two passenger cars, carrying Bergermeister Neuner from Mittenwald, a doctor, an art dealer, a civilian friend and the Oberbürgermeister from the Soviet zone, were stopped by a truck blocking the road near the entrance to camp Föhrenwald. DPs jumped down from the truck and ran out of the forest

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<sup>96</sup> Schochet, *Feldafing*: 93.

<sup>97</sup> Steers, "Monthly Historical Report," 2.

<sup>98</sup> American Intelligence, "Intelligence report," in *Displaced Persons* (Munich: BayHStA, 1946), 2.

<sup>99</sup> His description was something akin to PTSD, Bernstein, "Displaced Persons," 528.

carrying knives and sticks with which they beat the car, ripped the doors open, and attacked the passengers. The Bürgermeister was initially allowed to continue on down the road because he was, “a cripple,” but was again stopped by DPs in two trucks heading toward the camp, beaten, and taken back to the camp where he was handed over to Security troops. Two of the five passengers escaped without severe injuries, but the other three had to be hospitalized. Security police found the two cars hidden within the camp when they entered to interrogate the inhabitants and to speak with the UNRRA team in charge of the center. These officials were informed that the DPs had heard a rumor that two Jewish persons had been kidnapped in Wolfratshausen and that the Jewish DPs attacked in reprisal, although no evidence was ever found to support the claim.<sup>100</sup>

A surprisingly similar incident occurred on April 28, 1946, in and around the Landsberg camp. Sunday the 28 was a big day for the German citizens in the town of Landsberg am Lech, and a monumental day in Jewish history. It was the first German democratic election in the city since Hitler, and the one-year anniversary of the liberation of several of the Kaufering sub-camps of Dachau. It was also the day that a rumor spread among the Jewish DPs living in the Landsberg camp. This rumor claimed that two young Jews who had been on guard outside of one of the villas in Dießen, twenty-three kilometers from the center, were missing. Violent attacks occurred in the neighboring area as Jews took up the call for retaliation. Hundreds of male and female camp inhabitants, took to the streets in roving bands stopping Germans, asking for their passes, and beating and robbing them. A number of those attacked stated that after they were assaulted they were propped up so that the Jewish DPs could take photographs to further humiliate them. One woman stated that when her husband tried to reason with his assailants he was informed that, “in the night six Jews had been killed and that revenge must be taken,”

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<sup>100</sup> Steers, "Monthly Historical Report," 3.



illustrating how these rumors spread and the numbers increased as the story progressed from individual to individual.<sup>101</sup> This situation was played out in several different areas of the city, but most of the time the attacks took place near the camp barracks. Cars traveling on the road near the camp were stopped, damaged, and the drivers were dragged out and assaulted.<sup>102</sup> Many of the victims claimed that a number of their attackers were dressed in a cape with a Star of David worn by camp police. These attacks resulted in several battered individuals and hospitalization of more than twenty Germans, seven of whom were severely wounded and one who was “perilously wounded.”<sup>103</sup> All of the cases reported that the Jewish culprits carried cudgels and iron hooks, and a number of those hospitalized were brought in for stab wounds. It was later learned that the two young men in question had snuck off from their post in the early predawn hours and caught a train to Munich. This incident was finally resolved on August 22, 1946, when the Military Government court in Augsburg sentenced twenty Jews for their participation in the riot. The sentences ranged from three months to two years and while causing a stir among the DPs, helped to illustrate that even they would be punished for their wrong doings the same as everyone else.<sup>104</sup>

In a letter written to the State Commissioner for the Care of Jews in Bavaria, the mayor of Landsberg noted that the leading DP personalities had worked to establish, “normal relations between the DPs and German population.”<sup>105</sup> The Americans cited strong dislike as the motivator for the Landsberg incident and stated that while the, “activities and attitudes of the DP’s themselves, and of the local German population, were not considered...it was presumed that

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<sup>101</sup> Stadtpolizei Landsberg A.L., "Request of the City Police Landsberg," in *DP-Lager* (Landsberg am Lech: Stadtarchiv Landsberg am Lech, 1946), 7.

<sup>102</sup> In one case a driver for the Alpine Milch A.G was stopped and attacked resulting in 200 liters of spoiled milk.

<sup>103</sup> Bürgermeister der Stadt Landsberg am Lech, "Report to the State Commissioner for the care of Jews in Bavaria," in *DP-Lager* (Landsberg am Lech: Stadtarchiv, 1946), 1.

<sup>104</sup> Intelligence, "Intelligence report," 2.

<sup>105</sup> Lech, "Report to the State Commissioner for the care of Jews in Bavaria," 1.

the DP's still do not like the Germans, and vice versa."<sup>106</sup> However, this event and the one in Föhrenwald, illustrate that the Jewish DPs had stronger feelings than dislike toward the Germans, were prone to mass hysteria, became violent when they felt their safety was being threatened, and retaliated when they heard rumors of German attacks.

The unified feelings of strong hatred toward the Germans, expressed by Jewish DPs were definitely genuine. When asked about their feelings toward their German neighbors Jews often said the same thing, "I can't bear to see them, I could kill them all in cold blood."<sup>107</sup> Rabbi Bernstein noted, "although they [Jewish DPs] developed day by day relations with many Germans, the men sometimes with German women, they hated them with an unforgiving hate."<sup>108</sup> However, the need to interact with their neighbors forced Jews and Germans into a practical relationship, and occasionally more. A visitor to the camps noted that conversations with Jews often began with a discussion of how much they hated the Germans and continued on to include talk about, "'my friend Schmidt,' and 'our neighbors. The Müllers,'" illustrating these friendly relationships did occur.<sup>109</sup>

Although many Jews refrained from forming social interactions with Germans, this was not true for the whole Jewish population in Germany. Jack Novin worked in the DP hospital in Feldafing where the majority of the employees were German. When asked if he had many interactions with the Germans he said, "yes... because you had to, we lived between them, we had to go out, when we went out from the DP camps you were right with the Germans. In town,

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<sup>106</sup> Agriculture and Forests State Ministry for Food, "Report from the Bavarian State Ministry for Food, Agriculture and Forests to OMGB," in *Crime* (Munich: BayHStA, 1946), 2.

<sup>107</sup> Michael Brenner, *After the Holocaust: Rebuilding Jewish lives in Postwar Germany* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997). 52.

<sup>108</sup> Bernstein, "Displaced Persons," 529.

<sup>109</sup> Brenner, *After the Holocaust*: 52.

you go on [a] train you go to a movie, anyplace, there was always with the Germans.”<sup>110</sup> Despite Novin’s argument that the Jews had to interact with the Germans, he also recounted that he,

used to go skiing with them. The doctors who worked in the hospital there were ex-Nazis, that was their punishment, they had to work in the DP camps...So I got friendly with them, I worked for them, what can you do? So I met the wife and the children, I used to go to their homes, they invited me for dinner, they invite me to go with them skiing for weekends, I used to go down to the Alps. You had no choice, you couldn’t ignore them, you depend[ed] on them.<sup>111</sup>

While it was necessary to interact with Germans on a regular basis, accounts such as this indicate that the Jewish-German interactions were not always strictly business.

Several Jewish men had German girlfriends with whom they attended the theater, vacationed, and occasionally lived. These relationships were much more common than Displaced Persons cared to admit. In his testimony for the Shoah Foundation Arthur Kornfeld reminisced about his German girlfriend,

I had a friend, a Czech in [camp] Feldafing, and in town in Feldafing we got acquainted with two sisters, German girls, so they started to cook for us, and sew for us and we used them like maids. Judy was giving out passes to different kinds of things so she had contact to get tickets to an opera in Munich. So I went over to Judy and said ‘do me a favor give me four tickets’, one for me, for my German girlfriend, one for my friend and his German girlfriend.<sup>112</sup>

Arthur remembered that Judy was very upset when she learned that the tickets she had secured for him were intended for German women, as she believed that Germans and Jews should not be romantically involved. When asked about her interactions with Germans, Hinda Jacobs said, “No, I, Germans and Jews did not have regular interactions because the Germans were afraid and so were the Jews.”<sup>113</sup> However, this statement was followed by an explanation of Hinda’s living situation in which she said,

we lived in an apartment in town after I got married. There were four or five bedrooms and we had a small room to ourselves with a bathroom. It was small, but in the camps families shared a

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<sup>110</sup> Novin, Jack, Interview 24267. *Visual History Archive*. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. 2009. Web. 5 Feb. 2010. <<http://libguides.usc.edu/vha>>

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Kornfeld, Arthur, Interview 22997. *Visual History Archive*. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. 2009. Web. 5 Feb. 2010. <<http://libguides.usc.edu/vha>>

<sup>113</sup> Hinda Jacobs, Interview, Aug. 26, 2009.

room, so at least there was some privacy. There were three single men in our apartment, all with German girlfriends. One [girlfriend] taught me to cook.<sup>114</sup>

Although Jewish DPs often choose not to acknowledge that Jews and Germans did occasionally date, have sex, and marry, these practices were common. These “relations” became so worrisome that camp courts began expelling men who were believed to be too involved with German women, and the Central Committee decided to excommunicate men and women who married non-Jewish Germans.<sup>115</sup> As time passed, and the Jewish situation in Germany became less and less temporary, cases of German woman marrying Jewish DPs and moving into the camps with them began to crop up, and German Jewish relationships became less taboo.

### **Anti-Semitism in the Immediate Postwar**

While there were occasionally “friendly” relationships between Jews and Germans, and many Jews and Germans would describe their feelings toward one another as ambivalent, there also existed a strong undercurrent of hatred between members of the two parties. However, along with the occupation came new laws dictating what a German could and could not say in public. Bavarian Law fourteen, article one, stated that any expression of racial, religious or national hatred was illegal, and this law was taken very seriously in the first years of occupation.<sup>116</sup> A good illustration of the crackdown on vocalized anti-Semitism can be seen in a common Jewish joke from the forties,

A Jew... was held up late one evening. Rather than surrender his wallet, he shouted: ‘Down with the Jews! Up with Hitler!’ A few seconds later, radio cars screamed up, and policemen came running from all directions. The Jew and his assailant were taken to precinct headquarters. ‘Which one of you two made that anti-Semitic remark?’ Asked the grim desk sergeant. ‘I did,’ the Jew cheerfully admitted. ‘If I had called ‘Help! Thief!’ This guy would have got away before any of your men showed up. I knew they would be there in no time if I shouted what I did.’<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid

<sup>115</sup> Klausner, *A Letter to My Children*: 131.

<sup>116</sup> OMGUS, "Discrimination Against Race, Creed or Nationality," in *American Policy* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1946), 3.

<sup>117</sup> Norbert Muhlen, *The Survivors: A Report on the Jews in Germany Today* (New York: Thomas E. Crowell, 1962). 110.

Sadly, anti-Semitism was not a matter to joke about, even after the death of Hitler. Hatred toward the Jews had not disappeared in 1945; it had gone underground along with the support of the Nazi party. *Jude* no longer appeared on the side of buildings, but the term continued to crop up in German police reports even after the September 1945 law abolished racial categorization. The term Jew continued to be used in official German paperwork even after the law against its use was reiterated in October 1946, and can occasionally be found in reports from the 1950s.<sup>118</sup> When discussing the cases of anti-Semitism in Germany in 1946 and 1947, Boris Sapir noted that, "As long as the Allied troops remain in Germany, even the most rabid Nazis will try to control themselves," but there was the constant anticipation among Jewish DPs and aid workers that the Americans would not stay in Germany forever.<sup>119</sup>

Within months after the end of the war, swastikas were again painted on the sides of buildings, Jewish storefront windows were smashed, and cemeteries throughout Bavaria were desecrated.<sup>120</sup> Studies conducted throughout the country showed that four out of every ten Germans surveyed, admitted they would take part in, or condoned public acts against Jews.<sup>121</sup> An additional four Germans admitted to being German racists or nationalists who were, "easily susceptible to anti-Semitic incitement."<sup>122</sup> Rumors abounded that displaced Jews slaughtered Christian girls so that they could sell their meat on the black market.<sup>123</sup> While there were few overt attacks against Jews, tensions between the two parties continued to mount, and Jews were again subjected to jokes, songs, threats, and abuse.<sup>124</sup> The situation was so worrisome that the

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<sup>118</sup> Police, "NR. 35 (Police Report)," 6.

<sup>119</sup> Sapir, "Germany and Austria," 373.

<sup>120</sup> Report on Overt Acts of Anti-Semitism 1948, OMGB, and Memorial from the Central Committee of Liberated Jews in the American Zone in Germany, February 9<sup>th</sup>, 1948, BayHStA, 10/125-2/17.5, 1.

<sup>121</sup> Bernstein, "Displaced Persons," 531.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Sapir, "Germany and Austria," 373.

<sup>124</sup> Bernstein, "Displaced Persons," 531.

Military Government started tracking these activities and issued warnings about increased tensions in the American zone in Bavaria.

The Allied forces were certainly not the only ones aware of the rising anti-Semitic feelings plaguing Germany. Almost every Jewish-American publication and correspondence regarding the Jewish situation in Germany, or Jewish organization meeting minutes included a discussion on the “manifestations” of anti-Semitism. Even the German-Jewish press discussed the problem of anti-Semitism in the country and *Der Veg* ran an article in February 1947 stating, “German people in their majority are still anti-Jewish, and even the newly appointed officials hesitate to extend a helping hand to the Jews.”<sup>125</sup> While the population in Germany was still unenthusiastic about their Jewish neighbors, it was often the East European displaced Jews who were targeted. Many Germans complained that Germany was saddled with an overabundance of “bad” Jews, and that these Jews were driven by immoral, hate-filled, and criminal desires.<sup>126</sup> As a popular saying of the postwar period went, “What a mess the Führer made—he hounded away our good Jews [German], and now we have instead all these bad Jews [East European].”<sup>127</sup> The Germans understood that any expression of anti-Semitism would be met with harsh punishments by the Americans, but they also believed that there was a categorical system in place when it came to publically fomenting feelings of anti-Semitism: it was much more dangerous to express hatred toward German-Jews than targeting displaced Jews as foreigners.<sup>128</sup> The Bavarian Minister of Agriculture, Dr. Josef Baumgartner illustrated this best when he made a public statement complimenting Jewish entrepreneurs in the States, saying, “As far as Jews from the East here in Bavaria are concerned, however, I am of a different opinion. Gentlemen, to my

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<sup>125</sup> Sapir, “Germany and Austria,” 374.

<sup>126</sup> Berkowitz, *The Crime of My Very Existence*: 146.

<sup>127</sup> Norbert Muhlen, *The Return of Germany: A Tale of Two Countries* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1952). 167.

<sup>128</sup> Sapir, “Germany and Austria,” 374.

great regret I had to attend the Jewish congress Bad Reichenhall; the only pleasant thing during this congress was the unanimous resolution to leave Germany.”<sup>129</sup> Pastor Martin Niemoeller, a clergyman, declared that anti-Semitism was dead in Germany in January 1947. He continued on to claim that any ill-feeling toward the Jews that existed in the country was just a manifestation of opinions left over from before Hitler’s rise to power and were no different from those in every other country. All the same, Niemoeller argued, the Jews could not and should not return to Germany.<sup>130</sup> While many Germans argued that anti-Semitism was no longer present in Germany, American army reports illustrate otherwise. In his April 1946, monthly historical report, Major Steers noted that there was “a noticeable increase in anti-Semitism among the German population-however, the outlook of the Germans is bright-it has been stated by several- ‘Germany will soon be [a] relatively nice place to live as regards the Jews- they will be either in America or Palestine.’”<sup>131</sup> For many Germans the only solution to the Jewish question in the postwar reflected the same ideals put forth in the early Hitler era: The Jewish problem would only be solved when the Jews no longer lived in the country.

According to Frank Stern, the western Allied forces, especially the American Military Government in Bavaria, worked in their respective zones to combat anti-Semitism and to “reeducate” its proponents. However, it was clear by the late 1940s that their attempts had proved unsuccessful.<sup>132</sup> These re-education programs started in 1945 and had initially been directed at the individuals most entrenched in Nazi rhetoric. This changed over the course of the next few years when the American Military Government began to attempt to teach all echelons

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<sup>129</sup> New York Times, April 3, 1947, cited by Sapir in the American Jewish Year Book, vl. 49, 1947-1948, 374.

<sup>130</sup> These statements were made in the Christian Science Monitor and Aufbau in January 1947 and quoted in Sapir, "Germany and Austria," 374.

<sup>131</sup> Steers, "Monthly Historical Report," 3.

<sup>132</sup> For more on the reeducation efforts employed by the Allies see Frank Stern, *The Whitewashing of the Yellow Badge: Antisemitism and Philosemitism in Postwar Germany*, 1st ed. (Oxford ; New York: Published for the Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism (SICSA), the Hebrew University of Jerusalem by Pergamon Press, 1992).

of German society about democracy through American centers, baseball, and in German schools, thereby abandoning de-nazification efforts.<sup>133</sup>

Many American officials were disconcerted by the results of American Army surveys conducted in 1946, which found that 18% of the total German population was intensely anti-Semitic, and that a further 21% considered themselves moderately anti-Semitic.<sup>134</sup> While these findings were not necessarily reflected in public actions, it was clear that anti-Semitism was deeply ingrained in German thinking. Michael Berkowitz argues that many Germans accepted claims of inherent criminality in all Jews because they were already incredibly familiar with them from before the Nazi era.<sup>135</sup> Sapir noted that with the dismal conditions rampant throughout the country “the poisonous inheritance bequeathed by Goebbels continues to dominate the minds of the populace.”<sup>136</sup> Such ideas helped many Germans rationalize that the Jews deserved the actions taken against them during the Shoah and in the postwar. Billboards and campaigns proclaiming the criminal nature of world Jewry permeated the thinking of the average German during the Nazi reign and while these campaigns ceased with the end of the war, their long term effects were noticeable even after the Allies established what they believed to be Germany’s first truly democratic government.<sup>137</sup>

This situation was further compounded by the fact that the majority of Jewish Displaced Persons in the U.S. Zone of occupation in Bavaria where in camps bordering on some of the towns most infested with diehard Nazis before and during the war.<sup>138</sup> The “reformed” Nazis

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<sup>133</sup> W.E. Süskind, "The Jewish Question, a Test? (Translated by OMGUS Officials from the Original German)," in *Anti-Semitism* (Munich: BayHstA, 1948), 1.

<sup>134</sup> Avinoam J. Patt and Michael Berkowitz, *We Are Here: New Approaches to Jewish Displaced Persons in Postwar Germany* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press). 168.

<sup>135</sup> See Berkowitz, *The Crime of My Very Existence*: 1-24.

<sup>136</sup> Sapir, "Germany and Austria," 373.

<sup>137</sup> Berkowitz, *The Crime of My Very Existence*: XIII.

<sup>138</sup> Military Gov. Liaison & Security Office, 30 June 1946 Stadtarchiv Wolfratshausen. 1. Wolfratshausen was noted to have been a center of Nazi life during the war and the city housed the sister and mother of Goebbels as well



living in these areas had been the ones most likely to absorb the propaganda against the Jews produced and spread by the Party during the Third Reich. The German officials in these towns cited the perceived overabundance of Jewish involvement in crime, especially on Möhlstraße in Munich, as the main cause for the recent increases in public expressions of anti-Jewish feelings.<sup>139</sup>

While contemporary scholars understood that the actual causes of crime in Germany were brought on by the devastating defeat of the Nazis in 1945, and that the grey and black market would cease with the reestablishment of a functioning German economy, the average German often ignored this fact. The need to justify the actions of the Nazis against the Jews was overwhelming and led many Germans to employ “DP Diversionary tactics” as a way to defend their actions.<sup>140</sup> According to Samuel Gringauz, “the only possible defense of murders too vast to deny is to slander and blacken the victims—the Jews.”<sup>141</sup> He continued on to say, “Just as the Germans put the blame for their murders on the victims, they ascribe their present economic hardship not to the heroic world conquerors—the Nazis—but to the DPs.”<sup>142</sup> Many Germans needed to deflect their own involvement in unsavory actions during the Second World War, and their current postwar situation in order to continue to live with Jews in Germany. The easiest way to do so was by blaming the victims of Nazi criminality and arguing that in fact these people were criminals themselves.<sup>143</sup>

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as his brother in-law. Landsberg am Lech was a well-known Mecca for Nazis because of Hitler’s imprisonment there after the failed Putsch in 1923 and was known among the Nazis as the center for Hitler Youth.

<sup>139</sup> OMGUS, “Anti-Semitism,” in *Anti-Semitism* (Munich: BayHstA, 1948), 1.

<sup>140</sup> Gringauz, “Our New German Policy and the DP’s,” 513.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Sapir, “Germany and Austria,” 373.

It was clear by 1947, that the Jews were targeted as the scapegoat for Germany's economic woes.<sup>144</sup> This fact is especially interesting when one considers that the actual perpetrators of criminality in Germany were Germans. The goods ordinarily traded on the grey and black markets were acquired from German farmers, industrialists, and wholesalers. American army officials in charge of watching criminal activities in Germany estimated that, "the Bavarian peasant...sends seventy-five per cent [sic] of his eggs and forty per cent [sic] of his pork to the black market."<sup>145</sup> It was also common knowledge that manufacturers, merchants, and factory owners sent a substantial portion of their goods for trade on the illegal markets.<sup>146</sup> However, it was the Jewish DPs who were repeatedly singled out as the main perpetrators of crime in Germany. In order to survive, "the DPs soon accommodated themselves to the situation. They balanced their diet by bartering a portion of their rations and a part of the JDC amenities for the fats and proteins in which their rations were deficient."<sup>147</sup> Just as the other DPs and the Germans did, the Jewish DPs were forced to trade part of their rations to survive.

Reports from the period recorded that there were a number of interrelated causes that brought about the revival of anti-Semitism. These included the deterioration of morale among the German population, which was exacerbated by a miserable outlook on life in the postwar period and a continued economic depression in the country. As the situation in Germany worsened the lower echelons of society resented all "privileged" individuals. Many Germans viewed Jews as the primary recipients of the country's supplies, taking them from "deserving" Germans and then turning around to sell them at exorbitant prices on the black-market. Abraham Hyman noted that although Germany only made an insignificant contribution to the care and

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<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> Gringauz, "Our New German Policy and the DP's," 513.

<sup>146</sup> OMGB, "Black-Market Summary report," 1.

<sup>147</sup> Hyman, "Displaced Persons," 459.

feeding of the Jewish DPs, “the average native was led to believe that the total burden for the DPs’ support was borne by the local population.”<sup>148</sup> These misconceptions and untruths were fostered and spread among the German population leading to increased resentment and anti-Semitism.

Germans were also influenced by claims that the American military did little to stop illicit activities and when arrested, Jewish criminals received preferential treatment, skirted the law, and got away with their illegal activities. Interestingly, it appears that by mid-1946, some German officials wanted to crack down on all United Nations Displaced Persons’, both Jewish and non-Jewish, involved in crime but felt impotent against the cries of UNDPs, American policy and UNRRA members’ claims for continued clemency. In a report from February 1946, the author expressed his frustration at his inability to stop the illegal trade originating out of UNDP camps, saying, “In one instance a DP center, which has been under observation for some time, was declared off limits for raids. This particular place is definitely known to be a source of black market operations. However, as long as certain places or groups can claim immunity from the law it will hamper police activities.”<sup>149</sup> In this instance the author was referring to the ban on German police entering Jewish Displaced Persons centers after the shooting incident in March 1946. Despite the ban on German police in DP camps, German officers outside of these centers could arrest UNDPs.<sup>150</sup> This separate legal system and living environment was just another factor along with the perceived favoritism toward Jews by those serving in the Allied forces. When combined with the better rations received by DPs in a starving Germany, feelings of anger,

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<sup>148</sup> He continued on to state that, “In Bavaria, highly placed German spokesmen, though aware of the culpability of the local farmers and manufacturers who diverted a substantial percentage of what was intended for the rationed economy into the black market, inflamed the people by fixing the blame for food shortages upon the Jewish DPs.” Ibid.

<sup>149</sup> OMGUS, "Crime Report February," in *Black Market* (Munich: BayHStA, 1946), 1.

<sup>150</sup> Confinement and Repatriation of United Nations and Persecutee Prisoners in Bavaria, issued by OMGB, Munich, December 31, 1947, BayHStA, Co-570/1.14, 1.

hatred, and distrust arose among many Germans. These sentiments were added to the belief held by many Germans of their own victimization and led to increased resentment among the German population.<sup>151</sup> All non-German Jews in Germany were grouped under the umbrella of Displaced Persons and were viewed as one cohesive group by both non-Jewish Germans and American forces regardless of whether living in a center in the countryside or in an apartment in downtown Munich.

Lt. Engle, a German Public Safety Officer and acting Military Government officer in Landsberg am Lech, expanded on these feelings of German impotence in a much longer report from September 1946, saying,

As for law enforcement, the office (MG office) considers that DP's who violate laws—stealing, looting, black market, attacks on German nationals, public frays amongst themselves or otherwise, or other disorders against the peace and safety of the community—should be arrested, tried and, if guilty punished on the same basis as German trouble-makers. The local MG office believes that DP's who are being interrogated, or arrested, by MG or MP or other Military persons, should refrain from physical resistance, denunciations, etc., and should show proper respect for the US uniform, and that German police have the right to arrest DP's, without physical or verbal retaliation, for law violations.<sup>152</sup>

Engle was upset that the DPs living in Landsberg (Jews) were not, in his opinion, being punished as fully as German citizens committing the same crimes. Engle believed that these DPs were disrespectful, out of control, and were allowed free reign both inside and outside of their camp. According to him it was unfortunate,

that to any extent that any UNRRA agency considers DP's as immune from normal laws of human conduct and consequences of violation of such laws, and administrates DP's on this premise, and inculcates DP's with this doctrine, full reconciliation and absolute harmony of thought and action between that UNRRA agency and any Military Government agency which, with whatever tact and sympathy and normal leniency endeavors to effectuate Military Government responsibilities toward all concerned, will be unattainable—and cannot reach perfection at Landsberg in particular.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Atina Grossmann, "Victims, Villains, and Survivors: Gendered Perceptions and Self-Perceptions of Jewish Displaced Persons in Occupied Postwar Germany," *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, vol. 11 (2002), 291–318.

<sup>152</sup> OMGUS, "Crime Report February," 2.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

Lt. Engle was especially upset that when he spoke with Mr. Glassgold, the director of UNRRA in the DP center. He was told that DPs committing crimes, even those caught in the act of looting or theft, should be chided and told why their actions were wrong, not punished.<sup>154</sup> In his opinion these actions only led to a further sense of entitlement among Displaced Persons. He believed that a tightening of the present strictness applied by the Military Government would convince the DPs that they were being oppressed by the Germans, and would lead to further outcries among the DP community. However something had to happen to change the Jewish position as “untouchables.”<sup>155</sup>

Ironically, the Jews felt the same way about American treatment of Germans. Several JDC reports included an explanation of the Jewish DPs’ feelings of lamentation over their treatment as “second class” citizens when compared with the Germans. Schochet recorded, “Rather than being feared, the American soldiers are looked upon as caricatures because of their lenient, unmilitary behavior. To the Germans it seems strange that these victors are not harsh but indeed extremely generous.”<sup>156</sup> Many DPs questioned the replacement of the denazification policy with democratization and how quickly the Germans evolved from the enemy to the allies of the western world. They felt that as the “first victims” of the Nazis they should be the ones receiving special treatment and should get first priority when it came to the care provided by the Americans.

An examination of the laws dictating Displaced Persons’ incarceration in postwar Germany issued in October 1946, illustrated that in actuality the American Government was actively pursuing UNDP criminals right alongside the German offenders active in crime throughout the country. Although claims of American leniency also accompanied Jewish

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<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

<sup>156</sup> Schochet, *Feldafing*: 150.

sentences, any DP arrested for a crime was permanently prevented from acquiring a visa to the United States. These laws on the arrest and imprisonment of DPs, especially Jews, demonstrated that the Military Government in the American zone was actively arresting, sentencing, and imprisoning Jewish DPs who committed crimes, just as they did for other non-Jewish culprits. While the Germans believed American treatment of Jews was more lenient than that of Germans, Jewish DPs were held to the same laws as everyone else. The main difference was that German criminals often had to wait much longer for their trial. The German perception of the Jews as the main criminal offenders in the country did not correspond with the number of Jewish arrests. This discrepancy, a documented fact in Germany, was caused by the refusal of many Germans to admit that more Germans and non-Jewish DPs were involved in crime than Jews.

The final contributing factor believed to be responsible for increased anti-Semitism reported by the American military was the realization among Germans that the American idea of democracy allowed them freedom of speech.<sup>157</sup> This development led to the vocalization of long held feelings of hatred, resentment, and distrust that they could not have stated before because of the laws against expressions of anti-Semitism. One of the German officials responding to a survey issued by OMGB stated that not only were old anti-Jewish feelings making their way to the surface, which would have happened eventually, but they were being helped along by decreased fear of the occupation authorities, the militaries' relaxing views on "ex-Nazi activities" and changes to de-nazification policies.<sup>158</sup> As the American forces loosened their control on Germany and worked to create a democratic state they unknowingly created a new climate where many Germans could express their anti-Semitism without the repercussions of the first four years of occupation.

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<sup>157</sup> Report on anti-Semitism, June 30, 1948, BayHStA, 10/51-2/56.7. 1.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

**Americans and the Black Market:**

As we know the main traders on the grey market in the early months after the end of the war were Germans and foreigners, mainly DPs, and they traded with and for American goods. Initially the American goods bartered on the grey market were gifts and rations supplied by American soldiers, the Military Government and aid organizations. According to an OMGUS report from December 1945,

individual soldiers give or exchange goods which in turn find their way to the large operations through their smaller agents. A good many reports made against US troops actually turn out to be DPs dressed in American clothes and who pose as American soldiers. These people through UNRRA obtain American clothing, food, bedding and cigarettes, which in numerous instances appear on the black market. The majority of black market actions in American goods, appear to originate in these DP centers.<sup>159</sup>

These remarks were prompted by claims that numerous American soldiers were involved in illegal trade, certainly not for necessity, but purely for profit. These rumors were so widespread that General Eisenhower issued a statement to all troops warning that any soldier involved in illegal trade, the purchase of rationed goods, or overpaying for German goods that were not rationed would be severely punished.<sup>160</sup> Along with this announcement came orders from Eisenhower that only licensed dealers could, “a. buy sell, barter, give or offer any rationed items” and “b. buy, sell or offer any item at a price in excess that established by law,” and that these exchanges could only be conducted on the premises of the licensed seller.<sup>161</sup>

While the Americans continued to crack down on these exchanges they created new venues where trade was legal, thereby labeling all other exchanges as black market. In 1947 General Clay noted, “barter with Germans is illegal, except in two barter stores located in

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<sup>159</sup> OMGUS, "Americans on the Black Market," in *Black Market* (Munich: BayHStA, 1945), 1.

<sup>160</sup> Reuter, "Ike Denounces the Black Market," in *Black Market* (Munich: BayHStA, 1945), 1.

<sup>161</sup> Eisenhower claimed, “In order to combat this black market problem the support of every military person in the zone of occupation is essential. Military Government courts and German price courts and agencies reconstituted under US control have been instructed to prosecute vigorously any violation of German price control or rationing regulations. That procedure will reach the Germans. US military personnel have a part to play in the battle against the black Market.” Ibid.

Frankfurt and Berlin. In the future in cases where barter is used for exchange serious fines and sentences will result.”<sup>162</sup> While the type of individual trade that had been so prevalent in the immediate postwar period was illegal, trading could not be altogether abolished. These directives illustrate two important facts, first, that barter and trade were legal as long as they were conducted by licensed sellers, and secondly, that trade and barter had gotten so out of hand that it needed to be brought back under American control. This statement is evidence of how wide spread illegal exchange had become after only four months of occupation and that the Americans understood that they could not wholly eliminate this type of barter.

Despite these directives, the black market continued to grow and expand, as did American involvement. While the Americans were minor players in the immediate postwar period this does not mean that they were uninvolved. In November 1945, Major Heymont uncovered a huge black market exchange in Allied currency in Landsberg. The main participants were a Jewish DP named Lasker and the head of the military police squad in the area. This soldier had been selling American dollars at a rate of 80 marks per dollar.<sup>163</sup> By August 1946 reports of American involvement in illegal trade were widespread. In one such account the author noted that a substantial number of American soldiers were involved in minor black market dealings and wrote, “some of these cases have become serious enough to be brought to the attention of the criminal investigation division; resulting in courts-martial for the offenders.”<sup>164</sup> The only way to teach these soldiers that these activities were wrong was through the example and good leadership of unit commanders.

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<sup>162</sup> General Clay, "Directors Notes," in *Black Market* (Munich: Hauptstaatsarchiv, 1947), 1.

<sup>163</sup> Heymont, *Among the Survivors of the Holocaust*: 86.

<sup>164</sup> State Ministry for Food, "Report from the Bavarian State Ministry for Food, Agriculture and Forests to OMGB," 1.



Much to OMGUS' chagrin the problem was not corrected by simply telling the soldiers this conduct was wrong and educating them about how exactly the black market countered American goals in Germany. Instead the number of American soldiers active on the black market steadily increased until they were key players in illegal trade. By 1947, reports coming from and to OMGUS often included a section discussing American involvement on the black market. In September of that year General Clay issued a note during the Army Commanders Meeting stating, "the practice of dealing in the 'black market' by US individuals in or with the US army is an odious one and will not be tolerated."<sup>165</sup>

By 1948, American GIs had realized the potential of buying and selling on the black market and many soldiers were making thousands of dollars selling army PX (post exchange) goods to purchase china, jewelry, and other expensive commodities.<sup>166</sup> In one year American soldiers sent an estimated eleven million dollars above normal soldier salary back to the United States, money that could only be acquired illegally.<sup>167</sup> This combined with the introduction of the new Mark, and Allied desires to see a functioning capitalist economy in Germany meant that continued illegal exchanges were no longer ignored, but began to be targeted as crimes detrimental to the establishment of a democratic Germany. The changes in Allied policy aimed to end the thriving black market, but instead led to increased anti-Semitism, raids on Jewish camps, and intensified hostility between the Jews in Germany, German citizens, and the American Military Government.

Without a stable currency the population living in Germany needed some form of legal tender to purchase resources, and the American army and UNRRA paid those who worked for

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<sup>165</sup> Clay, "Directors Notes," 1.

<sup>166</sup> Pope, "Elimination of Black Market Activities by Individual Members of the Occupation Forces," in *Black Market* (Munich: BayHStA, 1948), 1.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*

them in cigarettes.<sup>168</sup> Major Heymont noted that no one would have worked for cigarettes if they had been worthless.<sup>169</sup> DPs also received cigarettes as part of their care packages. Since the purchase of commodities like cigarettes and tobacco could not be obtained through legitimate channels they became the principle medium of exchange on the markets.<sup>170</sup> Cigarettes were one of the most sought after items in the immediate postwar period. The Germans only had *selbstbau* tobacco which they grew in their gardens while the Jews were issued Pall Malls, Camels, and other American cigarettes known as *Offizier Zigaretten*.<sup>171</sup> The tobacco in the cigarettes provided by the above mentioned aid organizations was of a higher quality than anything that was grown in Germany at the time and helped survivors purchase the items they needed. In this way the American Military Government and the aid organizations helping them care for the DPs unknowingly furthered the illegal exchange rampant in the country. While this exchange was initially legal, as there was no other form of currency available in the country, by 1947, the American military worked tirelessly to curtail trade in cigarettes to no avail. American cigarettes continued to be the big-ticket item on the black market.<sup>172</sup>

### **Illegal Butchering and the Sale of Meat on the Grey Market**

A years or two, a year later I was in business already. This was not a legal business this was black market. I used to be a butcher [in Poland], I used to kill. I used to kill in the woods [and] bring the meat into my cellar... I couldn't kill in the woods, we couldn't kill in the woods we killed, we paid to kill by somebody in the cellar.<sup>173</sup>

As has already been mentioned basic necessities were unavailable through legitimate channels, and included among these missing items was meat and the by-products from the

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<sup>168</sup> Colonel Irving Heymont, phone interview, Fort Belvoir, VA, June 6, 2008.

<sup>169</sup> Heymont, *Among the Survivors of the Holocaust*: 95.

<sup>170</sup> OMGUS, "Reasons for promulgating Notice prohibiting certain activities connected with Black-Marketing," 1.

<sup>171</sup> Schochet explains that the cigarettes were known as *Offizier Zigaretten* because it was believed by many in the postwar period that only officers could afford such expensive cigarettes. Schochet, *Feldafing*: 50.

<sup>172</sup> Irving Heymont, Phone interview, September 14 2005.

<sup>173</sup> Berg, Dovid. Interview 35481. *Visual History Archive*. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. 2009. Web. 5 Feb. 2010. <<http://libguides.usc.edu/vha>>

slaughter of animals. The illegal butchering and sale of animals in postwar Bavaria serves as an excellent case study of the daily business interactions between Germans and Jews. It also illustrates how small time trade ballooned into big business black market exchange. The Jews of Feldafing and Föhrenwald were notorious among the American Military Government, their German neighbors, and even other Jewish DPs for the butchering and sale of meat on the black market. A police report from December 1946 mentioned illegal butchering and black-marketing by the inmates of the Feldafing DP-Camp, and in her interview for the Shoah Foundation, Helen Finkel described how her husband helped provide for them.<sup>174</sup> She said, “He lived in Föhrenwald and there were butchers over there, they were black marketing you know...there were butchers that butchered in the basements, and other things down there.”<sup>175</sup> However, an examination of the economic situation of Jewish DPs after the Shoah, i.e. their total lack of property, combined with the fact that they lived in closely monitored camps, meant that it would have been impossible to purchase, house, and slaughter hundreds of cattle without some help from German farmers in the area. The business interactions between Jews, Germans, and illegal slaughter began rather early in the postwar period. According to Simon Schochet many of the non-Jewish former forced laborers stole livestock from their former employers at the close of the war. These individuals arrived in the camp with a pig or cow in hand and ready for slaughter: the birth of illegal butchering in postwar Germany.<sup>176</sup>

While the Americans wanted control of all German cattle the economic return was less than satisfactory and no German farmer wanted to relinquish his livestock without a profit, or at least without some form of beneficial exchange. The Food and Agriculture Branch noted, “the

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<sup>174</sup> Meier Bez. Inspektor of LP, "Präsidium der Landpolizei von Bayern (Police Report)," in *Illegal Slaughter* (Munich: BayHStA, 1946), 1.

<sup>175</sup> Finkel, Helen. Interview 8657. *Visual History Archive*. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. 2009. Web. 5 Feb. 2010. <<http://libguides.usc.edu/vha>>

<sup>176</sup> Schochet, *Feldafing*: 28.

opinion of this office is that approximately 10-15% of all foods are now being disposed of through illegal channels largely through individual farmers (generally small producers and small retailers), this constitutes largely meat, fat, potatoes, and bread.”<sup>177</sup> These activities are further illustrated by the arrest of seven farmers in February of 1945, selling three oxen, one cow and two calves for illegal slaughter.<sup>178</sup> In a police report from February 1946 the author stated, “in their reluctance to sell foodstuffs for paper money, farmers in Bavaria not only trade their produce for commodities but now also for jewelry,” and showing the general disinterest that these farmers had in disposing of their livestock through the “legitimate” channels.<sup>179</sup> The police arrested a farmer when his actual livestock did not match the numbers previously counted by the Military Government. After a long interview process they learned that he had slaughtered his cows for the meat and thus should be brought up on charges for “the unauthorized butchering of two cows.”<sup>180</sup> Curtailing the illegal sale and slaughter of animals would take a lot more than arrests and threats to farmers who were unwilling to sell their cattle for useless money. According to Colonel George Quarles, the Chief of the Food and Agriculture Branch, the grey market was impossible to combat, as there were 600,000 farmers and small retailers and not enough police to monitor them.

The Allies realized that the meat rations provided throughout the zone were insufficient. However, the postwar situation did not allow for increased supplies. When meat was available, which was rare, it was substandard, and those purchasing it deemed this rationed meat undesirable. One public safety officer documented a butcher saying that he received only 10% of the meat he was supposed to and that the meat they did get would have been used as animal

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<sup>177</sup> Branch, "Illegal Disposition of Food," 1.

<sup>178</sup> OMGB, "Black-Market Summary report," 1.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

fodder before occupation.<sup>181</sup> While the farmer wanted a fair rate of return, the Jewish DP wanted fresh meat and was willing to trade surplus goods in exchange for desired products. Orthodox Jews living in the camps were unable to acquire fresh kosher meat and like everyone else in the country, turned to barter to get what they needed. This is evidenced in Rabbi Klausner's memoir in which he recalled a time when he was invited to celebrate *Sukkot* with the Klausenburg rebbe. As they all sat together the rebbe leaned over and confided to Klausner, "Mir haben fleish gehabt far'n Yom Tov!'-we have meat for the festival!...In order to have meat for the celebration, a deal had to have been made with a German farmer for the slaughter of a cow."<sup>182</sup> This buying power in turn made the Jews very unpopular among local German populations who claimed that the good meat brought into Munich from the north was immediately sold to Jews, thereby preventing Germans from ever having a chance at quality meat.<sup>183</sup> In his report regarding meat supplies in Bavaria from December 1946, Dr. Müller noted that the 250 grams of meat allotted to private citizens was not enough. Even the 650 grams allowed to farmers who supplied the cattle to the military was deemed insufficient, making meat a very attractive item on the grey market.<sup>184</sup> The desire for more meat was so strong that rumors began to circulate among Germans claiming that the low supplies in the American zone were due to the fact that Germany's meat was being sent to the other zones. According to one report the butcher shops in the British zone were overflowing with fresh meat and sausage creating a stir of resentment and hatred among those who believed these claims.<sup>185</sup>

The Munich police also noted an increase in the theft of livestock and in several cases it was later learned that the animals had been slaughtered and sold in the surrounding

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<sup>181</sup> Police, "NR. 35 (Police Report)," 22.

<sup>182</sup> Klausner, *A Letter to My Children*: 59.

<sup>183</sup> Police, "NR. 35 (Police Report)," 22.

<sup>184</sup> Dr. Müller, "Black Market," in *Black Market* (Munich: BayHStA, 1946), 2.

<sup>185</sup> Munich Police, "Polezeidirektion Munich," in *Polezeidirektion Munich* (Munich: BayHStA, 1946), 1.

countryside.<sup>186</sup> The Military Government began tracking these illicit business activities and found several instances in which Germans and Jews worked together to illegally butcher and sell the by products of animals ranging from cows, oxen, and horses to pigs. It was found, for example, that between October and December 1945, two Jewish camp inhabitants living in Feldafing, and a third Jew also living in the camp acting as a negotiator, bought six oxen from a farmer in Greeding and that they presumably slaughtered them in the camp.<sup>187</sup> This illegal butchering was not confined to the Feldafing camp but also occurred in the surrounding area as is demonstrated by another report from the middle of November 1945 when the military police (MP) staked out a shack near the camp housing a cow weighing sixteen hundredweight. When the cow disappeared it was assumed that it had been slaughtered.<sup>188</sup> This was also the case with a 300 lb. pig housed in a hay shack near the camp in February that disappeared and was presumed to have been butchered, or the two oxen stabled near the camp that were confiscated by the Americans.<sup>189</sup>

Feldafing was not the only Jewish center of illegal slaughter. The monthly historical report from Landezkreis Wolfratshausen for December 1946 noted that the major problems afflicting the region were theft and black marketeering. While Major Steers, the reporting officer, remarked that although there were problems originating out of camp Föhrenwald, he said that the majority of the DPs in the center believed that the law should be obeyed. Regardless, in the *Law and order* section of this report, theft of cattle was listed as the first and biggest problem in the area. Eleven cows were stolen during the month and eight of these cattle were found in an underground stable in Föhrenwald awaiting their slaughter. In another report from May 1946, the

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<sup>186</sup> Police, "Polezeidirektion München," in *Weekly Police Reports* (Munich: BayHStA, 1946), 1.

<sup>187</sup> Landezpoleyzei Oberbayern, "Repatriation Camp Feldafing," in *Police Reports* (Munich: BayHStA, 1946), 2.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

author noted the, “continual disappearance of cattle known in each case to have been slaughtered in camp Föhrenwald or one of the smaller camps under Föhrenwald. Fourteen oxen were known to have disappeared into Föhrenwald during the month of May.”<sup>190</sup> The Munich police attributed the mass slaughtering of animals to the fact that German police could not enter the DP centers, thereby making illegal butchering a profitable and fairly safe occupation.<sup>191</sup> Although Landsberg was not a known center for illegal butchering, there was a “black market” restaurant in the camp where inhabitants could get any kind of food that they wanted, illustrating that those in the center had access to the meat trade.

The number of reports rapidly increased in 1946. Beginning in February there is mention every month of the confiscation of animals assumed to be intended for DP camps. Trucks transporting cattle bound for illegal slaughter were stopped daily on the roads from Munich to Föhrenwald. The Munich police noted that they had to increase traffic control stops on highways and main roads into the city because foodstuffs, including greater quantities of illegally slaughtered meat, were being brought into the city from the countryside. In one instance the Landpolizei stopped a moving truck containing a horse, an ox, a calf, and two small pigs, all intended for buyers in the camp.<sup>192</sup> Added to this mode of transportation was the use of the railway system for smuggling illegal merchandise. In October 1946 Germans were caught transporting four small pigs without proper permission. These livestock were “secured” at the Feldafing train station (origin not specified), and when questioned the culprits confessed that the animals were intended for buyers in camp Feldafing.<sup>193</sup> The following month four large cows and three calves were confiscated on their way to the camp. On the flip side 388 livestock were

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<sup>190</sup> OMBY, "Annual, Quarterly and Monthly Reports," 25.

<sup>191</sup> Munich Police, "Polezeidirektion München," in *Weekly Police Reports* (Munich: BayHStA, 1946), 23.

<sup>192</sup> Police, "Polezeidirektion München," 21.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

found in cars and trains headed for Munich in the month of September alone, including 102 head of cattle, 38 oxen, 16 calves, 24 pigs, 113 piglets, 20 sheep, 6 goats, and 19 horses; all were confiscated. An additional 21,386 kilos of meat were also “secured” at the local train station and in civilian automobiles.<sup>194</sup>

Although the U.S. Military Government tracked trade in cattle, they were often unable to identify and arrest the illegal butchers. Illegal butchering not only presented a threat to the order of the rations system and the eventual reestablishment of the German economy, it also often created a health risk. The Landpolizei reported, “The unloading of intestines, hides and other remains at the dumps constitutes a danger to general health because the remains are left there to rot.”<sup>195</sup> German townspeople continued to find discarded animal remains at the local dump. The shoemaker Irsar who came across seven cowhides or Master Bricklayer, Kraus who found three sheep skins, ox heads, cow bones, lungs, intestines, and other remains of butchered livestock deemed unusable are prime examples of this phenomenon. It was hard for the MPs to identify the culprits even when the evidence of illegal butchering was found in the camp. On March 21, 1946 the Landpolizei Feldafing received a tip that an ox had been driven into camp Feldafing and was being housed in the old kindergarten. The military police immediately set out to investigate, and accompanied by the local police and a member of the Military Government stationed in Starnberg, found that the ox had been slaughtered and that the intestines and other remains had been dumped on a manure pile. Although several people were arrested it was never

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<sup>194</sup> Munich Police, "Black Market Conference," in *Black Market* (Munich: BayHStA, 1946), 10.

<sup>195</sup> Landpolizei Oberayern, "Bezirkinspektion Starnberg," in *Landpolizei Bayern Chefdienststelle Oberbayern* (Munich: BayHstA, 1946), 1.



determined whether or not the actual illegal butchers were apprehended.<sup>196</sup> In most cases, the apprehension of suspects was next to impossible.<sup>197</sup>

German and Jewish business interactions extended beyond the sale of living livestock. In June 1946 a Jewish Displaced Person by the name of Tannhäuser living in Gauting, purchased 25 kilograms of fresh meat in the Feldafing camp and brought it to a butcher shop in the city of Feldafing, owned by a German named Schneider, to have it made into sausage. He told Schneider that by the end of the day eight more head of oxen would be slaughtered and that earlier that week twenty sheep had been butchered.<sup>198</sup> However, not all business interactions involving the illegal slaughter of livestock were as amicable as the sale and processing of these animals. On April 8, 1946 two Landpolizei officers stopped two Feldafing DP inhabitants on the road to the camp transporting a cow. The police were surrounded by a large number of camp residents as they attempted to confiscate the cow and were prevented from completing their task. The cow was later secured by the military police and turned over to the food office in Starnberg. The following day the same two police were stationed outside of the center and were again surrounded by several camp DPs. One of the officers was assaulted from behind while the other was told, “he was playing with his life should he dare again to interfere” with the businesses in the camp.<sup>199</sup> When stakes were high enough, even the interactions that might be expected to be friendly or ambivalent could turn hostile.

While some sales in illegally slaughtered meat must have occurred between Jewish butchers and Germans, there was rarely any mention of these exchanges in the police reports of the Landpolizei Oberbayern throughout 1945 and 1946. Instead it appears that much of the meat

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<sup>196</sup> Oberbayern, "Repatriation Camp Feldafing," 2.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

was sold within the camp or that the Jewish DPs were good at keeping their transactions hidden from the police. On November 24, 1946, the constabulary police, at the request of the local police, confiscated 300 lbs. of freshly slaughtered beef in Camp Feldafing intended for sale. However, beyond this mention, the documents only contain speculations regarding Jewish involvement in the sale of illegally slaughtered meat.<sup>200</sup> It appears that the large-scale sale of meat on the black market in Germany did not begin until the end of 1946, but continued well after the introduction of the Deutsche Mark. As an occupation illegal slaughtering evolved smoothly from a trade prompted by necessity into big business on the black market.

It was argued that the Jews alone were the principle offenders of illegal butchering. However, military officials often reported that German farmers butchered their livestock and bartered the meat on the illegal market, too. This was the case in December of 1946, when the German police checked the luggage of the passengers on a train and found three sacks of illegally slaughtered mutton.<sup>201</sup> This is further evidenced in a police report from September of 1946, in which seven German individuals were arrested for trading meat on the black market, thereby illustrating, that just like in other illegal activities, the Germans were as much if not more involved than their Jewish counterparts.

### **Conclusion**

For decades scholars reported that the Jewish DP centers were set up with fences, barbed wire, and guards to ensure that their inhabitants were protected from contact with the Germans. However, historians are finding that while this might have been the initial motivation behind some of these defenses, in reality the close proximity between these centers and the German

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<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

<sup>201</sup> OMGUS, "Weekly Safety Report," in *Safety Reports: Germany* (Munich: BayHStA, 1946), 1.

towns neighboring them meant that these two parties were in constant contact, living, working, and especially trading with one another.

The initial interactions between Jews, Germans, and Americans may have been facilitated by necessity, however, these relationships often evolved into more than single exchanges. Despite the many and varied types of relationships between these groups over the postwar period, interactions among Jews and Germans were not always good or even ambivalent. Intense feelings of hatred motivated Jewish DPs to resort to violence when they felt threatened by their German neighbors, regardless of the validity of these feelings. Long standing anti-Semitism and resentment over the better care received by Germany's displaced Jews led many Germans to express their anti-Jewish sentiments both verbally and in the form of vandalism throughout the entirety of West Germany. Finally, the removal of front line soldiers who had liberated the concentration and death camps, and their replacement with inexperienced and uncompassionate occupation soldiers resulted in ever-worsening interactions between Jewish DPs and their American overseers. The abolition of the non-fraternization ban by OMGUS in late 1945, and the subsequent, and often romantic, relationships formed between American soldiers and Germans, resulted in increased anti-Semitism. Additionally, there was a general lack of understanding about the survivors' war experiences, common among many new young soldiers. This led to frustration and annoyance among troops who were tasked with dealing with DPs.

While the illegal economic system began as an informal market of barter based on necessity, it developed into a thriving illegal, multi-million dollar, trans-national business with partnerships and constant exchange between Jews, Germans, and Americans. The grey market would eventually be absorbed by the black market, a functioning economic exchange where every item could be found and purchased for the right price. Luxury items such as jewelry were

## II. A Means of Survival?

sold alongside counterfeit money and documents, as well as food on the black market. These continued economic interactions between Jews, Germans, and Americans, especially after the 1948 currency reform and the transfer of limited control to German authority, led to a further deterioration between these groups motivated by anti-Semitism, distrust, and resentment. These feelings were often driven by German and American claims of Jewish over-involvement in crime and illegal trade, and the presumed exorbitant profits made by Jews from these criminal exchanges. The need to trade for supplies pushed Jews, Germans, and Americans into constant contact but often proved detrimental to the relationships between these parties.

III.  
CRIME FOR PROFIT?  
THE EXCHANGE OF LUXURY ITEMS

The suffering, constant hunger, and cold experienced by many Displaced Persons throughout Germany over the course of 1945 and 1946 came to an end in mid-1947. The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) was replaced by its successor, the International Refugee Organization (IRO), during that year. The IRO, with the supplemental help provided by several international Jewish aid organizations, was finally able to “fully” provision the Jewish Displaced Persons living under their care. For the first time in almost a decade, the displaced Jews in Germany were provisioned with the resources they needed to live adequately. The Jewish DPs received enough rations to meet their daily needs and often had more than one outfit. However, they were not living easy or luxurious lives. Jewish Displaced Persons still needed to turn to the grey market for the fresh foods they wanted and continued to trade and barter for the products that the aid organizations could not supply.

The rations received by Jewish DPs after 1947 contained “luxury” items that were highly sought after in postwar Germany. These included chocolate, soap, stockings, and cigarettes. Displaced Jews who did not want to consume these products were able to use them as a form of currency on the black market active throughout the country. This was especially true for cigarettes, which were the most stable form of currency in the immediate postwar period. With these goods, an entrepreneurial DP could open a store alongside German businesses selling similar products secured through illegal exchanges. The fact that Displaced Persons received these supplies for free and did not pay taxes for them meant that any exchange they made with these goods resulted in a profit. While the Jewish DPs were involved on the illegal economy in Germany, they were the smallest group of participants and traded with Germans, American

soldiers, and non-Jewish Displaced Persons. Many Americans and Germans made substantial profits from their involvement on the black market. However, it was the Jewish Displaced Persons who were most often blamed for the continued success of illegal trade. Additionally, the displaced Jews in Germany were often cited by Germans as the main offenders in forgery and counterfeiting, two endeavors that arose in the late 1940s.

The perception of Jewish DPs as criminals, shared by many Germans and Americans, led to the deterioration of relations between these parties. This, combined with American and German efforts to reestablish a working democracy in Germany, led to a worsening in relations between the Jews and the authorities in the country, as well as a rise in anti-Semitism. As the Allies worked to transform Germany from an occupied nation into an ally, the victims of Nazism became less of a priority. While the Jewish Displaced Persons centers usually provided a sense of protection and security from the growing anti-Jewish feelings in Germany, the Jews could not avoid the animosity expressed toward them when they were outside of the camps, especially when they were working or shopping on Möhlstraße. American army raids on the Jewish DP centers and the German raids on Möhlstraße only further contributed to the breakdown of German, Jewish, and American Relations over the course of the late 1940s.

#### **Building Up Business: The Black Market**

The DP continued to live in an economy within an economy. Except in petty bartering and in isolated cases where Jewish DPs engaged in business in the communities or served apprenticeships in indigenous factories, the DPs and local economies are mutually exclusive.<sup>1</sup>

The dreams of the *She'erith Hapletah* finally began to coalesce into reality on November 29, 1947 when the United Nations decided to partition Palestine, thereby ensuring a future

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<sup>1</sup> Abraham S. Hyman, "Displaced Persons," *American Jewish Year book*, no. 50 (1948-1949): 317.

Jewish State in the Middle East.<sup>2</sup> While this decision was monumental for the stateless Jews in Germany and helped them to restore some hope for their future, the Jewish state would not come to fruition for more than a year. Immigration to Israel would remain a slow process, a situation that would continue even after the creation of the state. Over the course of 1948, only 30,000 Jews of the estimate 200,000 had been resettled, most of whom made their home in Israel.<sup>3</sup> One year after the declaration of the Jewish state in Israel, more than 100,000 Jews remained in Displaced Persons' centers in the American zone.<sup>4</sup> The ongoing presence of Jewish DPs in Germany added to the existing tensions between the Jews and the Americans caring for them, as well as the Germans surrounding them. The anti-Jewish feelings shared by many Germans and Americans continued to increase over the course of the DP era and many of these non-Jews found working with the Jewish DPs to be a trying experience. By the end of the 1940s, Germans, Jews, and Americans realized that their shared belief in a temporary Jewish presence in Germany was in actuality unrealistic. Although the various groups were living "together" in the country, they continued to reside in separate communities and to overlap on a daily basis as each party sought goods, work, entertainment, or companionship. Jews, Germans, Americans, and non-Jewish refugees interacted in every aspect of life in Germany. At times these continued interactions led to long term relationships between some members of these parties, as well as increased feelings of mistrust and aggression among others.

By the end of 1947, the living conditions for the Jews in the country began to stabilize with sufficient food and clothing provisions, school supplies, training programs, and entertainment venues. While this increase in supplies improved the living conditions of the

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<sup>2</sup> Zeev W. Mankowitz, *Life between memory and Hope: the Survivors of the Holocaust in Occupied Germany*, Studies in the Social and Cultural History of Modern Warfare (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002). 300.

<sup>3</sup> "Report on the DP situation," in *Displaced Persons* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1949), 1.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

*She'erith Hapleitah*, they were in no way living luxurious lives. The majority of survivors still resided in the same camps, ate the same foods day after day, and spent their time waiting for their situation to change. The monotony of their diet, combined with questions regarding the kosher status of the food supplied by UNRRA and the JDC, continued to push many DPs to barter for other goods.<sup>5</sup> The Germans were in a very similar situation. However, the supplies available to them were still well below the necessary levels to live comfortably and rations lines were just as long as they had been in the first days after the end of the war. Grey marketers emerged to fill the void left by the rationing system, but they wanted to be paid in real goods rather than fiat money.<sup>6</sup> Inflation alone did not lead to disillusionment in the *Reichmark* (RM) in Germany. The substandard living in the country, combined with a lack of purchasable goods on the legal rationing system, meant that it took more than the deflated RM to buy supplies. After 1946, grey market prices were essentially impervious to inflation, making the exchange of goods a much more reliable form of currency than the legally issued German *Reichmark*.<sup>7</sup>

Vincent Bignon, an economic historian, argues that the diet for the average German between August 1945 and the summer of 1948 “rarely exceeded 1,500 calories a day. As a consequence, in June 1947 only 22% of polled city dwellers in the U.S. zone agreed that the food supply was adequate.”<sup>8</sup> Country dwellers who had access to food supplies from garden plots or from exchanges with neighboring farmers were able to consume more calories than the average city dweller. The Economic Division of the American Government in Germany estimated that 20% of all food was diverted from the legal channels and sold on the black market in May 1947.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> M. Jacob Joslow, "Letter on Föhrenwald," in *Geneva I* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1947), 1.

<sup>6</sup> Vincent Bignon, "Cigarette Money and Black-Market Prices during the 1948 German Miracle," in *EconomiX* (2009), 7.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.



However, food was not the only necessity sold on the grey market. A contemporary economist writing in 1949 noted, “For several years many households had been unable to buy articles of the most common necessity. Losing a needle, breaking a cup, tearing a hole in a stocking could be [sic] major catastrophe.”<sup>10</sup> None of the aforementioned items were available through the legal channels of the ration system and the inflation of the *Reichmark* meant that they could only be purchased through trade. In June 1947 JDC director Celia Weinberg stated, “Of course the so-called black market or ‘bartering’ as I prefer to call it is going on throughout the zone and I am afraid there is nothing which we can do about it,”<sup>11</sup> meaning that the grey market continued to function as the only market where one could “buy” the supplies needed to supplement the rations provided by the Americans, the International Refugee Organization (IRO), and the aid organizations with whom they worked. Added to this, contemporary economists argued the use of money on the grey market carried with it a moral stigmatization, adding to the attraction of the use of other goods for exchange for many Germans.<sup>12</sup>

For the first time in modern history, many of the materials needed for production along with normal household items like food, clothing, and coffee could not be purchased with money, but only through an exchange of goods. After 1946, more and more businesses began to be conducted outside of the usual money market in the form of trade and barter, and a substantial amount of this trade resulted in goods needed in production or for products that would be used later.<sup>13</sup> The average worker “had no inducement to earn more money than was required to buy the rations at prices which were, on the whole, still fixed at the pre-war level.”<sup>14</sup> Those who

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<sup>10</sup> F.A. Lutz, "The German Currency Reform and the Revival of the German Economy," *Economica* 16, no. 62 (1949): 132.

<sup>11</sup> Celia Weinberg, "Reply to Letter 239," in *Geneva I* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1947), 1.

<sup>12</sup> Fred Klopstock, H., "Reform in Western Germany," *The Journal of Political Economy* 57, no. 4 (1949): 280.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 278.

<sup>14</sup> Bignon, "Cigarette Money and Black-Market Prices during the 1948 German Miracle," 122.

worked a regular job earned a less than profitable living and could not survive without breaking the law.<sup>15</sup> This need to turn to illegal trade extended beyond the individual civilian's needs to acquire goods. An economist writing in 1951 noted, "the businessman saw at once that even with a large mark income he could not buy materials with which to continue production. He soon learned that the only sure way to get materials and stay in business was to exchange commodities for commodities."<sup>16</sup> The situation was so bad that many workers who had no faith in German currency began asking to be paid in kind.<sup>17</sup> Known in the postwar period as "compensation trading," any trade in which one good was exchanged for another was considered illegal by the occupation authorities.<sup>18</sup> According to F.A. Lutz, a contemporary economist, "Every firm had several specialists, called 'compensators', on its staff. If, for example, cardboard for packing was needed, the compensator might be obliged to barter the plant's own products for typewriters, the typewriters for shoes, and the shoes for cardboard."<sup>19</sup> By the late 1940s, between one third and one half of all business transactions in Germany were conducted on the grey market through barter trade, illustrating the continued need for this type of market.<sup>20</sup>

#### **The Emergence of the Black Market**

There is no doubt that, like everyone else in Germany, Jewish DPs also participate in the black market. It is overlooked that the black market is a consequence of the chaotic economy in Germany. Many people have agreed that a black market would exist in Germany even if angels would live there and not human beings.<sup>21</sup>

While the "people's market" had grown and expanded slowly over the course of 1945 and 1946, by 1947 it had evolved into a thriving black market where any item could be

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Peter J. Senn, "Cigarettes as Currency," *The Journal of Finance* 6, no. 3 (1951): 332.

<sup>17</sup> Bignon, "Cigarette Money and Black-Market Prices during the 1948 German Miracle," 11.

<sup>18</sup> Fred H. Klopstock, "Monetary Reform in Western Germany," *The Journal of Political Economy* 57, no. 4 (1949): 278.

<sup>19</sup> A.F. Lutz, "The German Currency Reform and the Revival of the German Economy," *The London School of Economics* 16, no. 62 (1949): 122.

<sup>20</sup> Bignon, "Cigarette Money and Black-Market Prices during the 1948 German Miracle," 9.

<sup>21</sup> "Black Market of the DPs," in *DPs in Germany* (Jerusalem: AJAJJDC, 1949), 2.

purchased for the right price and where poor survivors, Americans, and Germans alike, could become wealthy beyond their expectations in spite of the failed economy. The illegal markets in Germany no longer sold only necessities, but also supplied buyers with any item imaginable. The grey market was still necessary and continued to function right alongside of the luxury market. Despite claims to the contrary, most individuals did not have surplus supplies or any valuables to invest in this new illegal “business,” let alone excess supplies that they could trade for more than just necessities. The *Reichmark* continued to lack “purchasing power, and only supplies that are sent in [imported goods] can be used as the bartering medium.”<sup>22</sup> This made the illegal market, or second economy, in Germany a continued necessity. Unlike its earlier manifestation, the later black market did not only sell necessities, but also the luxury items that the population in Germany had gone so long without. The black market did not exclusively consist of lavish luxury products, but also continued to include necessities like bread, meat, and clothing right along side foreign currency, jewelry, art, and electronics. By 1949, farmers and businessmen had realized that they could set the prices for those goods in high demand throughout the country, and “the businessman forgot that once he was dependent on the customer. Nowadays he considers his own profit only and wants to get rich as quickly as possible.”<sup>23</sup> What had changed was that those sellers with international business contacts and a ready supply of cash or goods could now make a substantial profit selling and trading in Germany where these items were still in short supply.

The need to survive and care for family drove all those living in Germany to become involved in activities that before the war would have seemed unconscionable.<sup>24</sup> While this was

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<sup>22</sup> Joslow, "Letter on Föhrenwald."

<sup>23</sup> Landpolizei Bayern, "Anti-Semitism," in *Monthly Crime Statistics* (Munich: BayHStA, 1948), 2.

<sup>24</sup> SGD Lanzinger, "Securing American Paraffin Oil. Petrolatum Liquid Heavy," in *The Black Market* (Munich: BayHStA, 1949), 1. This report, which deals with the sale of Paraffin oil a non-edible product being sold in Munich

still the motivation for many people in 1947, there were also numerous individuals who now worked on the black market strictly for profit. For these participants, the black market offered a way to recoup some of the savings and fortunes lost during the war. For former Nazis undergoing denazification, unable to work or having been stripped of their property, the black market presented a way to make quick hard cash to live on, while Displaced Persons, both Jewish and non-Jewish, often turned to illegal trade in order to make money that would help them rebuild their lives on soil far away from Germany.<sup>25</sup> The desire to live comfortably, to save up money for a new life outside of Germany, or to just regain some of the wealth they had lost during the war motivated several individuals to move into full-fledged illegal business in the late 1940s. This drive also forced all parties living in Germany to continue to work and interact with one another, to employ or find employment from their former enemies and victims, and to trade on a market whose illegality carried with it prison sentences and the possibility of a lifetime ban on immigration to the United States if caught. However, the Allies did not concern themselves with the motivations that drove individuals to try and profit on the black market; they only cared that the actions were illegal.

#### **Cigarettes as King: The Introduction of a New Currency in Germany**

Monetary history records a bewildering variety of commodities that have served as mediums of exchange—from the wampum beads used by American Indians to the cigarettes and cognac used in Germany after World War II.<sup>26</sup>

Although contemporary economists argued over the true value of cigarettes in the postwar German economy, it was well understood that they did act as a form of currency in the

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as cooking oil, illustrated some of the dangers affiliated with the purchase of black market items. Interestingly, it also showed German ideas of Jewish criminality and the working relationships between Jews and Germans who partnered up to make money on the black market.

<sup>25</sup> Boris Sapir, "Germany and Austria," *The American Jewish Year Book* 49(1947-1948): 369. In this article Sapir noted that it was estimated that the Jewish community in Germany was robbed of more than 10 billion marks in property from 1933 until 1945. By 1948 the cigarette trade was argued to have been run by former Nazis with international connections.

<sup>26</sup> Friedman M, "Commodity Reserves Currency," *Journal of Political Economy* 59, no. 3 (1951): 29. Cited in Bignon, "Cigarette Money and Black-Market Prices During the 1948 German Miracle."

only working market: illegal trade. When this was added to the overall stability of the value of cigarettes throughout markets in the American zone, “traders were strictly better-off paying for their purchases with cigarettes. In doing so they limited the risk of losses due to price dispersion.”<sup>27</sup> In the late 1940s, the exchanges in cigarettes were understood as a part of daily life, and economists, both then and now, agree that the “liquidity of cigarettes was far higher than the liquidity of any other good.”<sup>28</sup> Cigarettes were not sold at rations stores, and were thus illegal for purchase in Germany. This does not mean that they were hard to acquire. CARE packages distributed by American forces to DPs and refugees included cigarettes; individuals working for OMGUS and aid organizations throughout the zone were often paid in kind, meaning that they were given food and cigarettes for their efforts; and American soldiers initially had unlimited access to cigarettes from their supplies issued by the military, the PX on their bases, and those included in the packages sent by their friends and family. While the Allies had strict regulations against buying items in exchange for other goods, unless done in sanctioned barter stores, the use of cigarettes became one of the main means of purchase across Germany, lasting even after the currency reform in 1948.<sup>29</sup>

Cigarettes were such a sought after product that some economists estimate that the average cigarette traveled through about one hundred hands before reaching the individual who would actually smoke it.<sup>30</sup> However, the real value of cigarettes lay in its use as an easily transported and fairly stable form of currency. The *Herald Tribune* ran an article in May 1947

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> The Allies created these barter stores to encourage people to trade in them legally instead of on the black market thereby legalizing these activities in these shops.

<sup>30</sup> Bignon, "Cigarette Money and Black-Market Prices during the 1948 German Miracle," 14.

stating, “Cigarettes today are too expensive for the average German to smoke but they provide a portable, easily negotiable medium of exchange.”<sup>31</sup>

Even though American cigarettes were preferred over German brands, the German cigarette was by no means worthless. In fact, German cigarettes were often much easier to acquire and could be purchased for 20% less than their American counterparts.<sup>32</sup> German cigarette factories popped up all over the country, with some even specializing in cigarettes formed from the half smoked remains and butt ends of moviegoers, soldiers, and restaurant patrons. The individuals who collected these discarded remnants were known as *Kippensamler*, or collectors of cigarette butts, and they were so common that they were often written about in literature from the period. *Summer Evening*, a story written by Kay Boyle, the foreign correspondent in Germany for the *New Yorker*, included a joke shared among a group of American officers and their wives. In this joke, a character named Lieutenant Pearson’s noted, “‘It’s one of the articles of the Occupation Statute that you leave your cigarette stubs in plain sight,’ he said, and the group around joined in Lieutenant Pearson’s laughter... ‘A *Hausmeister*’ll make enough out of what’s left in the ashtrays after one of these shindigs to keep him in luxury six months.’”<sup>33</sup> This joke conveys two important facts about the postwar period. First, that there was a fair amount of profit to be made from the “sale” of cigarettes, and second, that it did not take much money to improve your life to the level of “luxury” in the dismal postwar situation.

On the February 28, 1947, the *Herald Tribune* ran an article stating, “In Germany, cigarettes lubricate the trade...Anything money will buy, and a good many things it won’t, can

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Kay Boyle, *The Smoking Mountain: Stories of Post-War Germany* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1951). 103.

be had for cigarettes in Germany today.”<sup>34</sup> The article discussed illegal trade in Germany by explaining the impracticality of carrying a large and expensive radio to the countryside in exchange for a radio’s worth of food. Instead the radio owner would trade the radio on the local black market for cigarettes, which he would then trade over a long period of time with the farmer for food. The black marketer who had purchased the radio could then trade it with an American officer for more cigarettes, starting the cycle all over again. The author argued that the black marketer could, “then sit down and smoke his profit - or part of it.”<sup>35</sup> This article is illustrative for several reasons. Not only does it explain trade in postwar Germany, but it also shows that Americans were actively involved in these practices while explaining how farmers came to be the main shareholders in Germany’s cigarette trade.<sup>36</sup> Cigarettes could easily be exchanged for agricultural products like meat, milk, and grains, all of which were almost impossible to purchase on the legal postwar economy.

Businesses could be established if one possessed enough cigarettes and the mind of an entrepreneur. This was the case with Szymon Nagrodzki, who opened an illegal restaurant in the Feldafing camp where patrons could order meat and fish dishes. When interviewed by the Shoah Foundation, Nagrodzki told of his work as an entrepreneur in the camp and how he secured the resources he needed. He had not set out to operate a restaurant, but rather wanted some fish for himself and his wife. This desire motivated him to leave the security of camp Feldafing and walk the three kilometers to Starnberg Lake where he met German fishermen. He recalled the experience saying, “so I asked him can I buy a few pounds of fish and he said you have bone coffee or you got this or that and we didn’t have that so we got from the PX and the soldiers, we

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<sup>34</sup> Bignon, "Cigarette Money and Black-Market Prices during the 1948 German Miracle," 14.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

got, you know a pack of cigarettes or whatever it is.”<sup>37</sup> With cigarettes in hand, Nagrodzki returned to the fishermen on the Starnberg Lake and “purchased” a pound of fish. This transaction was not at all unique in postwar Germany; however, Nagrodzki remembered the excitement that accompanied his return to camp with the fish. He said he was surrounded by people saying, “Look at that fish. Sell me a pound, sell me half a pound” to which he responded, “you know I only have a pound,” but this experience led him to become a middleman and later a restaurateur. He convinced several DPs to get together a few dollars that he converted into marks to purchase the fish. He no longer purchased by the pound, but by the hundred pound or more, and with this fish he made a substantial profit, “and that’s why we bought whatever I needed.”<sup>38</sup> Nagrodzki’s wife cooked to order and for quite some time their fish restaurant flourished, but the people began requesting meat. After all those years without fish and meat, these products were incredibly sought after. Nagrodzki claimed that the, “whole block of people came in and they start to eat fish and then they [wanted] meat.”<sup>39</sup> Luckily he knew a German butcher who would sell him meat, or when Nagrodzki could illegally purchase cattle he would bring it over for slaughter. Nagrodzki understood the illegality of the whole enterprise and ended this story by saying, “it was all black market.”<sup>40</sup> He, like so many others living in postwar Bavaria, understood that illegal activity was the only occupation he could perform in order to earn the money needed to survive. Nagrodzki also realized the importance of cigarettes as a medium for exchange and his story demonstrates how one pack of cigarettes could be enough capital with which to begin a business, as he did with his restaurant.

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<sup>37</sup> Nagrodzki, Szymon. Interview 26823. *Visual History Archive*. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. 2009. Web. 5 Feb. 2010. <<http://libguides.usc.edu/vha>>

<sup>38</sup> Ibid

<sup>39</sup> Ibid

<sup>40</sup> Ibid



The use of cigarettes as a means of exchange became so worrisome to the American Military Government that on May 26, 1947 the U.S. army barred the unrestricted importation of cigarettes by its troops. They feared that the continued use of cigarettes as a form of currency would prevent the reestablishment of a functioning German economy. Unfortunately for OMGUS, this plan did not work as anticipated and instead of reducing the use of cigarettes in trade, it just made them a more valuable commodity, thereby driving the price up.<sup>41</sup> Many economists and government officials thought that the June 1948 currency reform would bring about an end to trade in cigarettes and reintroduce the use of monetary currency as a trusted means of purchase, and it did for a time. Indeed, "After the currency reform was introduced, the black market activities declined considerably. American cigarettes are now sold more cheaply on the black market than German cigarettes in German stores."<sup>42</sup> While this decline in the black market did temporarily take place in the first few months after reform, soon enough cigarettes once more became a major form of currency and one of the central items sold on the again flourishing black market.<sup>43</sup>

#### **Americans and the Black Market**

It was felt that black market operations involving U.S. personnel or U.S. property (the responsibility of the Army) were so integrated with purely German black market operations that there was need for closer coordination [between American and German authorities] than exists at present time.<sup>44</sup>

Many members of the American military stationed throughout Germany had, by 1947, realized the potential of trading American PX goods on the black market for a profit. While DPs were trading "oranges, sugar, scrawny apples, or perhaps stockings and shoe laces" or maybe

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<sup>41</sup> Bignon, "Cigarette Money and Black-Market Prices during the 1948 German Miracle," 15.

<sup>42</sup> "Black Market of the DPs," 2.

<sup>43</sup> Hoarding was also an unforeseen consequence of the new currency introduced in 1948 and went hand in hand with the use of cigarettes as currency and the reemergence of the black market. Freiherr von Godin, "Mood and Sentiment of the Population," in *The Effects of the Currency Reform* (Munich: BayHStA, 1949), 3.

<sup>44</sup> OMGUS, "Black Market Conference with the Chief of Staff USFET," in *Black Market* (Munich: BayHStA, 1946), 1.

even cheese, juice, or salami, the Germans were using the black market to acquire an estimated 40% more food than their undersupplied rations provided, and American soldiers were purchasing luxury goods while making a substantial profit.<sup>45</sup> According to Marie Syrkin, the daughter of a Zionist leader, a teacher, and journalist who visited Bavaria, Americans did not trade with the small time dealers active in DP centers because they, “could use their cigarettes for bigger bait.”<sup>46</sup> By trading their American goods, these soldiers could buy, “French perfume, Rosenthal china, Leicas, and luxury furs made more alluring to the well-fed and comfortably housed Allied personnel than a bunch of carrots or a can of evaporated milk.”<sup>47</sup> Syrkin argued that all of Europe’s delights could be purchased in exchange for a pack of Chesterfield cigarettes, and participation in these activities helped to make the occupation less boring while also bringing soldiers a high profit. Syrkin noted that American troops were regularly involved in the black market currency exchange in which millions of dollars were being bought and sold for a high rate of return.<sup>48</sup> General Clay was so concerned about the continued activity of the black market that he informed Rabbi Bernstein that he was taking, “firm measures to stamp it out both among Americans and Germans.”<sup>49</sup>

While American products like chocolate and military coupon cards were popular sale items on the black market, the use of cigarettes as a form of currency after 1946 made them the most sought after item in postwar barter.<sup>50</sup> The introduction of currency restrictions prohibiting the possession of American dollars and British pounds by anyone not in service to either of these armies severely limited the practice employed by soldiers, who would sell their cigarettes for

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<sup>45</sup> Marie Syrkin, *The State of the Jews* (Washington, D.C.: New Republic Books, 1980). 45.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>49</sup> Leo W. Schwarz, *The Redeemers, a Saga of the Years 1945-1952* (New York: Farrar Straus and Young, 1953). 224.

<sup>50</sup> Senn, "Cigarettes as Currency," 329.

*Reichmarks* (RM) and then trade these RM for American and British currency. This meant, “A soldier could sell part of his ration, have all the money he desired for his non-military expenses, and still save his whole paycheck.”<sup>51</sup> This practice allowed American soldiers alone to send more than \$200 million dollars home above what they had been paid by the army.<sup>52</sup> However, in an effort to combat the black market, the American and British authorities outlawed the conversion of the RM into dollars or pounds, thereby attempting to end all transactions between those living in Germany and her occupiers.<sup>53</sup> These decision makers had unknowingly determined the worth of the cigarette as a form of currency. With the abolition of the conversion of the dollar, the American Government had inadvertently devalued the *Reichmark* in the mind of many Germans while ending the profits made by American soldiers who sold their cigarettes for local currency. Without a profit in American or British currency, the soldier could not send home his ill-gotten gain, and no soldier would convert his money into *Reichmarks* because of the very low rate of return. Instead soldiers began using their cigarette rations, which were higher than those received by any other national, for purchase of items instead of first selling them and then buying goods with the profit.<sup>54</sup> In this way, the soldier was able to make purchases in Germany and still send his salary home.

The cigarette became a very attractive medium of exchange for American soldiers because it was issued as part of their rations and could be purchased relatively cheaply from their army base PX. Added to this, American soldiers could order cigarettes directly from U.S. companies and could have them sent to them by friends and family. In an effort to curtail purchase with American goods on the black market, the American military began searching some

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 330.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 229.

200,000 soldiers' care packages between March and June 1947. Of the packages inspected, an estimated 95% contained cigarettes. While contemporary historians have contested this number, even their estimates are staggering, with at least half of the packages received every month (some three million) including cigarettes meant for resale in Germany.<sup>55</sup>

The involvement of occupation troops in illegal exchange in Germany during the first two years of occupation had initially caused very little concern among OMGUS officials because these numbers were relatively small when compared to the number of soldiers who had been active in the French black market during the war.<sup>56</sup> However, by 1947 this situation had changed so drastically that observers noted, "Allied soldiers and civilians in Germany indulged in black market practices to a surprising extent."<sup>57</sup> Soldiers had become such a staple player in illegal exchange that uniformed officials walking down Möhlstraße were often approached and questioned about what they would like to buy or sell. This was the case when William S. Hoffmann, the Chief of the Liaison Section, was instructed by the Military Government to conduct an in-depth investigation into the accusations about the illegal dealings on Möhlstraße. During a short walk in June 1949, two separate black marketers approached Hoffmann and asked if he would like to sell anything.<sup>58</sup> Black marketers understood that larger luxury items, like a camera or radio, could be easily sold to an American soldier in exchange for items like chocolate, cigarettes, nylons, foodstuffs, and liquor, in other words, more portable products. The American soldier could be relied on to buy fine china, art, and jewelry, items that Germans could not afford to own and possessions that the Nazis had stolen from DPs.

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<sup>55</sup> Bignon, "Cigarette Money and Black-Market Prices during the 1948 German Miracle," 17.

<sup>56</sup> The active black market in France had been extensive and the involvement of Allied soldiers was staggering during the war.

<sup>57</sup> Senn, "Cigarettes as Currency," 332.

<sup>58</sup> William Hoffmann, "Möhlstraße Situation," in *Black Market* (Munich: BayHStA, 1949), 3.

According to American officials, the involvement of Americans on the black market did more than just threaten the Allied efforts to rebuild the German economy; it also set a bad example while indicating a total lack of respect for American regulations.<sup>59</sup> Colonel George Pope argued that it was, “essential that an example in the field be set by the occupation forces if our mission is to be accomplished.”<sup>60</sup> Pope stated that one of the main goals of the occupation forces was to, “stabilize the economy of the occupied countries, to outlaw inflation, crime and general civil unrest and to prevent illegal transactions for profit.”<sup>61</sup> He claimed that individual soldiers were jeopardizing the eventual success of this mission because they were unfamiliar with, “the economic conditions in Germany, their causes and the resultant regulations necessary for the reestablishment of a free economy.”<sup>62</sup> Without good leadership, German civilians could not be expected to respect American occupation, let alone the regulations put into place to ensure that Germany would again become a fully functioning capitalist economy.

#### **Forgery and Counterfeiting as Postwar Enterprise and a Means of Escape.**

Although the rations and supply situation in Germany had begun to stabilize by 1947, this does not mean that individuals in the country were receiving all of the goods they needed or that those living in Germany were satisfied with the goods they received. As previously discussed, illegal trade, especially the black market, continued to function out of necessity. However, new methods of acquiring the goods needed for those living in the country were also introduced in the late 1940s. Interestingly, one of the most detrimental criminal activities threatening the food economy during this period was forgery. Although the connection between the food economy and forgery may not be immediately apparent, the fact that the only legal means of acquiring

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<sup>59</sup> George VW Pope, "Elimination of Black Market Activities by Individual Members of the Occupation Force," in *Americans and the Black Market* (Munich: BayHStA, 1948), 1.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

many rationed goods was through the use of rations cards, caused counterfeiting these illegal tickets to become a thriving business. While not unheard of in the immediate postwar period, forgers became active as paper and other supplies became more readily available during the occupation period.

Forgery acted as another big impediment blocking the way to economic reform, right alongside cigarette currency, throughout the postwar period. The counterfeiting of rations cards, official documents, tickets, and money all represented big hurdles in the way of American rule in Germany and placed the rationing system in continuous peril. While it was often argued that counterfeiting was a strictly “foreign” enterprise run by east Europeans, in actuality 39% of all those arrested for the crime were in fact German nationals.<sup>63</sup> This industry brought in millions in marks, pounds, and American dollars while diverting an equal amount of money from the German economy. Counterfeiting became a major business on the black market and a major obstacle to Allied efforts at reform.

The overall lack of supplies in postwar Germany led the Americans to introduce a rationing system throughout their zone. Rationing ensured that the supplies considered “scarce” in Germany including food and clothing, were evenly distributed to all Germans. The Ministry of Food and Agriculture, a division of OMGUS, sent both American and German employees to the countryside to catalogue and purchase goods dog-eared for the German economy.<sup>64</sup> The Ministry of Food would then distribute the collected items for sale at stores, butcher shops, and restaurants throughout the zone. These stores paid a subsidized fee for the products they received from OMGUS. The businesses that received these goods could only sell them if the

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<sup>63</sup> Alois Schögl, "Memorandum on the Extent of the Forgery of Ration Tickets," in *Counterfeiting* (Munich: BayHStA, 1948), 4.

<sup>64</sup> The amounts paid for these supplies were often similar to pre-war prices and were thus much lower than the going rates for these hard to secure items.

buyer had a rations coupon for the item. The seller was only allowed to sell the customer the amount of any given product dictated by the government. The buyer still paid for the goods they received, but at a subsidized price. The business owner then exchanged the collected ration cards and sent them to OMGUS for a small monetary supplement. Although most Germans complained about the system and the small quantity and poor quality of the goods they were able to purchase, rationing guaranteed all Germans access to the items they needed to survive albeit at a greatly reduced amount.

Initially this commerce was conducted on a small scale, with one individual producing the counterfeit items and another selling them. Alois Schögl, the Bavarian State Minister of Food, Agriculture and Forests, noted that forgers from 1947, “may have had distributors at their disposal, but no uniform organization could be ascertained.”<sup>65</sup> Kriminalinspektor Linder recorded, “forgeries of ration tickets had been more or less bearable in 1945 and 1946; they had increased tremendously after those years.”<sup>66</sup> An analysis of the criminal records from January 1, 1946 to May 31, 1946 found that there were sixty-four reported forgeries and twenty-two individuals arrested for participating in counterfeiting.<sup>67</sup> In 1947, the numbers rose to include 54 forgers arrested, 290 distributors imprisoned, and 27 forgery centers raided and disbanded. These figures rose rapidly in the late 1940s as the postwar period continued and profits from forgery grew. Counterfeiting moved from small time individual criminality into the realm of big business and pushed those involved into the organized crime syndicate active in Bavaria. The police found that by 1948, “a full fledged organization had been created which operated under a certain system,” showing just how much the industry had grown.<sup>68</sup> In 1948, 186 people were

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<sup>65</sup> Schögl, "Memorandum on the Extent of the Forgery of Ration Tickets," 3.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 4.

arrested for counterfeiting and 281 forgeries were found among real ration tickets in Bavaria.<sup>69</sup> The number of forgeries grew rapidly and the amount of forged tickets varied by ration period and region. Despite the disparities, the figure did not dip below 70.8% and rose as high as 90% of all rations tickets collected in Bavaria over the course of 1948.<sup>70</sup> The production and use of rations tickets exploded in the late 1940s, and the introduction of cards covering two months of supplies only made forgeries more attractive.<sup>71</sup> By April 1949, the sale of these counterfeit cards was a problem requiring the attention of all active authorities in Germany. The situation became so bad that German police began to fear that the forgers were attempting to sabotage the newly developing German government to show that the fledgling Federal Republic was incapable of running the country.

Those involved in investigating these fake tickets argued that the increase in forgeries was caused by the utter simplicity involved in counterfeiting these cards, combined with the fact that 67 print shops in Bavaria were licensed to produce them. The dispersion of these printing shops made it incredibly difficult to ensure that these printers were not producing fake cards and or selling the materials to someone who would use them to manufacture forgeries.<sup>72</sup> This was the case when a guard working at one of the paper mills producing ration tickets stock sold several reams of this dyed paper to a forger.<sup>73</sup> While investigating the crime scene of one forger's shop, the police found that the paper was genuine, the plates had been reproduced by a skilled plate maker, the paint was the same as that used in the authentic tickets, and microscopes had been employed to ensure that the fakes were a nearly exact match to the original. The structure of the

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>71</sup> Munich Police, "Report on Estimates on Food Withdrawn from Rationing Channels," in *Police Reports* (Munich: BayHStA, 1949), 1.

<sup>72</sup> Schögl, "Memorandum on the Extent of the Forgery of Ration Tickets," 1.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 6.



forgery operation was almost exactly the same as that employed by the Ministry of Food, and Schögl observed, “All technical prerequisites were given to make the forgeries complete.”<sup>74</sup> He continued on to say, “Practically an illegal Ministry of Food has been created. Its operations would have been in any case sufficient to get Bavaria’s food economy into the greatest difficulties.”<sup>75</sup> The German officials involved in stopping the counterfeiting and use of fake ration tickets realized that, “Not even with the assistance of the occupying power could we have kept the food economy working” if a solution was not found.<sup>76</sup> Counterfeiters were able to perfect their craft while securing the materials they needed, and their popularity only grew as rations continued to be insufficient.

It was originally the responsibility of the Landtag Investigation Committee in Bavaria to evaluate and deal with the illegal reproduction of ration tickets. They determined that “these forgeries had grown so big that Bavaria’s food economy was expected to breakdown.”<sup>77</sup> Chief of the Landpolizei, Pitzer, noted, “that so tremendous and vast a sabotage of our food policy had been made that it could be referred to as a public scandal.”<sup>78</sup> German officials in every capacity noted the continued threat that forgeries presented to the already disrupted ration system. These forged rationed tickets included all types of groceries ranging from vegetables, meat, and fat cards to restaurant tickets. The forgery of meat and fat ration cards presented an especially big problem, with 24% of all meat and a further 21% of all fat in Bavaria sold for fake tickets in one month alone.<sup>79</sup> Schlögl claimed that the grocers who accepted these cards had been able to tell when they were fake in the early postwar, but this changed when forgers began using the military

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 6.

approved marked paper stolen from the printing factories. The forgeries from the late 1940s were of so much better quality, appearing often as an exact match for the real thing, making detection by the average individual almost impossible.<sup>80</sup>

Although use of these rations cards at food sellers was very popular, the main purveyors of these counterfeit cards were actually Bavarian restaurateurs who often knowingly accepted forged cards with the understanding that either way they would be repaid by OMGUS. Unlike other business employees who had no way of telling if a card was real or fake without some outside training or the use of a loupe, restaurateurs often knew the cards they were accepting were fake because they could see the black marketers selling these items to their patrons outside of, or sometimes even within, their restaurants.<sup>81</sup>

The frequency of the exchange of certain items on the black market decreased as these items became more readily available. This was not the case with the illegal slaughter and sale of meat. This practice continued and grew, as meat supplies remained unobtainable through legal channels. Illegal meat sales became so widespread that in early March 1948, dealers of fake meat and fat ration tickets were more common than butcher shops with meat to sell. These individuals could be seen brazenly selling their product in the Mittenwald railroad station, and they were incredibly popular as they offered the chance at a product that was near impossible to purchase, and whose ration quantity was insufficient for even just one person, let alone a family.<sup>82</sup> In one case, a distributor was arrested and upon search, was found with tickets for 25,000 pounds of meat. When questioned this individual informed the police that he had already

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 3.

sold cards for several tons of food.<sup>83</sup> As Schögl pointed out, this was only one seller, and twenty others had been arrested right alongside of him, illustrating the extent of these sales.

The sale of forged meat ration tickets was such a big problem that in March 1948, the Ministry of Food found that while the supply of livestock in Bavaria was finally sufficient to issue the 400 grams of meat plus the additional amount proscribed by the ration laws for the sick and workers, (with 55,229 head of cattle, 35,489 calves, 3,696 pigs and 596 sheep), the cattle collected was insufficient to cover the demands in the state.<sup>84</sup> Added to this were delays and inconsistencies in food distribution because of forged ration tickets. During March and April, an estimated 25% to 55%, depending on the region and the month, of all meat and fat tickets surrendered by the grocers and butchers in Munich's suburbs were fake.<sup>85</sup> It was also during these months that an estimated 12,000 head of cattle were exempt from confiscation because they had been purchased with forged tickets, resulting in the loss of 1,500 tons or 3,000,000 pounds of butchered meat on the legal market. At the same time, 600 tons of fat were withheld from rationing because it had been already purchased with fake rations cards.

A report on the food withheld from rationing channels compiled on April 18, 1949 claimed that an estimated 30% of all beef and veal were kept from legal rationing over the course of the year. While this number seems high, it is not nearly as high as that for pork supplies. During this same period, approximately 75% of all pork selected for rationing was withheld or diverted from rationing.<sup>86</sup> Whereas cattle was most often sold to dealers by farmers at high prices, pork was mainly slaughtered by the farmer and sold as cuts of freshly butchered meat or eaten by his family. The purchase of this type of illegally slaughtered pork proved incredibly

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>86</sup> Police, "Report on Estimates on Food Withdrawn from Rationing Channels," 1.

dangerous as was evidenced by an outbreak of Trichinosis in Landsberg. The authorities warned all Landsbergers to refrain from the purchase of illegally slaughtered meat, as it was not inspected and had already led to a couple of, “deaths in Landsberg and her surrounding counties.”<sup>87</sup> However, the illegal sale of rationed meat continued to flourish. The situation became so bad that officials working for OMGUS claimed that there had been an easing up of illegally smuggled cattle into Föhrenwald, caused by a drought in livestock that affected even the black marketers.<sup>88</sup> All of this evidence, along with the continued confiscation of illegally sold cattle, attests to the continued illegal sale and slaughter of animals for their meat and other by-products, an occupation that brought German farmers and Jewish survivors together.<sup>89</sup>

The most watched and studied type of forgery was that related to the food economy, as it negatively affected rationing and thus the occupation government in Germany. However, it was not the only counterfeiting common throughout southern Bavaria. Forgery was the only quick and accessible option for acquiring the necessary documents, like birth certificates, needed by many Jews attempting to qualify for visas, especially to the United States. In a postwar world these things had often been destroyed or were held in countries lying behind the slowly solidifying iron curtain. Anything less than a trip to their former town halls or hiring someone to make the long dangerous trip for you meant an extended wait in Germany while your "incomplete" file could be evaluated for emigration. Acquiring a visa to the United States was an incredibly difficult endeavor before the DP Act of 1948, and even then providing the

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<sup>87</sup> "Schwarzschlachtungen mit Fleischbeschau," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, August 2 1949, 1.

<sup>88</sup> Munich Police, "Weekly Police Reports," in *Criminality* (Munich: BayHStA, 1948), 2.

<sup>89</sup> Reports like that from July 7, 1949 discussing the remittance to the Munich slaughterhouse of five head of livestock purchased on the black market for excess prices, illustrated that cattle could still be purchased illegally. Munich Police, "Crime Report 7-7-1949," in *Weekly Crime Reports* (Munich: Bay, 1949), 2.

necessary proof of birth, persecution during the war, and entrance in the DP camps created an ongoing struggle for many Jews.<sup>90</sup> According to William Haber,

The statements [of DPs being tried for falsifying their visa applications] relate either to their place of birth or to their length of residence in the U.S. Zone. The motive for making the false declarations was to gain the advantage of a favorable quota or, in general to qualify for migration under the Truman Directive of 22 December 1945.<sup>91</sup>

New businesses cropped up offering translation of documents as well as the fabrication of the necessary materials lost during the war.

Much to the dismay of American officials, DPs, both Jewish and non-Jewish, began employing the services of these counterfeiterers in the hopes of completing their applications. In one case, the US Civilian Branch Chief, Harold E. Stearns, noted that an informer had told him that more than 200 Jewish applicants living in one camp had hired the services of Mr. Eisch and Mr. Werner to obtain new birth certificates. According to his informant, it was an employee of the Military Government who carried out these services on site in an IRO center.<sup>92</sup> Added to the fact that these DPs were using fake birth certificates, it was believed that many of them totally falsified their documentation in order to help improve their chances of getting a visa. In many cases, people who had been arrested for black market activities would take on the names of friends who died in postwar Germany in the hopes that they would then have a chance of

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<sup>90</sup> The United States was not the only country where documentation could help a DP gain entry. Australia announced in the late 1940s, that it would take an unlimited number of DPs as long as they were qualified lumbermen. According to Rabbi Mayer Abromowitz, "Jews from German and Austrian DP camps suddenly qualified for this emigration. Being qualified as a lumberman meant that an applicant under this scheme could prove, with necessary documents, that he was the kind of lumberman Australia needed. Where they got the documents only God knows." Mayer Abromowitz, "The View from 82: Jewish DPs in La Bella Roma," *Jewish Life*(2003). 3.

<sup>91</sup> Dr. William Haber, "Prosecution of DPs for Presenting False Documents to United States Consular Offices," in *Haber* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1948), 1.

<sup>92</sup> Harold E. Stearns, "Illegal Identification of Jewish Groups," in *Black Market Activities in Munich* (Munich: BayHStA, 1947), 1.

circumventing the ban placed on them because of their criminal records.<sup>93</sup> Another popular falsification was to have the newly counterfeited birth certificate list a German city as the user's birthplace because the German quota for visas to the States was higher than that for Jews. It was rumored that this was the case with Dr. Kronberg, who had already immigrated to the U.S. According to the informant, Dr. Kronberg had been born in Tarnopol but had asked that his new birth certificate list Leipzig instead. The Americans hired German interpreters to work at the consulate in Munich in order to catch those claiming to be German; however, Stearns noted that it was believed that these Germans had been bribed to, "not notice their [the Jews] poor German."<sup>94</sup> He also noted that Jews pretending to be native Germans feared written exams because they would, "endanger their chances to get to the U.S. under the German quota."<sup>95</sup>

While Jewish DPs understood the risks of submitting false paperwork, which in the worst case included a lifetime ban on immigration to the United States, their desperation to resettle away from Europe drove them to purchase and file false documents with the American immigration office. Haber recorded,

It is a matter of common knowledge among the DPs that the discovery of the fraud will result in a permanent rejection of the individual for migration to the States. Yet the impatience to leave Germany has been so poignant that hundreds have taken the risk despite this knowledge.<sup>96</sup>

This was the case with L., a disabled man who had survived the Holocaust in a concentration camp. L. had entered the American zone after the January 1, 1947 cut-off date for legal admission. He had then submitted false papers in 1949, claiming that he had entered the country before 1947. He was caught and sentenced to six months in prison. Although his term was suspended, he was rejected from qualifying for the benefits of the *Escapee Program* because of

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<sup>93</sup> Finkel, Helen. Interview 8657. *Visual History Archive*. USC Shoah Foundation Institute. 2009. Web. 5 Feb. 2010. <<http://libguides.usc.edu/vha>>

<sup>94</sup> Stearns, "Illegal Identification of Jewish Groups."

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Haber, "Prosecution of DPs for Presenting False Documents to United States Consular Offices."

his use of falsified papers. The Legal Department of the JDC had taken on L.'s case and was working to get him clemency so that he could again apply for the *Escapee Program*. The JDC Legal Aid Department's files were overflowing with similar cases spanning the period.<sup>97</sup>

The use of counterfeit documents was so common that it was one of the first subjects brought up by William Haber when he spoke with the Commander of U.S. Forces in Europe, General Clay, in 1948. While Haber believed that those skirting American law needed to be punished, he felt that the American policy of banning individuals who were caught attempting to supply fake forms forever and imprisoning them was in fact double punishment for one crime. Haber claimed "that the problem of false documents with these people [Jewish DPs] does not represent a normal pattern of behavior, but is merely the last step in the long struggle for survival under the repressions to which they have been exposed."<sup>98</sup> He did not believe that the use of fake documents illustrated the deterioration of Jewish moral fiber, but was a display of the lengths to which the Jewish DP would go to, "quit his life of charity and degrading idleness."<sup>99</sup> Haber argued that many of the Jews who submitted counterfeit materials had in fact only survived the Holocaust because of their use of similar documents during the war. He believed that German society was partly to blame, as they had created a "social milieu that made lies and deception the price of survival."<sup>100</sup> This situation, which had been beyond the control of the Jews, had left them in a postwar condition of despair where they were willing to, "resort to any falsehoods in order to reach a place where they can regain their self-respect."<sup>101</sup> The DPs were

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<sup>97</sup> JDC Legal Department, "Legal Department " in *Jewish DPs, Legal Aid* (Jerusalem: AJAJJDC, 1949), 1.

<sup>98</sup> William Haber, "Notes on Session with General Lucius D. Clay in Frankfurt," in *DP problems* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1948), 3.

<sup>99</sup> Haber, "Prosecution of DPs for Presenting False Documents to United States Consular Offices," 2.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

prepared to take great “ risks in the attempt to escape the moral rot of life for these people in Germany.”<sup>102</sup>

At the time that Haber wrote this note, twenty-four DPs were on trial for submitting forged or irregular documents for U.S. visas. He argued that these twenty-four individuals in fact represented thousands of other desperate Jewish Displaced Persons struggling to leave Germany and “sink their roots” in a homeland of their own. Haber told Clay that OMGUS had already prescribed the harshest punishment possible by denying these DPs entry into the United States, and that trial, jail time, and/or fines were unnecessary.<sup>103</sup> JDC legal reports from 1948 on noted hundreds of cases in which DPs were contesting their permanent ban from the States, many of whom had been barred because of their use of counterfeit materials.

Forgers had become so competent by the late 1940s that no legally issued certificate was safe from counterfeiters. This was especially true of currency. By 1949 it was common to be paid in counterfeit money and the sale of these bills was conducted in numerous cafes throughout Munich. However, it was argued by numerous members of the Landpolizei of Bavaria that Jewish DPs were the key participants in these activities. In a report from March 3, 1949, issued by the Bureau of Police, the author noted a previously released statement from February 1, 1949 in which another officer had mentioned that he had found that the Jewish DPs “contributed considerably” to the growing trade in counterfeit currency.<sup>104</sup> The author of this memo continued on to say that the police were paying more attention to the issue of counterfeit money, as there had been a number of recent confiscations of fake currency, especially in the area surrounding the Feldafing DP center. He claimed the distributors in almost all of the cases were

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Haber, "Notes on Session with General Lucius D. Clay in Frankfurt," 1.

<sup>104</sup> Präsidium der LP von Bayern, "Counterfeit Money in the Hands of DPs," in *Landpolizei Bayern* (Munich: BayHStA, 1949), 1.



in fact unknown DPs, but that in the case of two recent arrests processed by his office, he was certain that the criminals were Jews from the camp.<sup>105</sup> Feldafing was not the only active forgery center in the area, and the reporting officer also cited Föhrenwald as a major site for counterfeiting and the sale of fake bills. He said, “The largest part of all seized money comes from DP members of Föhrenwald.”<sup>106</sup> Although the Landpolizei argued that their map of the area with pins marking the location where counterfeit bills had been confiscated illustrated the connection between counterfeiting centers and the DP camps, they could not ignore the fact that there were German members involved as well. This having been said, the author did end his report by saying, “it is almost exclusively members of the DP camps, and here again mainly Jewish DPs who act as the most significant distributors of counterfeit [currency].”<sup>107</sup>

The use of counterfeit money was not just common in the countryside, but was also a frequent means of payment in Munich illustrating its widespread use. Pitzer noted the use of fake currency for the purchase of goods in three different reports between July and September 1949. He also recorded an interesting case in which two teenage boys were arrested for using fake bills in September 1949. Upon questioning the suspects, Pitzer learned that one of the boys had been given the money by his mother, a cleaning lady at the café Bristol on Möhlstraße. Further questioning revealed that this woman had been paid for her services with the counterfeit currency.<sup>108</sup> The use of fake money did not decrease despite the attempted crack down on forgers, and by 1951 German police reports were littered with stories about its continued use.

While efforts were made to curtail the black market and forgery and continued arrests occurred throughout the late 1940s and early 1950s, these activities did not cease, but rather

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Pitzer, "Schwarz Markt," in *Stadtrat der Landeshauptstadt München-Polizeipräsidium-Kriminaluntersuchungsabtlg. München, den 9.9.1949* (Munich: BayHStA, 1949), 1.

grew and flourished. Instead of disappearing with the eventual removal of the rationing system, new types of forgery emerged, including the counterfeiting of American, British, French, and German currency, bringing with them an unexpected threat to the newly reformed German economy and the eventual German take over of government activities formerly controlled by the Occupation forces.

#### **The American Military, the Black Market, and the Jew**

The nerves of the military authorities are also frayed so far as the DPs are concerned. The honeymoon days, when the DP had the undivided sympathy of the army, are over. The world has moved on to what appears to be larger issues and the constant pre-occupation with DPs that interferes with the primary mission of the army in the occupied countries does not exactly endear the DPs to the army.<sup>109</sup>

Interactions between troops on the ground and Jewish DPs were strained at the best of times even as relations between top American officials in OMGUS and the displaced Jews living in the American zone continued to run smoothly. As mentioned in chapter two, the interactions between Jewish DPs and American soldiers had already begun to deteriorate in early 1946 and continued to worsen as the occupation period stretched on. Rabbi Bernstein believed that the decline in American and Jewish relations in the zone was only normal. In his yearly report on the state of the Displaced Jews in Germany from 1948, he wrote, “the continuing abnormalities of their lives in Germany could not help but bring about some deterioration in the relations of the displaced Jews with the German population and with the American Army.”<sup>110</sup> These relations worsened further as American forces had less to do with the running of Jewish DP camps and soldiers were constantly transferred to new posts; as these soldiers became more involved with Germans, including girlfriends and landlords; as OMGUS worked to restore the political and

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<sup>109</sup>Dr. Haber, "Speech from Dr. Haber to the 3rd session of the Congress of Liberated Jews in the U.S. zone," in *Displaced Persons in Germany* (Jerusalem: AJAJDC, 1948), 3.

<sup>110</sup> Rabbi Philip S. Bernstein, "Displaced Persons," *American Jewish Year Book* 49(1947): 531.

economic situation in Germany; and as German claims of Jewish criminality increasingly took hold in the minds of many American soldiers.

In the first months after the end of the war, American soldiers stationed near Jewish DP centers often worked within these camps. However, after the Harrison report and the eventual hand over of the control of these camps to UNRRA in 1946, daily contacts between these parties became much more infrequent. Added to this, American troops were regularly rotated throughout the zone, remaining at posts only long enough to begin to grasp the situation with which they were faced and then transferred somewhere new. As noted by a newly appointed officer in Wolfratshausen, the county housing the Föhrenwald DP camp,

The turnover of military personnel in this detachment is considered as the main factor in reducing the operating efficiency of the detachment. Becoming acquainted with the general situation and the numerous problems as well as personalities in the Kreis is a function, which is time consuming both to Military Government and the local governmental administration. This is especially true when one hundred (100) percent turnover occurs and the new personnel can not be adequately briefed since their predecessors have not been assigned to the detachment for a sufficiently long period of time to be thoroughly familiar with the general situation themselves.<sup>111</sup>

The soldiers deployed or transferred to a county such as Wolfratshausen often did not fully understand the complexity of their situation when presented with an area infested with rabid anti-Semites as well as several thousand Holocaust survivors and ethnic German refugees.

Educational classes, film reels depicting Nazi atrocities, and lectures by Jewish leaders had all failed to illustrate to these soldiers exactly who was the victim and who was the enemy. As one commentator from 1948 noted,

The military Personnel in the field had contacts with DPs only at the point of trouble. Because these soldiers were usually young and lacking in background for the understanding of so alien and complex a problem, it was hard for them to have a sympathetic or just evaluation of these uprooted Jews.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> OMGUS, "Föhrenwald, Quarterly and Annual Historical Report, July 1, 1946-June 1947," in *Landkreis Wolfratshausen* (Wolfratshausen: Stadtarchiv Wolfratshausen, 1947), 2.

<sup>112</sup> Bernstein, "Displaced Persons," 531.

The constant turnover of troops only further compounded these circumstances, and the absence of a thorough debriefing to help these soldiers understand their new posts meant that the situation only further worsened. For many soldiers, the Displaced Persons became more and more incomprehensible and foreign as the troops became closer to the Germans under their control.

The various Jewish agencies active in Germany understood that it was not just relations with American authorities that needed to be improved, but also the portrayal of the DPs in the press. In a report from April 9, 1948 on the *American Jewish Committee Meeting on European Affairs*, the nine organizations that met ranked improved press relations as one of their top ten most important topics, along with emigration and other current issues in the camps. Mr. Joffe, from the JDC, wrote,

The press situation in respect to the DPs is exceedingly bad. There is seldom a reference to the constructive activities in the camps. That is not news. But there is much news about black market, raids, arrests, prosecutions, and the like. This situation is contributing materially to the anti-Jewish DP attitude generally prevailing among military and civilian personnel.<sup>113</sup>

William Haber seconded this concern in his report to Mayer Grossmann in February 1948 when he said, "The prejudices of our soldiers, military officials, visitors, reporters and writers, are, to a very large degree, being influenced, if not entirely shaped, by what they see and hear."<sup>114</sup> If the press situation was left unchecked, the perception of the DPs would only further deteriorate, making their eventual resettlement in the United States that much more difficult.

While there were limited daily interactions between Jewish DPs and soldiers outside of the camps, ranging from soldier-frequented Jewish run restaurants and bars to business exchanges (mainly illegal), love affairs, and casual meetings on trains and in the street, the entrance of American soldiers into Displaced Persons centers mainly occurred when military police (MPs) were sent into a camp in pursuit of a suspect or when they had been told about

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<sup>113</sup> B.M. Joffe, "American Jewish Committee Meeting on European Affairs," in *Jewish Displaced Persons in Germany* (Jerusalem: AJAJJDC, 1948), 3.

<sup>114</sup> Haber, "Speech from Dr. Haber to the 3rd session of the Congress of Liberated Jews in the U.S. zone," 4.

possible black market activities. It was apparent to Rabbi Bernstein that relations between the average soldier and the Jews living in the American zone were crumbling. He stated: "There has been, in my opinion, some deterioration on the local level. I sense that in some places the DPs have become more irksome to the MPs and the DPs feel that they are increasingly the objects of the ill will of the MPs, as of the recrudescant anti-Semitism of the Germans."<sup>115</sup> This "recrudescant anti-Semitism" came in several forms, but one of the most prominent was the continued German claim of inherent Jewish criminality. In his Quarterly Historical Report, covering the period from the first of October to the thirty-first of December 1947, Edward Bird, the American official in charge of overseeing the Landkreis Wolfratshausen noted,

The main cause of anti-Semitism is the fact that so many inmates of Camp Föhrenwald are involved in the blackmarket. They have thousands of Marks available at all times to transact any kind of business. However the fact has been overlooked by the German population blaming the DPs for blackmarket transactions having to do with foodstuffs or cattle [that] there must be a German at the bottom of the deal furnishing the supply.<sup>116</sup>

Many American officials understood that Jewish DPs were definitely involved in the black market, but that they could not be the main offenders without supplies to trade. These supplies, especially items like agriculture and cattle, were incredibly hard to come by in the immediate postwar period, could not be housed in Jewish camps, and had to have been provided by German farmers living in the countryside surrounding these DP centers.

M.A. Weightman, the U.S. director of Wolfratshausen in 1948, clearly recognized German anti-Semitism at work when it came to accusations of Jewish dominance on the black market. He illustrated this when he wrote that anti-Semitism was again on the rise in the *Kreis* and,

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<sup>115</sup> Rabbi Philip S. Bernstein, "Address by Philip Bernstein," in *Jewish Displaced Persons* (Jerusalem: AJAJJDC, 1946), 2.

<sup>116</sup> Edward E. Bird, "Quarterly Historical Report," in *Quarterly Reports Wolfratshausen* (Wolfratshausen: Stadtarchiv Wolfratshausen, 1947), 29.

possibly the chief immediate cause is the fact that Jewish DPs figure prominently in the blackmarket. Whether the number of Jews so engaged is disproportionate is immaterial. The Jew is conspicuous for many reasons, and his actions are watched more closely. If he steps out of line, the entire race is condemned. Because some Jews figure in the local blackmarket, the reputation of the entire Jewish population suffers. Jews become ipso facto blackmarketeers, spivs and racketeers in the eyes of Germans.<sup>117</sup>

Although many of the top American officials in OMGUS understood these German arguments to be thinly veiled anti-Jewish sentiments, a substantial portion of the regular troops - with their intimate relations with Germans as both friends and lovers and their own American brand of anti-Semitism - were more susceptible to these German claims. In her article on Central Europe, Geraldine Rosenfield wrote, "According to UNRRA officials and other observers, some American soldiers have begun to adopt the anti-Semitic attitude of the German people with whom they come into contact."<sup>118</sup> This is evidenced by a comment recorded in a report from September 1947 in which the author noted, "the blackmarket is blamed upon the Jews. The unwillingness to work on the part of the Jews in camps is another reason. Through both legal and illegal transactions the Jews are again in possession of considerable wealth in the Kreis."<sup>119</sup> The belief that the Jews were profiting greatly, both legally and illegally, from the German economy was coupled with the long-standing opinion that they were lazy. These ideas continued to have a strong hold on German thinking after the war. What had changed in the years following the end of the war was that these convictions began to spread from the German community and were absorbed by many American troops.<sup>120</sup> Bernstein noted, "Increasingly, as United States Policy turned more activities over to the Germans and, also, as German girls

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<sup>117</sup> M.A. Weightman, "Föhrenwald Annual Historical Report July 1947- June 1948," in *Annual Historical Report, Wolfratshausen* (Wolfratshausen: Stadtarchiv Wolfratshausen, 1948), 14.

<sup>118</sup> Geraldine Rosenfield, "Central Europe," *American Jewish Year Book* 48(1946-1947): 311.

<sup>119</sup> OMGUS, "Quarterly Historical Report, Wolfratshausen," in *Reports Wolfratshausen* (Wolfratshausen: Stadtarchiv Wolfratshausen, 1947), 35.

<sup>120</sup> "An American economist writing about the black market in 1949 characterized black market traders as being 'recruited' from the ranks of the displaced persons." Laura J. Hilton, "The Struggle to Re-establish Law and Order: An Examination of the Participation of Displaced Persons in Economic Crimes in Postwar Germany," 2007, provided by the author. Cited by Margarete Myers Feinstein, *Holocaust Survivors in Postwar Germany, 1945-1957* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press).

influenced American men, the Americans were affected by German attitudes.”<sup>121</sup> Jewish Displaced Persons pointed to American policy changes targeting their activities as proof positive that German anti-Semitism was affecting the military.

The Germans who interacted closely with American troops kept their anti-Semitic feelings hidden, but they did express their belief in Jewish criminality. While keeping the big black market deals perpetrated by Germans concealed, especially those committed by officials, they drew the occupation authorities’ attention to DPs. Added to this, the American government began to argue for Germany as allies against the Soviets and believed that through close interactions between American troops and Germans, the Americans could educate Germans about democracy. Members of OMGUS hoped that the American GIs would act as “cross-cultural mediators” spreading American democratic ideals to former fascists, thereby moving the German from foe to friend. Little did they imagine that this would open discussions, allowing for the flow of ideas from Germans to influence American troops. The country’s new position meant that the Germans would no longer be punished for their past crimes.

These new policies and the gradual hand over of control to the recently established German semi-sovereign government, created tensions between Jewish DPs and OMGUS. These Jews felt that “since they were the first victims of Nazi tyranny they would also become the first concern of the victorious democracies.”<sup>122</sup> Instead they felt they had been abandoned for the enemy. In one of his first reports as the new advisor of Jewish Affairs, William Haber stated,

I was immediately struck by the fact that there is a definite conflict between the military mission here and their responsibilities to the DPs...The mission is clear: to rehabilitate the German and Austrian economy as quickly as possible. The DPs, from the viewpoint of the military, interfere with that objective.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Bernstein, "Displaced Persons," 531.

<sup>122</sup> Koppel S. Pinson, "Jewish Life in Liberated Germany: A Study of the Jewish DP's," *Jewish Social Studies* 9, no. 2 (1947): 114.

<sup>123</sup> Haber, "Speech from Dr. Haber to the 3rd session of the Congress of Liberated Jews in the U.S. zone," 3.

Germany's new position as an American ally superseded the needs of the DP and led to the resentment between both the American military and displaced Jews. This, combined with continued discussions between Germans and American troops about Jewish criminality, led to the further deterioration of Jewish-American relations and convinced the occupation soldiers to, "regard [the DPs] as a nuisance that complicated an otherwise easygoing routine."<sup>124</sup>

Jewish DPs argued that the increase in the number of American raids on their centers signified this up-surge in the American soldiers' belief that the Jews were the main participants of criminality in Germany. Of nine raids conducted on DP centers between January 1 and May 31, 1948, eight were carried out in Jewish-only camps. According to Abraham Hyman, "practically none of these mass searches substantiated the reports that prompted the Army to conduct them."<sup>125</sup> He argued that the news coverage that accompanied these raids only added to ideas of Jewish criminality by exaggerating Jewish involvement in these activities, while also lowering the opinions about these Jewish DPs held by individuals around the world.<sup>126</sup> Hyman followed this by saying, "Although only a small fraction of the Jewish DPs engaged in the black market for profit, Germans, Austrians and some of the occupation personnel held all the Jewish DPs collectively responsible as the principal black market offenders."<sup>127</sup> These limited interactions between American soldiers and Jewish Displaced Persons, which tended to be negative, coupled with the spread of German ideas of Jewish criminality, only further affected American and Jewish relations.

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<sup>124</sup> Samuel Gringauz, "Our New German Policy and the DP's: Why Immediate Resettlement is Imperative," *Commentary* 5(1948): 511.

<sup>125</sup> Abraham S. Hyman, "Displaced Persons," *American Jewish Year book* 50(1948-1949): 469.

<sup>126</sup> "Report on the Raid on the Ulanen Kaserne," Abraham S. Hyman to Philip S. Bernstein, December 5, 1946, item 94, box 1, PSB, 2-3.

<sup>127</sup> Hyman, "Displaced Persons," 469.



Just as the press had played such an important role in German thinking of Jewish Displaced Persons in Bavaria, so too did publications like *Stars and Stripes* and the *New York Times*. Mr. Joffe was so concerned about the negative portrayal of Jewish DPs in *Stars and Stripes* that he approached the editor and asked him what could be done to remedy the situation. While the editor was sympathetic, he said it was the responsibility of the JDC to work to improve the situation. He would provide a friendly reporter to accompany Joffe on trips to the camps, where the more constructive aspects of Jewish DP life could be witnessed, and the editor could begin including a weekly supplement in the publication that would help to illustrate how well former Jewish DPs were adapting to their new lives in America.<sup>128</sup> Mr. Joffe and Major Hyman were excited by the prospect of this favorable press and its effects on Jewish relations with the American military, but they both realized that they did not have the time needed to correct unfavorable reports or to write positive articles.

#### **An Up-Surge of Anti-Semitism**

By the late 1940s it was clear to everyone in Germany that anti-Semitism, while initially suppressed, was on the rise throughout the country. The situation had become so worrisome that the Central Committee of Liberated Jews sent a memorandum to General Clay suggesting that OMGUS introduce legislative measures against displays of anti-Semitism. This was not the first time that the Jewish community in the American zone had made such suggestions, but their continued sense of urgency drove them to contact Clay in 1947. The Central Council stated, "At present, two years after the end of the war, anti-Semitism has not only regained its old intensity, but infected even those parts of the German population which not so long ago rejected the

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<sup>128</sup> Joffe, "American Jewish Committee Meeting on European Affairs," 4.

national socialist ideology.”<sup>129</sup> In his reply, General Clay acknowledged the problem of continued anti-Semitism, saying that he deplored it in Germany as well as in any other country. However, legislation against expressions of anti-Semitism would be, Clay argued, unconstitutional. That having been said, he assured the Jews in the American zone that he, and every other OMGUS official, would continue to discourage anti-Semitism in all forms.<sup>130</sup>

The American Army was not ignorant or dismissive of Jewish claims of increased anti-Semitism. As Weightman noticed,

Anti-Semitism was not a Nazi invention, although the Nazis certainly put a bloom on it. In general, it flourishes in rural areas and among the ignorant. An agricultural Kreis like Wolfratshausen provides an ideal climate. When it is recalled that even Hessians-let alone Prussians- are regarded as foreigners and therefore unacceptable and unassimilable, it is no wonder that there is widespread mistrust of and discrimination against creatures so alien and un-Bavarian as the Jews. We are told (glibly and tritely) that the solution is education. But that is at best a long-range affair. For the present, we can only attempt to control anti-Semitism, and punish it when it becomes too flagrant.<sup>131</sup>

While OMGUS continued to issue surveys on German anti-Semitism and analyzed the trends dictating acts targeting Jews, everyone realized that ending, or even decreasing, this anti-Judaism would be a long-term effort. Campaigns were created to educate Germans about the Nazi crimes against the Jews and every American official issued some statement about the need to accept the Jews as fellow countrymen. However, for many American officials Anti-Semitism was a noticeable problem, but also one that they had very little control over.

Increased anti-Semitism was not only detrimental to the Jewish DPs in Germany, but also threatened American occupation as is illustrated by a leaflet found on an OMGUS car in September 1947. The author began by saying that the “Allied Military- Tyrants” were the ruin and misery of Germany and continued on to say that the Americans were robbing Germany

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<sup>129</sup> Frank Stern and Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism (Universitah ha Ivrit bi-Yerushalayim), *The Whitewashing of the Yellow Badge: Antisemitism and Philosemitism in Postwar Germany*, 1st ed. (Oxford ; New York: Published for the Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism (SICSA), the Hebrew University of Jerusalem by Pergamon Press, 1992). 152.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 153.

<sup>131</sup> Weightman, "Föhrenwald Annual Historical Report July 1947- June 1948," 14.

through cooperation with “pseudo-German” companies and allowing her to fall to the socialists by forming alliances with “hangmen of the type of Pieck, Grotewohl, Högner and Auerbach.”<sup>132</sup> He blamed the Allies for the division of Germany by arguing that they were in collaboration with Wilhelm Pieck, a prominent member of the Communist party, and Otto Grotewohl, a Social Democrat.<sup>133</sup> Beyond this, the author grouped the Allies with the Jews by also mentioning Wilhelm Högner, the Bavarian Minister President, often heard supporting the Jews, and Philip Auerbach, who was the State Commissioner for Racial, Religious, and Politically Persecuted Persons and the de facto figurehead of the Jews in Bavaria. As if this was not enough, the author alleged, “We [Germany] have been made the playground of Jews and Niggers, of Polish highwaymen and footpads,” illustrating the underlying prejudices still at work in postwar Germany. According to many Jewish leaders, “anti-Semitism in Germany, in the rest of Europe and without question, in the U.S.A., is being fed by the existence of the Jewish Displaced Persons problem in Germany.”<sup>134</sup> While not considered a cause of anti-Semitism, American officials claimed, “The behavior of some Jewish DPs” provided the perfect opportunity for anti-Semites to overtly express their anti-Jewish feelings.<sup>135</sup> This “race prejudice” was reserved for non-German Jews because, according to many Germans, their foreignness and conduct warranted acts of anti-Semitism.<sup>136</sup> Without the total removal of all Jewish DPs from the country, anti-Semitism would only continue to grow and spread. The idea that the Jews were to blame for the situation in Germany, including the failed economy, criminality, and even anti-Semitism, continued to influence feelings of Jewish hatred and distrust in Germany.

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<sup>132</sup> "American tyranny," in *German Sentiments for the Occupation Forces*. (Munich: BayHStA, 1947), 1.

<sup>133</sup> Pieck became the president of the German Democratic Republic in 1949 and Grotewohl acted as prime minister.

<sup>134</sup> Philip S Bernstein, "Address by Rabbi Bernstein," in *Displaced Persons* (New York: AJAJJDC, 1947), 117.

<sup>135</sup> ICD Research Branch, "Cause of Revival of Anti-Semitism," in *Anti-Semitism* (Munich: BayHStA, 1948), 1; Saul Kussiel Padover, *Experiment in Germany: the Story of an American Intelligence Officer* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1946). 1.

<sup>136</sup> Branch, "Cause of Revival of Anti-Semitism," 1.

The American Information Control Division (ICD) found that all foreigners in Germany except the *Volksdeutsche*, were “identical, in the minds of many Germans, with the Jews,” thereby providing fuel for the anti-Semitic fires burning in Germany.<sup>137</sup> In an article published in April 1948, Ernst Mueller-Meiningen wrote, “all of the non-Jews from Poland and other eastern countries who imperil public safety, nearly all of the violent criminals are non-Jews, are recorded in the minds of the public under the collective term of ‘the Jews.’”<sup>138</sup> This idea was seconded in another article published in the *Münchener Merkur* from April 16, 1948 entitled, *Distorted Thinking*, in which the author argued that, “hardly any difference is made between DP’s and Jews, particularly of those from Eastern countries. All of them are often spoken of as people eager to enrich themselves on the remnants of German property. Such, as a rule, is the public opinion.”<sup>139</sup> Similarly, Norbert Muhlen argued, “What seems to have happened is that ‘Jewish’ has become synonymous with ‘foreign’ in the new German imagery.”<sup>140</sup> All of these statements help to explain why many Germans believed Jews were over-involved in illegal activities including violent crime in Germany, where their numbers were in fact very low. The grouping of all foreigners as Jews by the German population only continued to further the perception of Jewish criminality. By implicating all foreigners as Jews, Germans multiplied the number of “Jewish” individuals believed to be involved in criminal activities.

OMGUS conducted a series of surveys between 1945 and 1951 in order to better understand anti-Semitic patterns and trends in Germany. In a 1949 survey, one fifth of the German population polled stated that they still believed four years after the defeat of the Nazis,

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<sup>137</sup> Research Branch ICD, "Anti-Semitism in Germany," in *Anti-Semitism* (Munich: BayHStA, 1948), 1.

<sup>138</sup> Ernst Mueller-Meiningen, "Süddeutsche Zeitung," in *German anti-Semitism* (Munich: BayHStA, 1948), 7.

<sup>139</sup> "Distorted thinking" in the *Münchener Merkur*, April 16, 1949, translation, BayHStA, 10/125-2/17.5, 1.

<sup>140</sup> Stern, *The Whitewashing of the Yellow Badge: Antisemitism and Philosemitism in Postwar Germany*, 340.

that the Jews were partially responsible for their continued persecution in Germany.<sup>141</sup> These American surveys also illustrated that the causes for anti-Semitism in Germany had not changed over the course of the preceding years, and that the Jewish DPs continued to be accused of many of the same crimes as they had been under the Nazis. The research branch of the ICD argued that while there were Germans throughout the country who felt utter revulsion for the anti-Semitic acts of the Nazis, there were more people who viewed these acts, “as a great political ‘mistake’” illustrating that they lacked the moral reaction deemed necessary to fully comprehend why anti-Semitism was wrong.<sup>142</sup> These Germans believed, “that the world’s ‘Jews’ had played a substantial part in bringing about the war against Nazi Germany and in the subsequent defeat of Germany.”<sup>143</sup> Ideas like these permeated German thinking and American Army reports continued to illustrate that the majority of Germans believed, “that National Socialism was a good idea, badly carried out,” making the Allies’ job of combating anti-Semitism that much harder.<sup>144</sup> The unpopularity associated with speaking out against anti-Semitism shared by many German officials meant that acts and expressions of anti-Semitism often went without punishment. Many Germans continued to resent anyone with a “privileged” status, especially because the economic situation in the country had not improved. The increased rations of Jewish DPs placed them squarely into the “privileged” category in the minds of many Germans. Difficulties in obtaining goods continued to promote feelings of resentment, and the belief that Jews were the main participants on the black market only helped anti-Semitism to grow and spread.

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<sup>141</sup> Feinstein, *Holocaust Survivors in Postwar Germany, 1945-1957*: 6.

<sup>142</sup> ICD, "Anti-Semitism in Germany," 2.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> Branch, "Cause of Revival of Anti-Semitism," 3.

There was no group in Germany that was free from expressing some form of anti-Jewish feelings. Numerous Christian congregations made attempts to build a bridge to bring Christians and Jews together, but latent anti-Semitism continually cropped up even at these philanthropic events.<sup>145</sup> The German Social Democrats (SPD) were no different, and in a memo issued in 1947, the party expressed its sympathies for the Jewish DPs in couched anti-Semitic language. The author noted that there was a general feeling of dissatisfaction in Germany, and that this discontentment was often directed at the Jewish Displaced Persons as they offered, “an easy target owing to their privileged position with regard to rationed food, consumer goods, etc.”<sup>146</sup> At first glance this statement seems to be supportive of the Jewish DPs against those who resented them for their “privileged” status without regard to the persecution and atrocities that led to their current predicament. However, the following sentence nullifies its predecessor when the author continued on to say, “These privileges are unfortunately often enough exploited for Black Market transactions,” providing the image of foreign Jews who lived in Germany as individuals who took advantage of their German neighbors.<sup>147</sup> Added to this, new issues arose with the introduction of *Wiedergutmachung*. In a report written by the president of the Rural Police of Bavaria, Freiherr von Godin, he noted that Germans were often heard grumbling, “Who will compensate our prisoners of war for being withheld in captivity for so long?”<sup>148</sup> Godin argued that no one contested the fact that the Jews had experienced “injustices” at the hands of the Nazis, but he continued on to say that many doubted whether, “this injustice exceeds that

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<sup>145</sup> Anthony Kauders has written a thorough examination of anti-Semitism among Christian groups and political parties in, Anthony Kauders, *Democratization and the Jews: Munich, 1945-1965*, Studies in antisemitism (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press for the Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism (SICSA), the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2004).

<sup>146</sup> German Social Democratic Party, "German Social Democracy and the Jews," in *Displaced Jews in Germany* (New York: AJAJDC, 1947), 1.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> Freiherr von Godin, "German public Opinion," in *Rural Police, Bavaria* (Munich: BayHStA, 1948), 3.

which was and still is done to German refugees and PW's."<sup>149</sup> This thinking led many Germans to question *Wiedergutmachung* because they could not understand why the Jewish Holocaust survivors should get such vast sums of money when no one was compensating Germans for their suffering, again moving the Jew into a privileged position in German understanding.

These anti-Jewish sentiments were widespread in the press as is illustrated by Mueller-Meiningen in his April 1948 article on anti-Semitism in which he argued that no person, despite the degree of their "political persecution," can get away with asocial and criminal behavior, demonstrating that he, like many Germans, understood the Jews to be tied up in criminal activities rampant throughout the country. He continued on noting, "nobody should complain of anti-Semitism who guiltily brings it about."<sup>150</sup> These ideas of Jewish criminality, and the role played by Jewish DPs in the increase in anti-Semitism, continued to plague German thinking more than a year later. This is shown in Andrew Sikora's report to OMGUS in August 1949, stating "The Jews of Landsberg have also been attacked severely for their black marketing activities."<sup>151</sup> Sikora argued that these activities led to calls for the removal of black marketers and the forced dispersal of gatherings of Jews meeting on the streets of Landsberg.<sup>152</sup> Many Germans also called for laws limiting Jewish travel over international borders because it was believed that Jewish DPs were only traveling for illegal trade.

However, the biggest operators of the black market are not Jewish DPs. Only 3% of the latter operate to any large extent in the black market. However, the big operators who, for example, sent four and a half million U.S. cigarettes from Switzerland to Germany, are former Nazis. They have far reaching connections. They keep themselves in the background and operate through a chain of small agents. Sometimes they cross paths in their business dealings with Jewish DPs. The masses of the Jewish people, however, have nothing to do with the black market, or as much as anyone else who lives in Germany.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Mueller-Meiningen, "Süddeutsche Zeitung," 7.

<sup>151</sup> Andrew Sikora, "Intelligence Report," in *Landsberg File* (Munich: BayHStA, 1949), 7.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

<sup>153</sup> "Black Market of the DPs," 2.

There was also the belief among Germans that the Jewish DP was lazy, failed to work and “morally leaches on the Germany economy,” while flaunting their privileged situation in front of natives.<sup>154</sup> Many Germans claimed that they were unable to forget, “the indoctrination received ...during the twelve years that Hitler ruled Germany.”<sup>155</sup> This argument was seconded in an American Army survey from May, 1948, in which the majority of the respondents stated that the, “racial doctrines of the Nazis continued to hold a firm grip on the German people.”<sup>156</sup> American officials believed that once a German had become associated with anti-Semitism, these individuals were likely to continue to believe in the tenants of anti-Jewish thinking because, “Anti-Semitism itself had a cumulative effect on the individual.”<sup>157</sup> A JDC worker writing a report on DPs in postwar Germany felt that while all of the aforementioned causes were possibilities for increased anti-Semitism, the biggest contributor was “that the U.S. Government shows that it is willing to cooperate closely with the German people and the fear toward the U.S. occupation forces therefore declines.”<sup>158</sup> He continued on to note that the East-West conflict afforded Germans, as well as ex-Nazis, a huge advantage because they were well received by OMGUS if their anti-Bolshevik claims seemed sincere, thereby bringing them closer to the American government in Germany. The Jews had nothing like this “German alliance” to offer the Americans, and because of the increased tensions between East and West, it made more sense for the Western Allies to work to form a strong German democracy that could stand against the Soviet Union, thereby making the Jewish DPs less of a priority.

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<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

<sup>156</sup> Hyman, "Displaced Persons," 1.

<sup>157</sup> Branch, "Cause of Revival of Anti-Semitism," 2.

<sup>158</sup> "Black Market of the DPs," 1.



**Verbal and Physical Manifestation of Anti-Semitism:**

The loud calls for the removal of Germany's "misfortune" were replaced after 1945 with hushed whispers, allusions to the Jewish role in German defeat and disgruntled murmurs about the "unfair privileges" enjoyed by the Jews. This verbal anti-Semitism was occasionally accompanied by a hastily scrawled swastika painted late at night, but these acts were fairly uncommon in the first years after German defeat. However, by 1948 anti-Semitism in Germany was manifested in several different guises ranging from,

Isolated incidents of violence against Jews, administrative sabotage in allotting to persecuted Jews the privileges to which they were entitled, desecration of Jewish cemeteries, threats, anonymous letters vilifying Jews sent to newspapers and individuals.<sup>159</sup>

Jewish communities in Bavaria witnessed the desecration of synagogues, extortion, and even the attempt by German police to force the Jewish members of the Bamberg population to leave the city.<sup>160</sup> The number of desecrated Jewish buildings and cemeteries only increased as time passed, and Jewish stores were vandalized and the windows broken on a fairly regular basis. While OMGUS argued that these acts were mostly perpetrated by German youths, in one case of a Jewish cemetery desecration, it was a 58-year-old man who had carried out the crime.<sup>161</sup> In a report from the meeting of General Clay and William Haber on January 14 and 15, 1948, Haber noted, "increasing evidence [of] anti-Semitism- such as desecration of cemeteries, breaking of windows in Jewish establishments, and the like."<sup>162</sup> The fact that these acts were being discussed at the official level demonstrate that everyone involved with running the country was aware of these crimes.

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<sup>159</sup> ICD, "Anti-Semitism in Germany," 1.

<sup>160</sup> "Accusations of Anti-Semitism in Germany," in *Anti-Semitism* (New York: AJAJJDC, 1949), 3.

<sup>161</sup> "Black Market of the DPs," 2.

<sup>162</sup> Dr. William Haber, "Notes on Session with General Lucius D. Clay in Frankfurt," in *Jewish Displaced Persons* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1948), 300.

An examination of the anti-Semitic incidents in Landsberg am Lech over the course of 1948 and 1949 help demonstrate this rise in anti-Jewish sentiments among Germans. In a report from 1948, OMGUS officials noted that there were about 100 incidents of anti-Semitism in Bavaria, most of which occurred in Landsberg.<sup>163</sup> In May 1948, the Jewish free-living community of Landsberg filed a complaint with OMGUS, stating that they were being discriminated against for housing in the city. While the reporting officer could not determine whether or not this discrimination was caused by a lack of housing, as was claimed, or anti-Semitism, it is a good example of the feelings of continued persecution carried by Jewish DPs.<sup>164</sup> One month later in June 1948, this same reporting officer noted that there was a noticeable rise in anti-Semitism in the city and that the Germans calling Jews names as they passed on the street were not in fact helping to better the situation.<sup>165</sup>

A subsection of the same report carried the story of the Landsberg *Bürgermeister*, who filled a complaint with the Military Government requesting that they move the American bus stop located in front of his home. He alleged that the American soldiers stationed in the town were involved in illicit criminal exchange with the Jewish DPs from the neighboring camp. OMGUS took these claims very seriously and dispatched military police to investigate the situation. The MPs filed a report stating that the American soldiers were not in fact involved in black market transactions with Jewish DPs at the bus stop. Not only were there no indications of illegal trade between the two, but also, “relations between American troops and Jewish DPs at the bus stop are normal,” and no changes to the location of the stop would be made. When the *Bürgermeister* determined that this conclusion was unsatisfactory, he approached the German

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<sup>163</sup> Various, "Overt Acts of Anti-Semitism," in *Anti-Semitism* (Munich: BayHStA, 1948), 1.

<sup>164</sup> OMGB, "Intelligence Report," in *German Sentiments Toward the Occupation Soldiers* (Munich: BayHStA, 1949), 2.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*

chief of police and instructed him to break up groups of four or more DPs gathered around his home, allowing for the use of force if necessary. The chief of police, realizing the illegality of this act, informed the *Bürgermeister* that Jews were considered equal to all other parties in Germany since 1945 and that discriminating against them was unlawful. He then notified OMGUS of the *Bürgermeister's* anti-Semitism, leaving the matter to the Americans to remedy.<sup>166</sup>

The Landsberg police sent OMGUS a statement on August 2, 1949 regarding the vandalism and destruction of a Jewish owned store located in the city center shortly after the above-mentioned report.<sup>167</sup> Six days later, Andrew Sikora sent OMGUS an account on the anti-Semitic professions of a business owner in the city as well as the defacing of a Jewish owned general store.<sup>168</sup> The store had originally belonged to a Jewish woman who was forced, during Nazi Aryanization, to sell to Mr. Hans Hecht. The original owner wrote to OMGUS from America attesting to Hecht's "good Nazi behavior."<sup>169</sup> Hecht had been forced to close his business for two years while his denazification case was being tried. During that time half of his store was assigned to Mr. Pickert, a Jew living in Landsberg. Once Hecht was able to take over limited control of his business, he was given the other half of his store. He and Mr. Pickert did not get along as Mr. Hecht was an anti-Semite and he wanted full control of his business. He was overheard making anti-Jewish statements, especially regarding Mr. Pickert. When OMGUS surveyed local residents about Mr. Hecht's behavior they learned that he was often hostile to the neighboring Jews like Gustav Blättner, who felt Mr. Hecht treated him with enmity.<sup>170</sup> He also

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<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

<sup>167</sup> OMGUS, "Anti-Semitism, Landsberg am Lech," in *Anti-Semitism* (Munich: BayHStA, 1949), 2.

<sup>168</sup> Sikora, "Intelligence Report," 6.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

<sup>170</sup> Gustav Blättner, "Statement," in *Anti-Semitism* (Munich: BayHStA, 1949), 1.

stated that on three separate occasions Mr. Pickert's storefront window had been vandalized with anti-Semitic statements saying things like "Jewish pig" and "bug-booth," alongside swastikas.<sup>171</sup>

Not all attacks on Jews involved damaging Jewish owned buildings or were tolerated by the Jews harassed. One such incident took place on August 23, 1949 at the Hotel Mohren located in downtown Landsberg am Lech. A Jew entered the hotel to have a beer at the bar at around 6:30 PM. While sitting at the bar he overheard the proprietress, Mrs. Charitas Pentenrieder, making anti-Semitic comments to the other patrons in the bar. As this was not the first time that Mrs. Pentenrieder had made such comments, the unnamed Jewish national stepped outside the bar to secure help from some other Jews standing on the street. Accompanied by three other Jews, these individuals reentered the bar and confronted Mrs. Pentenrieder, demanding that she explain her anti-Semitic comments or retract them. When she refused to do either, the Jews began breaking windows and plates, threatening to return to burn the facility down. The police were called and the Jews were assured that the Military Government would try Mrs. Pentenrieder if in fact she had made these comments. The author of the report on this incident, Andrew Sikora, noted that Mrs. Pentenrieder had undoubtedly made these statements. He explained some possible causes for Mrs. Pentenrieder's anti-Semitic feelings, including the fact that the hotel was at one time a residence for Jewish DPs who had left it in a bad state. Additionally, the area surrounding the hotel acted as the center for the black market in the area, thereby making the hotel an unattractive venue for diners or those looking for a place to stay for the night. Despite all this, Sikora suggested that Mrs. Pentenrieder be brought up on charges for inciting a riot and be examined by the denazification board because she was a "rather outright and rather outspoken adversary of the Jewish people."<sup>172</sup> As mentioned in the last chapter,

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<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

<sup>172</sup> Andrew Sikora, "Intelligence Report, Landsberg," in *Anti-Semitism* (Munich: BayHStA, 1949), 2.

Landsberg am Lech and its surrounding area were hot beds of Nazism before, during, and even after the war. Sikora noted that a common saying among Nazi circles active in the area was, “The revenge will come,” and he followed this statement by saying, “the Jews seem to be the scapegoat at the present time.”<sup>173</sup> He feared an outbreak of anti-Semitism in the area and stated, “the former Nazis are more active among themselves at the present time than they have ever been prior to this summer,” even going so far as to threaten former officials of the denazification board.<sup>174</sup> Anti-Jewish expressions were coming to a head in the small quiet town of Landsberg.

Munich was just as prone to violent acts of anti-Semitism as any other location with Jews. The windows of two Jewish owned stores were smashed in January 1948, but the reporting officer was not overly worried as there were no anti-Semitic posters up around town, and cases of discrimination only occurred very rarely, indicating that these practices were taking place but not on such a scale as to cause real concern.<sup>175</sup> There was a follow up report in which the author noted that the store windows had most likely been smashed because the local German population was upset over the continued black market activities on Ismaningerstrasse, showing a direct link between claims of Jewish over-involvement in the black market and violent anti-Jewish actions, at least in the minds of German police.<sup>176</sup> While the German police officer reporting on these acts of aggression was not concerned by the level of anti-Semitism in the area or the increase in anti-Semitism it represented, he did report, “a few provocations occur in trains and streetcars, and [a] very few cases of discrimination in rations offices are reported.”<sup>177</sup> According to the author of this report, “Black Market dealers hanging out in Möhlstrasse and in Ismaningerstrasse can be considered to be responsible for some of the anti-Semitism displayed. Therefore it

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<sup>173</sup> Sikora, "Intelligence Report," 7.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> Bayern, "Anti-Semitism," 1.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

appears that some Jewish persons themselves, together with education of the German people during the Nazi regime, are to blame.”<sup>178</sup> One month later, on the night of February 6, 1948, several Jewish owned businesses were desecrated at the same time, illustrating that this was not a random act of anti-Jewish violence but an organized event.<sup>179</sup> The Jewish businesses attacked included the kosher butcher shop, the restaurant of one Mr. Finkelstein, “Bristol” the local Jewish café, and the American Joint Distribution Committee building. While the degree of damage varied from broken windows and bricks thrown through glass doors to the total destruction of the JDC sign, the effect was the same: the terrorizing of Jews in Germany. According to the Central Committee of Liberated Jews, “such deeds are proof that the Nazi elements undermine the democratic ideas of the U.S. Military Government.”<sup>180</sup> For that aforementioned German officer, it was the Jewish DP who was to blame for the flare-ups of anti-Semitism occurring in Munich, not the individuals involved in these criminal actions. The Central Council claimed that the Jewish population throughout the zone was shocked over the increase in violent attacks and waited on the Americans to publicly and harshly punish the perpetrators to help set an example for other Germans thinking of expressing their anti-Semitism. For the Jewish community living in Germany, acts such as these needed to be stopped to ensure that there would be no “repetition of such infamous deeds,” which so strongly resembled the actions of the Nazis.<sup>181</sup>

These actions did not occur without OMGUS’ notice, and an American officer recorded in an army report from August 1949 that there was a noticeable resurgence of Nazism and ultra

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<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

<sup>179</sup> D. Treger and Dr. Blumovicz, "Memorial," in *Anti-Semitism* (Munich: BayHStA, 1948), 1.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

Nationalism in Bavaria.<sup>182</sup> This Bavarian nationalism and anti-Semitism had taken on a more brazen form and was becoming more aggressive as the years of occupation stretched on. This can be seen in a much more violent incident when the military police patrol was called to investigate an attack that took place in downtown Munich. During the disturbance a Jew was taunted, beaten, and stabbed. The incident began when a German citizen called out to his fellow countrymen to “take out your knives and beat the Jews,”<sup>183</sup> demonstrating that anti-Semitism was far from dead as was argued by many German officials.

Physical acts of anti-Semitism were not the only demonstrations of these feelings of hatred and resentment. Expressions of anti-Semitism came in the form of taunts, songs, and sometimes even the election practices of German officials. This was the case in one Bavarian county where supporters of the Lord Mayor, who was elected by 75% of all votes, claimed that the Mayor's opponent was a half Jew, painted the town square with Stars of David, and sang the *Horst-Wessel Lied*.<sup>184</sup> Jews across Bavaria expressed their outrage that these Germans would use such anti-Semitic methods to discredit their candidate's opponent, especially considering how publicly they had done so. While this particular mayor was not allowed to take office, it was not because of his anti-Semitism, but because he was hostile toward the occupation government.<sup>185</sup>

American officials continued to try and teach the doctrines of democracy, equality, and racial and religious freedom. The American authorities, including John J. McCloy, the United States High Commissioner in 1949, argued that the absorption of the tenets of equality and acceptance for all were central to Germany's population if they hoped to prove to the world that

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<sup>182</sup> "The German Press and anti-Semitism," in *Anti-Semitism* (Munich: BayHStA, 1949), 3.

<sup>183</sup> OMGUS, "Anti-Semitism," in *Anti-Semitism* (Munich: BayHStA, 1948), 1.

<sup>184</sup> William Haber, "Anti-Semitism," in *Anti-Semitism* (Jerusalem: AJAJDC, 1948), 1.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*

they were truly democratic.<sup>186</sup> One of the main obstacles facing this “democratization” in Germany was anti-Semitism. The Allies found that beliefs that world Jewry planned to suppress all non-Jewish Germans, desired to exploit the common man for their own gains, and were criminal by nature, were all hard to dislodge.<sup>187</sup> According to military statistics from April 1948, the Jews only constituted 4.7% of all DPs in the penal system. This meant that only 105 of 22,000 DP prisoners were Jews.<sup>188</sup>

The German press was a hotbed of anti-Semitic thinking throughout the late 1940s and 1950s and was considered a barometer of German anti-Semitism by many Jews. Jewish DPs were acutely aware of the use of the press as a medium to express anti-Jewish feelings and retaliated through both letters to the editors and demonstrations against the papers with the “audacity” to publish such articles. This was the case when Mr. Bachmann wrote to Mr. Friedmann at the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* about an anti-Semitic article published on June 26, 1948, entitled, “Überbrückungshilfen,” which discussed the currency reform and how it would affect Germany. In this letter Bachmann compared Herr K., a journalist on the staff of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, to a staff member of the Nazi magazine *der Stürmer*. He argued that while the article brought forth information about the currency reform, it also implied that the Jewish DPs remaining in Germany threatened its success because of their continued presence and need for support. Buchmann wrote: “This article is a very skillful machination of a cunning anti-Semitic agitator.”<sup>189</sup> Herr K. wrote that an estimated 600,000 DM were diverted from the German economy to help support the religious (Jewish) and political victims of Hitler in the country and

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<sup>186</sup> Haber, “Notes on Session with General Lucius D. Clay in Frankfurt,” 300.

<sup>187</sup> Michael Berkowitz, *The Crime of My Very Existence: Nazism and the Myth of Jewish Criminality*, The S. Mark Taper Foundation imprint in Jewish studies (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007). 146.

<sup>188</sup> Samuel Gringauz, “Our New German Policy and the DP’s: Why Immediate Resettlement is Imperative.,” *Commentary* 5(1948): 513.

<sup>189</sup> M. Bachmann, “License of the “Süddeutsche Zeitung,” in *Anti-Semitism* (Munich: BayHStA, 1948), 2.



that this money threatened to undermine the recently reestablished German economy. He then proceeded to argue that the Jews receiving this support earned their living through, “international business transactions.” Buchmann claimed that the author of this *Süddeutsche Zeitung* article ignored the fact that these Jews had been “deprived” of any chance to earn a regular legal living, could not find employment in Germany, and were often forced to trade on the black market like everyone else in the country.<sup>190</sup> Buchmann pointed out that Swiss bankers estimated an approximate 15 to 18 billion had been stolen from German Jews during the war, not to mention the billions upon billions stolen from Hungarian, Polish, French, Dutch, Romanian, and other European Jews.<sup>191</sup> Robbed of their possessions, transplanted to a new and hostile environment, unwilling to work for the Germans, and living in centers outside of city limits, these DPs were often unable to find legitimate work.

Germans were also influenced by claims that the American military did little to stop illicit activities and when arrested, Jewish criminals received preferential treatment, skirted the law, and got away with their illegal activities. One of the most significant contributing factors affecting anti-Semitism reported by the American military was the realization among Germans that the American idea of democracy allowed them freedom of speech.<sup>192</sup> This development led to the vocalization of long held feelings of hatred, resentment, and distrust that they could not have stated before because of laws against expressions of anti-Semitism, most notably Bavarian Law fourteen, article one, which stated that any expression of racial, religious or national hatred was illegal.<sup>193</sup> One of the German officials responding to a survey issued by Office of the

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<sup>190</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>192</sup> Report on anti-Semitism, June 30, 1948, BayHStA, 10/51-2/56.7, 1.

<sup>193</sup> Norbert Muhlen, *The Survivors: a Report on the Jews in Germany Today* (New York: Crowell, 1962). 110. A good illustration of the crackdown on vocalized anti-Semitism can be seen in a common Jewish joke in the late forties, “A Jew... was held up late one evening. Rather than surrender his wallet, he shouted: “Down with the Jews!”

Military Government, Bavaria (OMGB) stated that not only were old anti-Jewish feelings making their way to the surface, which would have happened eventually, but they were being helped along by decreased fear of the occupation authorities, the military's relaxing views on "ex-Nazis activities" and changes to de-nazification policies.<sup>194</sup> As the American forces loosened their control on Germany and worked to build a democratic state, they unknowingly created a new climate in which many Germans could express their anti-Semitism without the repercussions of the first four years of occupation.

Additional surveys from the time issued to the German leaders of the *Landkreis* around Munich in 1948 found that Germans in the area believed the up-surge in anti-Semitic sentiments was caused by the perception that 95 percent of the Jews living among them were "professional black dealers."<sup>195</sup> Because of their perceived success on the black-market, these Jews were argued to be living much better than the average German. They were also viewed as arrogant. These various explanations for increased anti-Semitism illustrate that no one cause could be pinpointed, but that the perception of Jewish involvement in crime was argued to be a leading contributor.

Writers for the German press also noted the resurgence of anti-Jewish feelings in the late 1940s; however, they cited different causes than OMGUS and German politicians. In an article published in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* in April 1948, Ernst Mueller-Meiningen Jr. reported that while all forms of anti-Semitism were objectionable, its causes were in fact brought on by the Jews themselves. He wrote, "Most of the displaced Jews do not adapt themselves to the

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Up with Hitler!" A few seconds later, radio cars screamed up, and policemen came running from all directions. The Jew and his assailant were taken to precinct headquarters."

"Which one of you two made that anti-Semitic remark?" Asked the grim desk sergeant.

"I did," the Jew cheerfully admitted. "If I had called 'Help! Thief!', This guy would have got away before any of your men showed up. I knew they would be there in no time if I shouted what I did."

<sup>194</sup> OMGB Report on anti-Semitism, June 30, 1948, BayHStA, 10/51-2/56.7, 1.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

miserable European picture. In addition they are being reproached, not without justification, for not working, living on black-marketeering; all this in the midst of and at the expense of a poverty stricken people.”<sup>196</sup> The press was filled with discussions about the up-surge in anti-Semitism, and the majority of the authors placed the blame for its reemergence back on the Jews. In an article on anti-Semitism in 1948, also published in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* one month later, the author cited the following factors for increased anti-Jewish expressions: “The presence of Jewish DPs in crowds, their strangeness, their partly displeasing conduct and the coincidence of all these circumstances with the misery of the German people.”<sup>197</sup> This author, like many other Germans and Americans, placed the onus of responsibility on the DPs themselves, claiming that their strange attire and behavior were to blame for the negative way in which they were treated by Germans.

Not all journalists argued that the Jews were criminals. In the article, *Germans and Jews*, published on January 10, 1948 in *Echo der Woche*, the author noted, “Among those who are involved in black-market operations and thus are profiteering from mass distress, the percentage of the Jews is not higher than that of the Germans and certainly not higher than that of the Poles and other expellees...”<sup>198</sup> This German author understood that public opinion grouped all DPs together as Jews and argued that they were the cause of German misfortune through their criminal activities.

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<sup>196</sup> “Anti-semitism,” by Ernst Mueller-Meiningen Jr, in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, April 17, 1948 (translated by OMGUS officials), BayHStA, 10/51-2/56.7, 1.

<sup>197</sup> “Anti-semitism-1948” in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, May 2, 1948 (translated by OMGUS officials), BayHStA, 10/51-2/567, 1.

<sup>198</sup> *Germans and Jews* by Erich Wollenberg, in *Echo der Woche* (translated by OMGUS officials), BayHStA, Jan. 10, 1948, 10/125-2/17.5, 1.

**The New Face of Old Anti-Semitic Stereotypes:**

Anti-Semitism was by no means the only German sentiment expressed toward the Jews in postwar Germany. Amazingly enough, Germany became the site where thousands of Germans who just a few years earlier had worked to erase any connection to Judaism began proclaiming their “hidden” Jewish heritage, and declarations of the benefits of a continued Jewish presence in Germany were publicly discussed. It is interesting that in a country previously argued to be *Judenrein*, where billboards had advertised that there was nothing beneficial about the Jew, Philosemitic comments and press began to make an appearance. According to Frank Stern, this Philosemitism helped Germans to argue that they had evolved beyond Nazi thinking, but it was in actuality just a new face put on existing anti-Semitic ideals.<sup>199</sup>

Little mention of the Jews was heard on the streets of Germany in the immediate postwar period, as fear that negative and anti-Semitic comments about the Jews would only result in detrimental consequences. Instead, Germans began espousing their link to Jewish friends or a long dead Jewish relative in order to distance themselves from Nazi rhetoric. Moses Moskowitz, an OMGUS official specializing in minority problems, recorded that several hundred Germans could be overheard discussing the Jews in their family tree in 1946.<sup>200</sup> Moskowitz noted that in Nazi Germany, "racial Aryanism was an integral part of the German's personality. Yet liberation came, and Jewish parentage was at once at a premium in Germany. One corpuscle of Jewish blood was highly prized, while former association with Jews were invoked as personal

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<sup>199</sup> According to Frank Stern, Philosemitism was considered a necessary, but missing, element needed in postwar Germany to bring about democracy. This argument was made by several American officials including General Clay, as will be discussed in the next chapter. For more on Philosemitism in postwar Germany please see Stern and Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism (Universitah ha-Ivrit bi-Yerushalayim), *The Whitewashing of the Yellow Badge* 264-326.

<sup>200</sup> Moses Moskowitz, "The Germans and the Jews: Postwar Report," *Commentary* 1/2(1946). First seen in Stern, *The Whitewashing of the Yellow Badge* 284.

recommendations."<sup>201</sup> For the first time in more than a decade, the Germans began to view contact with Jews as beneficial to their situation, and any trace of Jewish blood as a mark distinguishing themselves from “bad Germans.” Added to this, many Germans realized that American policy promoted the importance of German acceptance and integration of her Jews as a test of the citizens’ readiness to join the rest of the world’s democratic countries.<sup>202</sup>

This, however, would be impossible if the Jews residing in Germany decided to resettle elsewhere. Although the East European Jews were considered undesirable, German Jews were a sought after commodity in postwar Germany. A handful of German communities worked to remedy the wrongs done to their Jews during the Second World War by inviting Jewish émigrés to return to their former towns. This was the case with Kurt Schumacher, the head of the German Social Democratic party (SPD), who encouraged German-Jews to return to Germany in the postwar.<sup>203</sup> Schumacher was not alone in his efforts, and the mayor of Frankfurt am Main went as far as advertising in newspapers for the return of Frankfurt’s Jews and guaranteed the protection of all Jews living in the city. These attempts to lure the Jews back to Germany were not confined to any one zone as is evident from the case of Eisenach, in the Russian zone, where the city council returned to the Jewish community the land on which the former synagogue had stood.<sup>204</sup> The Holocaust and postwar period had, in a sense, transformed the image of German Jews in the eyes of non-Jewish Germans. The emphasis on defining these Jews had moved from their Jewish origins to their Germanness. These German Jews, whether in Germany or not, were the ones sought after to help rebuild Germany and act as the “right” Jews for the country. The

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<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

<sup>202</sup> This will be further discussed in the following chapter.

<sup>203</sup> Sapir, "Germany and Austria," 374.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

need for a continued Jewish presence in the country led many Germans to argue on behalf of the Jews, and anti-Semitic claims were turned on their heads, becoming Philosemitic rallying calls.

Statements about Jewish prowess in business, their penchant for money, and their ability to prosper even in the worst of times had, during Weimar and the Nazi era, been crime enough to target the Jews as enemies of the state. Still later it proved enough of an offense to strip them of their citizenship, confiscate their property, especially their businesses, and to remove the Jews from their homes. Theories about Jewish conspiracies to take over the world had allowed Hitler to rant that the Jew had to be wholly removed from German society, and the belief that the Jews were in fact running America as their puppet government had led to claims that the United States was in fact Germany's enemy long before the actual declaration of war was made. This all changed in the postwar period when all of the above mentioned "Jewish flaws" were touted as their greatest and most beneficial qualities; the ones that would help to save Germany.

Individuals from every echelon of German society expressed the belief that the Jews could somehow help rehabilitate Germany, both economically and politically. The editors of the *Jüdisches Gemeindeblatt* felt it necessary to question the various German parties, including the Social Democratic Party (SPD), Communist Party of Germany (KPD), and the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), about their stance on the Jews in one of its first editions released in 1946. They received generally positive responses, and the CDU stated that they were open to including Germany's Jewish citizens among their ranks, and "it is our hope that they will also place the millennia-old wisdom of their people in the service of the reconstruction of a better Germany."<sup>205</sup> Members of various Catholic and Christian churches argued that with the help of the Jews anti-Semitism could be eradicated in Germany. Professor Thieme, a Dr. of Theology, claimed, "Jews themselves should contribute more to trying to overcome anti-Semitism; this

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<sup>205</sup> Stern, *The Whitewashing of the Yellow Badge: Antisemitism and Philosemitism in Postwar Germany*, 292.

initiative which could be expected from ‘so intellectually advanced an elite as the Jews in Western Europe are.’”<sup>206</sup> These sentiments continued to pop up throughout Germany, and Dr. Baumgartner, the Bavarian Minister of Agriculture, stated during a speech given in 1947 that “We will never be able to get along without the Jews.”<sup>207</sup> According to Baumgartner, the Jew was a necessity in Germany, not only because of his business savvy, but also perhaps more importantly because of his perceived connections with other Jewish businessmen around the world, especially in the United States.

Perhaps one of the more interesting motivations behind the German drive to promote the value of maintaining Jewish life in Germany was the continued belief that the Jews were a major organized power, dictating the world economy and world opinion. An OMGUS study compiling various comments made by politicians regarding Jews illustrated that these *Realpolitiker* believed “that it was a tactical mistake to incur the enmity of ‘world Jewry’ and argued that German expressions of anti-Semitism would prove detrimental to the image of Germany held internationally.”<sup>208</sup> These sentiments were heard from people all over Germany and, interestingly, were also common among “reformed” Nazis. This was the case with Robert Ley, a Nazi tried in Nuremberg, who “even though a convert from anti-Semitism, thought that the Germans should now ally themselves with the Jews in order to obtain world power!”<sup>209</sup> This perception of Jewish world influence led many Germans to place a huge emphasis on the need to keep the few Jews remaining in Germany and even to invite those “good” Jews who had fled Nazi Germany to return.

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<sup>206</sup> Ibid., 331.

<sup>207</sup> New York Times, April 3, 1947, cited by Sapir in the American Jewish Year Book, vl. 49, 1947-1948.

<sup>208</sup> Stern, *The Whitewashing of the Yellow Badge: Antisemitism and Philosemitism in Postwar Germany*, 397.

<sup>209</sup> Branch, "Cause of Revival of Anti-Semitism," 3.

W.E. Süskind was one of the few Germans who argued that all the Jews in Germany, irrespective of their origin, should be encouraged to remain in the country. In his article, "The Jewish Question a Test," he claimed, it was the responsibility of all Germans to "give special consideration to the Jews and treat them with indulgence even if the individual Jew does not always encourage such an attitude."<sup>210</sup> He continued on to refer to the Jews as a "highly bred race" and to discuss their many beneficial attributes, all of which were a reversal of the negative stereotypes associated with these formerly anti-Semitic qualities. Süskind argued that the presence of a Jewish *minority* in Germany had enormous advantages because the Jews always, "contribute to the material and cultural life of any people intelligent enough to avoid the mass hysteria of anti-Semitism."<sup>211</sup> He continued on to say that the Jews should be kept in Germany if for no other reason than their first rate intellect and their strict individualism, which allowed them to resist mass movements like Fascism. According to Süskind, Germany had become poorer when she lost her Jews, and this poverty would only increase if the last of the Jews were again driven away.<sup>212</sup> Süskind was able to take the qualities deemed "worst" by the Nazis and turn them into a form of Philosemitism. In so doing, he just spoke of Jewish stereotypes, like Jewish intelligence, foreignness, and financial savvy and made them into characteristics that would be beneficial for the reestablishment of Germany.

Perhaps Kurt Schumacher best employed this new Philosemitism when he declared in 1949,

Antisemitism is ignorance about the great contributions made by German Jews to the German economy, German intellectual life, German culture and the struggle for German freedom and German democracy. The German people would be in better position today if it could have these forces of Jewish intellect and Jewish economic power in its ranks in building a new Germany.<sup>213</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> W.E. Süskind, "The Jewish Question, a Test? (Translated by OMGUS Officials from the Original German)," in *Anti-Semitism* (Munich: BayHStA, 1948), 2.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid.

<sup>213</sup> Stern, *The Whitewashing of the Yellow Badge: Antisemitism and Philosemitism in Postwar Germany*, 343.



The argument that without a Jewish presence Germany would be unable to rebuild into a powerhouse on the international stage, an economic leader, or a democratic force in Europe led many to proclaim the need to convince the Jews to stay in the country. The advantageous qualities of the Jews were mentioned in political speeches, religious sermons, and in the press. However, a closer examination of the comments made shows that these qualities were in fact the very same ones that had motivated the hatred in Nazi Germany and that these statements were often used tactically to convince the world that the Germans had moved beyond their Nazi past and had embraced the tenants of democracy.

#### **Ways of Combating Anti-Semitic Thinking in Germany**

The Americans worked to fight anti-Semitic thinking in postwar Germany. However, it was understood that no one venue could be employed to end anti-Semitism, as the causes were multifaceted. According to American authorities, the way to change the Germans' views was two-fold. First, the "Jewish problem" could most likely be solved by settling the Jews elsewhere. Second, the economic situation in Germany had to be resolved so that German morale would be bolstered.<sup>214</sup> These were long-term solutions. How then did the American military suggest lessening anti-Jewish feelings among Germans? The best solution provided by OMGUS in its report on anti-Semitism in Germany, prepared by the Research Branch in 1948, was: "Wherever possible, targets of prejudice (Jews in this case) should take measures to limit activities, (black-marketing, etc.) which aggravate feelings against them."<sup>215</sup> The American military also argued that, "The minority group should, in so far as possible, be encouraged to adapt itself to the predominant group, to respect its customs and traditions, to seek friendship and

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<sup>214</sup> Report on anti-Semitism in Germany prepared by the Research Branch, 1948, BayHStA,10/51-2/56.7, 6.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid.

cooperation.”<sup>216</sup> While many German people would have more than welcomed this solution, it was noted in this report that this goal was an unobtainable and ridiculous request for the great majority of Jewish Displaced Persons who had survived the Holocaust and were now living in a country that had perpetrated the murder of so many of their faith.

ICD argued that anti-Semitism reflected a “personality maladjustment” and that the only way to combat these negative associations toward Jews was to reorient “the individual in his intellectual and moral attitude toward his fellowman in general, toward his role in society and toward the situation of his country in the world.”<sup>217</sup> Added to this, the military needed to introduce a propagandistic as well as an educational campaign against expressions of hatred toward the Jews. This would entail an attack on the “misinformation” which led so many German to espouse anti-Semitism. Anti-Semitism had to be linked to condemned ideas like Nazism. Those individuals who were not yet “infected” by anti-Semitism, especially young people had to be educated about tolerance and acceptance.<sup>218</sup> Youths also needed to learn to cope with their own personal problems in an objective and rational way, while renouncing scapegoats, all of which were argued to have been lacking in those who clung to anti-Semitism.<sup>219</sup> Finally the German had to be taught to refrain from stereotyping and generalizations about groups when they disliked a few members. For ICD, the problem could not be solved by bettering the situation in Germany, but must be addressed through education. Material improvements would not guarantee a decrease in intolerance, as this thinking was too deeply ingrained in the minds of many Germans.<sup>220</sup> Therapy, reeducation, severe punishments for those who acted on their anti-Semitism, clear political statements about the occupation

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<sup>216</sup> Ibid.

<sup>217</sup> Branch, "Cause of Revival of Anti-Semitism," 1.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid.

authorities position against intolerance, and laws protecting individuals in minority groups were needed to effectively bring about an end to anti-Jewish feelings rampant in Germany.

#### **Conclusion**

While the political and economic system in Germany was transformed between 1947 and 1949 with the economic reform and the handover of limited power to the newly formed German semi-sovereign government, control over the country's displaced Jews remained fairly static. Discussions between OMGUS and the German government circled around the issues of Germany's Jewish DP population with talks about *Wiedergutmachung*, resettling the Jews outside of the camps, and the eventual hand over of their care to the Germans, but little changed. The Americans proceeded to care for the Jewish DPs in their zone, immigration continued to be a struggle, and still more than a hundred thousand Jewish DPs lingered in camps awaiting their resettlement with diminishing hope. Although the period after 1947 was a drastic improvement from the preceding two years in rations, hygiene, and general conditions affecting all of Germany, the Jewish DPs were still presented with a rather dismal view of their lives and their futures. The number of Jewish DPs emigrating abroad was very low even at the end of the 1940s. OMGUS reports estimated that no more than 30,000 Jews had left Germany by 1949. While this number would increase drastically by 1952, for many the process was long and drawn out.

For the DPs living in Germany, 1947 brought about drastic changes to their rationing and care. However, these improvements only led to their further segregation from the larger German population who viewed these survivors of the Holocaust as a "privileged" minority in the country. Resentment added to existing anti-Semitic ideas leftover from the war, led to the deterioration in relations between the Jewish DPs and the Germans. Additionally, the

involvement of a minority of Jewish DPs on the black market convinced many Germans and Americans that the Jews were working to undermine the German economy and newly formed semi-sovereign government.

The shifts in governmental control occurring after 1948 had long reaching affects on the displaced Jews in Germany. When combined with the ever-increasing anti-Semitism rooted in German thinking and the spreading belief held by many Germans and Americans in Jewish criminality, especially the black market, it is clear that everyone, including the DPs, wanted to close the DP era. Unfortunately, the DP period would stretch on for another eight years and with each passing year claims of inherent Jewish criminality grew. The gradual transfer of power to the Federal Republic from the Americans led to an increase in tensions and conflict between the Jews, Germans, and Americans. The Möhlstraße continued to be the main site of confrontation in Bavaria between these parties because it housed the majority of the offices of the international Jewish aid agencies, and, perhaps more importantly, because a number of Jewish merchants sold their goods on the thriving black market located there.

**Möhlstraße: A Case Study of Economic Competition, the Black Market, Money Laundering, and Other Illicit Activities.<sup>1</sup>**

While there were large scale black-markets throughout Germany, including those on Schlachtensee and Hermanplatz in Berlin as well as centers in Stuttgart, Frankfurt and the Soviet Zone, a focus on just Möhlstrasse in Bavaria illustrates the activities common in centers of illegal trade. As the main economic center of trade in Munich, Möhlstraße attracted everyone from housewives to businessmen. Contemporary American reports recorded that an estimated 85% of the buyers and sellers on Möhlstraße were Germans and the remainder consisted of Displaced Persons, Volksdeutsche, and other foreigners including American soldiers. Overall, Germany's displaced Jews constituted the lowest number of offenders, never exceeding 5% of the total participants active on this illegal trade. Despite the evidence, to the contrary certain stereotypes and discourses developed that argued the Jews were the principle contributors to the black market in Munich, and as such threatened the newly reestablished German economy. The association of the Jews and commerce in many German minds is illustrative of long-standing anti-Jewish ideas dating from the Middle Ages. The continuation of this belief in the postwar period led to increased and continued anti-Semitism associated with "Jewish criminality" common throughout southern Germany.<sup>2</sup> The continued strains of anti-Semitism held by many Germans can be found in numerous contemporary reports from the time and the responses issued shortly thereafter. This Anti-Semitism was expressed in articles dealing with issues of criminality and also in the letters sent to the American military government by the

*Landesverband des Bayerischen Einzelhandels* and the *Landesvereinigung des Bayerischen*

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<sup>1</sup> Parts of this sub-chapter originally appeared in an article by Kierra Crago-Schneider, "Antisemitism or Competing Interests? An Examination of German and American Perceptions of Jewish Displaced Persons Active on the Black Market in Munich's Möhlstraße," *Yad Vashem Studies* 38, no. 1 (2010), 167-194.

<sup>2</sup> For more information on the black-markets in Berlin and the Soviet Zone please see, Paul Steege, *Black Market, Cold War: Everyday Life in Berlin, 1946-1949* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), and Jonathan Zatlin's up coming work on Ignatz Bubis in Dresden and the economy in the east respectively.

*Lebensmittel-Großhandels* in the summer of 1949, which complained about DP involvement in illegal activities on Möhlstraße, most especially that of the Jews. These reports, articles, and letters help to illuminate several interconnected impediments to continuing Jewish life in Germany: resentment, anti-Semitism, and anti-competition, which led many Germans to call for the removal of Jewish Displaced Persons from the German economy in both legal and illegal trade. The authors of the letter from the *Landesverband des Bayerische Einzelhandels* and the *Landesvereinigung des Bayerischen Lebensmittel-Großhandels* presented their complaints in couched language, hinting at common ideas of Jewish predominance in crime in Germany. In so doing they were able to express their complaints about the competition created by Jewish involvement in trade in a way that was easily understood in postwar thinking and did not fall under the umbrella of anti-Semitism put forth under law number 8, article 1 which dealt with race hatred. The analysis of the calls put forth by these German businesses and the counter-arguments provided by the Office of the Military Government, Bavaria (OMGB) help scholars to truly grasp the postwar situation affecting the Jews residing in Germany and the anti-Semitism with which they were faced.

#### **A Short Explanation on the use of the term Anti-Semitism:**

The expression “anti-Semitism” is a rather new one developed in 1873 by Wilhelm Marr.<sup>3</sup> In its original use the term described a policy of racism against the Jews that argued that the intellect, morals, and behavior of any given individual were determined by their biology. This theory defined people by their “race” and claimed that the thinking and actions of world Jewry were predetermined by the shared genetic make-up of their ethnic group. Early proponents of anti-Semitism worked to discover verifiable differences between the Jews and

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<sup>3</sup> Gavin I. Langmuir, *Toward a Definition of Antisemitism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990). 311.

everyone else.<sup>4</sup> While the early theory of anti-Semitism was less concerned with the traditional religious distinctions between Jews and non-Jews cited by those expressing anti-Jewish feelings before the 1880s, these factors did play a role in anti-Semitism in its later manifestations.<sup>5</sup> As the idea of anti-Semitism became more rooted in 20 century thinking, pre-existing anti-Jewish attitudes from the Middle Ages to the modern period also became further ingrained in anti-Semitism.

The Nazis clung to the argument that Jews were biologically different and took the theory one step further by claiming that the Jewish race, while inferior to the Aryan race, threatened all races through blood contamination and inter-marriage.<sup>6</sup> Although science has proven that there is no such thing as distinct “races” and instead has found that biologically all humans are more closely related to one another than they are different, anti-Semitism has not disappeared. Instead, the meaning of the term has changed.<sup>7</sup> Historian Frank Stern claims, “The racial anti-Semitism leading to extermination had indeed been overcome, but only to be replaced by traditional and redefined anti-Jewish stereotypes.”<sup>8</sup> He continues on to say that not all Jews in Germany were targeted by the segments of the German population who continued to hold on to their anti-Semitism in the postwar period, but that the East European Jewish population, mainly DPs, became the new focus of these anti-Jewish sentiments.<sup>9</sup>

When used in this dissertation, anti-Semitism denotes irrational beliefs pertaining to the displaced Jews in Germany and their perceived genetic predisposition to criminality held by

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<sup>4</sup> Albert S. Lindemann and Richard S. Levy, *Antisemitism: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). 9.

<sup>5</sup> For more information on the study of anti-Jewish sentiments and anti-Semitism in Europe throughout history please see, Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 1st ed. (New York, : Harcourt Brace, 1951); Lindemann and Levy, *Antisemitism*; Shulamit Volkov, *Germans, Jews, and Antisemites: trials in emancipation* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Langmuir, *Toward a Definition of Antisemitism*.

<sup>6</sup> Langmuir, *Toward a Definition of Antisemitism*: 311.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Frank Stern, "The Historic Triangle: Occupiers, Germans, and Jews in Postwar Germany," *Tel Aviver Jahrbuch für deutsche Geschichte* 19(1990): 61.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

many Germans and Americans. Anti-Jewish arguments throughout history have often arisen because of the economic competition created by Jewish involvement in trade. Assertions of Jewish economic influence in Europe were common since the Middle Ages but again arose in the wake of the Shoah.<sup>10</sup> The belief that the Jews benefitted from their “international connections,” which allowed them to profit at the expense of honest hardworking non-Jews, has existed for centuries.<sup>11</sup> These long standing anti-Jewish ideas have been joined with modern beliefs, often gathered from misinterpreted scientific findings, to create modern day anti-Semitism.<sup>12</sup> However, when arguments of unscrupulous “foreign” Jews were combined with claims of Jewish inherent criminality as they were in postwar Germany, they led to accusations against the Jewish DP population asserting that they were the main participants in crime in the country. Germans and American soldiers found that they could express their existing anti-Semitism in terms of the competition created by the Jews, and the perceived unfair access that Germans and Americans believed the Jews had to hard to find items in the postwar. By stating that their concerns were not in fact anti-Semitic but rather based in Jewish involvement in crime, German shop owners were able to express their anti-Jewish sentiments under the guise of moral and legal concerns while citing some of the very same claims made by the Nazis. The following narrative works to document certain stereotypes and discourses that arose in the postwar period and to demonstrate that they were often based on information that was totally false. It then argues against these claims of Jewish over-involvement in crime through the use of evidence from the period showing that the Jews were actually the least involved group in all criminality in Germany. Even though

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>11</sup> Lindemann and Levy, *Antisemitism*: 252.

<sup>12</sup> Jacob Katz, "Misreading of Anti-Semitism," *Commentary* 76, no. 1 (1983): 39.



these beliefs had no basis in reality they led to increased expressions of anti-Semitism that affected German, Jewish, and American relations throughout the postwar period.<sup>13</sup>

**The Möhlstraße Situation:**

A larger number of retail stores of different business branches, but mainly provision stores, have been opened in the Möhlstraße...the owners of these stores belong to the group of 'Displaced Persons' of various nationalities. According to our ascertainments, however, these persons are predominantly of the Jewish denomination. In these stores everybody is being offered a large number of commodities, a great many of which are, on the normal market, subject to rationing or of foreign origin, respectively, and which could not yet have been imported through the officially authorized channels.<sup>14</sup>

Although the text appears superficially innocuous, a deeper reading, in conjunction with reports from the Office of the Military Government, Bavaria (OMGB) and press releases from 1948 and 1949 shows that the authors employed commonly used anti-Semitic language to point to Jewish Displaced Persons (DPs) housed in Bavaria as the main perpetrators of illegal activities on Möhlstraße. The report highlights Jewish involvement while ignoring the actions of several thousand Greek, Romanian, Baltic, Hungarian, Polish and other foreign nationals as well as Germans, who were also profiting from the sale of illegally acquired rationed goods sold to the highest bidder. These authors, who were also profiting from the illegal marketplace, recycled anti-Semitic ideas of Jewish criminality in an attempt to rid themselves of their main competitors.<sup>15</sup> In so doing, they chose to use language associated with German beliefs about the inherent nature of Jewish criminality, thereby further perpetrating anti-Semitism and reiterating anti-Jewish ideas regarding the inherent link between the Jews and the black-market. While many readers of this letter and hundreds of similar ones written and published in 1949 would

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<sup>13</sup> For more on these long standing beliefs in Jewish criminality, especially under the Nazis, see Michael Berkowitz, *The Crime of My Very Existence: Nazism and the Myth of Jewish Criminality*, The S. Mark Taper Foundation Imprint in Jewish Studies (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

<sup>14</sup> Letter from the Landesverband des Bayerischen Einzelhandels to Josef Müller, "Tolerated Blackmarket Transactions by Displaced Persons in Several Districts of Munich," June 20, 1949, (Munich: BayHStA, 1949), 13/142-3/9, 2. (Translated from the original German by American officials).

<sup>15</sup> Letter of the Office of the Military Government For Bavaria to the Landesverband des Bayer. Einzelhandels from July 7<sup>th</sup>, 1949, (Munich: BayHStA, 1949) 10/180-2/16.3, 1.

argue that the accusations were not anti-Semitic as such because they were true, they illustrate a new spin on pre-existing anti-Jewish ideas.

By the time the above letter was sent to OMGB a number of American soldiers who had arrived in Germany with their own anti-Semitic ideas and those who had contact with German “girlfriends” and friends, had begun to believe German claims of Jewish criminality. However, top officials like General Clay continued to be strong proponents of the Jewish DPs throughout their tours of duty. Clay acted as the Military Governor of the U.S. zone of occupation from 1947-1949 and publically argued against German claims that the Jews were criminals. Although allegations about Jewish criminality continued to plague the American government in Germany, many top American officials understood them to be a cloaked form of anti-Semitism. In an interview conducted in Frankfurt in 1949, a German reporter asked Clay about the black market allegations surrounding Jewish DPs, especially those associated with the thriving cigarette exchange in Europe. The reporter conducting the interview asked Clay if the policing and sentencing of Jewish DPs would be transferred to German authorities, to which Clay responded,

Displaced Persons will still be subject to Military Government court and Military Government jurisdiction. We shall continue to work with the German police, as we have in the past, and with our own people to do everything we can to stop black marketing everywhere. We certainly have no intention of removing the extra-territorial privileges now enjoyed by the Displaced Persons.<sup>16</sup>

He concluded by noting that the anti-Jewish sentiments held by so many Germans and often expressed by the press, especially the German reporter conducting the interview, were in fact the very reason that these DPs continued to be protected by the American authorities and separated from the German legal system.<sup>17</sup>

Already by the summer of 1949, newspapers had become a major hotbed for anti-Jewish opinions despite the fact that the American military wanted to use the press to bring democratic

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<sup>16</sup> Kurt R. Grossman, "Report on Germany," in *Displaced Jews in Germany* (New York: AJJDC, 1949), 6.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

ideas to the Germans and to spread the U.S. program.<sup>18</sup> Instead the media became the central place for, “the resurgence of Nazism and ultra nationalism.”<sup>19</sup> These sentiments were, “on the up-grade in Bavaria” and could be seen in newspapers throughout the country. According to the American official quoted above, “Such newspapers can be expected to be chauvinistic, rabble-rousing, anti-democratic, anti-Semitic, anti-DP, and anti-American, certain of doing incalculable damage [and] sabotaging democratic development in Germany”<sup>20</sup>

The role of the press as the central vehicle reporting the news to mass audiences in Germany and spreading ideals meant that any anti-Semitic rhetoric published in newsprint reached citizens living throughout the entire country. The use of newspapers to discuss major trends in German society is illustrated by the August 2, 1949 editorial written by Wilhelm Emmanuel Süskind, a German author and journalist, and published in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*.<sup>21</sup> Süskind’s article, “The Jewish Question a Test,” analyzed the current state of the “Jewish Question” in Germany in order to provide readers with a clear explanation of anti-Semitism in 1949. Süskind’s piece issued an intellectual response to General Clay’s claims that “the way in which Germany behaves towards the Jews” will act as the true “test of German democracy.”<sup>22</sup> In this article Süskind addressed some of the perceived problems often associated with the Jews remaining in the country, including claims that the Jews were profiting off of German misfortune and misery.<sup>23</sup> He wrote that the average man as well as the “well dressed” and educated leaders

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<sup>18</sup> OMGUS, "Special Reports of the Press Branch," in *Adolf Bleibtreu* (Munich: BayHStA, 1949), 3. (Translated from the original German by U.S. officials).

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> This editorial was published just two months after the letter sent to OMGB by the *Landesverband*.

<sup>22</sup> “The Jewish Question, A test” by Wilhelm Emanuel Süskind, in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, Aug 2, 1949, 10/125-2/17.5, (Munich: BayHStA, 1949) 1. (Translated from the original German by U.S. officials). In this article Süskind estimated that there were around 35,000 Jews in Germany in 1949. This number included both German-Jews and foreign-born Jewish Displaced Persons. Most recent studies, however, argue that the number was more likely closer to 15,000-20,000 in 1949.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

of Germany remain silent while “the whispering of average and mediocre intelligence has an open field.”<sup>24</sup> Süskind claimed that anti-Semites only sought “scape-goat[s]” for their own misfortune and their “well meant” sighs could be heard in every train compartment: “Oh, those from Feldafing, oh, the Möhlstraße and Oh, those Jews. Saying that, they light a Lucky Strike cigarette which they purchased (formerly black-market and expensive, now black-market and cheap) from the Jews.”<sup>25</sup> This statement acknowledged and accepted the claims that the Jews were the main sellers of rationed items like cigarettes on the thriving black market in Munich, but it also recognized that the same Germans condemning these practices were the ones participating in them through the purchase of said goods.

One of the published responses to this editorial argued that the Americans were willing to forgive everything that the Germans had done during the war except one and that was, “that we [Germany] have not gassed all of the Jews...” The letter writer, who signed his response, *Adolf Bleibtreu* (meaning “faithful to Adolf”), claimed that all Jews were “blood-suckers.” Normally he would tell them to go to America, but as one working for the American forces he knew that the United States did not want any of Europe’s Jews.<sup>26</sup>

The publication of the letter ignited a Jewish outcry against the author and the newspaper staff that had the audacity to publish such anti-Semitic statements in the wake of the murder of so many millions of Jews.<sup>27</sup> While there was a campaign to find the letter writer of this piece, the majority of the blame fell on the staff at the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. Upon learning of the publication of the Bleibtreu letter, many outraged Jewish Displaced Persons claimed that the newspaper’s staff was the contemporary replacement for the journalists on the notoriously anti-

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> “Letters to the editor,” in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, Aug, 1949, 10/125-2/17.5, (Munich: BayHStA, 1949) 1. (Translated from the original German by U.S. officials).

<sup>27</sup> For more on the Bleibtreu letter see Chapter 5.1, Freedom of Speech?

Semitic rag, “*der Stürmer*.”<sup>28</sup> An estimated 2,000 Jews took to the street and demonstrated against the publication of this anti-Jewish letter, resulting in the injury of three Jews and 38 Munich police officers.<sup>29</sup> After four years of “whispered” anti-Semitism, such verbal declarations against the Jews were shocking. However, when compared to the two letters published alongside the *Adolf Bleibtreu* rant, written by Germans “sympathetic” to the Jews in the country, one sees hints of “latent and accepted” anti-Semitic ideas.

In his letter Hans Günthert mentioned that he had many Jewish friends before the war and hoped, “not to be put again some day in the same pot with the anti-Semites” as he believed was happening due to claims of German collective guilt. Günthert wrote,

I know competent people in the Möhlstraße and I also know their practices. I do not resent these practices since all the less these people have undergone tremendous inconveniences, but I recognize and you must confirm it that in the long run this granting of privileges will bring forth results, which will revive anti-Semitism and certain individuals will take advantage of fostering and instigating such anti-Semitism.<sup>30</sup>

While he did not use the same language as the author of the *Adolf Bleibtreu* letter when associating the Jews with these illicit activities, he acknowledged the claims that the Jews were the main offenders when it came to illegal trade on Möhlstraße and stated that he condoned such practices because of the Jews’ “inconveniences” during the Shoah. However, he maintained that the continuation of Jewish involvement would only breed resentment and later lead to more anti-Semitism, squarely placing the blame for continued anti-Jewish feelings on the Jews themselves.

Interestingly, the other letter published alongside that of the *Adolf Bleibtreu* response was from Hans Lamm, a German-Jew who immigrated to the United States in 1938 and became an American citizen during his stay. Lamm returned to Germany in 1945 as a delegate of the

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<sup>28</sup> “The Süddeutsche Zeitung Declares” in the Süddeutsche Zeitung, Aug 11, 1949, 10/125-2/17.5, (Munich: BayHStA, 1949) 1. (Translated from the original German by U.S. officials). Der Stürmer was the major publication printing anti-Semitic rhetoric under the Nazis.

<sup>29</sup> Anthony Kauders, *Democratization and the Jews: Munich, 1945-1965*, Studies in antisemitism (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press for the Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism (SICSA), the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2004). 138.

<sup>30</sup> “Letters to the editor,” 1.

American Jewish Conference, worked with the American military as a translator at Nuremberg, and later acted as the president of the Jewish community in Munich from 1970-1985.<sup>31</sup> Lamm stated in his response that many Germans were willing to accept Jewish criminality on Möhlstraße because, “they believe with unshakable equanimity that Möhlstraße can make up for Auschwitz.”<sup>32</sup> He noted that nothing could erase the crimes of Auschwitz, not the bombing of Dresden or the crime of the Jews profiting in the shopping district in Munich, illustrating that claims of Jewish over-involvement on Möhlstraße affected the thinking of large portions of German society, including that of German-Jews. Historians have often overlooked these two responses because the *Adolf Bleibtreu* letter was so inflammatory. However, these letters illustrate that even the Germans, both non-Jewish and Jewish, who argued for a continued Jewish existence in Germany, were in fact influenced by the circulating anti-Semitic ideas that claimed Jews were the main perpetrators of non-violent crime on Möhlstraße. More importantly, these letters shows that a sizable portion of the society accepted the accusations as true.

#### **New Neighbors or just Nuisances?**

May 1949 marked three occurrences in Jewish History: the four year anniversary of the end of Nazi terror and murder, the one year anniversary of the creation of the State of Israel, and the re-establishment of a semi-sovereign German government that would gain control over all remaining displaced Jews in Germany in 1951. With the significance of these three events still fresh in the mind of world Jewry, it was equally surprising that May also marked another significant development in Jewish DP History: the integration of foreign Jews, mainly Displaced

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<sup>31</sup> For more information on Hans Lamm, please see, Andrea Sinn: *Und ich lebe wieder an der Isar. Exil und Rückkehr des Münchner Juden Hans Lamm*, (München, Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2008).

<sup>32</sup> “Letters to the editor,” 1.

Persons, into a Germany formerly argued to be “*Judenfrei*.”<sup>33</sup> It was almost universally accepted by non-German Jews that once a Jewish state was established all Jews remaining in Germany would depart en masse from the accursed soil of their enemies and rebuild their lives in the safety and security of the Jewish haven in the land “given by God.”<sup>34</sup> However, in May 1949, one year after the establishment of the State of Israel, some Jewish DPs chose to remain in Germany and to reestablish themselves among their former “enemy.” Additionally, not all of those who remained were infirm or too old to make a new start in the harsh war-torn country of their ancestors, but rather were young men and women who chose to stay for a variety of reasons including business and social attachments. Also counted among the Jewish remainder in 1949 were a handful of Jewish returnees from Israel who hoped to acquire visas to resettle elsewhere. Not only were there Jews living in Germany, but also synagogues were built, religious services were held, and the establishment of one representative voice for all Jews in Germany was actively being considered, resulting in the formation of the *Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland* (Central Council of Jews in Germany) in 1950.

The majority of Jews remaining in Bavaria continued to live in the last Jewish-only camps run by the International Refugee Organization (IRO), the successor of UNRRA. By 1949, only a few of these centers remained as the number of DPs dropped with the availability of visas to several South American countries as well as to the United States and the newly created State of Israel. Three major Jewish centers continued to operate in the idyllic mountain setting of Oberbayern: Föhrenwald, Feldafing and Landsberg, all just an hour train trip from Munich. Each

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<sup>33</sup> Jews living outside of Germany considered the voluntary integration of a small number of Jewish Displaced Persons into German society an outrage. This was not the case with the communities of German-Jews throughout the country. Some German-Jewish survivors and re-émigrés returned to Germany right after the war and quickly began reestablishing the Jewish community there. For more on this phenomena please see Andrea Sinn, *Public Voices. Jüdische Politik und Presse in der frühen Bundesrepublik* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013).

<sup>34</sup> M. Bachman, "Translation," in *Dispalced Persons in Germany* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1949), 3.

camp housed between two and four thousand Displaced Persons, had at least one store, and by the late 1940s an omnibus (taxi) service to the train station and into Munich.

The DPs residing in camps throughout Oberbayern often frequented downtown Munich to meet with the Jewish aid organizations housed there, enjoy entertainment, or conduct business. Whether living in a center in the countryside or in an apartment in downtown Munich, all non-German Jews in Germany were grouped together under the umbrella of Displaced Persons and were viewed as one cohesive group of foreigners. Both non-Jewish Germans and American forces perceived their presence as a nuisance, and they were often grouped together as criminals.

#### **Centers of Exchange, Centers of Meeting**

The area surrounding Möhlstraße provided the perfect space for several bureaucratic and aid organization offices. The centrality of the street within downtown Munich, combined with the fact that there were several unoccupied and relatively undamaged buildings on Möhlstraße and its surrounding, led to the area becoming a center for international administrative agencies. This was especially true for the Jewish aid organizations that had offices throughout Möhlstraße including those of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), The Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), and Obshestvo Remeslenofo zemledelcheskofo Truda (ORT). The concentration of these international aid organizations led to the congregation of several hundred Displaced Persons who came to the area seeking supplies and help on a daily basis. The Displaced Persons who visited the area brought with them supplies to trade with other DPs and local Germans. Within a short time Möhlstraße had evolved into a thriving center of “illegal” commerce. Initially a well-contained market, “confined in a fenced in yard of the Jewish community of Munich,” the limited space provided “proved inadequate to contain the growing numbers that the ‘trade’ attracted,” forcing people and commerce to “spill over onto



Möhlstraße.”<sup>35</sup> Soon the shopping center around Möhlstraße grew and flourished, quickly becoming the leading black market center in Bavaria with its merchants setting the prices for markets throughout the region.<sup>36</sup> The shops bordering the sidewalks of the Möhlstraße specialized in hard to find items, rationed goods that could be illegally purchased for cash, products smuggled in from abroad, and centers specializing in currency conversion.

In a contemporary study published in 1953, reporter Norbert Muhlen interviewed Germans living in both the east and west and analyzed the situation in Germany during the postwar period. His goal was to better understand the feelings and beliefs about the postwar held by Germans living in both sides of the divided country. In his chapter entitled *Jews, Germans and anti-Semitism*, Muhlen provided the reader with the perceptions of his German interviewees about the interactions between Jews and Germans while attempting to better understand international claims of renewed anti-Semitism among the German population. He noted that the Jews who did not leave the country once visas became available were still, “milling about the Möhlstraße” and sketched a picture of the area as it appeared in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

...a strange new settlement, a booming shack town such as those in the America of the gold-rush years. It w[as] now the shopping district, where almost everything was for sale. The stores were little different from the usual run of shops. Some of them consisted only of a table crudely set up on the street, with some merchandise spread out on it and the rest hidden in a cheap suitcase over which the owner stands guard. The next stage of economic progress was marked by an umbrella protecting goods and salesman, perhaps with a cart replacing more primitive table. The next shop would have a primitive booth around the table, giving the first hint of a real store. Then a display window was added, and often a small back room was finally built and the raw wood structure improved into a small concrete hut.<sup>37</sup>

Muhlen noted the hierarchy of exchange on the Möhlstraße. Indeed, photographs from this period show that stalls did in fact stand next to each other, some on the sidewalks, some in alleys, but more often than not, proprietors without even a table would sell their items from bags and suitcases that they carried down the streets while displaying their wares.

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<sup>35</sup> Harry Greenstein, "The Problem of Möhlstraße," in *Dispalced Jews in Germany* (New York: AJJDC, 1949), 117.

<sup>36</sup> William Hoffmann, "Möhlstraße Situation," in *Black Market* (Munich: BayHStA, 1949), 2.

<sup>37</sup> Muhlen, *The Return to Germany*: 161.

Möhlstraße was not the only black market center with a shantytown atmosphere, and the items being sold there could be found at similar markets throughout the American occupation zone of Germany. What distinguished Möhlstraße from other centers of trade was the fact that it was a known and fairly accepted center for the black market under American control.<sup>38</sup> Unlike other illegal centers of exchange in which black marketers sold their wares in dark allies and spoke in code, Möhlstraße and its adjacent streets housed stores packed with soldiers, Germans, and DPs trafficking in “PX cigarettes and chocolates and in currency, in full public view.”<sup>39</sup> The brazen nature of these black market transactions disgusted the Jewish aid workers whose offices were located on Möhlstraße. They found it, “grotesque, if not ugly, to see concentration camp survivors in the role of merchants in Germany.”<sup>40</sup> The issue was slightly more problematic for the Americans running the zone, as they viewed the activities on Möhlstraße as detrimental to their plan for Germany and they believed those illegally trading undermined American authority.<sup>41</sup> The fact that Möhlstraße was the “most conspicuous black market in the country” did not help the matter.<sup>42</sup>

By evolving and adapting to the new situation, Möhlstraße continued to thrive even after the currency reform of 1948 had solved many of the rationing and shortage problems, making several black market centers obsolete. Instead of the continued sale of hard to find goods at prices far exceeding those of normal markets, salesmen on Möhlstraße began to import merchandise while continuing to sell products acquired from aid organizations, occasionally

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<sup>38</sup> Over the course of the postwar period (from 1949-1951) there were really only a few large and significant raids directed at illegal trade on Möhlstraße.

<sup>39</sup> Greenstein, "The Problem of Möhlstraße," 117.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> George VW Pope, "Elimination of Black Market Activities by Individual Members of the Occupation Force," in *Americans and the Black Market* (Munich: BayHstA, 1948), 1.

<sup>42</sup> Greenstein, "The Problem of Möhlstraße," 117.

legally but more often illegally; they would then sell at a competitive reduced price.<sup>43</sup> The fact that the majority of these goods were illegally acquired, smuggled in or were intended for personal consumption, not resale, meant that those selling them did not pay sales taxes or import fees.<sup>44</sup> The products they were selling were also usually of a much higher quality than the goods that the average German was able to acquire through legal channels. Harry Greenstein, the last advisor on Jewish affairs to the United States Military Government, noted that “The stores range from temporary wooden shacks where religious items are sold, to first rate shops where bolts of cloth, silverware and leather goods may be bought at prices below the prevailing cost in the Germans shops.”<sup>45</sup> When paired with the depressed economic situation in the late 1940s, these lower prices on high quality goods drew many patrons away from “honestly run” stores, creating concern among those storeowners, as well as exacerbating feelings of resentment and anti-Semitism.

William S. Hoffmann, chief of the Liaison Section for the Military Government, investigated claims of black marketeering on Möhlstraße in the beginning of June 1949. He said, “...[I] drove up Möhlstraße once and inside of three blocks was twice approached by persons standing on the street asking in a loud voice if I wanted to change any money.”<sup>46</sup> He returned a day later to see if the situation would be any different if he walked the area instead of driving through it. He recorded,

In this one city block there were 13 small grocery stores each one displaying better than 50% of their items in American food stuffs such as coffee, chocolate, tea, cocoa, canned fruits and fruit

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<sup>43</sup> OMGB, "Memo to the Special Adviser to the Land Director, OMGB," in *Subj: Möhlstraße Situation* (Munich: BayHStA, 1949), 1.

<sup>44</sup> Letter of the Office of the Military Government For Bavaria to the Landesverband des Bayer. Einzelhandels, July 7, 1949, 10/180-2/16.3, (Munich: BayHStA, 1949) 1.

<sup>45</sup> Greenstein, "The Problem of Möhlstraße," 117.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

juice, canned nuts, etc. I was also approached by 7 different persons waving packages of cigarettes openly to sell.<sup>47</sup>

These two eyewitness accounts by Muhlen and Hoffmann, one a former German and the other an American official, portray Möhlstraße as a booming center for business and illegal activities. The fact that the sale of these goods constituted a crime was not lost on anyone observing or involved, and Harry Greenstein noted “the stores are pretty well stocked with items which come from American Post Exchange sources. It is of course prohibited to traffic in these items.”<sup>48</sup> Additionally, the PX goods could only be acquired by U.S. military soldiers, implicating them as participants on the black market. Muhlen referred to the commercial center as the “Jewish Möhlstraße” because he argued that most of the sellers there were Jews.<sup>49</sup> Those retailers on Möhlstraße who were not Jewish were, Muhlen claimed, DPs. He recorded that the Americans allowed the Displaced Persons throughout the zone to do as they liked, which led to the DP’s becoming, “in a real sense, the black market.”<sup>50</sup>

While it is true that a small portion of black marketeers active on Möhlstraße were Displaced Persons and that a large portion of those DPs happened to be east European Jews, there were several stores owned and operated by German proprietors who also skirted the law in an attempt to make a substantial profit. These German shops were located alongside their DP competitors and sold the same illegally acquired goods as did their neighbors. German proprietors sold, “meat, fat, whipped cream, white bread, fancy pastries and other scarce rationed food items” in their restaurants, and German stores sold coffee and tins of American beef without

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<sup>47</sup> Memo to the Special Adviser to the Land Director, OMGB, Subj: Möhlstraße Situation, June 14, 1949, 13/142-3/9, (Munich: BayHStA, 1949) 1.

<sup>48</sup> Greenstein, "The Problem of Möhlstraße," 117.

<sup>49</sup> Norbert Muhlen, *The Return of Germany: A Tale of Two Countries* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1952). 161.

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

ration coupons.<sup>51</sup> Added to this, most of the clients shopping in the stores located on Möhlstraße were German, leading one to question why the German police did not do more to stop this illegal trade.

However, this German involvement in the black market has been overlooked until just recently. In his report Hoffmann noted that the perception held by Germans throughout the area that the majority of perpetrators were Jewish DPs was common for the time. According to Greenstein the proximity of the stores at the, “doorstep of the Jewish organizations makes the spectacle infinitely worse,” because there was no way these shops could or would be viewed as anything but illegally run Jewish businesses despite the fact that there were also shops operated by non-Jewish DPs and German stores on Möhlstraße.<sup>52</sup>

This phenomenon is interesting when one notes three important facts. First, according to U.S. military reports the black market in Germany was just as active under the Nazis as it was in 1945, illustrating that it was not in fact the Jews who created it as was so often claimed.<sup>53</sup> Second, Jewish Displaced Persons in Germany only constituted five percent of Germany’s criminals in 1946 and 1947. A further ten percent of the country’s illegal offenders were non-Jewish DPs, and the remaining 85 percent was comprised of Germans.<sup>54</sup> These numbers actually dropped in later years with Displaced Persons in Germany constituting 3.3% of all criminal activities in the country including the black market in 1948.<sup>55</sup> Of the total number of people

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid,

<sup>52</sup> Greenstein, "The Problem of Möhlstraße," 1.

<sup>53</sup> Report: Reasons for promulgating notice prohibiting certain activities connected with Black-market, Aug. 4, 1945, 9/17-2/16, (Munich: BayHStA, 1949) 1 and Berkowitz, *The Crime of My Very Existence*: 208.. American army reports from 1945 noted that the black-market in Germany was a product of the Wehrmacht.

<sup>54</sup> Quarterly and Annual Historical Report, July 1946-June 1947, 1 0/78-3/3, 39 (Wolfratshausen: Stadtarchiv Wolfratshausen, 1947) 1.

<sup>55</sup> Laura Hilton, "The Struggle to Re-establish Law and Order: An Examination of the Participation of Displaced Persons in Economic Crimes in Postwar Germany," in *German Studies Association* (San Diego 2007), 7.

arrested for participating on the black market during that year only 1.5% were Jews.<sup>56</sup> Chaplain Mayer Abramowitz did note that this number increased to an estimated 3% in 1949, but Jews were still the smallest group of participants on the black market in Germany.<sup>57</sup> Additionally, the overall criminal records of Jewish DPs in Germany were considered the best by the American occupation authorities.<sup>58</sup> Jews rarely committed violent crimes in Germany and were noted to “participate in the black market only as petty intermediaries-...the Jews played the smallest role of all [participants].”<sup>59</sup> While the United States High Commissioners office in Germany (USHCG) no longer kept statistics after 1949, it is hard to imagine that the numbers changed so drastically in the following years as to result in the Jews having become the sole proprietors and clients of the black market. Finally, the majority of clients shopping in German black markets throughout the country were Germans, and the situation on Möhlstraße was no different. Sixty percent of the clientele on Möhlstraße in 1949 were estimated to be local Bavarians and the remainder consisted of Displaced Persons and Americans.<sup>60</sup> When these three facts are considered together it makes it almost impossible to understand how the Jews were viewed as the principle offenders in Munich. However, this was the "reality" as perceived by many Germans throughout the area.

#### **Necessity or a Return to Nazi Habits? The 1949 Raid on the Möhlstraße.**

There is no denying that the commerce on Möhlstraße caused the American government in Germany and the newly formed German semi-sovereign government a great deal of stress.

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<sup>56</sup> OMGUS reports from the mid to late 1940s noted that Jews were very rarely involved in violent crimes such as assault or murder. *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>57</sup> “The Present State of the DPs” by Mayer Abramowitz to the 5 agencies, [March 1948] item 96, box 2, Philip S. Bernstein archive (PSB), as cited by Berkowitz, *The Crime of My Very Existence*; Samuel Gringauz, “Our New German Policy and the DP’s: Why Immediate Resettlement is Imperative” *Commentary* 5, no. 6 (1948): 2.

<sup>58</sup> Gringauz, “Our New German Policy and the DP’s,” 510.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> Letter from the Landesverband des Bayerischen Einzelhandels to Josef Müller, “Tolerated Blackmarket Transactions by Displaced Persons in Several Districts of Munich,” June 20, 1949, 13/142-3/9; (Munich: BayHStA, 1949), 3. Translated from the original German by U.S. officials.

Additionally, the fact that the operators ran “the biggest money exchange business...in the Munich area” created innumerable problems as these two administrations worked to create a functioning democratic ally in Germany.<sup>61</sup> Both the American and German governments were committed to fighting corruption and the government officials could not continue to turn a blind eye to the activities on Möhlstraße.<sup>62</sup> After months of deliberation, the Military Government in conjunction with the German police agreed that a raid must be conducted against the criminals on Möhlstraße. They then notified the Central Committee of Liberated Jews in Germany of the up-coming raid as a measure of good faith. The Central Committee in turn alerted the displaced Jews throughout the area of the scheduled search. Interestingly, for many of the German police who conducted the Möhlstraße raid, the word criminal was synonymous to the word Jew and it was mainly the Jewish sellers and customers who were targeted. The subsequent raid played on many Jewish survivors’ darkest fears by creating a situation reminiscent of their Holocaust experiences.

Unlike a traditional raid that is carried out without warning, the Möhlstraße raid was “publicized in the Jewish newspaper,” and urged Jewish DPs to leave the area before the search for criminals began.<sup>63</sup> The placement of the ad in Jewish newspapers reflected the belief shared by many individuals throughout Bavaria that Jews mainly perpetrated crime on Möhlstraße. The advertisement for the raid ran ten days before the action was actually taken. According to Greenstein’s prediction, the raid, “will not be an expression of anti-Semitism,” but a straightforward search and arrest of all individuals involved in criminal activities on

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<sup>61</sup> Hoffmann, "Möhlstraße Situation," 2.

<sup>62</sup> The July raid was not the first time that an organized search had taken place in the Möhlstraße area. Two other raids had been carried out in June 1949 and had targeted the Café Mandelbaum, the Picadilly and Bristol Café, all known centers for illegal currency exchange. Ibid., 2.

<sup>63</sup> Theodore Feder, "Möhlstraße Raid," in *Displaced Jews in Germany* (New York: AJJDC, 1949), 1.

Möhlstraße.<sup>64</sup> This having been said, the German participants in illegal trade were largely overlooked during the actual raid. While the American Military Government argued that since the area was located on German streets, German police should conduct the raid, Greenstein and the Central Committee fought for at least the presence of American military police (MPs) at the scene. They believed that these American MPs could help control the German police and would ease the fears of the non-Germans on the scene. Although limited American MPs were dispatched, the use of several hundred uniformed and armed German officers did nothing to stop the spread of fear among the Jewish DPs, especially those who had lived through similarly executed actions under the Nazis

Despite these forewarnings and assurances, the raid turned into an event “reminiscent of Ghetto days.”<sup>65</sup> According to witnesses, the tension on Möhlstraße was palpable and Germans were again seen beating Jews. However, the morning, and the raid itself had not begun violently. Theodore Feder, a Joint official working at the JDC offices on Möhlstraße began his day without incident, but by mid-morning this had all changed. Feder was notified that German police had stopped his cashier as he attempted to make his way to Schleissheim. Feder was able to ensure the release of his cashier, but during his walk to and from the office he experienced a horrifying scene: “The sight that I beheld, I am sure was reminiscent of the scenes that met our Jews in Germany during the Hitler regime.”<sup>66</sup>

At 9:30 AM on July 1, 1949, an estimated 300 uniformed and armed German police entered Möhlstraße and the surrounding streets, closing off all traffic in and out of the district. Everyone contained within the cordoned off area was stopped, searched, questioned, and

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<sup>64</sup> Greenstein, "The Problem of Möhlstraße," 118.

<sup>65</sup> Feder, "Möhlstraße Raid," 2.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.



identified, and a band of roving mounted police monitored the crowd.<sup>67</sup> While Feder recorded that the Germans used physical restraint he believed they were “over-zealous in pushing people around when they did get the opportunity.”<sup>68</sup> While the German police may have acted with physical self-control they were not able to suppress their delight and “It was humiliating as a Jew to see once again a German laughing at a little bearded Jew who scurried across the road.”<sup>69</sup>

Feder noted that the police had been instructed to clear the sidewalks, but they could not disperse the dozens of Jewish workers whose offices were located in the area. As he walked through the crowd, Feder saw the looks of terror on the faces of the friends and workers he had known for years. He pointed out that these people, “were not black-marketers,” and thus had nothing to fear. However, the scene was so similar to the actions of the Nazi period that it struck terror in those who had first hand experience with the brutality of the Third Reich. The Jews did not stand idly by but hurled taunts at the German police calling them, “SS-killer, Hitler lover, [and] Gestapo,” and a few [Germans] were even beaten up by Jews at the scene.<sup>70</sup> Many of the aid workers observing the chaos of the raid commented that there would be real bloodshed if these activities continued. Finally, after four hours the police were withdrawn and the raid came to an end.<sup>71</sup>

Joint staff members argued that the Germans should never have arranged the raid to specifically target Jews but rather should have conducted a thorough raid against all black marketers, including the Germans active in the area.<sup>72</sup> Amazingly enough the raid did not deter those trading on Möhlstraße and within an hour many of the shops were again open and

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>71</sup> This group violence against Germans in uniform was not new in the postwar period. Just two months before, two German police officers notified CID that they had been attacked by 150 DPs as they attempted to arrest a Displaced Person who had committed a crime. Hoffmann, “Möhlstraße Situation,” 3.

<sup>72</sup> Feder, “Möhlstraße Raid.”

displaying PX and other illegally acquired goods. The streets were teeming with German shoppers and Feder had “never seen so many Germans in the area before.”<sup>73</sup> While no one in an official position was pleased to “see our Jews selling to Germans...it was certainly a sign of the resiliency of our Jews, to see them come out of the terrific raid and doing business as usual.”<sup>74</sup>

**Anti-Competition or Anti-Semitism: German calls for restrictions on Jewish trade.**

On June 20, 1949 the *Landesverband des Bayerischen Einzelhandels*, along with the *Landesvereinigung des Bayerischen Lebensmittel-Großhandels*, wrote and submitted a letter to State Minister Dr. Josef Müller at the Bavarian State Ministry of Justice complaining about unfair economic competition on Möhlstraße in downtown Munich. The members of the two organizations had placed similar complaints with several other German and American offices to no avail. They claimed that the DP business owners, mainly Jews, selling on Möhlstraße were able to traffic rationed, stolen, and illegal goods under the supervision of “German executive organs.”<sup>75</sup> It is true that Displaced Persons in Germany received supplies from the International Refugee Organization as well as several international aid groups, which often provided them with surplus rations that they could sell. However, it must be remembered that the German community also had access to agricultural foodstuffs that the Jews did not. Additionally, the German sellers on Möhlstraße were able to acquire many of the same items sold by Jewish retailers through their own “distributors” resulting in the sale of similar goods by Jewish and German shop owners. Despite this, the letter writers claimed that the DP retailers, especially Jews on Möhlstraße were the only ones illegally selling these resources. The letter continued on to say that these officials took no steps to curb the illegal commercial activities but rather helped them to flow smoothly.

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>75</sup> Letter from the Landesverband des Bayer. Einzelhandels, 1.

Members of both parties noted that they had no complaints about these activities occurring internally among DPs, as it did not affect the German market. They argued, “As long as these transactions were only carried on among Displaced Persons, no material prejudice to the German market made itself felt.”<sup>76</sup> However, this changed when DP retail stores began attracting German clients, thereby drawing them away from German stores. According to these German retailers, the DP storeowners acquired their goods through illegal channels by ordering retail from unsanctioned foreign importers and through “gift parcels” from foreign aid organizations and relatives abroad. Jewish Displaced Persons were “not subject to price supervision,” duty fees, customs, rationing laws, or taxes because they had acquired merchandise through such channels. Their goods were also usually of a better quality than those sold by German retailers and sold for less than German market prices.<sup>77</sup>

The members of the *Landesverband des Bayerischen Einzelhandels*, along with the *Landesvereinigung des Bayerischen Lebensmittel-Großhandels*, contacted several other state organizations before turning to the State Minister. These included the “Ministry of Food, Economics and Justice, the Customs Authority, the Delegate General of Racial Persecutees, the District Financial Office, the Food and Economics Section of the City of Munich, the Price Supervision Office, the Municipal trade Office and the Police Headquarters of Munich.” All of the above responded, “that any effective action on the part of the German authorities could be taken only under the greatest difficulties.”<sup>78</sup> With no solution in sight, these two businesses finally turned to the State Minister noting that if no measures were taken, “economic morals...will more and more deteriorate and the German businessmen will, for reasons of self-

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> OMGB, "Memo to the Special Adviser to the Land Director, OMGB," 1.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid

preservation, find themselves compelled to adopt similar methods” to those employed by the DPs, as they were, “faced with a competition that [was] entirely beyond them.”<sup>79</sup>

The letter ended with a statement declaring that their efforts to-date had illustrated that all of the other German organizations were ineffective in cracking down on the criminal activities rampant on Möhlstraße. They suggested, as had so many other German officials, that, “the German authorities can only bring into effect the powers at their disposal if by an appropriate ordinance of Military Government the Displaced Person will be placed under German Law.”<sup>80</sup> This request that legal jurisdiction over all Displaced Persons in Germany be turned over to the German authorities was prompted by their belief that the Division of Military Justice seemed to be “benevolently tolerating this state of affairs.”<sup>81</sup> The continued extralegal status of the Jewish Displaced Persons upset members of both the German population and the fledgling Federal Republic. Many individuals in Germany viewed the extraterritorial nature of the Jewish DP centers and their total separation from the German legal system as a threat to the New Western German government. The letter writers argued that only by gaining control of the jurisdiction over the Jewish DPs could they apprehend the guilty parties and bring about an end to the criminality plaguing Germany.

This letter implied by omission that German shop owners sold their items through legally sanctioned channels, acquiring their goods from approved wholesalers, paying import fees on all foreign goods sold, working within the rationing system, and paying domestic taxes. The Bavarian Retailer Trade Organization and Wholesale Trade argued that the reason that these DPs were able to continue with their activities was because the American Military Government

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 2.

tolerated their illegal economic exchanges.<sup>82</sup> According to these two organizations, the German authorities had no real control over what was happening in Germany when it came to Displaced Persons living among them. They claimed that if control over all Displaced Persons in the country were transferred to German authority, they would arrest and try Jewish criminals to the fullest extent, taking care of a major problem in Germany and an obstacle blocking economic recovery. They also argued that if the United States High Commissioner to Germany (USHCG) put an end to rationing they would be able to trade on a free market and could profit while helping the economy.

This might have been the only side of the story available to researchers had the Americans, Germans, and Jewish organizations not kept such complete records. Dr. Josef Müller's response was not preserved, but we do have the American response issued by the Office of Military Government for Bavaria Food, Agriculture, and Forestry Division. As mentioned above these organizations sent several copies of the same letter to various branches of the German and American authorities throughout the zone in the hope of receiving some sympathetic response and eventual action. Instead of agreeing with the claims made by the letter writers, the response sent to the *Landesverband des Bayerischen Einzelhandels* on July 7, 1949 countered their arguments. Will Muller, the chief of the Food Processing and Distribution Branch, stated that while the situation on Möhlstraße was "deplorable" the authors neglected to mention the "large scale black marketing of rationed food items by the German shop keepers."<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> "It has been argued that the black market flourishes in the camps only because the DP police do not enforce the regulations." German officials argued that they could not stop the black market outside of the DP centers without arresting those who used the camps as a refuge against arrest. The Bavarian Deputy Minister President told reporters at a February 18, 1948 press conference that German police had been forced to end pursuit of known criminals 520 times over the course of December to February because these individuals were DPs who sought asylum within camp gates. Dr. William Haber, "Notes on Session with General Lucius D. Clay in Frankfurt," in *Jewish Displaced Persons* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1948), 4.

<sup>83</sup> Letter of the Office of the Military Government For Bavaria to the Landesverband des Bayer. Einzelhandels from July 7<sup>th</sup>, 1949, 10/180-2/16.3, (Munich: BayHStA, 1949) 1. (Translated from the original German by U.S. officials).

Not only should Displaced Persons follow food-rationing statutes, but it was also the responsibility of German storeowners to do the same. Without the combined efforts of all those living in Germany, the economy would never fully recover. The continued sale of rationed meals for cash in German restaurants, hotels, and shops undermined American efforts to provide goods like meat, fat, bread, and other rationed supplies to those most in need, mainly the lower class.<sup>84</sup> Muller pointed out that the reason that rationing continued in 1949 was because the poor were hurt by the black market activities rampant throughout the country. He stated that, “many workers purchase rationed food on the black market, although none of them can afford to, and none should be required to make such purchases.”<sup>85</sup> However, because the majority of food in Bavaria was sold on the black market, there were not enough rationed goods to be bought with coupons, thereby forcing the poor to take what little money they had to illegally buy the supplies they needed to survive.<sup>86</sup> It was clear that even in late 1949 German resources continued to fail to feed the masses.

The official American reply to German cries for further control over Displaced Persons was met with the same response as had every other similar request received. Muller pointed out in his letter that the Bavarian government had, “all the power it needs to maintain rations and price controls for shops in Bavaria whether they are operated by Germans or by Displaced Persons outside of camps.”<sup>87</sup> He noted that the Bavarian government did not need an extension of power to stop criminality on Möhlstraße because they could do so at any time. However, he

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<sup>84</sup> Report: Failure of BMFAF to Enforce Ration Controls, June 7, 1949, 5/379-2/3.10, (Munich: BayHStA, 1949) 1.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>86</sup> Letter of the Office of the Military Government, 1.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

believed, as did many other American officials, that German police turned a blind eye to these activities because they were receiving bribes from storeowners.<sup>88</sup>

It is clear that the situation on the Möhlstraße was not as simple as it was argued to be by the *Landesverband des Bayerischen Einzelhandels*. The writers knowingly made accusations against their Jewish competitors without mentioning the illegal practices of fellow German shopkeepers. More than this, these accusations extended beyond the Jewish store-owner on Möhlstraße to condemn American government policy while ignoring the inactivity of the Bavarian authorities in charge of policing the area. In the end all blame fell on the DPs, most notably the Jews, who like all other DPs and Germans, continued to profit through illegal exchange in downtown Munich.

#### **Conclusion**

By 1949 anti-Semitism was such a big problem throughout Germany that the leaders of the American, British, and French zones regularly corresponded about possible solutions. Fear for the continued security, safety, and peace of the remaining Jews in Germany led these individuals to exchange reports on anti-Semitic incidents in their respective zones in order to check for similarities. The Western Allies in Germany found that anti-Semitism was a problem throughout all three zones, and it had caused increased feelings of apprehension about the removal of the Allied forces from the country. These concerns were heightened in the American occupation zone of Bavaria where an estimated 19,992 Jews continued to live, with the country's largest concentration of Jews, 4,111, residing in Munich.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Many Germans argued that when the German police did arrest Jewish criminals they were promptly released or their cases were dismissed when a rabbi or Army Chaplain became involved and claimed the possessions of the DP had in fact been legally acquired. Report on the Möhlstraße Situation, June 14, 1949, 13/142-3/9, (Munich: BayHStA, 1949) 2.

<sup>89</sup> Wetzel. J. *Jüdisches Leben in München, 1945-1951: Durchgangsstation oder Wiederaufbau?* (Munich, Kommissionsverlag Uni-Druck, 1987), notes.

For many Germans living in postwar Bavaria, the term Jew was synonymous with criminal. This claim had existed in some form for hundreds of years, but it was Nazi efforts that spread these accusations transforming them into truths. No modern historian would claim that the Jews in Germany were not at least partially culpable when it came to criminality in the postwar. However, the materials collected from the late 1940s do not support German claims of Jewish predominance in these activities. Criminal actions were present in Jewish and German populations alike.

Reports written by employees of the Jewish aid organizations, the American military, and UN workers illustrated that the black market was a continuing problem blocking the way to German recovery and economic security. They also noted that while the Jews were involved in the black market, they were not the only players in illegal trade in Bavaria and were in fact not even the main participants. Instead, the Jews, like almost all individuals living in Germany in the postwar period, had initially become involved in the black market as a means of survival. Similar to so many other Displaced Persons and Germans, the Jews remained active participants on the black market as the years progressed and the market changed as a means to prosper and to acquire the funds they would need to rebuild their shattered lives. The black market on Möhlstraße was not an enterprise established by Jews after May 1945, but rather was a product of the Nazis during the war, a period when Germany was argued to have been “*Judenfrei*.”<sup>90</sup> Despite claims to the contrary, Jewish criminals were arrested and tried by the American military court and as Muller noted the Bavarian authorities possessed the power to significantly reduce, if not stop, these activities.

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<sup>90</sup> OMGUS, "Reasons for promulgating notice prohibiting certain activities connected with Black-Marketing," in *Black Market* (Munich: BayHStA, 1945), 1.



The authors of the letter from the *Landesverband des Bayerischen Einzelhandels* and the *Landesvereinigung des Bayerischen Lebensmittel-Großhandels* exploited the common and accepted belief in Jewish criminality by employing language that any German reader and any American officer familiar with the situation in the zone could understand. They attempted to single their Jewish competitors out and to claim that they were the main perpetrators of crime in the country. By portraying themselves as victims, these Germans attempted to deflect the blame away from their own involvement in crime in an effort to squash their competition. They used “accepted” anti-Semitic language to illustrate that the Jews were the true perpetrators of crime in the country and hoped that by using this anti-Jewish language they would be able to wipe out their main competition in Germany. Unfortunately for them, their anti-Semitic claims proved unfounded when it was also discovered that German storekeepers and restaurant and hotel owners, were just as active in the black market, selling goods illegally. Their claims of Jewish over-involvement in crime were proven false when they learned that the German officials, the same ones they had argued had no authority over Displaced Persons, did in fact have the power to stop these activities but were said, by the American Military Government to ignore these exchanges because they felt the criminals were not punished severely enough and because they received bribes from many of the shopkeepers on Möhlstraße.<sup>91</sup>

These German shop owners looked to a familiar scapegoat. They hoped that claims of Jewish criminality might save their businesses in a failing economy, and they played on the longstanding German perceptions of the Jews living in the country as a means to their end. The use of this anti-Semitic language in the press and in letters to the government resulted in the spread and further acceptance of these claims and increased anti-Semitism in Bavaria. The steadily growing anti-Semitism gained more and more influence over German and American

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<sup>91</sup> Report on the Möhlstraße Situation, June 14, 1949, 10/84-1/41, (Munich: BayHStA, 1949) 2.

thinking as the postwar period continued. The up-surge in anti-Jewish sentiments in Germany led many Jews around the world to question the safety of the Jewish DPs if their temporary stay did not soon come to an end. While the German storeowners cited illegal trade as the cause for Germany's continued suffering, they did not understand that the only way to stop Germany's black market was the rebirth of a fully functioning economy, which would take more than a decade to achieve.

PART II:

SHOULD THEY STAY  
OR BE FORCED TO GO?  
DEBATES ABOUT THE FUTURE  
OF DP LIFE IN GERMANY,  
1948-1957

IV.  
NO FUTURE IN GERMANY?  
AMERICAN-JEWISH CALLS FOR THE  
IMMEDIATE EMIGRATION OF GERMANY'S DPs

The end of the 1940s brought with it a renewed effort among Jewish DPs to ensure that their demands for immediate emigration were heard. Simultaneously, the Jewish aid organizations were embroiled in impassioned debates about the future presence of the Jewish Displaced Persons in Germany. The calls for the resettlement of Germany's Jews abroad took on a new urgency after the creation of the state of Israel. Several members of the international Jewish aid organizations feared that if the Jewish DPs were not removed from Germany, anti-Semitism would only continue to grow. These anti-Jewish sentiments would increase and spread and violent anti-Semitism would again take hold in the country. These aid workers believed that the Jews who remained would face their "eventual destruction."<sup>1</sup> While not all of world Jewry felt that the DP situation was so dire, they almost unanimously agreed that there was no permanent future for the Jews in Germany.<sup>2</sup> Abraham Klausner was one of the more extreme believers in the certain destruction of Germany's displaced Jews if they were not immediately resettled. He argued "the Jew must be evacuated from Germany. Continuation of the present system will only hasten his doom."<sup>3</sup> Working on the belief that everyday spent in the Jewish DP centers in Germany brought the DPs one day closer to their own "demoralization," Klausner wrote and submitted an unsolicited report to the "American Jewish Congress" calling for the immediate, and if need be forceful evacuation of Germany's remaining Jewish DPs.<sup>4</sup> Klausner's

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<sup>1</sup> Abraham J. Klausner, *A Letter to My Children: From the Edge of the Holocaust* (Berkeley, CA: Judah L. Magnes Museum, 2002). 162.

<sup>2</sup> Atina Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007). 254.

<sup>3</sup> Klausner, *A Letter to My Children*: 164.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

#### IV. No Future in Germany?

letter, and the responses to it from the “Major Jewish Welfare Organizations,” provide scholars with a clear view of the perceptions held by international Jewish aid workers concerning their Jewish brethren in Germany. The debate that ensued after the submission of Klausner’s “report” also gives a clear picture of the positions of the various Jewish aid agencies regarding the resettlement of the Jewish DPs in Israel, as well as the understanding of these aid workers about the daily lives of the displaced Jews “forced” to remain in camps throughout Germany.

Just as discussions about the Jewish future in Germany were underway outside of the country, so too were similar debates occurring in the Jewish-only DP centers in the American occupation zone. As the period from 1948 onward saw more and more displaced Jews resettled abroad, especially in the state of Israel, many Jewish DPs feared that they would be left behind in Germany. Their concerns were exacerbated by two very public events deemed anti-Semitic by Jews around the world: the publication of the Bleibtreu letter in 1949 and the Auerbach Affair in 1951. These two events led Jewish DPs to push even harder for their immediate emigration. No other solution would do for the displaced Jews who remained in Bavaria and who lived through these incidents. Both the publication of the Bleibtreu letter in and the Auerbach Affair shook the very foundation of Jewish life in Bavaria and made people around the world question Germany’s ability to move beyond its Nazi past. These incidents led to clashes between Jewish Displaced Persons and German police and left the DPs feeling unsafe in Germany. In the end both the world Jewish organizations and the DPs agreed on one thing: that the Jewish DP era in Germany needed to come to an immediate end.

### **Should they Stay or be Forced to Go? Jewish Discussions Over What Should be done with Germany's Displaced Jews.**

Wards of the occupying power which considers them a "damn nuisance," physically part of a society, actually outcasts of that society, [Jewish DPs] will become the target for ambitious politicians and men of resentment of which there are many.<sup>5</sup>

The resettlement of the Jewish DPs from west Germany must be seen as an integral part of our new American security policy, if not the basis of its application in Germany.<sup>6</sup>

By 1948, life in the Jewish Displaced Persons centers closely resembled that of the shtetls before the war. These camps provided everything that the Jewish DP needed including tailors, doctors, schools, restaurants, religious facilities, and even universities. Outside of the Jewish centers the Allies worked to rebuild Germany, to reestablish a working economy in the war-torn country, and to resettle the remaining foreign refugees who called Germany home. The position of Jewish Displaced Persons was often discussed throughout Germany, especially among Germans who longed for an end to the "DP problem" in the country, and between American officials who wanted to be free from the responsibility of caring for the Displaced Persons throughout the zone. With so much discussion underway among non-Jews, it is understandable that the Jews were also involved in talks to end Jewish DP life in Germany. Just as Jewish Displaced Persons called for their immediate resettlement abroad, so too did their coreligionists outside of Europe. While works like Idith Zertal's, *From Catastrophe to Power: Holocaust Survivors and the Emergence of Israel*, discuss the use of the *She'erith Hapletah* as a pawn in Zionist efforts to secure a Jewish homeland in Palestine, and other studies have discussed the lives of the Jewish DPs before their resettlement, little work has been done on the perception of

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<sup>5</sup> Abraham Klausner, "Jewish Displaced Persons in the American Occupied Zone of Germany," (Chicago 1948), 3.

<sup>6</sup> Samuel Gringauz, "Our New German Policy and the DP's: Why Immediate Resettlement is Imperative," *Commentary* 5(1948): 514.

the displaced Jews held by world Jewry.<sup>7</sup> Contemporary reports compiled by members of several Jewish aid organizations provide a glimpse into their view of the Jews who had survived the Shoah. They also offer scholars an account of the discussions about the activities of Jewish DPs in postwar Germany, as well as their perceived future position in the larger world Jewish community upon their resettlement. The opinions held by world Jewry in relation to the Jewish DPs in Germany are incredibly important to the creation of a wider view of Jewish life in the Displaced Persons camps but are yet to be fully explored.

The policy line espoused at the end of the Second World War by Jews living outside of Europe, from here on in referred to as World Jewry, was that all Jews needed to be removed from Germany.<sup>8</sup> This was the one thing on which these diverse individuals from around the world could agree. According to M. Bachman, the Jewish organizations had decided by May 1949, “that in the future there shall be no Jews in Germany. Those who will then remain are uninteresting and of no consequence to Jewry, and are almost written off.”<sup>9</sup> For Jews living outside of Europe, a continued existence in Germany was unacceptable.<sup>10</sup> World Jewry almost exclusively pushed for the immediate removal and resettlement of Europe’s *She’erith Hapletah*, or the Jewish Saving Remnant, outside of Germany, with the Jewish state in Palestine as the ultimate destination. However, there was a portion of German-Jews who felt they needed to work to recreate Jewish communities in the very places where they had flourished before the war.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> According to Abraham Hyman, “The Jewish DPs were the argument celebre in the bid for a Jewish state. To a great degree, it was their homelessness that influenced the historic partition decision made at Lake Success on November 29, 1947. To keep faith with those who want to make Israel their homeland, the world Jewish community must at the earliest moment replace their DP cards with visas to Israel.” Abraham S. Hyman, “Displaced Persons,” *American Jewish Year book* 50(1948-1949): 473.

<sup>8</sup> Jay Howard Geller, *Jews in Post-Holocaust Germany, 1945-1953* (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005). 2.

<sup>9</sup> M. Bachman, “Translation,” in *Dispalced Persons in Germany* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1949), 3.

<sup>10</sup> Geller, *Jews in Post-Holocaust Germany, 1945-1953*: 239.

<sup>11</sup> For more on this see Andrea Sinn, *Public Voices. Jüdische Politik und Presse in der frühen Bundesrepublik* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013); Geller, *Jews in Post-Holocaust Germany, 1945-1953*.

The World Jewish Congress (WJC) expressed the sentiments held by the majority of Jews at the second plenary meeting held in Switzerland in 1948. At that time the WJC posited that “the determination of the Jewish people never again to settle on the bloodstained soil of Germany,” was their ultimate goal.<sup>12</sup> During a later speech, A. Leon Kubowitzki, then general secretary of the WJC argued that the continued presence of Jews in Germany “excused the guilt of the Germans” because the very existence of Jews in the country meant there were some Jews who were, in his opinion, willing to forgive the Germans for their actions during the Shoah.<sup>13</sup> Kubowitzki argued that all of world Jewry had to work to see that “all organized Jewish life in Germany” came to an end.<sup>14</sup> However, by May, 1948 there were still more than 200,000 Jewish DPs living in Germany waiting for visas, and in fact, a German-Jewish community was actively being created.

The majority of the Jewish DPs themselves shared the view of world Jewry that all Jews needed to be removed from Germany. In his annual report for 1948-1949, in the *American Jewish Yearbook*, Abraham Hyman, the advisor on Jewish affairs to U.S. commands in Germany and Austria, stated, “they [displaced Jews] are firm in their view that it is a sin for a Jew to sink roots in the German soil.”<sup>15</sup> While the American surveys conducted in DP centers in the mid-1940s found that the United States and Palestine were the top two most desirable immigration sites, the inhabitants of one camp went so far as to say they would rather end up in the crematorium than anywhere but Palestine.<sup>16</sup> For most DPs, the desire to leave Germany and immigrate to Palestine was so strong that it was often the only thing on which the highly diverse Jewish DPs could agree. This is illustrated by the quick formation of Zionist groups in every

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<sup>12</sup> Hyman, "Displaced Persons," 465.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Geller, *Jews in Post-Holocaust Germany, 1945-1953*: 239.

<sup>15</sup> Hyman, "Displaced Persons," 465.

<sup>16</sup> OMGUS, "A Pilot Study on DPs," (Munich: Institut für Zeitgeschichte, 1945), 1.



camp within days of the end of the war and the participation of DPs in Hebrew and other training classes designed to prepare them for their futures in the Jewish state.<sup>17</sup> However, according to Meir Grossman, a JDC worker in Germany, Zionist propaganda in the camps was very idealistic, and “a more realistic interpretation of the Palestine program among the DPs should be fostered to overcome the romantic view which, until now, has been emphasized and to familiarize them with the type of life that awaits the DPs in Palestine.”<sup>18</sup> The romantic picture of Palestine provided by the Zionists was not initially seen as a problem by Zionist leaders but created a lot of issues when in the late 40s former Jewish DPs who had resettled in Israel began to return to Germany bringing with them stories about the hardships of life in newly created Israel.

Only a handful of DPs had made their way to Palestine through the use of legal visas before the creation of Israel. The fact that Palestine continued to remain under British control until it was handed over to the Yishuv in May 1948 meant that visas were limited and extremely hard to secure. The allotted visas available went first to young orphaned children, teenage Zionists who had lived on DP kibbutzim, and devote supporters of the Zionist state. Added to this number were thousands of individuals who had emigrated illegally, as well as those who had tried to get to Palestine but had been caught and detained by the British.<sup>19</sup> The Jews who tried to enter Palestine without a visa and were caught were interned on Cyprus where they awaited the creation of the Jewish state. While the eventual establishment of Israel afforded numerous Jews a chance at finally being resettled in the new country, the war that erupted immediately after the declaration of the state, combined with a lack of resources, and the need for able-bodied young men who could fight, meant that the new Israeli government was initially selective of the DPs

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<sup>17</sup> Zeev W. Mankowitz, *Life Between Memory and Hope: The Survivors of the Holocaust in Occupied Germany*, Studies in the Social and Cultural History of Modern Warfare (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002). 29.

<sup>18</sup> Mair Grossman, "Report of Germany's Jewish DPs," in *Jewish DPs in Germany* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1948), 2.

<sup>19</sup> According to a New York Times article from August 1947, there were 16,000 Jewish DPs, mostly Holocaust survivors, housed on the Island of Cyprus awaiting release.

#### IV. No Future in Germany?

who received visas. The elderly, ill, and families with young children often continued to wait years to emigrate even after the Jewish state was created. This meant that there was still a substantial number of Jews living in Germany after the creation of the state of Israel. This situation was still viewed as unacceptable by many Jews around the world. These individuals argued for the removal of all Jews from Germany, but the reality of the political situation in Israel changed world Jewry's perspective on how best this could be done and their approach to ensuring it happen. Rather than calling for the immediate removal of all Jews from Germany, the leaders of several Jewish aid organizations began to argue for bettering the DP situation, as an immediate solution seemed more and more unlikely.

While the topic of European Jewry was at the forefront of discussions among aid organizations and Zionists, it was not until the late 1940s that a debate erupted over the "desirability" of these Jewish DPs as future members of the Jewish communities outside of Europe, especially those who would become refugees of the new state of Israel. This debate was prompted by the unofficial, and unsolicited, report of Rabbi Abraham Klausner sent to the American Jewish Conference on May 2, 1948, just 12 days before the declaration of the Jewish state. Klausner's report, entitled "The DP Picture," was an over exaggerated condemnation of the care and treatment of Jewish DPs in the American zone and was meant to motivate the aid agencies, as well as the World Zionist Organization (WZO), to push for an end to the Jewish DP era. It urged these world Jewish organizations to immediately remove and resettle the Jewish DPs in Palestine as soon as the new state was officially declared. If his warning was not heeded, Klausner professed, it would lead to the total destruction of the Jewish DPs in Germany.

### Renegade Rabbi

The name Abraham Klausner appears in almost every scholarly work on the lives of Jewish Displaced Persons but only rarely do authors introduce him beyond saying that he was an influential and problematic figure in postwar Germany. Klausner, originally from Memphis, Tennessee, found himself fresh out of seminary school when the United States entered the war. In his book, *A Letter to My Children*, he recorded that he “wanted to be part of the battle.”<sup>20</sup> However, the United States Army required that all Chaplains have at least two years of experience after their schooling was completed. The Army reduced the two-year requirement to one year and then eventually to just a few months but by the time these changes were made, Klausner had already spent a year as the “replacement” rabbi for a temple in New Haven, Connecticut.<sup>21</sup> Instead of being sent directly overseas on assignment, or working as the Jewish rabbi at a military hospital, the novice rabbis were expected to replace the older rabbis who had to leave their congregations in order to serve in the Armed Forces. After a year in New Haven, Klausner was called up to serve at the Lawson General Hospital in Atlanta. His assignment there was short and he was soon sent to Europe. His unit was originally station in Liege, but he left the city and headed to Bad Godesberg on the Rhine.<sup>22</sup> Klausner describes his first weeks in Europe as “vacuous” and said that he left Bad Godesberg in search of General Dwight D. Eisenhower in the hopes of reassignment.<sup>23</sup> Klausner was then sent to the 197<sup>th</sup> General Hospital in Paris, but his stay only lasted one day. At the close of his first day at the hospital in St. Quentin he was notified that he had again been reassigned to the 116<sup>th</sup> Evacuation Hospital. After days of driving and general confusion over the location of the hospital, Klausner learned

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<sup>20</sup> Klausner, *A Letter to My Children*: 4.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 5.

that it was attached to the Seventh Army, which was located at Dachau Concentration Camp.<sup>24</sup>

While not the first rabbi to arrive at Dachau, Klausner reached the camp three weeks after liberation, and spent the first few days there helping the Christian chaplain bury the dead.

Driven by the desire to help Europe's surviving Jews, Klausner went AWOL from his unit when they were reassigned. At that point in his career he became "unattached" to any one unit and moved from place to place working to help the survivors.<sup>25</sup> His "base" was Dachau, but he traveled through the countryside meeting with survivors, learning what they needed and helping to ensure that they were able to get it. He was argued to have been 'the father figure' for the 30,000 liberated Jews in Dachau and later played the same role for Germany's Jewish Displaced Persons (DPs) in the American zone.<sup>26</sup> Through the use of what he terms "appropriation" Klausner was able to get additional food, clothing, housing, and resources for the Jewish survivors.<sup>27</sup> One of his first acts after burying the dead was to help reunite family members who had lived through the war. To do this, Klausner "secured" writing utensils, paper, and typewriters, which he brought to the Jews in Dachau so that they could begin compiling a list with their names, ages, and place of birth: the first volume of the "*Sherit Ha-Platah* series." He then made copies that were distributed to other camps. This endeavor grew into a survivors' book, which allowed friends and families in one Displaced Persons camp to search for surviving relatives housed in other centers.

During his tenure in Germany Klausner was able to bring about the unofficial establishment of the Jewish-only camp at Feldafing. He did so through a series of bluffs and

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., x.

<sup>26</sup> Dennis Hevesi, "Abraham Klausner, 92, Dies: Aided Holocaust Survivors," in *The New York Times* (The New York Times Company, June 30, 2007).

<sup>27</sup> Klausner, *A Letter to My Children*: x.

compromises with American officials.<sup>28</sup> Upon learning of the visit of Earl G. Harrison, the representative for the Intergovernmental Commission on Refugees, Klausner introduced himself and convinced Harrison to change his original plans to visit the “show” camps in the American zone, instead taking him to see the worst centers in Germany.<sup>29</sup> Klausner’s intervention led Harrison to write a damaging report against American treatment of the Jewish survivors of the Holocaust, which led to a complete restructuring of the DP camp system in the zone and better care for the Jewish DPs. Once the Jewish-only centers were established Klausner moved to help the Jewish DPs to found their own representative bodies both within the camps and throughout the zone. He assisted the displaced Jews in Germany to create the Central Committee of Liberated Jews in Bavaria and was made the honorary president. According to Yehuda Bauer, “He helped them [Jewish DPs] to recover mentally as well as physically, and enabled them to proceed to be active as autonomous human beings, Jews who again became aware of the world around them and who then tried to make their wishes and hopes known in as forceful a way as they could.”<sup>30</sup>

Klausner devoted his life in the immediate postwar period to ensuring that the Jewish DPs were treated fairly and that they were properly cared for so that they could begin to rebuild their lives in the wake of the Shoah. Despite all of Klausner’s work, and the love he was given by the Displaced Persons themselves, American officials in Germany often saw him as more of a nuisance than a hero. Whatever supplies Klausner needed, he took, whether he was allowed to or not. He constantly undermined his superiors and publically condemned the Jewish international aid agencies that came to work with the Jewish DPs.<sup>31</sup> The American Jewish Joint

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Hevesi, "Abraham Klausner, 92, Dies: Aided Holocaust Survivors."

<sup>30</sup> Klausner, *A Letter to My Children*: ix.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., x.

Distribution Committee (JDC) received the brunt of Klausner's criticism because they did not arrive in Germany until almost four months after liberation, they often denied his requests for goods for the DPs, and their constant turnover of their staff resulted in an inconsistent policy of caring for the displaced Jews. His outspoken nature and willingness to put the needs of the displaced Jews first, led to Klausner's blackballing by the major Jewish welfare agencies active in Germany. The strong dislike of Klausner and his damaging reports against these international aid organizations eventually resulted in these agencies lodging several complaints against him with OMGUS.<sup>32</sup> By the summer of 1946, Klausner had already made a number of enemies in the military and U.S. authorities could no longer ignore his activities in the zone. He was threatened with court-martial and eventually discharge from the military in 1946.<sup>33</sup> His strong desire to return to Germany because he felt that his "work was unfinished," led Klausner, with the help of some influential friends in Senate, to be reassigned to the G-5 section of the Army, which oversaw the DPs in Germany.<sup>34</sup>

Unwilling to leave Germany before he felt he had completed his task, Klausner remained until 1948 working with the Jewish DPs housed in the American zone. Although many prominent Jewish aid workers, including William Haber, the advisor on Jewish Affairs to General Clay, considered Klausner a dedicated Zionist, he was not "a supporter of any particular political Zionist party."<sup>35</sup> In fact, the Zionists often dismissed Klausner because, as one of Ben-Gurion's aids noted, Klausner's work was not "Zionist inspired."<sup>36</sup> Instead, Klausner's tenure in Germany was dictated by his strong desire to see to the best possible outcome for the Jewish DPs, and by 1948 he saw Israel as the means to that end. Klausner was an impassioned advocate

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 120.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 127.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 129.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., xi.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 155.

and friend of the Jewish DPs. He risked his career and his personal freedom to see to the betterment of the lives of displaced Jews in Germany. As Bauer wrote, “He [Klausner] had, I think, a rather idealistic view of the ‘people’ and when they did not live up to his expectations, and demoralization set in, after over two years in the DP camps, he slowly became disappointed in them.”<sup>37</sup> This disappointment is evident in his independent report from 1948. However, what is also clear from his account is that while he might not have been happy with the DPs, he still wanted to protect them and ensure that they were given a chance at the future they desired: Israel.

Klausner is remembered by the Jewish DPs who worked with and knew him, as a “brother and friend, who more than any individual or group gave us hope, courage, and life itself.”<sup>38</sup> According to Ira Hirschmann of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), Klausner was a “creative irritant,” and Judge Simon Rifkind, the former advisor on Jewish Affairs in Germany, said he was “a rare individual who gets things done regardless of obstacles.”<sup>39</sup> Whatever the opinion held about Klausner, his efforts and success at caring for the Jewish DPs changed the lives of more than a hundred thousand displaced Jews who called the American zone of Germany home. His high hopes for the displaced Jews did not disappear even when he became disillusioned with them. Instead, he moved to do what he always did and came up with a new plan to “save” the Jewish DPs, hence the writing and delivery of his unsolicited report of May 2, 1948, to the American Jewish Conference.

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., x.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 155.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

### **Palestine as the Jews' Only Salvation?**

Distraught over the continued presence of more than 100,000 Jewish Displaced Persons in post-Holocaust Germany, Klausner began to push for the immediate emigration of the remaining displaced Jews in early 1947. He argued that the continued stay of the Jewish DP in Germany was threatening their moral foundation and leading them into a life filled with despair.<sup>40</sup> The increasing interactions between Jews and Germans worried Klausner and led him to question his decision to return to Germany.<sup>41</sup> In a report from March 1947, Klausner stated “the spirit of the people reflects a radicle change. There is no longer an air of excitement, a darting of the eyes, a flood of questions—there is a feeling of resignation. Many leaders speak of the ‘demoralization of the people.’”<sup>42</sup> He continued on to say that the Jewish survivors were slowly forgetting the abuse perpetrated against them. For Klausner this was best evidenced by the up-surge in sexual relations between Jewish DPs and Germans and the willingness of some displaced Jews to enter into business partnerships with their former “enemies.”<sup>43</sup> Klausner described the remaining Jewish DPs as “a people united by common suffering and hope drifting from day to day in the face of seemingly insurmountable obstacles...”<sup>44</sup> The only solution available in Klausner’s opinion was that “The Jew must be gotten out of Germany!”<sup>45</sup> Understanding that the vast majority of the Jewish DPs had little chance of legally emigrating in 1947, Klausner suggested that the Jewish aid organizations forgo supplying the DPs and instead take \$15,000,000 to purchase ships destined for Palestine. Desperate to get the Jews out of Germany, Klausner proposed that the Jews be illegally smuggled to the Jewish settlement in the

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 130.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 131.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 137.



Middle East despite the British blockades. He argued that even imprisonment on the island of Cyprus would be better than remaining in Germany for one day longer.<sup>46</sup> This report, like many of Klausner's "radicle" suggestions was ignored, leading him to write an impassioned plea to the American Jewish Conference demanding that they help aid the Jewish DPs in their efforts to reach Palestine. In his report from May 2, 1948, Klausner painted the absolute bleakest picture of the DP situation in Germany in order to prove his point. He portrayed the Jewish DPs as listless criminals involved in every "sordid" act occurring in Germany. Ignoring truths that he had acknowledged and discussed in past reports, letters, and his own memoirs, Klausner worked to damage the image of the Jewish DPs in the hopes that this negative portrayal would lead world Jewry to act in the resettlement of these Jews abroad.

Klausner's desire to press upon world Jewry the "urgency" of removing the European Jewish DPs led him to write a report that included many unfounded statistics and claims. However, his account provides scholars with a picture, although a biased one, of the life and struggles of the Jews remaining in Germany in 1948. When read in conjunction with the responses it prompted, especially the minutes of the Jewish Co-operating Organizations, which included statements from members of the American Jewish Committee, the American Jewish Conference, the Jewish Agency, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), the World Jewish Congress, Rabbi Bernstein, Judge Levinthal, Max Lowenthal and Klausner himself, along with contemporary accounts from 1948 and 1949, the report is balanced out and helps provide scholars with a clear picture of the DP situation in the late 1940s. The discussion carried out by members of these organizations and individuals also provides a view of how world Jewry changed its stance on the removal of all Jews from Germany as they came to realize that this goal might not be as immediate or viable a possibility as they had originally believed.

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

Discussions about the future placement of the Jewish DPs were in no way new when Klausner issued his report. Questions about where to resettle the displaced Jews had plagued the various agencies working with them since the end of the Holocaust, and debates about this topic continued to occur among the various aid organizations when Klausner wrote his account of the DP situation. However, Klausner's insistence that the Jews must be resettled immediately in Palestine erupted into a worldwide discussion on whether or not the state of Israel would be able to meet the needs of the survivors, and more importantly, if in fact these Jews were the sort of, "human material Eretz Yisroel needs today."<sup>47</sup> The discussions that followed Klausner's report led to questions of the "worth" of the Jewish DPs in Germany, and whether they should be allowed to settle in the Jewish state. This debate provides scholars with an interesting view into the understanding held by some of the Yishuv's members about the role of Palestine as a safe haven for all Jews.<sup>48</sup>

According to Klausner the officially recognized Jewish DP population in the American zone in 1948 was between 114,000 and 124,000 with a constant fluctuation in the numbers of about 20% due in part to the movement of DPs between various camps in the zone. This number was also affected by the occasional illegal trip over the border into the countries neighboring Germany taken by Jewish DPs searching for family or interested in securing goods that would later be sold on Germany's black market. This means that if Klausner's estimates were correct there were over 100,000 Jewish DPs in the American zone in the summer of 1948.<sup>49</sup> Klausner argued that this number represented the equivalent of 35,000 families with about 30,000 children. He also estimated 80% of all Jewish Displaced Persons in the American zone consisted

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<sup>47</sup> "Minutes of the Meeting of the Jewish Co-operating Organizations on Rabbi Abraham Klausner's Suggestions Representing the DP Situation," (Jewish Co-operating Organizations, 1948), 1.

<sup>48</sup> The Yishuv is the name for the Jewish settlement in Palestine before the creation of the Israel.

<sup>49</sup> Abraham Hyman argued that 92,863 Jewish DPs called the American zone home. Hyman, "Displaced Persons," 457.

of Jews forced to immigrate to Russia from Poland during the war and who spent the majority of the war in the East.<sup>50</sup>

Many aid workers employed in Jewish camps in the immediate postwar period, including Klausner, argued that in the first months following the close of the Second World War, “the Concentration Camp Jew anticipating the early departure from Germany renounced every relationship with the German Community.”<sup>51</sup> Klausner took this claim a little further by arguing:

From May 1945 to the present [1948], the Displaced Persons have been living in camps, which are virtually economic, social, and political islands. Housing has been provided by the U.S. Army. Food, by the U.S. Army, the (UNRRA) IRO, and the American Joint Distribution Committee.<sup>52</sup>

For Klausner the separate reality of the “Island Pattern” of Jewish DP living, their distinct existence away from their German neighbors, and the fact that according to him their every need was met by outside aid organizations led the Jewish DP to a life of idleness, where they only became involved in the “sordid activities of German post-war society.”<sup>53</sup> Klausner was not alone in his comments about the ills of camp life and the idleness rampant among Jewish DPs.

According to Abraham Hyman,

Everyone who made even the most superficial study of the DP problem recognized the urgency of dissolving the DP camps. While the Jewish DPs made an amazing adjustment to their pattern of living, there was nothing to commend it as a way of life. The sustained idleness, the lack of privacy, the communal living that reinforced the memory of a tragic past, were not conducive to the rehabilitation of a distressed group.<sup>54</sup>

Hyman was not alone in his condemnations of the problems rampant in the camps. William Haber, the JDC director of the American occupation zone of Germany, noted,

I am frankly shocked at the inactivity prevailing in the DP camps among able bodied displaced persons. What is even more distressing is that a *considerable portion of the work performed for our people in the camps is done with hired German help*. I was literally dumbfounded when, on visiting the AJDC matzo factory in Frankfurt a few days ago, I discovered that, with one or two

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<sup>50</sup> Klausner, "Jewish Displaced Persons in the American Occupied Zone of Germany," 1.

<sup>51</sup> Abraham Klausner, "The DP Picture," (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1948), 2.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid

<sup>53</sup> Klausner, *A Letter to My Children*: 161.

<sup>54</sup> Hyman, "Displaced Persons," 472.

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exceptions (mashgichim)<sup>55</sup>, the entire personnel was composed of German employees. The faulty policies that may account for this may be of historical importance only if emigration actually gets under way soon. However, it is absolutely imperative that they be corrected at once if the people are likely to be here for all of 1948 and, perhaps, to some extent, through 1950.<sup>56</sup>

Haber believed that, “every stitch of work that must be done for Jews in the camps, including the most menial labor, should be done by Jews.”<sup>57</sup> The fact that most work within the camps including cutting wood, cleaning the housing, and caring for small children, was preformed by Germans was a point of contention for the Jewish aid organizations who believed the Jewish DPs needed to complete these tasks to help prepare them for their lives away from the camps. However, many Jewish DPs, especially Holocaust survivors, found that the completion of these menial jobs by desperate Germans was in fact a form of revenge that they were able to perpetrate against their enemies.<sup>58</sup>

Unlike Klausner, Hyman and Haber did not believe that the camps were total failures. They argued that there was no validity in the claims that the Jewish centers had not served their purpose for the homeless Jews by providing housing, food, clothes, a sense of security, employment training, cultural activities, and perhaps most importantly, acting as the “safe” space necessary for the Jewish DPs to rebuild their lives and regain a sense of autonomy. Although Klausner noted that inadequate housing, and insufficient food, and clothing were major problems until the fall of 1947, he failed to mention that this was the primary motivation driving Jewish involvement on the grey market, one of his main complaints about Jewish life in Germany. He argued that the DPs traded illegally for financial gain and because they were too lazy to work. This omission is especially interesting when one considers the fact that within a matter of hours

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<sup>55</sup> In Judaism the Mashgiah is the individual who oversees the kosher status of the product being produced. Mashgichim is the plural form of the word.

<sup>56</sup> Dr. William Haber, "Notes on Session with Gernal Lucius D. Clay in Frankfurt," in *DP problems* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1948), 4.

<sup>57</sup> Haber, "Speech from Dr. Haber to the 3rd session of the Congress of Liberated Jews in the U.S. zone," in *Displaced Persons in Germany* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1948), 3.

<sup>58</sup> Atina Grossmann discusses this phenomenon in her book, Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies*.

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after liberation, the healthier Jews made their way into the countryside surrounding the camps and began stealing food and clothing, and exchanging confiscated camp supplies with Germans living in the area, a fact that Klausner would have been well aware of as the chaplain who helped bury the dead in Dachau in the days immediately following the end of the war.<sup>59</sup> Additionally, Klausner's assertion of idleness among the Jewish DPs totally ignored the segments of the DP population who were involved in activities like the camp newspapers, occupational training, education at both the elementary and university levels, religious studies, as well as the thousands of camp inhabitants who worked as translators, drivers, and secretaries for agencies like the International Refugee Organization (IRO), OMGUS, and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC). Klausner knowingly omitted any mention of the thousand of individuals involved in work and study in order to stress his point.<sup>60</sup> Instead, he focused only on the individuals who did not work at all or those who were involved in the black market.

Klausner's argument about the "island pattern" of Jewish life in Germany totally overlooked the estimated 8,562 Jewish free-livers in the Munich area alone in 1948 and blatantly disregarded the fact that these Jews,

Patronize Jewish sources when available but also frequent German establishments. If there are Jewish restaurants available he will patronize them, if not, he will have no qualms against going into German restaurants. He mingles freely with the German community at the opera, cinema, concerts as well as other entertainment.<sup>61</sup>

As we have seen this was just as true for camp inhabitants as free-livers, and just like the camp DP, the free-living DP was seldom heard "stating that he wishes to remain in Germany for any

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<sup>59</sup> Klausner, *A Letter to My Children*: 131.

<sup>60</sup> According to Klausner's book, he helped the Jewish DPs to begin their camp newspapers shortly after the close of the war. He also wrote that he was very involved in aiding the Klausenberg rebbe when his community needed religious supplies. Finally, Klausner recorded his involvement in establishing the Central Committee of Liberated Jews in Germany, all of which indicate a level of activity among the DPs that Klausner omitted from his report. See *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> Harry Greenstein, "The DP situation," in *Jewish Displaced Persons in Germany* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1949), 5.

length of time.”<sup>62</sup> Instead, it was clear that the majority of Jews claimed that they were only “waiting” for their resettlement elsewhere. This policy of totally separate communities for Jews existed in word alone, a fact that even Klausner was later forced to acknowledge. However, he argued that this change was not brought on by the concentration camp survivors but occurred in late 1946 through the influx of hundreds of thousands of Polish Jews into the American zone. Klausner claimed that these Jews did not have the same aversion to the Germans that the camp survivors did and saw the Germans as a means by which they could make a quick profit.<sup>63</sup> His arguments about a totally separate Jewish community in Germany ignore the actual situation on the ground in the country right after the end of the war, where newly liberated Jews were housed in German homes, treated in German hospitals by German doctors and nurses, and traded with these Germans for their very survival.

Although it is true that the vast majority of Jews were not overly pleased or even willing to live among the Germans, it does not mean that they resided in the Jewish centers without connections to the surrounding communities. While the Jews did not participate in German politics and had their own stores within the camp walls, ate at the camp kitchens, etc., they also were well aware of the events occurring in Germany, bought rations from German store owners, and frequented German restaurants and bars. The barbed wire surrounding the DP centers kept unwanted people from entering the camps, but non-Jewish employees with the proper paperwork, and traders, friends, and lovers who had partners living inside of the camps could enter through the front gate with little trouble. While the majority of Jewish DPs were staunchly against helping to clear rubble or rebuilding Germany, and later refused to work in the German

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> This is not to say that Polish Jews liked, or were even willing to tolerate most Germans, but Klausner believed that because these infiltrators had lived out the war outside of concentration camps, their hatred for the Germans was not as intense as that of Holocaust survivors who had experienced Nazi terror first hand.

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economy, this does not mean that they had no interactions with their German neighbors. Norbert Wollheim, a German Jew living in Bergen-Belsen expressed a commonly shared feeling among Holocaust Survivors when he noted, “I didn’t destroy Germany; I have no duty to build it up again. I can’t.” The hesitancy felt by many Jewish DPs to rebuild Germany was understandable when examined against the backdrop of the Second World War. However, this reluctance to work rebuilding Germany did not indicate a separation of Jews from their German neighbors. It is true that many Jewish DPs expressed strong feelings of hatred and aggression toward Germans as a group, but the reality in postwar Germany was that one on one relationships occurred frequently. Those who worked on the ground with the Jewish DPs often accepted this fact. They realized that separate Jewish communities without interactions between the displaced Jews and those living outside of the camp gates, while ideal, was impossible. Klausner acknowledged a wide range of relationships between Germans and Jewish DPs in his earlier report from March 1947. Although he wrote about these interactions as detrimental to the Jewish DPs, at least he had been willing to admit they occurred. However, his almost total omission of any interactions between these parties except on the black market in his May 2, 1948 account helps him to stress his argument that the Jewish DPs needed to be resettled in Palestine. As someone living in Germany and working with the Jewish DPs, Klausner’s had to know that his claims that the DP lived an “island pattern” had no validity. Additionally, as someone who had fought so hard to ensure that the Jewish DPs got the supplies they needed, and experiencing that at times it was impossible to complete this task, Klausner knew that the care organizations were unable to provided for the DP’s every need and that the camp inhabitants lived anything but a life of comfort and ease as he tried to argue in this report.

In order to illustrate the “dire” Jewish situation in Germany, Klausner focused only on the negative aspects of DP life. After providing the basic facts about caloric allowances, housing, and clothing, he delved into the “problems” faced by the average DP.<sup>64</sup> Among his main points was the failure of the “rehabilitation” program established for the displaced Jews, inadequate living environments for families, lack of qualified teachers, poor education, and the black market. It is especially interesting that Klausner is so focused on Jewish involvement in the black market in postwar Germany because he admits that at times he was also forced to turn to this method of illegal trade in order to secure the resources needed for the Jewish DPs themselves.<sup>65</sup> He also mentioned the upsurge in the number of American raids in Jewish centers throughout the zone. Klausner claimed that these raids were initiated because of the extensive involvement of the Jewish DPs in illegal trade, and more importantly, that the continued involvement of the Jews on the black market only increased “tension between American personnel and the Displaced,” while “embarrassing the Jew in the presence of his German neighbor.”<sup>66</sup> While he did note that the vocational training programs had been slightly successful and grown rapidly, he claimed it was also a failure in that those being trained had absolutely no chance of practicing their trade once they had completed their courses, ignoring the fact that these training programs were designed to prepare Jewish DPs for a future outside of Germany.

Klausner’s main contestation about the situation of Jewish Displaced Persons regarded their involvement with criminal activities in German society. According to him, “people found

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<sup>64</sup> According to Klausner’s report, these Jews received 1,000 calories a day from the army and an additional 1,200 from the IRO. This number was nominally supplemented by JDC rations, which were non-existent in the first two years after the war, but amounted to about 50 calories a day by the end of 1948. This was more calories than other DPs received and for some more than they needed. It is also important to note that Klausner’s next paragraph acknowledges this fact while admonishing these aid organizations for providing goods with a very high black market value. Klausner, “The DP Picture,” 3.

<sup>65</sup> In one case Klausner recorded that he became involved with a woman illegally selling herring that he hoped to purchase for religious Jews living in a neighboring camp who needed it for their repast on Shabbat afternoon. Klausner, *A Letter to My Children*: 139.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 161.



their way out of the camp into every sordid aspect of German society. In time the Jew was involved in illegal endeavors ranging from prostitution to highly involved black-market transactions.”<sup>67</sup> He believed that the Jews were well immersed in German society but not in the aspects that would help them relearn to be good people or active members of a community. Klausner claimed that the Jewish DPs were entrenched only in “interacting with Germans on the lowest of levels.”<sup>68</sup> He noted that the situation in Germany was “demoralizing” for the DPs, but he cited several avenues through which the Jewish DP bettered his situation, primarily, he argued, through the money and goods offered through criminal exchanges. According to Klausner, Jewish survivors were drawn into the seedy side of German society in postwar southern Germany, and he believed that this relationship destroyed what had remained of European Jewry’s already shaky moral foundation, which had been tested and weakened by the Jewish DPs’ experiences during the Shoah. He said, “There is hardly a moral standard to which the people adhere. Nothing seems to be wrong and everything can be excused.”<sup>69</sup> According to Klausner’s understanding, the Jews were slowly being reduced to a mass of lawless individuals. The only way to save the Jewish people residing in the country was by evacuating them immediately from Germany. He believed that the only social force capable of molding these masses in Germany into “positive members of a Jewish society,” was the Jewish community in Palestine known as the Yishuv.<sup>70</sup> The moral degeneration, he argued, was caused by the Jews’ desires to profit from the flourishing black market active throughout Europe, with conveniently centered markets throughout the American zone. According to Klausner’s estimates, the absolute minimum number of Jewish DPs involved in the black market was 30% of the total

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>68</sup> Klausner, "Jewish Displaced Persons in the American Occupied Zone of Germany," 4.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 5.

population not including those trafficking goods on the grey market.<sup>71</sup> Klausner described the black market as a “luxury market, as contrasted to the basic food market, [and] ranges from single dealings in American PX items to carloads of cigarettes. The earnings in this market likewise range from a few American dollars per year to 60 to 70 thousand dollars per year.”<sup>72</sup> As was discussed in prior chapters, the Jews were involved in the flourishing illegal trade, but to argue that even 10% of the total population in 1948 were involved, or that they were bringing in thousands of dollars each year, is not economically realistic. He cited these activities as a major contributor to the number of raids on Jewish centers in 1948 and noted that they threatened the relationships between the Jews and their American overseers as well as the neighboring Germans.

Each raid ... whips the Jew into a state of resentment that will make it practically impossible to extricate him from his antagonisms.<sup>73</sup>

Like many other aid workers, Klausner believed that involvement in the black market not only led to the moral decay of the DPs in Germany, but also to feelings of discouragement and bitterness among the Jews, as well as increased anti-Semitism by Germans and Americans.

Klausner’s motivation for arguing that the Jews were a lazy, demoralized, and corrupt mass untouchable by the legal system, stemmed from his one desire to resettle them in the soon to be formed state of Israel. He argued that their comfortable and separate living situation led the Jews to believe that they could continue to live in communities within the larger German society without having to, “make any contribution to their own subsistence.”<sup>74</sup> In his report, Klausner included a conversation he had with a DP about why many DPs did not work in the German economy. He quoted the DP as saying, “We never thought while we were in Russia that some

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<sup>71</sup> Abraham Klausner, "Jewish Displaced Persons in the American Occupied Zone of Germany," (Chicago: The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1948), 2.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 5.

day we would come to the American zone of Germany and there be housed, fed and clothed without our having to contribute any efforts. Since you Americans have chosen to house, clothe and feed us why should we work?"<sup>75</sup> There were Jewish DPs who did not work and lived off of the charity of the International Refugee Organization, the JDC, and the international aid agencies. However, Klausner's exclusion of any mention of the thousands of Jews who did work in the DP camps and the German economy prevents him from giving a true account of the DP situation in Germany.

While many Jewish DPs chose not to work in German society, arguing that they were resistant to help strengthen Germany, they did so out of feelings of resentment, distrust, and hatred toward Germans not out of laziness.<sup>76</sup> Additionally, unemployment was high in Germany and German business owners often chose to hire other Germans before considering foreigners for open positions. While working in the German economy may not have suited many Jewish DPs, this in no way indicates that the displaced Jews in Germany did not work. According to Abraham Hyman, Jewish DPs were more than willing to work as long as their job did not require that they toil under the employment of a German, which, he believed, created a "psychological barrier" for many survivors. Hyman cited the case of a Jewish construction company that was formed in the U.S. zone and worked to build new structures as well as repair existing buildings in American military installations. There were 225 skilled Jewish craftsmen employed by the company and they were constantly busy with new jobs throughout the American zone. Moses Leavitt, the JDC secretary who directed the aid organization in its work with Germany, argued "Of the remaining 45,000 [Jewish DPs excluding children, the elderly, and nursing mothers,] 15 to 20,000 work in camp service, 9,000 in the ORT schools, and 4,000 in workshops. If we

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>76</sup> Klausner, *A Letter to My Children*: 170.

deduct the remainder—the sick, the tuberculars, etc.—some 10,000 is the maximum that could be usefully employed.”<sup>77</sup> While Klausner conceded that the above numbers were correct he was unwilling to allow that the individuals working in the camps were not also black marketers.<sup>78</sup> Fearing that the only way to convince world Jewry of the need to remove the Jews from Germany was by slandering them, Klausner greatly exaggerate the extent of the demoralization, criminality, and the degeneration of morals among Jewish DPs.

Although Klausner’s primary goal was relocating Jewish DPs in Germany to Israel, he was not opposed to their resettlement elsewhere. He mentioned the limited resettlement possibilities available to the DPs but noted the “stipulations attached to [those] offers have been such as to exclude Jews.”<sup>79</sup> Only 10,000 Jews were granted entry to the U.S. in the three years following the end of the war, and it was not until 1949 that the United States expanded its immigration laws, allowing the Jews increased visa quotas to enter the country. Although Klausner did not see immigration to the States as the best option available to the Jews, he did argue that if a DP received papers to immigrate to the United States, he or she should be encouraged to move there. However, Klausner did note that even immigration to the U.S. induced the Jews to become involved in illegal activities.

In order to qualify for immigration to the U.S., many Jews have been forced to purchase false birth certificates and residence certificates. The ‘false paper’ market of Germany today is tremendous business. Practically any kind of document can be purchased. Many of the applicants have been caught and have been disqualified for immigration to the U.S. Yet even for the 65,000 applicants for the U.S. (as of the fall of 1947) there seems to be little hope at the present time.<sup>80</sup>

In the early years after the end of the Second World War, there were no “morally” acceptable avenues open to the Jews allowing them to legally and comfortably emigrate

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 168.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Abraham Klausner, "Memorandum on the Jewish Displaced Persons in the American Occupied zone of Germany," in *Correspondence Germany 1946-1949* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1948), 4.

<sup>80</sup> Klausner, "The DP Picture," 4.

elsewhere in the world. The Jewish DP, robbed of all of their property, faced with hundreds of closed borders, with limited visas to Palestine, really only had two choices: remain in Germany waiting or attempt to emigrate illegally to Palestine or somewhere else. All of the aforementioned limitations and problems only reaffirmed Klausner's belief that in almost all cases the Jewish DPs needed to settle in Palestine in order to remove their temptation to become involved in criminality as a means of improving their situation. Even with the opening of the Jewish state scheduled for mid-May 1948, Klausner claimed that no more than 30% of the Jews living in the American zone would immigrate on their own to Palestine. The uncertainty of the new country and lack of resources and funds there were, according to Klausner, the main deterrents keeping these Jews from emigrating. The belief that Germany was a constant source of "easy money," he argued, convinced the majority of Germany's Jewish DPs to stay in the country until the fate of Israel had been settled. While Klausner argued that the displaced Jews chose to stay in Germany because it was a source of fast cash, and the Jews were so entrenched in the criminality plaguing Germany, others saw this desire to stay temporarily settled in Germany as a means of saving enough money to make the move to Israel, and their new lives there comfortable.<sup>81</sup>

Rabbi Klausner was so against a continued life in Germany that he proposed the forceful removal and resettlement of all Jews in the country to Palestine. He argued that it was the responsibility of world Jewry to extricate these Jews from their situation. Klausner believed that, "it becomes necessary for the Jewish community at large to reverse its policy and instead of creating comforts for the Displaced Persons to make them as uncomfortable as is possible. The American Joint Distribution Committee supplies should be withdrawn."<sup>82</sup> Only by making the

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<sup>81</sup> Klausner, *A Letter to My Children*: 163.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

Jews' living situation difficult could they be convinced to leave Germany and resettle elsewhere. However, Klausner's suggestions did not end with the withdrawal of the everyday comforts afforded to these DPs. He did not think that the removal of rations and supplies, even those that could catch a high price on the black market, would be enough to motivate the flight of these Jews. What was really needed, argued Klausner was "a call for an organization such as the *Haganah*, (the Israeli paramilitary organization) to harass the Jew. Utilities would be tampered with and all protection now given by the Adviser on Jewish Affairs, DP Chaplains, and Agency personnel to be withdrawn."<sup>83</sup> According to Klausner it was only through truly drastic measures like harassment and abuse that the Jews would be convinced to leave Germany. In order to justify his rather extreme plan, Klausner explained that the Jewish DPs could not be left to make their own decisions. "It must be borne in mind that we are dealing with a sick people. They are not to be asked, but to be told what to do. They will be thankful in years to come."<sup>84</sup> Klausner claimed that the DPs were "not prepared to understand their own position nor the promises of the future. To them, an American dollar looms as the greatest of objectives."<sup>85</sup> The trauma faced by all European Jews during the Nazi reign had, according to Klausner, resulted in Jews who were mentally and physically diseased, regardless of the severity of their war experiences. These Jews needed to be retrained to be moral upstanding citizens. His argument was that like a child the Jewish DP saw only the attractions of the short term, were unable to care for themselves, and could not make the best decisions. It was thus, the responsibility of the larger Jewish community to make the right choices for them in order to ensure that they were afforded the best future. "I am convinced that the people must be forced to go to Palestine. They are not prepared to

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid

<sup>84</sup> Ibid

<sup>85</sup> Ibid

understand their own position nor the promises of the future.”<sup>86</sup> That future, according to Klausner, lay in Palestine and whether through force or enticement these Jews needed to be settled there as soon as possible.

Klausner was not alone in his belief that the Jewish survivor was negatively affected by his or her wartime experience, and that the Shoah left more than physical scars on the Jews who survived. In his 1947 article, “Jewish Life in Liberated Germany: A Study of the Jewish DP’s,” Koppel Pinson, a historian and the *JDC* educational director in Germany and Austria wrote that the partisans

psychologically as well as physically ...represented a healthier element than the *Kotzeller* (Concentration Camp survivor). They had not been subjected to the torture and the degrading humiliation experienced by the latter and hence presented somewhat better integrated personalities.<sup>87</sup>

Like Pinson, Dr. Samuel Gringauz, a former judge and Holocaust survivor, noted that the Jewish DPs seemed so foreign to the newly deployed American forces because “Jewish DP’s... nerves have been rubbed sore by abnormal living conditions and by the constant Jew-baiting of German officialdom and private individuals,” thereby resulting in them acting in a way which many in the army believed was “abnormal.”<sup>88</sup> Jewish leaders in Germany attributed the abrasive personalities of survivors to “the shattered nervous system of all DPs.”<sup>89</sup> Like Gringauz and so many other aid workers, Pinson realized that the trauma of the Holocaust would have long lasting consequences on those who lived through them, but he believed “these scars are not necessarily permanent in character.”<sup>90</sup> Unlike Klausner, Pinson did not argue that Palestine was the only

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<sup>86</sup> Klausner, *A Letter to My Children*: 164.

<sup>87</sup> Koppel S. Pinson, "Jewish Life in Liberated Germany: A Study of the Jewish DP's," *Jewish Social Studies* 9, no. 2 (1947): 104.

<sup>88</sup> Gringauz, "Our New German Policy and the DP's: Why Immediate Resettlement is Imperative," 509.

<sup>89</sup> Abraham S. Hyman, "Minutes of Philip S. Bernstein's meeting with Jewish leaders," in *PSB* (Rochester: River Campus Libraries, 1946); Michael Berkowitz, *The Crime of My Very Existence: Nazism and the Myth of Jewish Criminality*, The S. Mark Taper Foundation Imprint in Jewish Studies (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007). 179.

<sup>90</sup> Pinson, "Jewish Life in Liberated Germany: A Study of the Jewish DP's," 110.

solution, but instead stated that, “given once again normal surroundings and community life these exaggerated and intensified personality traits can easily reduce to something approximating normal.”<sup>91</sup> While everyone universally agreed that the Jews needed to be removed from German soil, not all of the solutions needed to be as drastic or immediate as Klausner’s because, while the aid workers understood the affects of the emotional scars left by the Shoah, they did not think their solution was insurmountable in Germany.

Klausner threatened that if the world Jewish community decided not to act quickly, “there will [be] much suffering, a greater wave of anti-Semitism and a tougher struggle to accomplish what might perhaps be accomplished today.”<sup>92</sup> Klausner was not the only one to see a direct connection between the Jewish DPs and German anti-Semitism. Several Jewish advisers and DPs in Germany often commented on the dangers that accompanied anti-Jewish thinking and the need for the American military to work to combat these problems. Grossman noted, “At the present time, the Germans are inclined to hold the DPs responsible for many of Germany’s present troubles and especially for its slow recovery. At best they consider the DPs, and especially those of the Jewish faith, as parasites.”<sup>93</sup> For Klausner the Jews were partially to blame for German resentment. “The web of activities spun by the people, I venture to suggest, will become a factor in the political struggles of the German nation and will be used as a political platform from which the Jew will again be attacked.”<sup>94</sup> Klausner believed if the Jews were allowed to continue to live in Germany, and thus engage in “scandalous and dangerous” activities there, it would only lead to further increases in anti-Semitic expressions, which would

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>93</sup> Grossman, "Report of Germany's Jewish DPs," 5.

<sup>94</sup> Klausner, "The DP Picture," 4.



again become violent.<sup>95</sup> Interestingly, it appears that Klausner's attempt to quickly settle the Jews in Palestine backfired on him when members of the Jewish Co-operating Organizations met to discuss his report.

### **The Debate**

Outraged over the disparaging claims made by Klausner about both the international Jewish aid organizations' role in the demoralization of the Jews in Germany, and the state of the Jewish Displaced Persons themselves, the major Jewish welfare organizations felt compelled to respond to Klausner's report and the allegations contained therein. The Co-operating Organizations met on May 4, 1948, a mere two days after receiving Klausner's unofficial and unsolicited report on the Jews in Bavaria. As mentioned above, all of the major aid organizations and the leaders of Jewish affairs attended the meeting. Some of these participants knew Klausner well and had met with him before he wrote his report, but at the meeting it was apparent that no one was happy with Klausner's conclusions. Judge Levinthal, former adviser on Jewish affairs, was very upset with Klausner's account because the two had just met and discussed DP matters but Klausner never submitted the report to Levinthal and the findings contained were not based on their previous conversation as Klausner had implied.

The minutes from the meeting of the Jewish Co-operating Organizations clearly indicate that relocation in Israel was not an option in 1948, thereby making Klausner's calls for immediate resettlement impossible. The arguments presented at the meeting, both those for and against Klausner's claims provide a more accurate portrayal of the situation in the American zone by including the information omitted by Klausner in his report. Although every respondent noted that demoralization and feelings of despair were rampant throughout the zone and needed to be remedied, only one supported Klausner's push for the forceful migration of European

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<sup>95</sup> Klausner, *A Letter to My Children*: 168.

Jewry out of Germany. His closest supporter, Philipp Bernstein, the former advisor on Jewish Affairs from May 1946- August 1947, had previously written about the deplorable state of the Jews in Germany. As will be discussed further on in this chapter, Bernstein saw a real need to move the Jews as soon as possible, but he questioned the ability to resettle them in Palestine. Instead a plan was needed that would allow the Jews to live comfortably and honestly in Germany until another location became available for their resettlement.

Contesting Klausner's facts as presented in his report, Judge Levinthal stated that while it seemed that many Jews were hesitant to go to Palestine at the time of the meeting, he still believed that 75% would move there if they could do so legally.<sup>96</sup> Although Levinthal agreed with Klausner that there was a problem with feelings of demoralization among the Jewish DPs, he took issue with the proportions and severity of said demoralization. Instead of implementing the drastic plans put forth by Klausner, Levinthal argued for adjustments to the existing system. He suggested an educational program, noting that "perhaps education could help, improving the morale, and the willingness to go to Palestine."<sup>97</sup> Overall he claimed that Klausner's report was too general, and that although some DPs may have been behaving unethically, they were in fact in the minority. He said, "in the light of the black market, it is still gratifying to see numbers of DPs interested in vocational training."<sup>98</sup> His statements were a direct refutation of one of Klausner's major complaints against the current state of DP affairs in Germany: their "laziness."

Arguments against Klausner's plan questioned the likelihood of moving the Jews, noting "for some time to come there is no chance to go to Palestine."<sup>99</sup> The logistical problems of resettling the Jews in partitioned Palestine were, members posited, too great to be solved anytime

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<sup>96</sup> Jewish Co-operating Organization, "Meeting of the Jewish Co-operating Organizations on Rabbi Abraham Klausner's Suggestions respecting the DP Situation," in *Jewish DPs in Germany* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1948).

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

in the near future. Dr. Nahum Goldmann of the Jewish Agency responded to Klausner's report by pointing out that Palestine was an unrealistic destination at best, as "We cannot promise them early admission to Palestine..."<sup>100</sup> He continued on to argue that if there were a possibility that the leaders of the new state would be forced into truces to prevent a war with their neighbors, there was also a strong chance that they would have to enter into a policy of voluntary limited immigration. This would reduce the number of new immigrants to no more than 4,000 a month at the very most, and according to Dr. Goldmann this number would be quickly consumed by the refugees imprisoned in Cyprus before a single Jewish DP from Germany ever entered Palestine. He estimated that it would be a year at the least before, "a single DP's turn would come."<sup>101</sup> Dr. Simon Segal, a member of the American Jewish Conference, continued on with this argument by noting that even though world Jewry was optimistic about the future of partitioned Palestine, they were realistic about the fact that the Jews would be unable to emigrate en masse right after the new state was handed over to the Yishuv.<sup>102</sup> He stated, "Even in the hopeful days of the partition decision, nobody had entertained the idea of taking large masses of DPs into Palestine at once. Everybody realized the impossibility of moving large masses. This is infinitely more the case today."<sup>103</sup> He also noted that there was no possibility of forcing anyone to immigrate against his or her will. Accordingly, Levinthal noted that "family units and older people do not want to do so [emigrate to Palestine] because they cannot venture the risks" associated with the instabilities of the soon to be formed Jewish state.<sup>104</sup> Meir Grossman of the JDC also noted a similar problem when he mentioned that programs needed to be created to help the DPs, "whose

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<sup>100</sup> Klausner, *A Letter to My Children*: 167.

<sup>101</sup> Organization, "Meeting of the Jewish Co-operating Organizations on Rabbi Abrham Klausner's Suggestions respecting the DP Situation," 2.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

physical deficiencies will block their emigration.”<sup>105</sup> These comments illustrate that all those involved in the care for Jewish DPs understood that some survivors would be barred from emigrating and would thus be forced to remain in Germany. While these leaders realized that there would be Jews left in Germany indefinitely, they also believed that those who remained behind had no choice and that all other Jews would leave for Palestine when the opportunity arose.

The sentiments regarding resettlement in Palestine were seconded in several accounts from the period, and discussions of this nature occurred between all sectors of world Jewry. In his independent report on 1948-1949 published in the American Jewish Yearbook Hyman wrote,

The prospects for the immediate mass resettlement of the DPs in Israel were not too bright. Questions were being raised about the absorptive capacity of Israel, about a selective immigration in terms of Israel's present needs, and about the imperative necessity for evacuating the Jews from the Muslim countries to save them from annihilation. In view of these factors, it was estimated that a maximum of 60,000 Jewish DPs would be resettled in Israel during the twelve-month period following the establishment of peace.<sup>106</sup>

However, the date for this “peace” was unknown when Hyman compiled the report. He noted “barring unforeseen circumstances, such as succession of truces of guerrilla warfare, it was acknowledged that the summer of 1949 would still find about 90,000 Jewish DPs vegetating in the DP camps of Europe.”<sup>107</sup> While this number indicated that a portion of the Jewish Displaced Persons would be resettled by 1949, it also implied that there would still be a large number of Jews waiting for emigration opportunities. Jewish aid workers understood that even a year after Klausner's report the Jewish problem would more than likely still exist in Germany.

Comments regarding the fate of European Jewry peppered reports discussing their continued care and rehabilitation as early as 1945. These remarks increased as time went by and as the date for partition approached statements discussing immigration littered the majority of

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<sup>105</sup> Grossman, "Report of Germany's Jewish DPs," 4.

<sup>106</sup> Hyman, "Displaced Persons," 473.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

memos sent among members of World Jewry and between organizations. When addressing the Central Committee of Liberated Jews, Haber stated, that “you know perhaps better than I that regardless [of] what any of us may do a substantial number of our people are doomed to remain here for some time to come.”<sup>108</sup> B.M. Joffe, also of the JDC, seconded this statement and claimed that emigration presented a much larger issue than many people believed. He reported that, “The problem of immigration will not be solved in the next six months and may perhaps drag on for the next two or three years.”<sup>109</sup> In a report on Germany’s Jewish DPs written for internal review by the JDC in early 1948, Meir Grossman posited that the number of Jews in Germany would remain large, maybe even as large as the current population at the time of writing his report.<sup>110</sup> With the rapidly rising birthrate in the camps and the new infiltrations from Romania, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary, Grossman estimated that there would be no reduction in the number of Jews in Germany.<sup>111</sup> These statements from 1948 help illustrate the perceived difficulties associated with Palestine as well as the long-term problem of emigration.

Concerns over emigration did not lessen with the creation of the state of Israel and only grew with the limited immigration allowed by the new government. In a report from 1949, Grossman said: “frankly, I have been told by responsible officials in the work here that, in spite of the hardships and the ominous outlook, many, perhaps a very large number of Jewish DPs, have accommodated themselves to the prevailing situation here and are not inclined to go to places where the risks are very great.”<sup>112</sup> According to Harry Greenstein, the last Advisor on Jewish Affairs to the U.S. commander, “The best estimate as to the total number of Jews that will

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<sup>108</sup> Haber, "Speech from Dr. Haber to the 3rd session of the Congress of Liberated Jews in the U.S. zone," 2.

<sup>109</sup> B.M. Joffe, "American Jewish Committee Meeting on European Affairs," in *Jewish Displaced Persons in Germany* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1948), 1.

<sup>110</sup> Grossman, "Report of Germany's Jewish DPs," 3.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

#### IV. No Future in Germany?

remain in Germany, not including Berlin, ranges between 15-20,000.”<sup>113</sup> Similarly, Bachman stated, “In informed Jewish circles it is assumed that there will be a small core of approximately 25-30,000 Jews who will remain in Germany, too weak physically and financially or too old to think of emigration. There will also possibly [be] a number of elements who will remain because they are able to reestablish themselves favorably from the financial point of view.”<sup>114</sup> Unlike earlier arguments that stated only the infirm and elderly Jews would remain in Germany, those commenting on emigration after the creation of the state realized that there would be survivors who were able bodied and chose to reestablish their lives in the country of their former oppressors.<sup>115</sup>

The participants at the Jewish Co-operating Organization meeting found fault with Klausner’s plans for several reasons, not just because of the logistical uncertainties of immigration to Palestine, but also because of the suffering they believed it would inflict on the Jewish DPs residing in the country. Goldmann noted that if these rash plans were put into place they would most likely lead to the starvation of many Jewish DPs as their emigration could not be guaranteed. Why should the aid organizations move to cut off the DPs’ supplies, Goldmann questioned, when such actions would only lead to their starvation, force them into the German economy, and compel them to “go even deeper into undesirable practices.”<sup>116</sup> If in fact there was no opportunity to immigrate anyway, why then should the Jewish aid organizations add to Jewish suffering? Goldmann questioned the efficacy of Klausner’s plans by asking why world Jewry would make the DPs’ remaining time in Germany worse than it must be if in fact his

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<sup>113</sup> Greenstein, "The DP situation," 5.

<sup>114</sup> Bachman, "Translation," 3.

<sup>115</sup> Goldmann argued that, “Most of the young people refuse to go as well.” Organization, "Meeting of the Jewish Co-operating Organizations on Rabbi Abrham Klausner's Suggestions respecting the DP Situation," 3.

<sup>116</sup> Jewish Co-operating Organizations, "Meeting of the Jewish Co-operating Organizations on Rabbi Klausner's Suggestions respecting the DP Situation," (New York: The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee-Jerusalem, 1948), 2.

above cited estimates on immigration proved to be true? Dr. Segal agreed with Goldmann stating that if the aid organizations were to cut off the DPs' supplies and amenities they would become, "even more dependent on illicit activities."<sup>117</sup> While Dr. Segal did note that Klausner's report was a good warning about the demoralization of the Jewish DPs, and that a new rehabilitation program was needed, he believed that Klausner's suggestions were too radical to really solve the problem. According to Moses Leavitt the JDC could not be blamed for the DPs who did choose to sell their goods on the black market, as Klausner had done in his report. Leavitt argued that the JDC was doing the very best it could given the situation. Like Segal, Leavitt believed that "giving less goods means more black trade,"<sup>118</sup> and he agreed with Dr. Haber's evaluation of these illegal activities, stating that the number of DPs involved was closer to 10% than the 30% argued by Klausner.<sup>119</sup>

Despite all of the arguments against the plausibility of the immediate resettlement of the DPs in Palestine, against his overinflated numbers of those involved in illegal crimes, and against his push to force all Jews to leave Germany, Klausner still felt that there was no future in Germany for the DPs. He answered these arguments about his falsified numbers by claiming, "Germans are being flooded by offers of Jewish traders, even when they descend from

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>119</sup> This is not to say that the JDC was unaware of Jewish participation in illegal trade. In a report from May 17, 1948, less than two weeks after the abovementioned meeting, Saul Hayes, a JDC worker, participated in a discussion and he stated, "our kosher meat is finding its way into the German economy and into German homes." He continued on to note that reports home to the States argued that German hausfraus could be seen walking down the street, "carrying the meat labeled, 'Canadian Jewish Congress- Joint Distribution Committee' etc." Even after acknowledging these crimes Hayes stated, "Perhaps our DPs used these cans of meat as a medium of exchange and if they did not need the particular can of meat they would barter it for something else. He stated that this was not the case; that actually thousands of DPs don't need the supplementary ration of meat and that those who do not need it simply use it as a medium of trading of benefit to the German Economy although admittedly of small benefit and without improving their basic standards." Saul Hayes, "Personal and Confidential," in *Black Market* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1948), 1.

streetcars.”<sup>120</sup> He believed that Jewish involvement in illegal activities was the biggest threat to Jewish life in Europe and posed a serious danger to their continued existence there. These activities did not consist solely of the black market but also included, “incredible rackets of other kinds, like kidnapping, bribery, people making millions by getting operators out of jail, high Jewish officials involved, etc. On one occasion, four Jewish peddlers were shot by a German policeman, and we had to hush up the matter because we were in the wrong.”<sup>121</sup> For Klausner the actual numbers of Jews involved in crime was not nearly as important as the crimes they committed and the fact that they would participate in such activities at all. He was outraged over the criminal roles played by some Jewish DPs because he expected better of them. Instead of acknowledging that there were amoral people in all societies, including among the displaced Jews, Klausner blamed the postwar situation in Germany.

Not only did Klausner implicate the Jewish DPs in these illegalities, but he also pointed his finger at top officials and aid workers, arguing that they were just as involved as the average DP. His comments at the meeting did not end with these allegations, instead he continued on to say that these criminal acts were not strictly occurring outside of DP centers, but, “in any camp, any day, hundreds of Jews can be seen engaged in business, some of them wholesale.”<sup>122</sup> This further alludes to the acceptance, if not participation, of those outside workers stationed in and around these Jewish DP camps. Klausner ended his statement by saying, “the problem is there, it must be dealt with.”<sup>123</sup>

As mentioned above, Klausner did have one supporter in Rabbi Bernstein, who claimed that the fate of the Jews in 1948 was in a state of, “steady, catastrophic demoralization,” and the

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<sup>120</sup> Organization, "Meeting of the Jewish Co-operating Organizations on Rabbi Abraham Klausner's Suggestions respecting the DP Situation," 3.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.



only way to cure that ill was by removing the Jews from their situation, even if this must be done forcefully. He believed that the, “majority is prey to the inevitable calamity and shame of illicit activities,” and even the workers, he argued, were mostly idling, an argument often discussed in postwar reports on the DP situation.<sup>124</sup> He continued on to say, “at the early stages, we resisted any attempt at forcing DPs into the German economy because the paramount interest was to get them out to Palestine...Of course we should get them out as soon as possible, even against their will. But can they be moved to Palestine?”<sup>125</sup> Although everyone at the meeting could agree that the ideal situation would be the immediate removal and resettlement of the Jewish DPs in the soon to be formed Jewish state, everyone but Klausner was aware that in May 1948 this was not a viable option.

Unlike Klausner, Bernstein was not as optimistic that forcing the Jews to fend for themselves in Germany would help motivate them to immigrate to Palestine, and he questioned if compelling the DPs to work for their living would not have the opposite effect in convincing the Jews to move to the Jewish settlement in the Middle East? Like the other members before him, Bernstein noted that Palestine’s borders were closed and would remain so for some time. He suggested that by providing jobs in the Jewish centers, the aid workers could give the Jews a morale boost, but even this option was not really a good solution because these jobs provided future opportunities for “further phony work.”<sup>126</sup> Bernstein’s account makes it clear that even those supporting change in the Jewish centers realized that pushing the Jews into the German economy or moving them out of the country were no more possible options in 1948 than they had been in 1945. As Judge Levinthal pointed out, “many Jewish DPs are already out of camps,

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<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 4.

and in the German economy.”<sup>127</sup> Instead, as Eugene Hevesi from the JDC noted, “cutting off food supplement and amenity supplies, or even maintenance, or closing the camps altogether would throw the DPs upon the German economy all right, but not as workers but as speculators by predilection and by necessity.”<sup>128</sup> The solutions suggested by Klausner, and other like-minded aid workers, they believed, would only drive the Jewish DP further into the illegal activities permeating German society. Klausner’s report ignored the hundreds of times that Jewish DPs explained why they were unwilling to work on the German economy. As Abraham S. Hyman noted in his article, “Displaced Persons,” “first, there was their psychological aversion to any labor that would directly or indirectly benefit the German or Austrian economies; second, under the postwar inflationary conditions prevailing in Germany, the local wage scale had virtually no purchasing power.”<sup>129</sup> He continued on to say that the money the DPs would make could only be used to purchase rationed goods, which could not be bought in the DP camps.<sup>130</sup> Klausner’s argument that the Jewish DPs chose not to work in the German economy because of their inherent idleness and their illicit dealings ignored the actual situation plaguing the DPs. It was not the DPs who had ruined Germany as was so often argued by Germans, but the chaos and devastation of war. That war had taken everything but the life of the survivor, and they did not feel responsible for rebuilding the German state. While the vast majority of Jewish DPs did not want to work for Germans or to do jobs that helped to rebuild the country, there were almost 10,000 Jewish free-livers who had already chosen to settle outside of the DP camps and to work in the German economy. Additionally, the employment of displaced Jews by German-Jews, the involvement of Jewish DPs in illegal trade, and business partnerships between Jews and

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<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>129</sup> Hyman, "Displaced Persons," 460.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

Germans placed many Jews squarely in the German economy. Although some Jewish aid workers chose to ignore these types of overlaps between Jewish Displaced Persons and Germans, there is no denying that they happened fairly regularly.

The idea of forcing the Jews into the German economy was very foreign to the Jewish aid workers who understood the extent of the horrors of the Holocaust and the amount of work that the Jews had already invested into the running of Germany through the confiscation of their property by the Nazis and their forced labor during the war. This is not to say that Klausner and others arguing for the forced integration of the Jews into the German economy did not understand the traumas experienced by Holocaust survivors, but they believed that by making the Jews work alongside Germans, they would become motivated to move of their own accord. Hevesi questioned the morality of creating a policy that would force the DPs to work in the German economy. He recounted Haber's proposed plan to recruit 200 Jewish DPs to work for the military in an army construction workforce, but he asked if the Co-operating Organizations were, "willing to endorse a general solution of work obligation for all DPs, outside the camps, in complete merger with the German economy?"<sup>131</sup> Could the various aid organizations justify the incorporation of the Jews in Germany into the German society? According to Hevesi this option might very well be the only way to solve the moral problem among the DPs, but he believed it would come at a very high cost to the well being of these Jews.

We must remember that the debate over the fate of the Jews in Germany was initially motivated by Klausner's inflammatory report arguing for their forceful immigration out of the country and into Palestine. However, the Co-operating Organization's report indicates that by this point in the meeting most of those present realized that neither emigration nor the DPs'

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<sup>131</sup> Organization, "Meeting of the Jewish Co-operating Organizations on Rabbi Abraham Klausner's Suggestions respecting the DP Situation," 4.

integration into German society were viable options. While the previously discussed commentators found numerous faults in Klausner's arguments, Dr. Nahum Goldmann from the Jewish Agency questioned the very worth of the DPs as future citizens of Israel. He believed that the displaced Jews in Germany were too damaged by the war, and were not morally up-standing enough to become good citizens in the Jewish state.<sup>132</sup> For him it was not as much a matter of legal immigration to Palestine, but rather, a question of the quality of the individuals to be resettled there. This argument was not necessarily new and was pretty common in the immediate postwar period. In the minutes collected by Rabbi Bernstein when meeting with Jewish leaders in 1946, there was a discussion of the character of those who survived. "The Jews who survived and who constitute the DP population do not represent the best of Jewry. They were those whom the SS selected for survival. The best of European Jewry, the less vigorous and cultured were exterminated."<sup>133</sup> This statement was the Jewish equivalent of German claims that Hitler had exterminated all of the good Jews and left Germany saddled with bad Jews.<sup>134</sup> However, arguments of Jewish unworthiness were met with protestation and DPs and aid workers pointed out that the Nazis had not fully succeeded in their attempts at exterminating the upper echelons and intelligencia of European Jewry. Goldmann's comments were met by the other participants at the meeting with cries of outrage and rejected; illustrating that at this particular gathering he was alone in his assessment of Jewish DP worth. Bernstein argued that "in one camp, the chairman is a former Court of Appeals judge in Lithuania. In another the doctor was head of a hospital in Poland. Able scholars have established academies

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Hyman, "Minutes of Philip S. Bernstein's meeting with Jewish leaders," 1; Berkowitz, *The Crime of My Very Existence*: 179.

<sup>134</sup> Norbert Muhlen, *The Return of Germany, a Tale of Two Countries* (Chicago: H. Regnery Co., 1953). 167.

of learning. Newspapers, concerts and drama flourish...”<sup>135</sup> While world Jewry could agree that some of European Jewry’s best individuals had survived, Goldmann argued that the survivors were not the type of individuals that the new state needed. According to Goldmann, the reality of the situation in Palestine was that the new Jewish state would need to care for itself and not for her refugees. He said “it [Israel] can use, under the dictates of Sacro Egoismo, only young people who can shoot. It cannot be interested at this time in youth aliyas [immigration of Jews to Israel], in children, in families and old people.”<sup>136</sup> The Yishuv would, “have to chose the better material, young, willing people,” instead of the more than 100,000 Displaced Persons in Germany.<sup>137</sup> The new citizens of the State would need to be fierce defenders. The Yishuv was only interested in the healthy young camp inhabitants, especially former partisans, Zionists living on Kibbutzim, and those who had survived the war in Russia.<sup>138</sup> As we know from Leavitt’s account of the Jewish refugees, there were around 55,000 children, elderly, and infirm individuals, or more than half of the total DP population. One must add to this number the families that included members who fell into these categories further raising the total of “unattractive” immigrants who wanted to be settled in Palestine. Goldmann’s claims illustrated that the DPs’ worth only extended as far as he or she was able to contribute to the new Jewish state. According to Goldmann, the Jewish state had reached a “brutal phase” where the needs of the state came before anything else, including the remnant of European Jewry awaiting resettlement. Instead of taking the Jews in Germany to Palestine, he noted that “in Cyprus, in Eastern Europe and notably in the Moslem countries we have an infinitely more desirable

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<sup>135</sup> Berkowitz, *The Crime of My Very Existence*: 179.

<sup>136</sup> Organization, "Meeting of the Jewish Co-operating Organizations on Rabbi Abraham Klausner's Suggestions respecting the DP Situation," 4.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

material available.”<sup>139</sup> The Jewish state would need strong, able-bodied fighters not broken men and women, children and invalids, argued Goldmann. The new immigrants needed to defend the threatened sapling of a country were not to be found in corrupt centers in Germany, but rather in the East. Once the fighting had settled, and the institutions necessary for the care of these individuals were in place, the very old and young along with their families, could then come to Israel.

According to scholars like Idith Zertal, the Zionist party had used the DPs as a political tool to illustrate to the world that the Jews needed their own homeland.<sup>140</sup> The continued presence of displaced Jews in Germany had definitely motivated the United Nations decision to partition Palestine. However, once the decision had been made to allot the Jews a state in Palestine, the Jewish DPs had, Goldmann believed served their purpose and were no longer as important to the Yishuv. Goldmann stated “the DPs represent no political argument for Palestine any more either. This angle does not make any impression on General Marshall anymore, it is therefore a politically irrelevant thing from the point of view of the Jewish State.”<sup>141</sup> The DPs had served their purpose as the victims reminding the world of Jewish suffering and need. They were no longer politically significant as a tool for the Yishuv and thus they were no longer important.

Goldmann did not ignore the fact that there was a continuing Jewish problem in Germany or that the Jewish aid organizations desperately needed to find a solution. Upon establishing that Palestine was not an answer to the Jewish question, he was able to point out that the, “situation in Germany is explosive” and that care for European Jewry put a huge strain on the “Jewish

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> Idith Zertal, *From Catastrophe to Power: Holocaust Survivors and the Emergence of Israel* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

budget,” or the combined resources of the various Jewish welfare organizations used to care for Jews around the world who were in need.<sup>142</sup> Goldmann suggested that while the DP problem could not be solved overnight, the Jews could slowly be integrated into Germany society. He rejected Klausner’s plans of forcing the Jews into the German economy and noted that starvation was also not a viable option. Instead Jews needed to be shown that they could benefit from learning skills in Germany and that all able bodied Jews should work in the German economy in order to earn a wage to support themselves. Only those Jews who could not work should be cared for, argued Goldmann, and the belief that the Jewish DP did not want to contribute to “strengthening Germany” must be rejected out of hand as the “scandalous situation” in the country could no longer be accepted. While Palestine might not have been an option for Goldmann, the prospect of the current situation continuing as it was also unacceptable.

On a practical note, Leavitt pointed out that the DPs would not, “work for worthless marks if a months pay is less than the value of one pack of cigarettes.”<sup>143</sup> The realization that the pay issued by German employers was worthless led many Jews to seek out employment within their camps or through UNRRA, which paid in kind. Jewish aid workers and military officials understood that the Jewish DP was unwilling to help rebuild Germany, especially when they could make a better profit working for supplies that could then be traded on the black market. Members of the JDC discussed possible solutions that would get the DPs working while removing the temptation of the black market. According to Joffe, “it was judge Rifkind’s opinion that DPs must be paid in tangible currency which may accumulate to their credit in countries other than Germany, otherwise they would not work and may continued to be engaged

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<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Organizations, "Meeting of the Jewish Co-operating Organizations on Rabbi Klausner's Suggestions respecting the DP Situation," 4.

in black market activities.”<sup>144</sup> The leaders of the various Jewish aid organizations realized that as long as Palestine’s borders were closed immigration was not a plausible solution to the DP problem. Instead something had to be done to make the best of DP camp living in order to ensure that the Jews did not fall into a life of idleness or crime. Unfortunately, these individuals found that there was little they could do to remedy the conditions plaguing postwar Germany.

Grossman did not express concerns over the issues of payment for DPs working in the German economy, but rather noted that the organizations at the meeting had “no power for changing the situation, and we cannot force the DPs into the German economy.”<sup>145</sup> Just as Goldmann had argued against the possibility of resettlement in Palestine, Grossman claimed that the Jewish aid organizations could not, “force them [DPs] to turn German.”<sup>146</sup> Cutting off JDC supplies and compulsory work in the German economy were not solutions that members of the American Jewish Committee could countenance. While noting that the opinions expressed by Goldmann were solely his own and were in no way reflective of any of the organizations present, especially not the World Jewish Congress, Rabbi Stephen Wise also noted that he could not “conceive that the DPs could be forced to sink into the life of Germany.”<sup>147</sup> For many of the members present at this meeting, forcing the Jewish DPs into becoming active members of German society was simply not an option. They understood that forcing Jews into the German economy would only further harm an already traumatized people. Instead they needed a plan that would allow the DP to remain in Germany in a semi-permanent way while keeping the displaced Jews autonomous and separate from the German society and allowing them to live as moral and beneficial members in the country.

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<sup>144</sup> Joffe, "American Jewish Committee Meeting on European Affairs," 1.

<sup>145</sup> Organizations, "Meeting of the Jewish Co-operating Organizations on Rabbi Klausner's Suggestions respecting the DP Situation," 4.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.



All of the suggestions put forth by the co-operating aid organizations seemed ineffectual in solving the Jewish question. The possibility of educating the people into becoming “worthwhile citizens” or enticing them through monetary incentives was infeasible solutions when the sheer number of DPs was considered. Educating or paying DPs to refrain from involving themselves in the illicit activities dominating Germany was not possible, and several of the participants at the meeting understood that “we cannot eliminate the black market, only the economic rehabilitation of Germany can do it.”<sup>148</sup> If Palestine were to remain closed and integration into German society was not an available option, then how would these organizations solve the Jewish question? Resolving the internal debate raging between the members of the various Jewish organizations seemed to remain a problem without a solution as the meeting drew to a close. All parties agreed that there could be no future Jewish life in Germany, the issue was how to care for the Jewish DPs while their resettlement was being arranged, a task that would prove to take another nine years to accomplish. Hopeful that William Haber might be able to propose a solution to the DP problem, Leavitt arranged a meeting between the Advisor on Jewish Affairs and the Co-operating Organizations. Although Haber did not end up meeting with these organizations, he did issue a response to Klausner’s report on May 28, 1948, directed to the Co-operating organizations.

#### **Haber’s Take on the Jewish Situation in Germany**

As the lead contact working directly with the Displaced Jews, World Jewry, the Yishuv, the American military, the aid organizations in charge of caring for the DPs, and the American government, Dr. Haber was the most informed individual on the issues facing European Jewry. Haber summarized his feelings toward Klausner’s report by saying that “his factual analysis gives a distorted and inaccurate picture of the Jewish DPs. It exaggerates their shortcomings,

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<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 3.

ascribes to all the moral aberrations of the few, and completely fails to mention the positive and constructive aspects of the life of the Jewish DPs.”<sup>149</sup> However, he did not disagree with all of Klausner’s claims. Haber knew Klausner and argued that for Klausner “militant Zionism is a religion, an all-consuming passion.”<sup>150</sup> Haber viewed Klausner’s convictions, his desire to see the Jews settled in Israel, and concern brought on by his belief that the Jews would not immigrate to the Jewish homeland as a lens through which he formed his opinions, thereby preventing him from being objective about the complexities of Jewish life in Germany. Klausner’s biases prevented him from creating rational solutions and, according to Haber, led him to write a report full of “serious errors of commission or omission...” with “major conclusions and recommendations [that] are either unrealistic or premature.”<sup>151</sup> Haber devoted the majority of his reports to contesting Klausner’s claims and attempting to counter his numerous suggestions.

The most pressing point plaguing the status of Jews in Germany was their supposed predominance in illicit activities. It is for this reason that Haber addressed this claim at the beginning of his statement. While Haber did not disagree with Klausner’s argument that the DPs were living in a disheartened and idle state, he indicated that there was a very high standard of morals in the camp. Haber claimed: “Surely, in a situation as bleak as camp life presents, there are many occasions when the DPs will reflect man at his worst. However, that does not, by the wildest stretch of the truth, indicate that the deterioration has reached a point that the DPs have thrown all moral value to the winds.”<sup>152</sup> He pointed to the boys and men studying the Talmud all day, the thousands of newly married couples focused on rearing their children, and those engaged in JDC work projects, ORT, and camp committees as examples of the resilience of

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<sup>149</sup> Klausner, *A Letter to My Children*: 179.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 173.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, 174.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, 176.

European Jewry. While he contended that “it is impossible to exaggerate the sense of frustration and helplessness that it [the discouragement felt by the DPs] etched on the faces of our people vegetating in the camps,” Haber did not see the point in portraying the Jewish DPs in the bleakest terms possible or vilifying them, especially because the reality of their situation was bad enough.<sup>153</sup> He questioned the purpose of showing the DPs in such a negative light considering that these statements, “lead one to question whether the people are worth salvaging for Israel or any other country.”<sup>154</sup> Klausner’s argument that the majority of DPs were involved in the illicit activities rampant throughout Germany and were thus living in an amoral state, was untrue. Haber noted, there were Jews who were heavily involved in the black market, the production and sale of false documents, and other illicit activities, but this was not the norm for all DPs. “The intimation that this is typical of all the Jewish DPs has nothing to support it but Klausner’s eagerness to sustain his thesis that the Jewish DP is so sick that nothing short of surgery is necessary to save him from physical and moral destruction.”<sup>155</sup> According to Haber, Klausner was driven by his Zionist religious zeal, which motivated him to portray the Jews as demoralized supplicants.

While Klausner’s portrayal of the Jewish DPs bordered on “vilification’,” Haber claimed that their involvement in illegal activities was in actuality the “normal pattern in Germany.”<sup>156</sup> He was willing to concede that the majority of Jewish DPs were involved in the grey market and that there were members who were big business operators; however, he noted “the overall shabby appearance of our DPs convinces me that the real ‘operators’ constitute a very small

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<sup>153</sup> Dr. William Haber, “Response of Dr. Haber,” (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1948), 2.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

<sup>156</sup> Klausner, *A Letter to My Children*: 175.

fraction of our people.”<sup>157</sup> Haber wrote that Klausner could afford to be as generous in his evaluation of Jewish criminality as General Clay, who said that the conclusion that the Jewish DPs were the main offenders on the black market was sheer nonsense.<sup>158</sup> Klausner’s identification of the Jews as the exclusive culprits on the grey and black market was “decidedly unfair and untrue,” especially when one considered that “in this crazy economy, all of us are guilty of participating in the black and grey market to varying degrees.”<sup>159</sup> In a country lacking a functioning economy, even members of the aid organizations caring for DPs were forced to occasionally seek out goods on the illegal markets. This having been said, Haber pointed out that court statistical records illustrated that Jewish involvement in all crime was lower than any other group in the country.<sup>160</sup>

Unlike Klausner, Haber blamed Jewish idleness and involvement with crime on the devastated situation in Germany, noting “if our DPs were given some reasonable incentive for doing work, they would accept employment.”<sup>161</sup> However, like Hevessi, Grossmann, and Rabbi Wise as well as several others, Haber realized that integrating the Jews into German society would not solve the problems faced by these DPs. Haber claimed that the Jews who participated in German society would only end up on the black market or continue to prosper from it like those who had integrated themselves and the native German-Jews.<sup>162</sup> Besides this, the sheer number of native Germans and German refugees forced from Eastern Europe already plagued the German housing authority. How would they ever find housing for the camp Jews?<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> Haber, “Response of Dr. Haber,” 2.

<sup>161</sup> Klausner, *A Letter to My Children*: 175.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid., 176.

<sup>163</sup> Wetzel, *J. Jüdisches Leben in München, 1945-1951: Durchgangsstation oder Wiederaufbau?* Munich, Kommissionsverlag Uni-Druck, 1987. Notes

It is important to note that Haber believed that the Jewish DPs needed to live by high moral standards. He argued, “Jews everywhere are being judged by what is observed in the DP camps where our people are compelled to live under the most abnormal conditions.”<sup>164</sup> Haber claimed that, “The plight of these people in the established assembly centers is a pitiful one; they live in want and in daily fear of being thrown out on the streets and left to the mercy of a hostile German population.”<sup>165</sup> The threat of a German takeover of the control of all Displaced Persons in Germany combined with rumors of the impending closure of all the DP camps left many displaced Jews fearful for their futures. Unable to imagine living under the care of their former oppressors, and losing the protection offered by the American military, many DPs began to worry about the slow transfer of power occurring throughout Germany as the Allies handed over their control to the West German government. Haber argued that those, “who have been spared their cruel fate [the Jewish Displaced Persons] can [not] afford to be altogether righteous in our approach to the moral aberrations of the DPs,”<sup>166</sup> as nothing could “offset the frustration of a daily life of waiting.”<sup>167</sup> This having been said, Haber also understood that the black market was a huge problem across Germany and went so far as telling the Central Committee that it was their responsibility to their Jewish brethren to help end illegal trade before the army arrested and sentenced those involved.<sup>168</sup>

Haber realized the detriment of Jewish involvement in illegal trade and noted “its [the black market] extensive operations in the DP camps is leading to a great deterioration of the Army’s attitude toward the Jewish DPs.”<sup>169</sup> He believed that the black market influenced

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<sup>164</sup> Haber, "Speech from Dr. Haber to the 3rd session of the Congress of Liberated Jews in the U.S. zone," 4.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

<sup>166</sup> Haber, "Prosecution of DPs for Presenting False Documents to United States Consular Offices," in *Haber* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1948), 2.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

<sup>168</sup> Haber, "Speech from Dr. Haber to the 3rd session of the Congress of Liberated Jews in the U.S. zone," 3.

<sup>169</sup> Haber, "Notes on Session with Gernal Lucius D. Clay in Frankfurt," 3.

#### IV. No Future in Germany?

American thinking about the displaced Jews and said: "Perhaps that explains why it is possible to say that the attitude of the military toward the DPs is negative."<sup>170</sup> Haber recognized that the position of the Jewish Holocaust survivors had changed and that the displaced Jews in Germany were no longer viewed in the same sympathetic light as they had been immediately after the war. He also understood that the position of Germany had shift from one of an enemy nation to that of an American ally. Concerns over Jewish American relations continued to plague Haber throughout his tenure, and these sentiments were expressed again and again throughout his reports. He explained postwar Jewish-American relations by saying,

The nerve[s] of the military authorities are also frayed so far as the DPs are concerned. The honeymoon days, when the DP had the undivided sympathy of the army, are over. The world has moved on to what appears to be larger issues and the constant pre-occupation with the DPs that interferes with the primary mission of the army in the occupied countries does not exactly endear the DPs to the army.<sup>171</sup>

For Haber there was a,

Very real sense of a crisis atmosphere, both in Germany and in Austria, particularly in the former. I am told-and some of it I sensed myself-that irritations are increasing; that some issues, like that of black market operations, appear to be coming to a head; and that the difficulties are likely to increase if emigration does not get under way within the next six months.<sup>172</sup>

However, what was the answer that would remedy the problems straining relations between Jews and Americans? Haber personally placed a lot of blame on the Central Committee of Liberated Jews, arguing that it was their responsibility to help provide monetary support for the DPs under their care in order to alleviate the financial strains pushing these Jews into the black market. Haber said that the silence of the Central Committee was viewed by the military as acceptance of these illegal practices.<sup>173</sup> The Central Committee as "the elected leaders of the Sherit Hapleita [sic] must accept as true what I am telling you and must wage a vigorous campaign to regain and

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<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> Haber, "Speech from Dr. Haber to the 3rd session of the Congress of Liberated Jews in the U.S. zone," 2.

<sup>172</sup> Haber, "Notes on Session with Gernal Lucius D. Clay in Frankfurt," 1.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

retain the friendship of the American forces and the American people.”<sup>174</sup> While Haber, like Klausner, Bernstein, and so many others saw the only real solution to the DP problem to be emigration, he also saw the barriers blocking the path to Israel.<sup>175</sup>

What upset Haber more than anything else in Klausner’s report was his total omission of the positive aspects of DP life; so much so that Haber argued this was offensive by its very absence. While Haber supported the closure of the camps at the earliest possible date, he also realized that these centers had served a purpose in providing Jews a sense of security, solidarity, religious life, and culture, not to mention that they probably helped to influence the UN decision to create a Jewish state. Haber argued without reservation that the Jews needed to be evacuated and that Israel was the ultimate destination, but he noted that Klausner’s one big mistake in this argument was his belief that this was a possibility in 1948 or the near future for that matter. Although Haber agreed with Klausner in his final goals, he noted, similarly to Goldman, “the government in Israel has not made such an offer [mass immigration] and would, in fact, be foolish to add to its burdens in the already strained economy by inviting people who could not readily be integrated into fighting forces.”<sup>176</sup> He was confident that once immigration visas were issued there would be plenty of DPs willing to leave Germany and resettle in Israel. The people in the camps were ready to leave Europe and build their lives anew; they just needed the situation in Israel to stabilize and their paperwork to come through. Any attempts to compel the Jewish DPs to leave by withdrawing support, forcing them into the German economy or cutting their contact with JDC aid workers and rabbis was according to Haber, “tantamount to a sadistic

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<sup>174</sup> Haber, "Speech from Dr. Haber to the 3rd session of the Congress of Liberated Jews in the U.S. zone," 1.

<sup>175</sup> Not all DP organizations sat idly by when it came to combating the black market. The Landsberg Leaders introduced a vigorous campaign against idleness and black market speculation and promoted vocational training. Posters throughout the camp reminded the people, “Trading helps the Germans and only blackens the Jewish name” and that, “The gates of Palestine are closed for idlers and Luftmenschen. Pinson, "Jewish Life in Liberated Germany: A Study of the Jewish DP's," 123.

<sup>176</sup> Klausner, *A Letter to My Children*: 178.

abandonment of the people at a time when they most desperately need the constructive guidance and encouragement which these agencies can give them to weather the psychological storms through which they were passing.”<sup>177</sup> While no conclusions were reached at the end of this debate, Haber ended his report by stating that the JDC program would have to be reevaluated in its entirety, possibly with a “means test” by which the aid organizations would only provide what a DP needed, not large scale supplies for all. He also said that there might come a time when the Jewish DPs needed to be encouraged to work so that they could help elevate some of the costs associated with the care of DPs incurred by world Jewry. Finally, Haber noted that the vocational training program would most likely need to be revised so that the skills offered catered to the needs of the countries to which DPs were likely to immigrate. He finished by noting that he advised the five agencies represented at the meeting of the major welfare organizations to “examine these issues and their program implications.”<sup>178</sup> Haber realized that the DP situation would most likely stretch on for some time before the last displaced Jews were resettled outside of the camps. With no immediate end date in mind, Haber encouraged the major Jewish welfare organizations caring for the Jewish DPs in Germany to reevaluate, and possibly restructure, their aid to Germany so that it could help the Jews not just with their physical needs, but also with their long-term spiritual care.

**One Voice for All Jews in West Germany? The Creation of the Central Council of Jews in Germany.**

World Jewry’s position about the future for the remaining European Jewish Displaced Persons in Germany, as well as the German-Jews living in the country had not changed. They argued that a Jewish future in Germany was impossible. However, the reality of the situation in

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<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid., 180.



1948 was that leaving Germany soon was not an option even for those who wanted to emigrate. This meant that a new semi-permanent plan would need to be developed, something that had seemed impossible to world Jewry in 1945. The Jewish DPs in Germany had not had the same qualms as the Jews living outside of the country. These Jews realized almost immediately after liberation that if they could form into an united representative group, they would be able to yield more bargaining power when demanding compensation and care. By the early summer of 1945 Jewish DPs living in both the American and British zones had tried to form a Jewish body that would act as the voice for the DPs in both zones. Power struggles and differing opinions meant that each zone kept its own representatives and despite continued efforts to unite, Jews in the four zones remained divided. Additionally, calls for an umbrella organization representing all Jews in Germany were heard soon after liberation, but despite several attempts, none of the Jewish leaders were able to unite the various Jews living in the country. This changed in 1949 when Philipp Auerbach pushed for a representative body formed by members in all three western zones that would act as the one voice for all Jews in Germany. He suggested that representatives from the western zones meet once a month to discuss the needs of Jews in their area and present their requests to the authorities on behalf of the Jews they represented. The first inter-zonal body came to fruition in the form of the *Interest-Representation organization*. The Interest-Representation organization had little success, even being dubbed by Auerbach as having “died stillborn.”<sup>179</sup> However, it gave Jewish representatives throughout Germany the hope that a united Jewish umbrella organization was possible.<sup>180</sup> Not to be discouraged by the failure of the Interest-Representation, Auerbach pushed forward with his calls to unite the Jews living in

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<sup>179</sup> Many of Auerbach’s opponents argued that it was his fear of losing power that kept him from forming a successful inter-zonal organization. "Efforts to Unite Permanent Jewish Communities in Four Zones of Germany Seem Doomed," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA, September 5, 1947), 1.

<sup>180</sup> Geller, *Jews in Post-Holocaust Germany, 1945-1953*: 49.

Germany.<sup>181</sup> He argued against the demands of foreign Jews pushing for the immediate removal of all Jews from Germany claiming that, “it was the mission of the Jewish people” to ensure that there was a Jewish settlement in Germany, a mission that Auerbach took very seriously.<sup>182</sup>

The world Jewish organizations waited with baited breath as they watched the Jews in Germany struggle to unite, but all efforts before 1950 failed. For the Jews around the world who believed there was no future for Judaism in Germany, the continued failure of Germany’s Jews to unite was viewed as a welcome event. It allowed these groups to argue that this was just another reason that all Jews should emigrate as quickly as possible. However, the efforts of several different individuals pushing for unity finally led to the creation of one governing body of Jews in July 1950.

John J. McCloy, the High Commissioner of Germany, pushed for American policy to support a central organization for the Jews of Germany. With his support Harry Greenstein held a series of conferences between March and July 1949, at which Jewish representatives from around the world as well as those from the German-Jewish and Displaced Persons’ communities, came together to discuss the Jewish future in Germany.<sup>183</sup> The idea of the central association of German Jews that had existed in 1933 was destroyed during the Holocaust and a new organization was needed to represent all Jews in Germany. Instead of an organization consisting of German citizens who were Jews or German-Jews, this new group would represent all Jews living in Germany irrespective of their countries of origin or whether they planned on staying in

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<sup>181</sup> "First Jewish Bank Chartered in U.S. Zone of Germany; Will Aid Rehabilitation of Victims," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Archive, September 13, 1949), 1; Geller, *Jews in Post-Holocaust Germany, 1945-1953*: 208.

<sup>182</sup> Sabine Hering, *Jüdische Wohlfahrt im Spiegel von Biographien*, 2. durchgesehene und erw. Aufl. ed., Schriften des Arbeitskreises Geschichte der jüdischen Wohlfahrt in Deutschland (Frankfurt am Main: Fachhochschulverlag, 2007). 51.

<sup>183</sup> Jürgen Zieher, "Weder Privilegierung noch Diskriminierung: die Politik des Zentralrats der Juden in Deutschland" *Jahrbuch für Antisemitismusforschung*, no. 13 (2004): 189.

the country.<sup>184</sup> These individuals represented the more than 14,000 Jews registered in communities in the American and British Zones in Germany and Berlin, the Displaced persons community, and an additional 7,000 unregistered Jews living in big cities but unaffiliated with the Jewish communities there.<sup>185</sup> The major dividing factor between the various Jewish groups was their geographic origin. German-Jews and East European Jews had a hard time relating and getting along. The East European majorities in cities like Stuttgart, Darmstadt, and Heidelberg as well as many other cities, meant a continual conflict over who should be the rightful leaders of these Jewish communities. The East European portion of the community argued that the majority should rule, while the German-Jewish contingency claimed continuity with the prewar communities which had been interrupted by the forced hiatus of the Holocaust.<sup>186</sup>

In his final report from 1950 Major Abraham Hyman, Jewish Advisor, claimed that it was the lack of qualified leadership that left the Jews divided.<sup>187</sup> The murder of so many Jewish leaders in the Holocaust combined with the exodus of the leaders of Germany's Displaced Jews after the war left the Jewish community in Germany without a true figurehead. The continued disunity created problems for the world Jewish aid organizations caring for Germany's Jews. This problem also effected relations between the newly reestablished German semi-sovereign government that wanted to work with these Jews but could not find one representative group to whom they could turn. The West German government proposed the creation of an office for a Jewish advisor, but debates over this position were divided among the Jews in Germany leaving

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<sup>184</sup> Michael Brenner, "Von den Hintertüren der Diplomatie auf die Bühne der Öffentlichkeit: Der Wandel in der Repräsentation des Zentralrats der Juden in Deutschland," in *Ignatz Bubis. Ein jüdisches Leben in Deutschland*, ed. Fritz Backhaus, Gross, Rapheal, Lenarz, Michael (Frankfurt/Main: Jüdischer Verlag, 2007), 124.

<sup>185</sup> Geller, *Jews in Post-Holocaust Germany, 1945-1953*: 209.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*

the final decision for the office in limbo for more than a year.<sup>188</sup> This advisor would act as the middleman for all communities throughout Germany as well as the interested body when it came to the creation of laws that would affect the Jews.<sup>189</sup> However, several Jewish groups demanded that the German government speak with the democratically elected Jewish representative of each community, united under Philipp Auerbach in the form of the Interest-Representation, not just one advisor.<sup>190</sup> Germany's Jews understood that they needed to form one united body, but they were unable to agree on the form of this organization. It took the efforts of three Auschwitz survivors to envision what would become the Central Council of Jews in Germany: Philipp Auerbach in the American zone, Norbert Wollheim of the British zone, and Heinz Galinski of Berlin.<sup>191</sup>

Finally, in 1950 under the direction of these leaders, and with the help of Nahum Goldmann several Jewish representatives from throughout Germany met to discuss the formation of a future united Jewish organization. At this meeting it was decided that a more decisive meeting would be held on July 19, 1950 and at that time a new umbrella organization would be created along the lines of the Interest-Representation.<sup>192</sup> True to their word 25 Jewish representatives of the Landesverbände and the central committee of Frankfurt met on July 19 to clarify all questions relating to the future organization. It was also at this meeting that they created the representative organization, *der Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland*, located in Frankfurt. From this date on the *Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland* would act as the one voice

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<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>190</sup> Geller, "Die Entstehung des Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland," in *Zur Deutsch-Jüdische Geschichte nach 1945*, ed. Susanna Schönborn (Munich: Martin Meidenbauer, 2006), 66.

<sup>191</sup> Brenner, "Von den Hintertüren der Diplomatie auf die Bühne der Öffentlichkeit: Der Wandel in der Repräsentation des Zentralrats der Juden in Deutschland," 125.

<sup>192</sup> Geller, *Jews in Post-Holocaust Germany, 1945-1953*: 84.

for all Jews living in Germany.<sup>193</sup> Following a suggestion put forth by Heinz Galinski, a representative of the Soviet zone, a directorate of four was created to oversee the organization. Philipp Auerbach appointed the directors, naming himself, Pessah Piekatsch, Norbert Wollheim, and Heinz Galinski for the positions.<sup>194</sup> Galinski suggested that there also be four alternates for the directorate and a governing council of 15 members. This council would consist of three representatives each from the American and British zones, Berlin, and the Central Committee in Munich. A further one representative would come from the British zonal Central Committee, the French, and Soviet zones.<sup>195</sup> Each community would pay 100 marks a month with the bulk of the financing coming from a 500 mark monthly contribution from the JDC as well as a single donation of 3,000 marks from the Jewish Bank for Industry and Trade.<sup>196</sup> Despite this first meeting the Central Council was in disarray for several months while its members tried to organize themselves for the task before them. They met on August 20 to discuss their mission and to work out some technical issues and then again on September 6 to nominate a secretary. In the end Hendrik George van Dam was selected and he assumed the position on October 15, 1950. The problems of the role of the new organization did not cease with the establishment of the Central Council. Questions arose over the political role of the Council including whether or not they should celebrate national holidays in West Germany, if they would act as the sole intermediary with the German government, and if there was still a need for a Department of Jewish Affairs in Adenauer's cabinet. In the end it was determined that there should not be any one person filling the role of Jewish advisor because their power would be limited by governmental restrictions and they would take all of the blame when things did not work out as

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<sup>193</sup> Geller, "Die Entstehung des Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland," 67.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.

<sup>195</sup> Geller, *Jews in Post-Holocaust Germany, 1945-1953*: 85.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*

they should.<sup>197</sup> Instead it was decided that the Central Council would act in all political roles pertaining to the Jews in Germany.

Besides the task of deciding the exact role of the Central Council, members had to deal with divided loyalties and outright hostilities from Jews living in Germany and abroad. The Jewish Displaced Persons centered near Munich did not agree to the self-proclaimed position of the Central Council as their new representative body in Germany. They had their own representative body in the Central Committee of Liberated Jews that had acted as their voice since 1945. Fortunately for the Central Council, the Central Committee dissolved in December 1950 as its members emigrated abroad, bringing an end to this DP faction and allowing the Central Council to gather the DPs into its organization.<sup>198</sup> Additionally, the majority of Jewish Displaced Persons were against the permanent settlement of Jews in Germany, one of the points stressed in the mission statement for the Central Council.<sup>199</sup> Just as the DPs were loath to unite under the umbrella organization, the German-Jewish community was also weary of joining with the Displaced Persons.<sup>200</sup> The German-Jewish communities came together quickly, but getting them to agree to unite with the Displaced Jews remaining in Germany was a harder task. After finally bringing together the various groups of Jews throughout Germany, the Central Council again faced opposition, this time from Jews abroad who continued to argue that no Jews should remain in Germany. These organizations and Jewish communities around the world ignored the Central Council, denying them a seat at international meetings, even those dealing specifically with German-Jewish issues.

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<sup>197</sup> Ibid., 87.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid.

<sup>199</sup> Geller, "Die Entstehung des Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland," 71.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

With the creation of the Central Council of Jews in Germany the Jewish populations throughout the country created a representative body that acted as their voice when making requests and demands of the German government.<sup>201</sup> Simultaneously the German government now had one organization to deal with on all matters pertaining to the Jews in Germany.<sup>202</sup> While this did not mean that they could broker all agreements between a given Jewish group and the West German government without a say from representatives of that group, the Central Council was consulted when making any big decisions that would effect the Jews in Germany. This authority did not come about quickly; in fact, it took until March 1952 before members of the Central Council met with officials from the West German government.<sup>203</sup> Although the internal conflicts of the Central Council did not disappear despite efforts to bring the various groups of Jews together, negotiations between the Jews in Germany and the German government became easier and the political disunity of the preceding five years among these Jews disappeared.<sup>204</sup> Despite the force that the Central Council would become, its ability to survive the first few years of its existence was questionable. Not just internal fighting, but also attacks on one of its directors, Philipp Auerbach, shook the very foundation of the Central Council and led its members to question the organization's ability to survive the tests of time. Despite the slow start, the initial disunity of the Jews in Germany, and the East-West divide between the Jews living in the country, the Central Council became an integral part of German-Jewish life and continues to act as the voice of German-Jews today.

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<sup>201</sup> Ibid., 74.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid., 73.

<sup>204</sup> Geller, *Jews in Post-Holocaust Germany, 1945-1953*: 89.

## **Conclusion**

While world Jewry called for the immediate resettlement of all Jews in Germany, the creation of a Jewish homeland took three years to be realized and even then its gates remained closed. Beyond that, many Jews, especially German-Jews chose to remain in Germany in order to reestablish the Jewish communities that had been destroyed during the Shoah. Unlike the German-Jews, the Jewish DPs often agreed with the claims made by world Jewry that there should not be a Jewish community in Germany. Despite this position, the displaced Jews were forced to remain in the country. By 1948 Abraham Klausner, one of the biggest supporters and proponents of the Jewish DPs in Germany, was convinced that the Jews remaining in the country were spiraling into a life of despair and demoralization. Desperate to remedy this situation, Klausner wrote a disparaging report on the Jewish DPs portraying them in the bleakest terms as lazy criminals who had to be removed from Germany immediately in order to save them from their doom. In order to see to the resettlement of the Jews abroad, Klausner was willing to make their lives as uncomfortable as possible thereby forcing them to emigrate. Outraged over the allegations made in Klausner's report from May 1948, the Jewish Co-operating Organizations met to discuss his account. Their discussion makes it clear that immigration limitations to the United States and Israel meant that moving a large portion of the Jewish DPs was not currently a possibility. Yet Klausner's other suggestion to encourage or even force Jewish DPs to integrate into German society in the hope of convincing them to leave the country was just as outrageous to Jewish aid workers in 1948 as it had been at the close of the war. All those involved in the debate over what should be done with the Jewish DPs in Germany agreed that changes needed to be made to the running and care of the Jewish DP centers but no concrete plan was created. The members of the major Jewish welfare organizations realized that the displaced Jews in Germany



#### IV. No Future in Germany?

could not emigrate because there were no countries willing to take them all. These agencies also understood that there would be no immediate solution to the problem, and that most likely the Jewish DPs would remain in Germany for at least a few more years.

Interestingly, at almost the same time that the Jewish world organizations were meeting to discuss ways to resettle the displaced Jews as quickly as possible, the DPs themselves were pushing for their immediate emigration. Frequent interactions with Germans had made large portions of the Jewish DP population aware of growing anti-Semitism in the country. This combined with the threat of the transfer of DP control from OMGUS to the fledgling Federal Republic led many Jews to call for their immediate removal from Germany. As anti-Semitism became more publically proclaimed, and accepted, the demands of the Jewish DPs for resettlement away from Germany became ever louder and more insistent.

V.  
BACK WHERE WE STARTED?  
GERMAN ANTI-SEMITISM IN POSTWAR BAVARIA

**Freedom of Speech? The Bleibtreu Letter**

I will never forget, as long as I live, that I went down into the street between the two forces which were moving toward each other—on the one side the German police and on the other side outraged Jewish DP's.<sup>1</sup>

The end of the 1940s and early 1950s was a period of great upheaval for the Jewish Displaced Persons who remained in postwar Germany. The creation of the State of Israel lent hope to many Jews who wanted to emigrate from Germany as quickly as possible. The new Jewish state offered an ideological motivation for emigration, and for many DPs who could not qualify for visas elsewhere, acted as their only chance to leave Germany. The imminent transfer of control from the Office of the Military Government, United States (OMGUS) to the fledgling German Federal Republic struck fear into many of the DPs who realized that they very well might have to remain under German rule in the country indefinitely. The closure of several centers also made the inhabitants of DP camps anxious about their futures. Additionally, anti-Semitism had become more and more publically acceptable over the course of the late 1940s and began to take a more central position in the press.

OMGUS had envisioned the press becoming a voice for democratic ideals; however, freedom of speech meant that all opinions were expressed in the media. By August 1949 a debate was brewing in Munich over claims of Jewish over-involvement in criminality in Germany. John J. McCloy, the U.S. High Commissioner, stated, "One test which will be applied in judging the actions of the new government [The west German government] will be the extent

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<sup>1</sup> Murray Kass, "Oral History Program of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee," in *Oral History Division*, ed. The Hebrew University of Jerusalem: The Institute of Contemporary Jewry (Jerusalem: Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1980), 9.

to which German leaders can create an atmosphere in which Jews and all minorities can feel secure in the exercise of their rights.”<sup>2</sup> This statement, issued at a conference for the Jewish leaders in Germany in Heidelberg, led to a discussion among the editorial staff of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* regarding the Jewish question in Germany. The *Süddeutsche Zeitung* was considered a well-written and unbiased paper by the American occupation government. Originally set up by the Americans in the immediate postwar period, the paper had a number of good writers and was regarded as fair.<sup>3</sup> Werner Freidmann, the half Jewish editor-in chief and co-publisher of the newspaper, suggested that the paper run an article on the themes presented by McCloy.

W.E. Süskind was chosen to write the article, “The Jewish Problem as a Proof Test,” because he believed that there was a conspiracy in Germany to keep silent about the rampant anti-Semitism plaguing the country.<sup>4</sup> The article appeared on the front page of the paper on August 2, 1949, and in it Süskind asked if the Germans could openly talk about their treatment of the Jews in Germany. He claimed that anti-Semitism was just the sort of issue that needed to be publically discussed. For Süskind, it was the daily interactions that mattered much more than issues of *Wiedergutmachung* or legal rights.<sup>5</sup> He addressed some of the anti-Semitic grumblings heard throughout Munich and espoused equality for the Jews in Germany regardless of whether individual members deserved it or not. Süskind argued that it was important for the German population to treat the Jews just as they would any other minority group in the country. This

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<sup>2</sup> "It Happened in Munich (Journal Article)," in *Report from Germany, Germany Legal Bulletins, ORG 2, Office of General Counsel, Germany, Newspaper clippings, From Feb 1948-March 1956* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, December 20, 1949), 18.

<sup>3</sup> Theodore Feder, "Report of Möhlstrasse Incident (JDC Internal Report)," in *Report from Germany, Germany Legal Bulletins, ORG 2, Office of General Counsel, Germany, Newspaper Clippings, From Feb 1948-March* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1949), 1.

<sup>4</sup> "It Happened in Munich," 1.

<sup>5</sup> Anthony Kauders, *Democratization and the Jews: Munich, 1945-1965*, Studies in antisemitism (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press for the Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism (SICSA), the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2004). 139.

meant understanding that certain Jews may involve themselves in immoral or illegal activities, just as was true in all groups, but that the actions of these few individuals should not influence the perception held by Germans about the group as a whole. He said that Germans should not be influenced by the “failings of individual Jews” or by certain characteristics shared by several Jews, but rather that all Jews must be treated with respect.<sup>6</sup> Süskind ended the piece by saying, “Without the Jews we have become still poorer, and we will become still poorer if we are going to drive them away by not trying to keep them. Why not speak openly about it?”<sup>7</sup> Such an open and strongly worded piece prompted responses from local Germans, both for and against Süskind’s position. The *Süddeutsche Zeitung*’s mailroom received more than 30 letters, about half of them condemning anti-Semitism and a quarter clearly anti-Semitic.<sup>8</sup> He decided to choose four to help illustrate the current state of thinking about Jews in Germany, and they were published on the front page of the newspaper one week later on August 9, 1949. Two of the letters were neutral, one was pro-Jewish and the final letter was clearly anti-Semitic, argued to be the worst one in the bunch.<sup>9</sup>

This letter was argued to be “as provocative as anything Julius Streicher might have written.”<sup>10</sup> In the piece, the author claimed that the Americans were willing to forgive everything that the Germans had done during the war except one and that was, “that we [Germany] have not gassed all of the Jews...”<sup>11</sup> He told the Jews to “Go ahead and go to America, even though the people there have no use for you either. They have had enough of you

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<sup>6</sup> W.E. Süskind, “The Jewish Problem as Proof Test (newspaper article translated from the original by JDC officials),” in *Report from Germany, Germany Legal Bulletins, ORG 2, Office of General Counsel, Germany, Newspaper clippings, From feb 1948-March 1956* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1949), 1.

<sup>7</sup> Süskind, “The Jewish Question, a Test? (Translated by OMGUS Officials from the Original German),” in *Anti-Semitism* (Munich: BayHstA, 1948), 3.

<sup>8</sup> Kauders, *Democratization and the Jews*: 139.

<sup>9</sup> “It Happened in Munich,” 1.

<sup>10</sup> Herbert Steinhouse, “Re: Riots in Munich, August 10, 1949 (JDC Letter),” in *JDC/AR 46/54 Germany: localities: Munich 1945-1954* (New York: AJJDC, 1949), 1.

<sup>11</sup> “Bleibtreu,” *Time Magazine*, August 22, 1949, 20.

bloodsuckers.”<sup>12</sup> The letter writer who signed his response, *Adolf Bleibtreu* (meaning remain faithful to Adolf) wrote “I assure you that I was not a Nazi, but I am 100% German. I belong to the so-called ‘quiet people in Germany’ [a direct reference to Süskind’s article]- and the whisper propaganda counts more than a hundred newspapers.”<sup>13</sup> He ended his rant by stating that there were a lot more people who agreed with him, and he threatened that the world would hear more from them soon. The publication of the letter immediately ignited an outcry against the author and the newspaper staff who’d had the audacity to publish such anti-Semitic statements in the wake of the murder of so many millions of Jews.<sup>14</sup> While there was a campaign facilitated by the Bavarian Ministry to find the author of the letter, including the use of handwriting specialists, the majority of the blame fell on the staff members at the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* who were accused by outraged Jews in Germany of being the contemporary incarnation of the journalists on the notoriously anti-Semitic rag, “*Der Stürmer*.”<sup>15</sup>

After reading the article that morning, Samuel Weiss, stated, “If they have the right to print such a letter, we have the right to demonstrate.”<sup>16</sup> He went first to the Joint to get help starting his protest. JDC worker Ted Feder noted that several employees of the various Jewish aid organizations as well as “outsiders” had come into the JDC offices demanding that some action be taken against the paper.<sup>17</sup> Dissatisfied with the response of the Joint, Weiss made his way to Palestrinastrasse 33, the address given in the Adolf Bleibtreu letter, to check and see if the author truly existed. Finally, he returned to Möhlstraße to raise awareness of this offense and

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Adolf Bleibtreu, "Letter to the Editor Dept. (Translated from the original German by JDC staff)," in *Report from Germany, Germany Legal Bulletins, ORG 2, Office of General Counsel, Germany, Newspaper clippings, From feb 1948-Marc* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1949), 1.

<sup>14</sup> Interestingly, Süskind only published part of the letter, omitting the portion attacking him and claiming that he was a Jew and stating that the Jews needed to leave now because in twenty years it would be too late for them.

<sup>15</sup> "The Süddeutsche Zeitung Declares (Translated by American officials)," in *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (Munich: BayHStA, August 11, 1949), 1.

<sup>16</sup> "It Happened in Munich," 19.

<sup>17</sup> Feder, "Report of Möhlstrasse Incident (JDC Internal Report)," 1.

to gather people to help him demonstrate.<sup>18</sup> Jewish DP communities throughout Bavaria expressed their immediate outrage over the publication of the letter, and by the afternoon of August 9 a crowd of demonstrators had congregated outside of the offices of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* to protest the publication of the anti-Semitic letter.<sup>19</sup> Although the protest that occurred on August 9<sup>th</sup> was rather small, it was a precursor of things to come. It never occurred to Mr. Weiss to ask the German police if he could hold a demonstration in downtown Munich, but it is debatable whether he would have sought permission even had the thought crossed his mind.<sup>20</sup> Tensions were so high by that afternoon that Joint officials called a meeting at the behest of the Central Committee of Liberated Jews in the U.S. zone in Germany and issued a leaflet encouraging the demonstrators not to do anything rash or illegal but to assemble at the playground of the Munich synagogue school the next morning at ten to discuss how the Jewish community in Bavaria planned to proceed.<sup>21</sup>

The following day an estimated two thousand people came to the meeting located in the center of the business district on Möhlstraße and denounced the staff of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. They shouted that the United States High Commissioner for Germany (USHCG) needed to be contacted and convinced to support their call for the dissolution of the newspaper.<sup>22</sup> A JDC report noted that the assembled Jews were incensed but lacked true leadership.<sup>23</sup> Letters were read stating that German anti-Semitism did not surprise the assembled DPs because “we Jews who survived the last war know the deeds of German anti-Semitism very well.”<sup>24</sup> Finally, when

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<sup>18</sup> "It Happened in Munich," 1.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> "It Happened in Munich," 19.

<sup>22</sup> The United States High Commission for Germany was the civilian branch that replaced OMGUS in 1949.

<sup>23</sup> Steinhouse, "Re: Riots in Munich, August 10, 1949 (JDC Letter)," 1.

<sup>24</sup> "Protest Under False Assumptions. Jewish Demonstrators Against the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*: Bloody Clash Behind the Friedensengel. 21 Policemen and 3 Demonstrators Injured," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, August 11, 1949, 2. Found in the BayHstA file 10/125-2/17.5

the meeting ended at 11:30 AM, the demonstrators were asked to go home quietly, but as they spilled onto Möhlstraße one man called for people to follow him to the offices of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. Suddenly someone produced banners saying “Down with the Stuermer of 1949--the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*.”<sup>25</sup> Other banners read, “The *Süddeutsches Zeitung* [sic] is a nest of National Socialism. We request to withdraw their license,” and “The bloody Hitlerism is here again. The mean note of the *Süddeutsches Zeitung* [sic] is a shame for the democratic world.”<sup>26</sup> About three hundred people began to follow the rabble-rouser across the city.<sup>27</sup>

Matters escalated very quickly. The German police stationed near Möhlstraße attempted to stop the demonstrators but failed. The two police stationed on the street called for reinforcements who arrived mounted on horses within a matter of minutes. The police rushed the crowd without warning and the angry demonstrators retaliated by throwing any object that they could find in the street.<sup>28</sup> JDC reports note that the police purposely charged the smaller groups of dispersing Jews rather than the mass of demonstrators intent to continue on to the newspaper office.<sup>29</sup> The police initially appeared to be at an advantage with their mounts and clubs but were quickly overcome by the Jewish protestors.<sup>30</sup> One spectator described the mayhem by saying

I heard loud cries from the Möhlstraße and ran over. Mounted police were already charging into the crowd. The crowd retreated in a rush towards me, and I jumped on a fence to watch. The police were hitting out with their clubs, with really savage cruelty, at everyone indiscriminately. They would charge in short, fast attacks, regroup and charge again. I counted six charges. The marchers ducked into gates and open doorways, and fought back with bricks picked out of the gutter, and with sticks. Two horses slipped and went down. After about five minutes, the police decided they had enough and fell back. Some demonstrators had already slipped through, and the rest re-formed and went forward again.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Feder, "Report of Möhlstrasse Incident (JDC Internal Report)," 1.

<sup>26</sup> "Protest Under False Assumptions," 1.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Steinhouse, "Re: Riots in Munich, August 10, 1949," 1.

<sup>29</sup> Feder, "Report of Möhlstrasse Incident (JDC Internal Report)," 1.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> "It Happened in Munich," 19.

The Jews were undeterred by the preceding events and marched on. The German police, who had jurisdiction over street demonstrations, sent a riot squad to form a human chain blocking the protestors' way, but they were outnumbered. JDC officials stated that a "bus load of police reinforcements appeared in the neighborhood, found another group of Jews and charged into them immediately. The police poured out of the bus, swinging their clubs and in a few cases shooting."<sup>32</sup> Fighting again broke out and three Jews were shot, one in the back while fleeing, one in the arm, and a third who had to be hospitalized.<sup>33</sup>

According to an eyewitness the riots were the worst ever seen in Munich and possibly Germany.<sup>34</sup> "They were marked notably by German police shooting without provocation into a crowd of Jewish DPs, with intent to kill, and wounding three men."<sup>35</sup> Recounting how he was shot, Benjamin Herring said he was trying to get away when he was beaten by three police officers with clubs. When he again tried to run he was shot twice, once in the hand and once in the side. His friends came and got him and took him to the local German hospital where he was asked why he had not gone to the Jewish hospital. Dissatisfied with his answer the doctor left while a nurse gave him gauze to hold on the wound. After 45 minutes Herring's brother-in-law came and took him to the Jewish hospital.<sup>36</sup>

The fighting lasted about an hour and there were twenty-seven casualties on the Jewish side, seven of which were severe enough to warrant hospitalization. The German police also suffered badly. They had had to leave as a group, and several of their members had a hard time escaping. Two demonstrators stole the riot-squad car during the chaos and drove it back to

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<sup>32</sup> Steinhouse, "Re: Riots in Munich, August 10, 1949," 1.

<sup>33</sup> "It Happened in Munich," 20.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Steinhouse, "Re: Riots in Munich, August 10, 1949 (JDC Letter)," 1.

<sup>36</sup> "It Happened in Munich," 20.



Möhlstraße where they painted a swastika on it and lit it on fire.<sup>37</sup> Despite German and American efforts to extinguish the blaze, the car burned down to ashes before the 508th military police were finally able to convince the crowd to allow an American fire fighting team in to put out the fire.<sup>38</sup>

Rumors spread that a thousand Jewish DPs from Feldafing were on their way to join the protestors. Fearing a possible takeover of the city center by bands of roving Jews, the German police finally called on American reinforcements.<sup>39</sup> The Provost Marshal and his superior arrived at the scene of the clash at 12:30 PM as the demonstrators were dispersing. Following the crowd and the smoke from the burning police car they arrived at Möhlstraße where they asked chaplain Hersh Livarier, an army Captain assigned to work with the DPs to try and get the crowd to disperse peacefully.<sup>40</sup> Just when it looked like his attempts had succeeded, a detachment of 140 German police arrived on the scene with 300 others in reserve.<sup>41</sup>

Upset over the beating they had taken at the hands of the rioters, combined with the loss of their car, and the embarrassments of the morning, these police were ready for action. Dr. Weitmann, the police officer in charge ordered thirty men, ten on horseback, to take action against the Jewish demonstrators, but reduced the number to 15 police on foot and six mounted police after receiving advice to use caution by an American official. Weitmann ordered his police forward toward the 500 remaining demonstrators and the mood on Möhlstraße again became charged.<sup>42</sup> The demonstrators would not budge and “a catastrophe appeared

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> "DPs, Police Injured in Munich Clash," *Stars and Stripes*, August 11 1949, 1.

<sup>39</sup> The JDC was also in contact with the Provost Marshall's office and the military police in the hopes that they might intervene on behalf of the Jewish demonstrators. Feder, "Report of Möhlstrasse Incident," 2.

<sup>40</sup> "It Happened in Munich," 2; Steinhouse, "Re: Riots in Munich, August 10, 1949," 1.

<sup>41</sup> "It Happened in Munich," 20.

<sup>42</sup> Feder, "Report of Möhlstrasse Incident," 3.

unavoidable.”<sup>43</sup> Realizing the amount of blood that would be shed if the German police proceeded, Sam Haber from the Joint, begged Colonel Singer, the highest-ranking military official on the scene saying, “For God’s sake, stop those Germans from coming any farther!”<sup>44</sup> Singer walked into the crowd and ordered the German police to turn around.<sup>45</sup> A few Jewish demonstrators formed their own human chain to stop the Jewish crowd from pushing forward and Singer ordered them to disperse immediately, which they did without further resistance.

Although it appeared that the matter had been resolved, the German police were disinclined to acquiesce to demands to let the matter go. They were also bombarded with insults from German civilians milling about who shouted “You cowards! Shame! Go back! Whose orders are you taking?” Dr. Weitmann announced that the “action is finished” after being twice advised by American officials to withdraw, and the protest officially came to an end.<sup>46</sup> While the German government had regained authority over matters occurring outside of the Jewish centers, the Americans still held ultimate authority over the country. Even though the fighting and demonstrations seemed to have subsided for the day, Jewish American officials feared that the clashes would pick up again soon if left unchecked. Ted Feder expressed concern “that while the situation now seems quiet, the mood in the area is so ugly that he [wa]s afraid something even more devastating may break out very soon.”<sup>47</sup> Major Hyman rushed back to Munich to investigate the incident in the hopes of extinguishing any lingering fires that might erupt into

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<sup>43</sup> "It Happened in Munich," 20.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> The transfer of power to German jurisdiction meant that the American government in Germany could not intervene in police matters without the written permission of the Military Governor who was away from his office on August 10.

<sup>46</sup> "It Happened in Munich," 20.

<sup>47</sup> Steinhouse, "Re: Riots in Munich, August 10, 1949," 2.

further violence.<sup>48</sup> In the end, the matter remained resolved although hurt feelings persisted among all of those involved in the incident.

The Jewish organizations in downtown Munich met to discuss the riot and to determine blame. After careful evaluation, they concluded that the German police had no “knowledge of working with potential problem groups.”<sup>49</sup> Feder argued that there had been other protests in the postwar period, even ones started by Jewish Displaced Persons, but that these had all gone along peaceably without any German police interference. In the past it had been the job of the American army and Military Government to deal with the protests of these demonstrators and they “had always recognized that the Jewish group had to be handled a little differently than German citizens.”<sup>50</sup> With the gradual transfer of power from USHCG to the Germans, dealing with these protests fell under the jurisdiction of the local authorities. The Germans, JDC argued, lacked the understanding required to calm these situation. The military police had been able to subdue a similarly sized crowd with half a dozen police while the German police failed to bring peace with hundreds of officers and extreme violence.<sup>51</sup>

Ted Feder was outraged that the police had shot people in the back while they tried to flee the melee of the chaotic fighting. He argued that this illustrated the German inability to deal with explosive situations and their desire to abuse Jews when a pretense presented itself. He said, “Where at one time Germans had no right to molest Jewish Displaced Persons that right has now been restored to them and the results are conclusive evidence of what no doubt will come later on.”<sup>52</sup> Feder feared that the brutality of the German actions would become a common occurrence once control of the Displaced Persons was transferred to the newly formed German

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Feder, "Report of Möhlstrasse Incident," 3.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

semi-sovereign government and argued that German violence could not be condoned.<sup>53</sup> He said that it had to be understood that the Jew as an individual might respect German authority, but that Jews as a mass were less inclined to “accept German police jurisdiction.”<sup>54</sup> JDC officials noted that in many cases the actions of the German police were no different from those taken by non-German police, but in this particular instance that was not the case. The fact that the German police had directed their horses toward women and children, compounded by the fact that there was “a certain glee with which the German beat up the Jew,” led members of the Jewish organizations to argue that the German police force was in no way an unprejudiced authority. They also claimed that the German police were obviously not ready to oversee Jewish activities, legal or otherwise.<sup>55</sup> To be fair, Feder noted that the Jews also felt joyous at finally being able to beat up Germans and that they relished the opportunity. He described the Jewish position by saying,

The reaction of the Jew to these incidents is quite a terrible thing to behold. There is suddenly a break-out of all the pent-up force emotion [sic] and indignation that had been stored up for years and he becomes an irrational person. People whom I have known for two to three years suddenly turn into raving maniacs looking for a stone, a piece of metal or a stick to throw at the Germans. The cry of the crowd, a low roaring sound as if the anguish of a people were being made vocal... You heard repeated over and over again, “this was like the Ghetto, this was like Auschwitz.” Probably the most difficult situation that any of us faced was when during the excitement of the raid, the eyes of our Jewish people seemed to say in terror, “what, had the time come again.”<sup>56</sup>

The riots helped to illustrate the existing hatred of both the German police and the Jewish Displaced Persons so long held in check. It also showed the growing gulf between the two groups that had started with the rise of anti-Semitism after World War II. While the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* published a formal apology the following day, feelings of hatred, distrust, and resentment between displaced Jews and the German authorities continued to plague Bavaria.

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

Protests like the one over the Adolf Bleibtreu letter were uncommon but not unknown in the following years.

The editors of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* immediately issued a statement about the “rebellion” saying that they understood the anger expressed by the Jewish community in Munich over “eruptions of anti-Semitism.”<sup>57</sup> They also noted that they might have been mistaken when they published the letter, but that they only did so to illustrate that anti-Semitism was still rife in Germany, something that the actions following the letters publication proved only too clearly.<sup>58</sup> The editors of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* understood the anger and frustration expressed during the demonstration against the contents of the Adolf Bleibtreu letter. However, they were baffled that the newspaper staff should be the target of the outrage expressed by Munich’s Jewish community. They argued that the original article published by Süskind, “The Jewish Problem as Test Proof,” rigorously condemned German anti-Semitism, and that Süskind had only published the Bleibtreu letter to illustrate the full spectrum of feelings regarding a continued Jewish presence in Germany. Had Süskind only published the neutral and positive letters, he argued, the wrong image would have been given about the true nature of anti-Semitism in Bavaria.<sup>59</sup>

The staff at the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* could not condone the actions perpetuated by the Jewish community. The editors of the newspaper condemned those involved in the riot, especially those who had acted violently against the German police. They wrote, “the policemen in self-defense made use of his pistol,” which then led the crowd to attack the police and to search for those responsible for the shootings.<sup>60</sup> This perspective differs from that of the Jewish community and members of the Jewish organizations who argued that the German police used

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<sup>57</sup> “Protest Under False Assumptions,” 1.

<sup>58</sup> “Bleibtreu,” 20.

<sup>59</sup> “Protest Under False Assumptions,” 2.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

their weapons for no reason, thereby escalating events to a level above that anticipated by the “peaceful” protestors. The editors continued on to state that the Jewish demonstrators went about breaking out windows in stopped cars and that the drivers had to flee the scene with bleeding heads.<sup>61</sup> They ended the article by stating, “If the anti-Semitism-- that we believe is an absolutely unbavarian phenomenon--should grow again one can thank the organizer of yesterday’s tumult,” placing the blame for continued anti-Semitism squarely on the Jewish demonstrators.<sup>62</sup>

Although the violence over the Bleibtreu Affair came to an end on the evening of the ninth, the outcry over the publication of the anti-Semitic letter, as well as discussions over the clash did not. News of the Bleibtreu Affair spread worldwide. The *Neue Zeitung*, *Time Magazine*, and *Stars and Stripes* were just a few of the journals that published articles regarding the events of August 9, 1949. The *Neue Zeitung* reported that seven Jews were seriously wounded during the events, which corresponded with the Police reports filed by seven Jews in the days following the outbreak of the violence.<sup>63</sup> The writer of the article in the *Neue Zeitung* expressed understanding and sympathy with the confused position expressed by the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and seconded their incomprehension over the blame placed on the newspaper for the anti-Semitism expressed by one reader.<sup>64</sup>

The publication of the Bleibtreu letter combined with the violence brought on by the German police tasked with controlling the situation, made the Jewish community in Bavaria

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 3. Efforts were made to determine who was at fault for the riot that erupted in downtown Munich, but the American Military Government said that they did not have enough information to determine guilt.

<sup>63</sup> German Police, "Bericht Über Die Von Der Polizei Am 10.8. Verletzten Patienten, München (German police Report)," in *Report from Germany, Germany Legal Bulletins, ORG 2, Office of General Counsel, Germany, 47.405, Newspaper clippings* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1949), 1.

<sup>64</sup> "Serious Tumult in Munich: Anti-Semitic Reader's Letter Causes Street Fighting, *Neue Zeitung* (translated by JDC Staff)," in *Report from Germany, Germany Legal Bulletins, ORG 2, Office of the General Counsel, Germany, Newspaper Clippings* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, August 10, 1949), 1.

realize just how truly precarious their position was in Germany. Fears over renewed anti-Semitism spread among the Jewish DP community and parallels were constantly drawn between the Nazi actions of the 1930s and 1940s and the postwar violence of the German police. Unlike the earlier period, the Jewish DP community argued it was unwilling to be “abused” by the Germans and resorted to physical retaliation as a form of protection. Camp raids and peaceful protests alike ended in bloodshed and violent fighting. The Central Council of Liberated Jews publically proclaimed, “As long as we are forced to stay here, however, we will fight with all our strength against every attempt of anti-Jewish provocation.”<sup>65</sup> The Jewish DPs living in Germany would no longer sit by while anti-Semitic Germans targeted them

The Central Committee openly blamed OMGUS for the riot that broke out and the anti-Semitism prevalent in Germany. They issued a statement to the press claiming that the Americans were “responsible for the up-surge of ‘Neo-Fascism’ in Germany.”<sup>66</sup> They continued on to say “It is hard to believe that American Occupation forces would allow provocations like this in spite of all declarations against hatred and for the preservation of human rights.”<sup>67</sup> The Central Committee of Liberated Jews believed it was the responsibility of the USHCG to eradicate anti-Semitism in Germany. They were the authorities in control of most of the country, and tasked with establishing a functioning democratic Germany. The Jewish community in Munich considered the willingness of an American funded paper to publish anything anti-Semitic as a failure for USHCG. Philipp Auerbach, the Bavarian General Attorney for Racial and Political Persecutees, expressed his anger over the German use of guns, saying, “I am enraged that human beings have been shot by the police. They could have used nightsticks instead.

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<sup>65</sup> "Protest Under False Assumptions," 2.

<sup>66</sup> "DPs, Police Injured in Munich Clash," 1.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

These methods resemble too closely those used after 1933.”<sup>68</sup> He told the German press that he intended to file a suit against the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* on behalf of the Jewish community.

Auerbach argued that the publication of the Bleibtreu letter defied the German law against racial and religious hatred and as such the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* must immediately retract the article.<sup>69</sup>

However, for many members of the Jewish community in Munich the issue extended beyond the appearance of one anti-Semitic letter in a “democratic” paper and the violence that accompanied the protest over its publication. Instead, the true issue was the continued rise of anti-Semitic expressions throughout Germany and its acceptance by members of both the non-Jewish German community and segments of the Allied troops stationed in the country. To emphasize their point, the Displaced Persons Jewish community ended their statement by saying, “The voice of our protest shall be heard in the whole democratic world when we say: Nobody [sic] of us wants to stay on the earth that is stained with Jewish blood. Now we have our own country.”<sup>70</sup>

Comparing the actions of the Germans to SS methods used to torment Jews in the years before the outbreak of the war, the Camp Committee called upon the democratic world to help them end their stay in Germany.<sup>71</sup> Pleas to leave Germany continued to fall on deaf ears and emigration opportunities continued to be scarce making resettlement incredibly hard. For many the deadline for emigration was still years away.

While the violence over the Bleibtreu affair subsided, the incident was by no means laid to rest. The Central Committee of Liberated Jews in the U.S. Zone in Germany pushed for legal action. After meeting with the Chief of the Munich police and being convinced that the actions taken by the police were necessary not anti-Semitic, Philipp Auerbach and Rabbi Orenstein tried

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>69</sup> "Serious Tumult in Munich: Anti-Semitic Reader's Letter Causes Street Fighting, Neue Zeitung (translated by JDC Staff)," 3.

<sup>70</sup> "Protest Under False Assumptions," 2.

<sup>71</sup> "Serious Tumult in Munich," 2.



to convince the Committee to let the issue go.<sup>72</sup> Despite these claims the Committee argued that the letter had incited violence and that the editors of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* were responsible. In the end the Bavarian Association of the Federal Jewish Religious Community Association moved forward with the suit against two of the editors responsible for the publication.<sup>73</sup> The State Prosecutor acquitted them, stating that the letter publication was not in fact a form of pro-Nazi propaganda. He argued that the letter was run in the newspaper for the purpose of “enlightenment rather than incitement.”<sup>74</sup> Interestingly, Werner Freidmann, the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*’s editor in Chief, who had been traveling in Italy throughout the affair, argued that the letter should not have been published, not because it was anti-Semitic, but because it portrayed the Germans in an unfavorable light. He said, “we Germans are in a glass house, surveyed by an outside world that is not friendly to us.”<sup>75</sup> He believed that acknowledging anti-Semitism in its own voice only furthered the world’s negative image of Germany.

Regardless of the motives behind the publication of the Bleibtreu letter or those of the Bavarian police who acted to quell the advancing protestors, the affair illustrated the tenuous relationship between the Jewish Displaced Persons remaining in Germany, German authorities, and USHCG. The Bleibtreu incident was the first time that German police were sent to deal with a matter involving Jewish DPs since 1946 without American officials involved. It was the first indicator for the displaced Jews that their situation in Germany was changing. This led them to question their security in Germany and to fear that their future there might involve conflict with German authorities. The events following the Bleibtreu letter also marked a change in the way

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<sup>72</sup> Kauders, *Democratization and the Jews*: 140.

<sup>73</sup> Matthew Paul Berg and Maria Mesner, *After Fascism: European Case Studies in Politics, Society, and Identity Since 1945*, Austria: Forschung und Wissenschaft. Politikwissenschaft (Berlin ; London: Lit ; Global [distributor]). 97.

<sup>74</sup> Kauders, *Democratization and the Jews*: 140.

<sup>75</sup> Berg and Mesner, *After Fascism*: 97.

that the Jewish DP community dealt with anti-Semitism. Their actions of August 1949 were just the first of a series of coming clashes between themselves and German authority figures, all of whom were argued to be anti-Semitic by the displaced Jews remaining in the country. While the eight years following the Bleibtreu publication were not full of constant tumult, there were regular flare-ups, both verbal and physical, between the DP community and the German authorities. Additionally, Jewish claims of prevalent anti-Semitism did not disappear and often accompanied the clashes between the two groups. The road to resolution stretched on before the displaced Jews, and a new conflict would arise every time that calm settled across Bavaria.

### **A Search for Justice? The Auerbach Affair**

To the best of my knowledge, Philipp Auerbach was an innocent victim of certain corrupt influences in the Jewish Community at the time and he became a victim of this complex situation.<sup>76</sup>

The two years following the Bleibtreu incident reflected extensive change for both the Jewish Displaced Persons still living in German camps and the larger German population. After four years of struggling to prove to the world that Germany had moved beyond its Nazi past, the Federal Republic was finally able to work alongside the Allied occupiers as a functioning democracy. The handover of occupation control to the newly formed German government took several years; however, German politicians were slowly allowed to assume responsibility for the running of West Germany. This process would come to completion in May 1955 when Germany was recognized as “fully sovereign” over its domain.

The Berlin Blockade of 1948 and 1949 resulted in the “evacuation” of the Jewish Displaced Persons living in centers in Berlin and their resettlement in Southern Bavaria, the area of the American zone housing the largest number of Jewish DPs. This left 64,269 displaced Jews living in forty-eight camps in the American zone in January 1949.<sup>77</sup> It was around this time that talks began regarding the closing of Jewish Displaced Persons centers, and by 1949 the Feldafing, Landsberg, and Föhrenwald camps were discussed as possible sites for closures. Landsberg was the first major Jewish camp closed on October 15, 1950, and its remaining inhabitants were transferred to Feldafing and Föhrenwald. By 1953 all of the big camps except Föhrenwald had been closed and the great majority of all Jewish DPs called this center their home.

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<sup>76</sup> Kass, "Oral History Program of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee," 30.

<sup>77</sup> Julius H. Schoeps, *Leben im Land der Täter: Juden im Nachkriegsdeutschland (1945-1952)*, Sifria Bd. 4 (Berlin: Jüdische Verlagsanstalt, 2001), 44.

As all of these changes were taking place among the Jewish Displaced population in Germany, an equally large change was occurring among the population of German-Jewish survivors of the Holocaust and those German-Jewish re-émigrés who had returned to Germany after the war. This development was the final resolution of Jewish calls for a single representative body in Germany, the *Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland*, which had began years before but only came to fruition on July 19, 1950.<sup>78</sup> This development originally only affected the German-Jewish community in Germany. It later became the one voice for all Jews living in Germany, including, much to their chagrin, the Jewish Displaced Persons. From its establishment on, the Central Council has acted as the officially recognized organizational body representing all Jews in Germany in negotiations with the Federal Republic. This is not to say that the Jewish DP committees did not continue to arrange meetings with the West German government, or that they turned to the Central Council for help with negotiations, but that the Federal Republic recognized the Central Council as the voice of the Jews in Germany. While the Central Council was eventually able to overcome the obstacles dividing the Jews in Germany, it had a very rocky beginning and was not immediately accepted as the one voice for all Jews.

Just a few months after the Central Council was established, one of its governing members, and a major spokesperson for Jews living in the American zone of Germany, Philipp Auerbach, the Bavarian State Commissioner for Racial, Religious, and Political Persecutees, was accused and found guilty of forgery, embezzlement, and financial misconduct of reparations payments.<sup>79</sup> Although Auerbach was found guilty of these alleged crimes, he was posthumously acquitted of the charges. The Auerbach Affair rocked the Jewish community in West Germany

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<sup>78</sup> Herein referred to as the Central Council of Jews in Germany. While the Central Council's Official establishment date is July 1950, they did not receive recognition from the various Jewish communities until October of that year. Jay Howard Geller, *Jews in Post-Holocaust Germany, 1945-1953* (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005). 84.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

and threatened to destroy the fledgling *Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland*. His control over so many different aid organizations in Southern Bavaria meant that his arrest caused an almost total collapse of the German-Jewish organizations active in Munich.<sup>80</sup> However, the effects of the Auerbach Affair were not only centered on the Jewish population in Germany. The course of the events of Auerbach's trial led to conflicts between the Jewish communities in Germany and German citizens and officials. Additionally, news of the affair and the Jewish and German responses to it, reached the United States where debates ensued regarding the possible intervention of American authorities. Auerbach's death by suicide in 1952 had resounding consequences in Germany, Israel, and the United States.

Even with all of the abovementioned turmoil created by the Affair, one of the most significant outcomes of Auerbach's arrest and trial was the blatant outburst of anti-Semitism that it incited throughout West Germany. For the first time since German defeat a well-known and powerful Jew was being accused of a major crime. Auerbach's offenses extended beyond the petty crimes of black marketing and illegal border crossing, and served as a catalyst for Germans to express their anti-Semitism in the guise of a public criminal debate. The prevalence of this anti-Semitism in all German discussions about the Affair led people around the world to wonder if it was possible to ever fully destroy Germany's hatred for its Jewish inhabitants. The Affair threw the newly formed struggling Jewish community in Germany into the spotlight and made many Jewish Displaced Persons, as well as those providing their aid, question the plausibility of a safe future in Germany.

**Friend, Enemy, Ally, or Liability? Philipp Auerbach and the Jews in Germany.**

Philipp Auerbach's role as a leading figure for the Jews in Germany began almost immediately after the war ended. He became the leading authority governing many of the major

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<sup>80</sup> Geller, *Jews in Post-Holocaust Germany, 1945-1953*: 211.

Jewish organizations active throughout Munich by early 1946. Auerbach was also a major voice for Jews living in the American zone of Germany and well respected as an advocate for Jewish Displaced Persons. He was referred to as the “Czar of Wiedergutmachung” and argued to be “the most important Jewish actor in the American zone.”<sup>81</sup> Born on December 8, 1906 in Hamburg, Auerbach was the son of a major chemical manufacturer. From 1913-1922 he attended the Talmud-Tora secondary school in Grindel and afterwards completed an apprenticeship in commerce.<sup>82</sup> Later Auerbach attended a professional school where he completed a program in chemistry.<sup>83</sup> Upon completing his degree, Auerbach practiced Industrial Chemistry, was a businessman, and a firm director in the Rhineland. In order to escape the Nazis, Auerbach immigrated to Belgium in 1933 and established an import-export firm near Antwerp where he employed 2,000 workers.<sup>84</sup> During the Spanish Civil War Auerbach supported the anti-Fascists by providing necessary supplies to the Republicans.<sup>85</sup> With the German invasion of Belgium in 1940, Auerbach was arrested by Belgian authorities and sent to France where he was interned in a camp.<sup>86</sup> In 1942, he was handed over to authorities at the police prison at Berlin’s Alexanderplatz where he remained for almost a year working as an interpreter in the Foreign Department of the Judicial Police before being deported to Auschwitz in 1943/1944.<sup>87</sup> With the advance of the Allied forces into Eastern Europe, Auerbach joined the

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<sup>81</sup> Michael Brenner, "Von den Hintertüren der Diplomatie auf die Bühne der Öffentlichkeit: Der Wandel in der Repräsentation des Zentralrats der Juden in Deutschland," in *Ignatz Bubis. Ein jüdisches Leben in Deutschland*, ed. Fritz Backhaus, Gross, Rapheal, Lenarz, Michael (Frankfurt/Main: Jüdischer Verlag, 2007), 125.

<sup>82</sup> Schoeps, *Leben im Land der Täter*: 208.

<sup>83</sup> Claudia Fröhlich and Michael Kohlstruck, *Engagierte Demokraten: Vergangenheitspolitik in kritischer Absicht*, 1. Aufl. ed. (Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot, 1999). 57.

<sup>84</sup> Schoeps, *Leben im Land der Täter*: 208.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

thousands of concentration camps inmates on their trek west into Germany, stopping temporarily in the concentration camp at Groß-Rosen before ending up in Buchenwald.<sup>88</sup>

After liberation Auerbach settled in the British zone in Düsseldorf, and just a few short months later he was active in the Social Democratic Party (SPD). He was heavily involved in Jewish social welfare throughout the British zone in 1945 and 1946, where 40,000 Jews resided after the war.<sup>89</sup> He quickly received a job promotion and became Düsseldorf's senior executive seeing to the affairs of former concentration camp inmates and persecutees beginning on September 1, 1945. Auerbach also acted as the co-founder and president of the local Jewish community in Düsseldorf, the first Jewish community reestablished in postwar Germany. In December 1945 he established the Jewish National Association of North Rhine and Westphalia.<sup>90</sup> He was also active in pursuing Nazi criminals and worked with the British Field Security Service as a consultant for a "commando" unit tracking down and arresting Nazis.<sup>91</sup> Auerbach accused the British and American Governments of hindering Jewish welfare efforts and of not having done enough to help European Jewry during the war, making him a pariah in the British zone. In a statement from March 1946, he claimed that the Jews in the British zone were treated like enemy nationals, and that their property was not safe from requisition.<sup>92</sup> Auerbach made several enemies in the British zone and was under investigation by the British Occupation government in 1946 for spying and falsely using the title of doctor, among other charges.<sup>93</sup> Matters finally came to a head in February 1946 when he was suspended from his

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Sabine Hering, *Jüdische Wohlfahrt im Spiegel von Biographien*, 2. durchgesehene und erw. Aufl. ed., Schriften des Arbeitskreises Geschichte der jüdischen Wohlfahrt in Deutschland (Frankfurt am Main: Fachhochschulverlag, 2007), 48.

<sup>90</sup> Fröhlich and Kohlstruck, *Engagierte Demokraten*: 58.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> "Groups Represented at London Jewish Parley Will Cooperate, but Plan No International Body," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Archive, March 4, 1946), 1.

<sup>93</sup> Schoeps, *Leben im Land der Täter*: 209.

position for allegedly “prosecuting a too vigorous denazification policy.”<sup>94</sup> His political activities and career were heavily scrutinized, but with the help of Wilhelm Hoegner, the Bavarian Minister President, Auerbach was able to leave the British zone and resettle in Munich in the fall of 1946.<sup>95</sup>

Auerbach was quickly appointed to perform a similar position to the one he held in the British zone as the Bavarian Commissioner of Jewish Affairs. He was originally assigned to oversee the care of Jewish persecutees in the American zone, but within a matter of days Bavarian officials promoted him to the office of Politically Persecuted Persons.<sup>96</sup> Beginning on September 15, 1946, Auerbach worked as the State Commissioner for the Welfare of the Victims of Fascism in the American zone. This office was renamed the State Commissioner for Racial, Religious, and Political Persecutees just a few short weeks later in October 1946.<sup>97</sup> He replaced Hurman Aumer, the first Bavarian State Commissioner for the Victims of Fascism, who had been rather ineffectual at securing housing and funds for Jews in Germany.<sup>98</sup> Occasionally Aumer had secured large sums for Jewish Communities in Germany, but this was infrequent. He was finally removed from the position because of his involvement in the Bavarian Separatist party, leaving the job open for Auerbach.<sup>99</sup> Auerbach proclaimed his commitment to both German-Jews and Jewish Displaced Persons living in Germany because he argued, “everyone experienced common sufferings, regardless of the original country.”<sup>100</sup> His time in Auschwitz

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<sup>94</sup> "Rosensaft Charges That German Girls Exert Anti-Jewish Influence over British Officers," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Archive, February 5, 1946), 1.

<sup>95</sup> Schoeps, *Leben im Land der Täter*: 208.

<sup>96</sup> "Jewish Affairs Office in Bavaria Will Be Merged with Office for Non-Jewish Victims," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Archive, September 19, 1946), 1.

<sup>97</sup> Hering, *Jüdische Wohlfahrt im Spiegel von Biographien*: 52.

<sup>98</sup> Leo W. Schwarz, *The Redeemers: A Saga of the Years 1945-1952* (New York: Farrar Straus and Young, 1953). 160.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Auerbach was a strong advocate for German-Jews, arguing against their unequal distribution of rations when compared to those received by DPs. He also claimed that German-Jews who were intermarried deserved to vote on



and Buchenwald meant that he could sympathize with survivors and DPs, a trait that his predecessor had lacked.<sup>101</sup>

The position of the State Commissioner for Racial, Religious, and Political Persecutees was far reaching, entailing everything from overseeing the emigration of thousands of Displaced Persons and finding employment, housing, and clothing for those who could or would not be repatriated, to dispensing restitution payments as well as social welfare resources.<sup>102</sup> In one of his first interviews upon taking office, Auerbach stated that his main priorities were the establishment of a Jewish sanitarium in Bavaria, restitution, relieving overcrowding, and the restoration of Jewish family life as well as cultural and spiritual life.<sup>103</sup> He took over control of an essentially new office without any set rules or direction, and very little money, and proved to be very successful at it. Auerbach pushed the occupation authorities to work to ensure that restitution measures were underway, saw to the smooth emigration of DPs from Germany, argued for stricter actions against acts of anti-Semitism, and even became involved in the discussion over the daily rations that Jewish DPs received.<sup>104</sup> In essence, Auerbach worked to insert himself into any position dealing with the victims of Nazism in the American zone and became the voice for Jews in Bavaria as well as the self appointed “protector” of all Jews in Germany.

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matters pertaining to the German-Jewish community and that the children of these marriages be considered Jewish regardless of the religion of their mother. He believed that both the Jewish aid organizations as well as the Central Committee of Jews in the U.S. zone in Germany were discriminating against these Jews when it came to restitution and rations. "Marriage Issue Causes Disagreement Among Jewish Community Leaders in Germany," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Archive, December 24, 1947), 1. For more on Auerbach's support for German Jews please see "Jew Who Spent Six Years in Nazi Camp Becomes Bavarian Commissioner for Jewish Affairs," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Archive, September 17, 1946), 1; "Jewish Organizations Protest Establishment of Jewish Restitution Bank in Germany," in *Jewish telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Archive, December 28, 1949), 1.

<sup>101</sup> Schwarz, *The Redeemers*: 160.

<sup>102</sup> Kauders, *Democratization and the Jews*: 52.

<sup>103</sup> "Jew Who Spent Six Years in Nazi Camp Becomes Bavarian Commissioner for Jewish Affairs," 1.

<sup>104</sup> "Jewish Child Dies, Four Others Stricken in Infantile Paralysis Outbreak in DP Camp," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Archive, March 1, 1948), 1.

As the provincial governments of Germany worked to enact their own restitution plans, Auerbach fought for the rights of victims. He struggled against Baden-Wuerttemberg's decision to differentiate between those "interned in ghettos," and thus denied indemnification, and those "imprisoned in ghettos" who received restitution.<sup>105</sup> While both parties were forcefully placed in ghettos Bad Wuerttemberg tried to differentiate the two in order to avoid paying out as much in compensation. Auerbach worked to ensure that every unmarked mass grave in Germany was found and a record kept of the occupants who could be identified so that a memorial could be erected, Kaddish said, and a ceremony held. By September 1950, Auerbach had dedicated 11 cemeteries to victims of Nazi camps in Germany.<sup>106</sup>

Auerbach's commitment to the Jewish community in Germany extended beyond his government position, and he often-suggested programs that he believed would help better the lives of DPs in the country. In early 1946 he proposed a work program that would employ 4,000 Jewish Displaced Persons in factories throughout the country, making clothes for the 185,000 Jews living in camps in the American zone. Auerbach argued that the program would put DPs to work, a hard task to accomplish considering that the majority of Jewish DPs were unwilling to work for German employers, German marks, or within the German economy.<sup>107</sup> While this program was eventually put aside because none of the involved parties could settle on agreeable terms, it was not Auerbach's only proposal regarding the situation of the Jewish

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<sup>105</sup> The distinction made by Bad Wuerttemberg callously overlooked the reality of Holocaust Ghettos arguing in essence that some inmates of the ghettos had chosen to live there. "Germans State in U.S. Zone Attempts to Discriminate Against Ghetto Inhabitants' Claims," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Archive, October 6, 1949), 1.

<sup>106</sup> "Jewish Communities in Germany Deplore U.S. Release of Convicted Nazi War Criminals," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Archive, September 5, 1950), 1; "New Mass Graves Found in Germany; Contain Remains of 5,000 Belgian, Polish Jews," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Archive, February 28, 1950), 1.

<sup>107</sup> "4,000 Jews May Be Placed at Work in German Factories to Produce Clothing for Jewish DPs," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Archive, November 6, 1946), 1.

DPs.<sup>108</sup> Auerbach also urged the Bavarian Government to consider seizing the funds acquired by the Nazis between 1933-1945 to help rehabilitate Nazi victims. He argued that restitution funding was progressing too slowly and that changes needed to be made.<sup>109</sup> He stated that the victims of Nazism would not be contented with “a handful of German marks.” Instead they demanded that they would reclaim their former status from 1933 by receiving adequate compensation and having their property returned.<sup>110</sup> In 1947 Auerbach proposed a plan to loan \$200,000,000 to Jewish emigrants preparing to resettle away from Germany. The money would be divided evenly between 20,000 Jews in the American zone who had qualified for visas abroad and was intended to help relieve the cost of resettlement.<sup>111</sup> This plan, like so many of his others that would have cost the German government tens of thousands of dollars, was also rejected, but it helps to illustrate the efforts made by Philipp Auerbach as he worked to find a resolution to Jewish restlessness, depression, and restitution.

Auerbach’s influence in Bavaria’s Jewish organizations grew and in 1947 he assumed the position of the head of the Bavarian Jewish Community. One year later, on November 16, 1948, he became the Attorney General of the Bavarian State Office for Restitution.<sup>112</sup> In September 1949, he was made a board member of the newly formed Jewish charter Bank that secured advanced credits to Jews awaiting property restitution. Known as a man of action, Auerbach wielded enormous power and was viewed by many as a true advocate for European Jewry. Jewish representatives and newspapers expressed amazement when Auerbach became involved

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<sup>108</sup> The American Army refused to pay the DPs in American currency and would only agree to a four-month contract, after which the DPs would be forced to work for the German economy. Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> "Confiscation of Nazis' Funds to Aid Victims Urged by Bavarian Official," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Archive, January 28, 1947), 1.

<sup>110</sup> "German Racial and Political Persecutees Demand Restoration to Pre-1933 Status," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Archive, July 29, 1947), 1.

<sup>111</sup> "Propose \$1,000 Stake for Every Jewish Dp to Aid Rehabilitation in New Land," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Archive, November 25, 1947), 1.

<sup>112</sup> "Dr. Auerbach erhält ein neues Amt: Keine Unterbrechung in der Betreuung der Verfolgten," in *Auerbach* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1948), 1; Fröhlich and Kohlstruck, *Engagierte Demokraten*: 61.

in a particular matter and was unsuccessful at achieving his goal. While Auerbach was not always successful at his endeavors, the shock expressed in the press when he did fail illustrated his perceived power and influence when it came to Jewish affairs in the American zone.<sup>113</sup> Interestingly, Auerbach's authority extended beyond Europe. Although he lived in Munich he was the director of the Jewish Restitution Successor Organization, or JRSO, housed in New York.<sup>114</sup> Additionally, he flew to the United States in October 1949, to help accelerate the restitution claims of between 10,000 and 12,000 former prisoners of Nazi camps who had settled in North America and were entitled to compensation.

Despite his efforts and success in aiding the Jewish community in Germany, Auerbach was not free from criticism. Officials in the Bavarian Ministry of Economics and Foreign Trade accused Auerbach of protecting Jewish emigrants who were alleged to have acquired German industrial equipment on the black market and were shipping it to Israel.<sup>115</sup> Members of these governmental branches believed that Auerbach was using his power and influence to help Jewish emigrants steal from the German economy. While claims against Jewish emigrants persisted, Auerbach was not found guilty of involvement.<sup>116</sup> Additionally, a handful of disgruntled DPs awaiting their emigration accused Auerbach of creating delays preventing these Jewish émigrés from leaving Germany for Israel and blocking Jews from receiving their restitution. With the full support of Abraham S. Hyman, then adviser on Jewish affairs, Auerbach denied claims that he was in any way responsible for either slowdown. Instead he explained that since the original

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<sup>113</sup> "Jews Demonstrate in Bavaria to Demand Immediate Implementation of Restitution Law," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Archive, November 9, 1949), 1; "Indemnity Aide Here To Help Nazi Victims," in *1923-Current Files* (New York: New York Times, October 19, 1949).

<sup>114</sup> "Dr. Philip Auerbach Comes to U.S. to Aid Former Inmates of Nazi Camps on Claims," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Archive, October 20, 1949), 1.

<sup>115</sup> "Bavarian Officials Charge Israel-Bound Jews are Removing Machinery Without Permission," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Archive, October 17, 1948), 1.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*

restitution law had been enacted his office had processed 9,000 applications.<sup>117</sup> He continued on to say that 300 to 400 applications were evaluated a day and that any monetary hold ups would be solved after the Jewish Agency resolved reparations negotiations. Once this resolution was reached the Jews who had immigrated to Israel would receive restitution in the form of a prefabricated house rather than German marks.<sup>118</sup> According to Major Hyman, Auerbach “has been very aggressive in the implementation of the General Claims Law in Bavaria” but did not have the power to accelerate the payments.<sup>119</sup> The situation was not much better nearly a year later when 170,000 applications were submitted to the restitution office and only 10,000 had been settled with an additional 30,000 awaiting evaluation. The slow progress of processing the claims was caused by the need to investigate each application. Auerbach asserted that, “obviously entire forgery centers are busy forging documents” and making false claims so that every application had to be thoroughly evaluated.<sup>120</sup> It would take at least two years before the Bavarian indemnification program was finally completed.<sup>121</sup> Although these assessments led to resentment, there was no denying that Auerbach was working to ensure that the victims of Nazism received their due restitution.

While Auerbach had numerous supporters and defenders, he also had several enemies. His strong criticisms against Denazification and his belief that many Germans were just waiting for the chance to again express their anti-Semitism led to hostile feelings among many Germans across the political spectrum in the country.<sup>122</sup> He also constantly berated the American occupation government for their “lack” of efforts to stop the re-emerging anti-Semitism rampant

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<sup>117</sup> "Bavarian Restitution Office Not Responsible for Delay of DP Emigration to Israel," in *Jewish telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Archive, December 14, 1949), 1.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> "Emigration of Jews from Bavaria Completed; 18,000 Remain, Parliament is Told," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Archive, October 31, 1950), 1.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Fröhlich, *Engagierte Demokraten*: 61.

in their zone and argued that they put the needs of ex-Nazis before those of the victims of Nazi terror.<sup>123</sup> Auerbach never stopped defending European Jewry against German anti-Semitism and was often heard countering the claims of prominent German politicians who argued that anti-Semitism was a European problem, not just one expressed by Germans.<sup>124</sup> He was criticized for arguing that postwar anti-Semitism “used the same tactics of 1933” and for claiming that if authority was again given to Germany, the country would revert to a prewar copy of itself.<sup>125</sup> In an interview in 1947, Auerbach declared that, “the Nazi spirit is more deeply rooted than the Allies realize,” noting that in one Bavarian town residents had put up posters stating, “Hitler Lives. He will Return.”<sup>126</sup> Despite the resistance with which Auerbach’s claims were met, he continued to argue that he personally was sent letters filled with anti-Semitic epithets, and that when he announced his travel plans to the States in 1947 he received several letters expressing the hope that he would stay in America and take the Jews living in Germany with him.<sup>127</sup> In a report compiled by OMGUS in conjunction with several members of Jewish aid organizations entitled, *Overt Acts of Anti-Semitism*, Mr. Grosser noted that “A large percentage of the complaints to this Headquarters come from Dr. Auerbach, but his complaints do not mean much until they are verified. There are more of his complaints which can not be verified than those on

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<sup>123</sup> "Jews in Germany Welcome U.S. Commissioner's Support of Indemnification Claims," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Archive, February 9, 1950), 1.

<sup>124</sup> In December 1946, Auerbach publically attacked the Mayor of Munich, Karl Scharnagl a Social Democrat, for claiming that the Bavarian government owed the Jewish DPs nothing because they were in fact victims of Polish anti-Semitism. Auerbach reminded Scharnagl that it had been the Germans who first oppressed the Jews and had spread their hatred throughout all of Europe. "Jewish Commissioner Attacks Munich Mayor's Statement That DP's Are not Victims of Nazis," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Archive, December 2, 1946), 1.

<sup>125</sup> "Army Admits Anti-Semitism Growing in Bavaria; Official Cites Anti-Jewish Incident," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Archive, February 3, 1947), 1.

<sup>126</sup> "Bavarian Commissioner for Persecutees Warns Against Rebirth of Nazism in Germany," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Archive, June 10, 1947), 1.

<sup>127</sup> "Anti-Semitism Increasing in Bavaria, Commissioner of Jewish Affairs Declares," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Archive, June 26, 1947), 1.

which it can be said that he is right.”<sup>128</sup> Auerbach’s deep-seated belief in the threat of future anti-Semitism led him to push for the establishment of special courts to try individuals involved in anti-Semitic acts as an illustration that would convince the Germans that the Allies stood firmly as protectors of the persecuted.<sup>129</sup>

Despite all of the counterarguments and attempts to persuade him otherwise, Auerbach was unwilling to change his stance about the future threat of Nazism. After a series of anti-Semitic attacks in 1950 in Frankfurt and Nuremburg motivated the Jewish communities there to consider undertaking self-defense measures, Auerbach again reiterated his claims that the “Nazi underground” was obviously active in these areas.<sup>130</sup> As anti-Semitic expressions increased throughout Bavaria, Auerbach continued to argue that there was a widespread and active Nazi network, which could not be ignored.<sup>131</sup> He never held back his opinion when it came to Denazification hearings or the appointment of people whom he considered former Nazis. This was the case when he publically called Hjalmar Schacht, the financial expert under the Nazis, a war criminal.<sup>132</sup> Auerbach’s proclamation led to a libel suit against him but did not stop him from accusing other former Nazis of war crimes, and again being sued for libel in 1951.<sup>133</sup> While members of the occupation forces, as well as Jewish aid organizations active in the American zone of Germany, were willing to concede that expressions of anti-Semitism were becoming more common as the occupation period continued, they argued that no evidence existed to support Auerbach’s claims of an eminent Nazi resurgence.

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<sup>128</sup> OMGUS, "Overt Acts of Anti-Semitism," in *Anti-Semitism* (Munich: BayHStA, 1948), 1.

<sup>129</sup> "Army Admits Anti-Semitism Growing in Bavaria; Official Cites Anti-Jewish Incident," 1.

<sup>130</sup> "Jews in West Germany Consider Self-defense Measures; Anti-Semitic Incidents Mount," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Agency, April 18, 1950), 1.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> "Hjalmar Schacht Sues Jewish Official of Bavaria for Calling Him a War Criminal," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Archive, March 22, 1950), 1.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

His uncompromising belief that National Socialist ideology continued to be an integral part of Bavarian thinking motivated him to push for a law preventing the employment of civil servants who had been involved with National Socialism, furthering the German mistrust and dislike surrounding him.<sup>134</sup> This law stipulated that no one who had worked under the Nazis could hold a civil position in the German government until 1955. His staunch position against former National Socialists led the Bavarian MP Dr. Rudolf Soenning to plead with Auerbach in 1948, asking him to forgive these individuals for their crimes.<sup>135</sup> Soenning claimed that only after “feelings of hatred and revenge” were left in the past could Germany become a true democracy. In his book, *Democratization and the Jews: Munich 1945-1965*, Anthony Kauders argues that Soenning was expressing the opinion of many of his fellow liberals in Germany who believed that Germany would never fully develop into a democratic country if it could not move beyond its past, and if the survivors living in Germany could not put aside their feelings of hatred.<sup>136</sup> Despite these arguments, Auerbach continued to preach against the ever-present threat of Anti-Semitism in German society. Additionally, enmity toward Auerbach increased among Germans because of his verbal slights of members of the Bavarian government and his perceived preferential treatment of “racially” persecuted individuals.<sup>137</sup>

Auerbach’s power and influence led to feelings of resentment and distrust among several officials; German, Jewish, and American. He was often described as a megalomaniac and even met with strong animosity from Jewish leaders like Abraham Klausner who called him “pompous and officious.”<sup>138</sup> Many members of the Central Committee of Liberated Jews in the

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<sup>134</sup> Kauders, *Democratization and the Jews*: 98.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., 162.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 141.

<sup>138</sup> Michael Berkowitz, *The Crime of My Very Existence: Nazism and the Myth of Jewish Criminality*, The S. Mark Taper Foundation Imprint in Jewish Studies (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007). 168.



U.S. zone in Germany believed Auerbach had attempted to make himself the “Leader of the Jews.”<sup>139</sup> Prominent German officials argued that Auerbach’s numerous political positions were controversial, and articles appeared in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* discussing the conflict of interest this presented.<sup>140</sup> Justice Minister Dr. Josef Müller argued that a reorganization of control was necessary because he believed that Auerbach’s power was too far reaching and eventually would threaten the interests of those he was supposed to serve.<sup>141</sup>

As one of Auerbach’s biggest opponents Müller was known for publically attacking him in the press. By October 1948, Müller had called for Auerbach’s immediate resignation from the office of State Commission of Racial, Religious, and Political Persecutees.<sup>142</sup> Müller’s views were not widely supported, and several local politicians, as well as the Jewish community in Bavaria, backed Auerbach claiming that his character flaws were not as important as his work record.<sup>143</sup> Despite his impassioned attacks against former members of the National Socialist party and his claims of prevalent anti-Semitism throughout the country, Auerbach did have the support of some local German officials and members of the aid organizations active in Germany. Instead of stepping down, Auerbach took over a new position becoming the head of the Bavarian Restitution Office, which replaced the Department of Persecutees.<sup>144</sup>

Auerbach’s long and influential career came to an end in January 1951 when he was suspended from his position while awaiting the outcome of an investigation into his affairs in

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> Fröhlich and Kohlstruck, *Engagierte Demokraten*: 61.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> "Die Vorgänge um Dr. Auerbach," in *Auerbach* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1948), 1.

<sup>143</sup> "Dr. Auerbach erhält ein neues Amt: Keine Unterbrechung in der Betreuung der Verfolgten," 1.

<sup>144</sup> "Bavarian Government Dissolves Department for Persecutees; Opens Restitution Office.," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Archive, October 29, 1948), 1.

office.<sup>145</sup> Matters only became worse when Auerbach was arrested for embezzlement, fraud, and falsification of documents in March of that year.<sup>146</sup> The investigation into Auerbach's work had begun a year earlier when the state audit office realized that the Restitution office was 18 million marks in debt.<sup>147</sup> Rumors surfaced that the Reparations Office was processing fraudulent claims, causing the deficit. These allegations motivated several German groups, as well as the American Occupation Government to begin an investigation, into Auerbach's affairs. Hoping to prevent American involvement in the investigation the Bavarian Government moved first to take control in 1951.<sup>148</sup>

Within a matter of days after his suspension Dr. Seitz, the very man who had conducted the investigation into Auerbach's work at the State Compensation Office, replaced Auerbach.<sup>149</sup> The reason issued for Auerbach's suspension was that he "lacked the qualifications for the job."<sup>150</sup> No mention of any criminal involvement was given. A short time later the Bavarian parliament released its own statement arguing that Auerbach had not in fact committed any crime during his term as the head of the State Compensation Office, a claim that they held throughout the more than two-year investigation and trial.<sup>151</sup> Despite these arguments in favor of Auerbach, he was arrested and sentenced to prison. However, his deteriorating health led to his custody in a prison hospital where he remained for more than a year during the investigation into his life and work conducted by German authorities. Just a month after his arrest Auerbach attempted to

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<sup>145</sup> Auerbach was also accused of brutally beating other prisoners in Auschwitz, but the charges were later dropped. "Dr. Philip Auerbach Suspended As Head of Bavarian State Restitution Office," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Archive, February 26, 1951), 1.

<sup>146</sup> "German Minister Announces Arrest of Former Head of Restitution Office in Bavaria," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Archive, March 21, 1951), 1.

<sup>147</sup> Kauders, *Democratization and the Jews*: 141.

<sup>148</sup> Geller, *Jews in Post-Holocaust Germany, 1945-1953*: 208.

<sup>149</sup> Auerbach claimed that Seitz was the former assistant of Hans Frank and should have been tried as a war criminal. His appointment to the position of head of the Restitution Office led to a general outcry among Jews in Germany who believed that a Jew should hold the position, not a German. "Dr. Philip Auerbach Suspended As Head of Bavarian State Restitution Office," 1.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

commit suicide but was unsuccessful.<sup>152</sup> His lawyer said that he was suffering from a very deep depression brought on by the accusations surrounding his integrity.<sup>153</sup> Just three days after his attempted suicide, on April 19, 1951, Auerbach was found to be “above reproach” in all of his work by the Bavarian Supreme court.<sup>154</sup> The court had begun its own investigation into the claims surrounding Auerbach and emphasized that Auerbach had never advanced credit without first notifying the Minister of Finance, that he had seen to it that the majority of these loans were quickly repaid, and that any time that Auerbach came across a discrepancy or suspected forgery he immediately notified the proper authorities.<sup>155</sup> The State Prosecutor pushed forward with the Auerbach investigation despite the findings of the Bavarian Supreme Court. Just a few months later the American High Commissioner, Dr. George Shuster, demanded that Auerbach be given a speedy and fair trial so that he could defend himself. He said, “while Auerbach’s conduct of the restitution office had left much to be desired, what he had done in the nature of restitution and indemnification for Nazi persecutees should not be underestimated.”<sup>156</sup> In August 1951, Wilhelm Hoelper, the prosecutor, informed the Bavarian Parliamentary Commission that the police had yet to uncover any proof supporting assertions that Auerbach had ever intentionally settled any false claims.<sup>157</sup> The investigations conducted by various branches of the Bavarian Ministry and

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<sup>152</sup> "Dr. Auerbach, Former Head of Bavarian State Restitution Office, Attempts Suicide," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Archive, April 16, 1951), 1.

<sup>153</sup> "Bavarian Court Finds Dr. Auerbach "Above Reproach" in Granting Restitution Credit," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Archive, April 19, 1951), 1.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

<sup>156</sup> "Trial of Former Head of Recitation Office in Bavaria will open this Month," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Archive, May 22, 1951), 1.

<sup>157</sup> "Bavarian Parliamentary Commission Begins Investigation of Charges Against Auerbach," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Archive, August 27, 1951), 1.

the positive statements about Auerbach's work did nothing to dissuade the District Court in Munich from trying Auerbach.<sup>158</sup>

Although Dr. Seitz had taken over Auerbach's position as the head of the State Compensation Office, indemnification payments had come to a grinding halt with the arrest of Auerbach, leaving Jews who qualified for this restitution without any compensation for more than seven months.<sup>159</sup> The police presence in the State Compensation Office meant that all restitution payments had stopped.<sup>160</sup> The Social Democratic party voiced its displeasure in April that no restitution payments had been issued or assistance made available to the victims of Nazism since Auerbach's arrest.<sup>161</sup> At the same time a statement was made by a group of persecutees who were protesting the halt in restitution payments.<sup>162</sup> Two days later on April 26, 1951, the Association for Jewish Invalids in Germany appealed to the World Jewish Committee to intercede on their behalf with the Bavarian Government regarding the freezing of all payments from the State Compensation Office.<sup>163</sup> These individuals argued that there had been no medical assistance or payments since the beginning of the Auerbach Affair.<sup>164</sup> Hans Erhard, the Bavarian Premier told the State Parliament that all indemnification resources had been exhausted and that only through the sale of seized Nazi property could Bavaria continue its restitution efforts.<sup>165</sup> The American High Commissioner issued a statement urging Bavaria to reinstate restitution

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<sup>158</sup> Unlike the American judicial system, German criminal trials are not initiated with a Supreme Court indictment, but rather develop from the investigations made by the state's attorney. Ingo Müller, *Hitler's Justice: The Courts of the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Harvard Press, 1991). xii.

<sup>159</sup> "German Campaign of Slander Against Jewish Community Irks Jewish Leaders, Protest Voiced," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Archive, March 2, 1951), 1.

<sup>160</sup> "Recitation 8,000 Displaced Jews Left Bavaria in 8 Months without Compensation," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Archive, September 11, 1951), 1.

<sup>161</sup> "Bavarian Restitution Office Makes No Indemnification Payments to Nazi Victims," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Archive, April 24, 1951), 1.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> "Jewish Invalids Seek Intervention Against Freezing of Restitution Payments in Bavaria," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Archive, April 26, 1951), 1.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

payments when no efforts were made to resume indemnification, but people still continued to wait for restitution in September 1951.<sup>166</sup> According to Maurice Weinberger the representative of the remaining Jews in the American zone as well as the chairman of the Council for the Liquidation of Jewish Camps and Communities in the area, 8,000 Jewish émigrés had already left Germany without any restitution payments because of the breakdown of the State Compensation Office with the arrest of Auerbach.<sup>167</sup>

For many Jewish Displaced Persons, those who had emigrated, those awaiting immigration, or those too infirm to leave Germany, the cessation of payments not only meant continued hardship but led them to believe that all Jews were being punished for the suspected crimes of members of the State Compensation Office.<sup>168</sup> These feelings were shared by the Jewish aid organizations in Germany, OMGB, and the newly formed Central Council of Jews in Germany. These groups all made various declarations regarding the detrimental nature of the trial on German opinion of the remaining Jews in Germany. Already by the beginning of March 1951, just weeks after the initial investigations, members of the Central Council of Jews in Germany issued protests “against the campaign of slander and incitement being carried on against the Jews in connection with the recent suspension of Dr. Philipp [sic] Auerbach.”<sup>169</sup> In a series of statements given by members of the Central Council, they condemned public and press statements, which identified the Jews as a single group represented by one member. They acknowledged the need for a thorough investigation into the affairs of the State Compensation Office and a conviction of anyone participating in any crimes. However, German Jews argued that these actions could not target all Jews because of the involvement of one, and they should

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<sup>166</sup> "U.S. Commissioner Tells Bavarian Government to Pay Indemnification to Nazi Victims," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Archive, May 8, 1951), 1.

<sup>167</sup> "Recitation 8,000 Displaced Jews Left Bavaria in 8 Months without Compensation."

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

<sup>169</sup> "German Campaign of Slander Against Jewish Community Irks Jewish Leaders, Protest Voiced," 1.

not punish all Jews by stopping indemnification and medical payments.<sup>170</sup> The outcome of these actions, argued the Central Council, was to incite hatred and “poison” the opinion of the German public.

The Central Council quickly realized that they needed to distance themselves from Auerbach and the chaos associated with the affairs surrounding his investigation.<sup>171</sup> While Auerbach claimed that his trial was an attack on all Jews, members of the Central Council argued that it was only Auerbach on trial, but that the accusations against him did have the potential to lead to widespread anti-Semitism if they continued to associate with Auerbach. Hendrik George Van Dam admonished the other members of the board, asking them if they really wanted to have a representative member who was a subject of interest to the Americans.<sup>172</sup> He pushed Auerbach to resign from his positions for the good of the Jewish community. Several members of the Central Council of Jews in Germany feared that the Auerbach Affair would lead to the death of the newly formed Jewish representative body and they understood the detriment that the investigation could have on the whole Jewish community. After a lot of external pressure and demands from members of the Central Council, Auerbach resigned from his position on the board, but he argued it would last only through the period of his investigation. Within a month, members of the American zonal Interest-Representation group had removed Auerbach from all of his posts in the American zone. Although the Joint had initially supported Auerbach in his claims of innocence, arguing that Dr. Josef Müller had a personal vendetta against him, this all changed in April 1952.<sup>173</sup> JDC officials had originally argued that Müller was a known anti-Semite and that the choice of prosecutors and judges illustrated that the entire trial was a sham

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<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> Geller, *Jews in Post-Holocaust Germany, 1945-1953*: 209.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> Ronald Webster, "American Relief and Jews in Germany, 1945-1960," *Leo Baeck Institute* 38, no. 1 (1993): 313.

set up to destroy Auerbach.<sup>174</sup> Later reports illustrate a change in the JDC's position. One such report noted, "Auerbach... is not being tried because he is a Jew, nor is [sic] there any immediate anti-Semitic overtones."<sup>175</sup> Auerbach's innocence was less the issue for the Joint than the fact that the investigation and trial of the former Jewish "Tsar" of Bavaria was tainting the image of all Jews in Germany, thereby making the JDC's efforts to resettle the remaining DPs abroad that much more difficult.<sup>176</sup> Not all Jews abandoned Auerbach, but the aforementioned organizations worked to disassociate themselves from him in an effort to save Jews in Germany from future attacks.<sup>177</sup>

The Jewish organizations were not the only ones fearful of an outbreak of anti-Semitic sentiments among the German population. Even Josef Müller, the main German proponent pushing for Auerbach's investigation, worried that Auerbach's arrest would bring about a new wave of anti-Semitism. At a conference in Ansbach he said, "Auerbach's arrest should not be exploited for anti-Semitic purposes."<sup>178</sup> Unfortunately, many Germans ignored Müller's statement, and the German press was filled with anti-Semitic debates grouping Jews as a whole when discussing the suspected actions of Auerbach. According to Jay Howard Geller the Auerbach affair had opened a Pandora's box of antisemitism and recriminations.<sup>179</sup> Both German Jews and Jewish Displaced Persons protested against the manner in which the case was discussed both privately and in public forums.<sup>180</sup> Interestingly, apprehensions about the portrayal of Auerbach and its repercussions on the German-Jewish community were not confined to Germany. American officials expressed concerns that the Auerbach case would only bring on

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<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid., 314.

<sup>177</sup> Geller, *Jews in Post-Holocaust Germany, 1945-1953*: 209.

<sup>178</sup> "German Minister Announces Arrest of Former Head of Restitution Office in Bavaria," 1.

<sup>179</sup> Geller, *Jews in Post-Holocaust Germany, 1945-1953*: 1.

<sup>180</sup> "Trial of Former Head of Recitation Office in Bavaria will open this Month," 1.

a new surge of anti-Jewish sentiments, thereby disrupting the order that the country had just begun to enjoy.<sup>181</sup> These Americans noted the continued tension between the various German parties over the Auerbach debate as their cause for worry. They feared that an outbreak of anti-Semitism and disorder could lead to the toppling of the newly formed German government, yet at the time they were unwilling to try Auerbach in a military court, opting instead to wait and see how the trial progressed.<sup>182</sup>

The investigation into Auerbach's life and work took just over a year to come to trial because of the constant addition of new charges. The trial had initially been scheduled for September but was delayed when it was announced by Müller that Auerbach was charged with having secret contacts in a news agency abroad and was using these connections to keep watch on "public personalities."<sup>183</sup> The trial was again postponed in February adding another three months to Auerbach's imprisonment.<sup>184</sup> The continuous delays and prejudiced portrayal of Auerbach led many people in both Germany and the United States to fear that Auerbach's trial would be biased against him. H.A. Goodman, the World Agudah leader, claimed that the "democratic world would deplore the anti-Semitic atmosphere of the proceedings and the Nazi-like reports of the trial appearing in the German press."<sup>185</sup> It was for this reason that the League

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<sup>181</sup> "Auerbach Trial Provokes Concern of U.S. Officials in Germany," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Archive, April 18, 1952), 1.

<sup>182</sup> Members of various organizations throughout the United States pushed for American intervention arguing that the German government could not be trusted to hold an unbiased trial. "U.S. Commissioner Rules German Court Can Try Dr. Auerbach," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Archive, April 14, 1952), 1; "Auerbach Trial Provokes Concern of U.S. Officials in Germany," 1.

<sup>183</sup> "Auerbach Trial Again Delayed as New Charges Are Made," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Archive, September 26, 1951), 1.

<sup>184</sup> "Bavarian Govt. Urged to Give Auerbach a Fair Trial," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Archive, February 28, 1951), 1.

<sup>185</sup> "Auerbach Trial May Find Echo at U.N. Human rights Commission," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Archive, May 13, 1952), 1.



for Freedom and Human Dignity appealed to the Bavarian Government in February 1952 to allow Auerbach a fair trial.<sup>186</sup>

Many individuals believed that there were several obstacles facing Auerbach before the trial even began. One of the dates proposed to begin the trial coincided with Passover, which resulted in a debate over whether the German constitution protected the rights of individuals to miss court for religious reasons.<sup>187</sup> Auerbach's lawyer filed a plea requesting that the trial be delayed until after the holiday, but the question remained undecided for weeks. Members of Agudas Israel argued that the matter should be brought before the UN Human Rights Commission if in fact Germany's basic law did not protect the religious rights of all of its residents.<sup>188</sup>

The trial finally began on May 17, 1952 and within a matter of weeks a new committee was created in the United States to help raise money for Auerbach's defense and to educate Americans about the case against him.<sup>189</sup> This group called itself the Committee on Fair Play for Auerbach, and along with individuals throughout Germany and the United States, believed that the press coverage that had run before the trial painted Auerbach in a very negative light condemning him to a guilty verdict before the proceedings had even begun. The group argued that the appointment of former Nazi judges for the trial proved that the hearing was indeed

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<sup>186</sup> "Bavarian Govt. Urged to Give Dr. Auerbach a Fair Trial," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Archive, February 28, 1952), 1.

<sup>187</sup> "German Court Seeks Clarity on rights of Religious Groups," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Archive, May 1, 1952), 1.

<sup>188</sup> The Agudas Israel organization was originally established in 1912, in Eastern Europe as a representative body for the orthodox community whose members traditionally were not members of the local Zionist movements. They came to an agreement with the early Israeli government that ensured the rights of the orthodox community in the Jewish state. "Auerbach Trial May Find Echo at U.N. Human rights Commission," 1.

<sup>189</sup> "American Group Seeks Fair Trial for Auerbach in Germany," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Archive, May 8, 1952), 1.

prejudiced against Auerbach. They claimed that he would not get a fair trial because three of the five judges hearing the case had been former Nazis.<sup>190</sup>

### **The Return of Nazi judges**

The terms of the unconditional surrender of the Third Reich at the close of the war not only brought about the end of the Nazis but also led to the end of Germany's legal system including the functioning legal practice. The first proclamation issued by the Allied government was that "all German court...within the occupied territory are closed until further notice."<sup>191</sup> The suspension of Germany's legal structure meant that the majority of the functions previously fulfilled by various levels of the German court system were taken over by the Allied troops, and the successive governments in the four zones of occupation. At one point the Allies discussed closing Germany's courts for up to ten years so that a new group of lawyers and judges could be trained to replace the legal professionals with Nazi ties.<sup>192</sup> The Allies proposed the introduction of a colonial court system in the intermediary period, but instead opted to remove the judges with the longest and strongest ties to the Hitler regime. The lawyers and judges who had only "nominally" participated with the practices of the Third Reich and who had not been ardent party members were denazified and allowed to return to their former positions.<sup>193</sup> The Allies had believed that the permanent removal of the prosecutors and judges most closely linked with the Third Reich would allow for the promotion of those who had not been Nazi supporters as well as attorneys returning from their stays abroad.

The Allies soon realized that if they removed all legal representatives who had had ties to the Nazis, they would have to permanently close the German court system. In some areas of

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<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

<sup>191</sup> Müller, *Hitler's Justice*: 201.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid., 202.

Germany 100% of the court officials had been Nazi party members. The Allies found that even in the areas where less than 100% of legal workers were not affiliated with the Party, the numbers were still often in the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile.<sup>194</sup> The Americans were only able to find two judges in all of Bremen who had records that could be considered “untainted.”<sup>195</sup> The Allies debated the possibility of reinstating German judges who had retired before 1933 and only allowing lawyers to practice part time, but this would have still resulted in too few judges to keep the country’s legal system active. Instead the British chose to ignore the party membership of all prosecutors and judges who had joined the Nazi party after 1937 hoping that this would supply enough court officials to reinstate a working German structure.<sup>196</sup> When this method proved unsuccessful at providing enough judges, the British introduced a system by which every “clean” judge reinstated to a legal position allowed for the restoration of one former Nazi judge. This system lasted until June 1946 when former SA prosecutors who had been through the de-Nazification process were allowed to again assume their former positions.<sup>197</sup>

Ingo Müller presents a clear picture of the continuities between law professionals active under the Nazis and postwar period in his book, *Hitler’s Justice: The Courts of the Third Reich*. Müller’s research proves that by 1949 81% of all judges and prosecutors in Bavaria had in fact been Nazis.<sup>198</sup> These numbers were similar to those found in the other zones of occupation. This meant that finding judges and legal representation who had no affiliation with the Nazis to preside over the Auerbach Affair was nearly impossible. In the end more than half of the judges assigned to hear the Auerbach trial had had strong ties to the Nazi party.

## The Trial

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<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid., 203.

The charges against Auerbach filled 102 type-written pages. The most notable accusations were the acceptance of bribes while in office, falsified sworn testimonies, fraud and the payout of nearly \$714,000 in false reparations claims.<sup>199</sup> Of all of the charges against him Auerbach only pleaded guilty to one: the unlawful use of the title of doctor. Over the course of the investigation and trial the charges against Auerbach changed constantly, leading his defense counsel to appeal for an acquittal in May. His lawyer argued that the fact that these charges kept being dropped meant that there was insufficient evidence to merit the continued incarceration of Auerbach.<sup>200</sup> Six days later, the fraud charges against him fell apart and he was released from custody while his trial was suspended.<sup>201</sup> Simultaneously, Auerbach's lawyers charged that Müller, the main proponent behind the investigation was in fact involved in the illegal sale of indemnification credits that were estimated to total 20,000 marks.<sup>202</sup> He was brought before parliament but refused to discuss the extent of his involvement. Müller's continued silence cost him 500 marks in fines.<sup>203</sup> He was finally forced to resign from his position when it was found that he was in fact involved in the very crimes for which he had accused Auerbach.<sup>204</sup> The suspension of the trial was only temporary and resumed shortly after Müller's resignation, lasting until August 14, 1952.

As the first really big postwar trial of a Jew by a German court, people around the world watched the Auerbach Affair closely. There is very little doubt that the Auerbach trial was

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<sup>199</sup> "Bavarian Denies Fraud: Restitution Official Says All charges Are Lies," in *1923-Current* (New York: The New York Times, April 19, 1952), 1.

<sup>200</sup> "Munich Court Hears Appeal for Acquittal of Dr. Auerbach," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Archive, May 29, 1952), 1.

<sup>201</sup> "Philip Auerbach Released As Fraud Trial Collapses," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Archive, June 4, 1952), 1.

<sup>202</sup> "Munich Court Hears Appeal for Acquittal of Dr. Auerbach," 1.

<sup>203</sup> "Bavarian Justice Minister's Ouster Demanded in Auerbach Case," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Archive, May 26, 1952), 1.

<sup>204</sup> "Overdose of Pills Kills Auerbach, Convicted on Nazi Victim Fraud," in *1923-Current* (Internet: New York Times, August 17, 1952), 15.

biased, and several aspects of the affair were definitely anti-Semitic and unsympathetic to the plight of Holocaust survivors. Besides the three former Nazi judges chosen to preside over the case, the fact that the trial had been scheduled to begin on a Jewish holiday did not bode well for German claims of acceptance and equality for their Jewish citizens. Additionally, one of the judges dismissed the severity of the horrors of the Shoah by comparing his POW experience to that of a Jew living in a concentration camp and went so far as to refer to Auerbach's wife as "Aryan," dismissing his suffering.<sup>205</sup> The trial continued despite the Jewish cries against the anti-Semitic nature of the "Affair."

After five months the trial of Auerbach, dubbed one of "Germany's most sensational scandals," finally came to an end with a guilty verdict, a two and a half-year sentence and \$643 in fines.<sup>206</sup> Auerbach was convicted of bribery, forgery, fraud and falsely claiming to be a doctor of philosophy. He argued that the trial was a "second Dreyfus affair" and told his wife that he could not live with the shame of his conviction.<sup>207</sup> The day following the closing of the trial, Auerbach was found dead in his hospital room after having taking an overdose of pills.<sup>208</sup> His suicide note, sent to his wife, stated that he would never be able to move past "having his honor dragged through the dirt."<sup>209</sup> Within a matter of days accusations, arose against the judges as well as the occupation forces. It was argued that the Allies were responsible for Auerbach's appointment to the position of Restitution Commissioner and therefore an Allied court should

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<sup>205</sup> Kauders, *Democratization and the Jews*: 141.

<sup>206</sup> "Jewish Aides Guilty in Nazi Victim Fraud," *The United Press*, August 15 1952, 1.

<sup>207</sup> "Overdose of Pills Kills Auerbach, Convicted on Nazi Victim Fraud," 1.

<sup>208</sup> "Philip Auerbach Commits Suicide; Act Due to Verdict of Geramn Court," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA-Jewish News Archive, August 18, 1952), 1.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid.

have tried him.<sup>210</sup> Auerbach's defense team alleged that the Bavarian Ministry had set Auerbach up for a guilty verdict by selecting three former Nazis to sit on a five-person bench.<sup>211</sup>

Despite the efforts of some members of Germany's Jewish community to distance themselves from Auerbach during the trial, he continued to have ample Jewish support throughout the entire event. The Jewish community mourned his death. Merchants were urged to close all shops during the funeral to illustrate its solidarity with Auerbach.<sup>212</sup> Rioting broke out during the funeral as Jewish protestors carried signs reading "Down with the Nazi Dreyfus trial."<sup>213</sup> Some of the protestors resisted police efforts to disperse them and were arrested while the rest were sent home. An estimated 1,000 mourners attended the funeral, mainly Jewish Displaced Persons. The following day, the Jewish community in Germany decided to erect a memorial in Auerbach's honor.<sup>214</sup> A representative for the Social Democratic Party stated that Auerbach's overdose "was final proof of his devotion and sincerity with which he addressed himself to the task of bringing relief to victims of Nazism in Bavaria."<sup>215</sup> He concluded his statement by saying that there was reason to believe that the trial judges "were unable to clear their minds of old prejudice."<sup>216</sup>

Several German papers began drawing parallels between the Auerbach trial and the Dreyfus Affair.<sup>217</sup> The German press argued that Auerbach's suicide was "a tragic conclusion

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<sup>210</sup> "U.S. Authorities in Germany Blamed for Auerbach's Suicide," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA-Jewish News Archive, August 19, 1952), 1.

<sup>211</sup> "Bavarian Parliamentary Committee to Probe Auerbach Trial," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA-Jewish News Archive, September 16, 1952), 1.

<sup>212</sup> "Auerbach Honors Urged: Munich Stores Asked to Close During Funeral Today," *New York Times*, August 18 1952, 1.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>215</sup> "U.S. Authorities in Germany Blamed for Auerbach's Suicide," 1.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>217</sup> "Auerbach Honors Urged: Munich Stores Asked to Close During Funeral Today," *New York Times*, August 18, 1952 August 18, 1952, 1.

and a tragic consequence,” one that needed further investigation.<sup>218</sup> Germany was left so unsettled by the trial’s outcome and Auerbach’s suicide that several different groups began demanding a full investigation into the affair. In September 1952, the Central Council of Jews in Germany demanded that the Bavarian Parliament conduct a full investigation into the Auerbach trial.<sup>219</sup> They were not alone in their demands. The Association for Freedom and Justice of Bavaria requested that the Bavarian Ministry bring formal charges against the presiding judge, Dr. Muelzer, who had acted so inappropriately during the trial.<sup>220</sup> They also notified the government that they expected an in-depth investigation into the “background and conduct” of all those involved in the Auerbach Affair.<sup>221</sup> Not to be left out of the chorus of groups demanding an investigation, the Bavarian Parliament stated that the Auerbach trial was a “monstrous disgrace for Bavaria” and needed to be fully examined.<sup>222</sup> The Parliament demanded full disclosure and wanted to know the extent to which Minister President Erhard, as well as Josef Müller, were involved with the illegal transaction of Munich’s former Chief Rabbi Aaron Ohrenstein, another member of the German-Jewish community being tried for embezzlement.<sup>223</sup> By the beginning of September 1952, the Bavarian Parliamentary Commission had agreed to begin an examination into the conduct of the investigating officials as well as the judges presiding over the Auerbach Affair.<sup>224</sup>

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<sup>218</sup> Ibid.

<sup>219</sup> "German Jews Demanded Official Investigation of Auerbach Trial," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Archive, September 10, 1952), 1.

<sup>220</sup> "Bavarian Parliamentary Committee to Probe Auerbach Trial," 1.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid.

<sup>223</sup> Ohrenstein was on trial along with Auerbach and was found guilty of similar charges. Müller admitted to taking money from parties involved in the Auerbach case and temporarily resigned from office while the investigation into the Auerbach case was underway. It was later discovered that Müller had accepted 40,000 deutschemarks and he was dismissed from his position. "Bavarian Minister Leaves Post Temporarily Because of Auerbach Case," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Archive, May 13, 1952), 1; *ibid.*

<sup>224</sup> "Bavarian Parliamentary Committee to Probe Auerbach Trial," 1.

Many of the German newspapers that had accepted Auerbach's guilt before the trial had begun to question his involvement as the Bavarian Parliament investigated his supposed participation in illegal profits while head of the State Compensation Office. The press' break from attacking Auerbach's character was short lived. As the secondary investigation into Auerbach's work got underway, so too did anti-Semitic statements about Auerbach and the remaining Jews in Germany. Within a short time, some of the more organized anti-Jewish groups began to use the new investigation to kindle anti-Jewish sentiments in German society.<sup>225</sup>

During the investigation, and in the years following its conclusion, it was found that several of the key witnesses testifying against Auerbach had in fact given false and slanderous testimonies.<sup>226</sup> Karl Diekow an architect working with Auerbach testified in court that Auerbach had tried to extort money from him.<sup>227</sup> His statement was instrumental to Auerbach's conviction; however, the prosecutors withheld the fact that there was a pending case against him for having committed perjury in a separate trial.<sup>228</sup> Diekow was found guilty of perjury and sentenced to one year in prison.<sup>229</sup> Gindl, another star witness against Auerbach, was also charged with committing perjury in another case.<sup>230</sup> Finally, August Polaczy, a German Internal Revenue Service official who had testified several times about Auerbach's involvement in the misuse of restitution funds, was removed from office for having lied about Auerbach and slandering him in public.<sup>231</sup> Polaczy was later found guilty by a civil service disciplinary court for making false accusations against Auerbach and was sentenced to forfeit one-fifth of his salary

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<sup>225</sup> "Bavarian Minister Leaves Post Temporarily Because of Auerbach Case," 1.

<sup>226</sup> "Sick D.P.'s Make Plea; Tubercular Group in German Camp Seeks to Emigrate," *New York Times*, February 22 1952, 1.

<sup>227</sup> "Prosecution Witness in Auerbach Case Sentenced for Perjury," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Archive, August 29, 1952), 1.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid.

<sup>230</sup> "Bavarian Minister Leaves Post Temporarily Because of Auerbach Case," 1.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid.



for a period of five years for his involvement in the Auerbach Affair, Auerbach's conviction, and his later suicide.<sup>232</sup>

After three years of public hearings and examinations the German Parliamentary Commission vindicated Philipp Auerbach of all charges. No neglect or dereliction of duties were found, and it was determined that while Auerbach was not a "proper bureaucrat" in traditional terms, it was this that allowed him to work through the chaos plaguing postwar Bavaria before the 1948 currency reform, a time when the most victims of Nazism needed aid.<sup>233</sup> The Commission concluded their report by saying that "Auerbach may have been energetic, industrious, meddlesome and talented," but he was not a criminal.<sup>234</sup> People still question whether Auerbach was truly innocent or guilty. Regardless of the answer, the effects of his work could still be felt in Germany years after his death, and in 1954 the Bavarian government adopted regulations to grant loans to victims of Nazism that were not very different from a plan proposed by Auerbach during his tenure in office.<sup>235</sup> The positive aspects of Auerbach's work brought about changes in the lives of several thousand Jews living in Germany before 1952. However, the negative results of his trial had long-term effects on the Jews awaiting emigration abroad or integration into German society. The Auerbach Affair made it more difficult for the JDC to find countries willing to take the remaining DPs in Germany because the debates surrounding the trial had called into question the morals of all of the Jews residing in the country.<sup>236</sup> Additionally, the more anti-Semitic accusations claiming inherent Jewish criminality that surfaced in discussions about the trial led the West German government to question the

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<sup>232</sup> "German Official, Active in Campaign Against Dr. Auerbach, Sentenced," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA- Jewish News Archive, March 13, 1956), 1.

<sup>233</sup> "German Parliamentary Body Vindicates Dr. Auerbach; Issues Report," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA- Jewish News Archive, March 2, 1952), 1.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid.

<sup>235</sup> "Victims of Nazi Persecution to Get State Loans in Bavaria," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA- Jewish News Archive, July 13, 1954), 1.

<sup>236</sup> Webster, "American Relief and Jews in Germany, 1945-1960," 314.

sensibility of absorbing the Jews who could not or would not emigrate abroad. The after effects of the trial were devastating and it took years of hard work for the Jews in Germany to move away from the accusations that had surrounded the Affair. While Auerbach may have been perceived as a power monger who did not often follow the rules, his trial will forever be remembered as a “campaign of mud-slinging” and anti-Semitism, a stain on postwar German history.<sup>237</sup> Although the Auerbach Affair created problems for Jewish aid agencies attempting to resettle the Jewish DPs, and the public slander of the Jews had threatened the newly formed Central Council of the Jews in Germany, it had also shaken the displaced Jews in the country to their core. Fearful of the rising anti-Semitism in Germany, and the state sanctioned trial a Jewish Holocaust survivor by Nazi judges, the Jewish DPs questioned their future in Germany, even if it was understood that it would only be temporary. The events of the Adolf Bleibtreu letter combined with the Auerbach Affair made the DPs call for their immediate emigration. However, it was the American transfer of the control over all DPs in Germany to the Federal Republic in 1951 that convinced the remaining displaced Jews that their time in Germany must come to an end.

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<sup>237</sup> "German Parliamentary Body Vindicates Dr. Auerbach; Issues Report," 1.

PART III:

THE FIGHT FOR AUTONOMY:  
“HEIMATLOSE AUSLÄNDER”  
UNDER GERMAN ADMINISTRATION,  
1951-1957

VI.  
THE TIMES THEY ARE A CHANGING:  
THE TRANSFER OF CONTROL  
OVER THE DISPLACED PERSONS IN GERMANY

German demands for control and jurisdiction over Germany's Displaced Persons became more insistent as the 1940s stretched on. The German Federal Republic could not allow for the continued extraterritorial and extralegal status of the displaced Jews living in camps as they worked to reassert their authority in Germany. Unwilling to transfer control over the DPs to the West German government until they were certain that all checks had been put into place to ensure the fair treatment of stateless individuals, the Office of the United States High Commissioner to Germany (USHCG) worked to prepare the newly formed Federal Republic for the task before them. Dissatisfied with the efforts put forth by German police in Bavaria assigned to control both the German population as well as Displaced Persons outside of IRO centers, USHCG waited to see if German law enforcers were capable of implementing legal control in the area before handing over jurisdiction. Additionally, the Americans needed to make sure that the Jews living throughout Western Germany would not face continued anti-Semitism. After years of work and struggle, USHCG finally transferred the remaining DP centers in Germany to German control bringing the period of American administration over these peoples to an end in 1951. With the handover of control, the Displaced Persons remaining in the country became Heimatlose Ausländer and the West German government began the long process of closing the last centers for these stateless foreigners. The process of resettling the last Jewish DPs spanned the course of six years and was fraught with contention. By 1953 only the Föhrenwald center remained and after twelve years of camp life, the last Jewish center was finally closed in 1957.

## VI. The Times They Are a Changing

The late 1940s was a period of trial and error for the Allies as they worked to pull the majority of their soldiers and officials out of West Germany. By 1949 they had successfully reestablished a working economy in Germany, flooded German markets with American consumer goods, and returned limited power to the newly formed West German semi-sovereign government. This is not to say that all of their efforts had been successful or that the Allies were confident that their departure would occur without any problems, but they were ready to move out of Germany leaving only a limited presence there. The Americans worked to ensure that the fully functioning government they had introduced in the days and months after the end of the Second World War would continue to thrive after they were gone. This task proved especially difficult as reports began to flood the desks of officials at the Office of the Military Government, Bavaria (OMGB) in 1948 and 1949, stating that the German police were derelict in their duties and that German officials were encouraging German citizens to ignore American rationing proclamations. At the same time, the American Occupation Government made efforts to transfer control over Germany's remaining Displaced Persons to German care. In order to do this, USHCG not only had to set up government agencies that would see to the care and control of DPs, but also ensure that the rights of these Jews were guaranteed, and that they would not be discriminated against because of race or religion. While securing any true guarantee was impossible, USHCG had to make efforts to establish the framework that would ensure that all people in Germany could live without fear of discrimination. This task seemed especially daunting as the American departure approached and the number of anti-Semitic instances in the zone increased.

By the end of the 1940s, the sense of security shared by Germany's Jewish Displaced Persons had disappeared everywhere outside the confines of the DP centers. Increasingly, public

displays of anti-Semitism, combined with calls to close Germany's Displaced Persons camps, left Jewish DPs concerned about their fate. Frustration over the continued presence of Jewish Displaced Person centers throughout the country led many officials, American, Jewish, and German, to push for a solution. The creation of the state of Israel had not brought salvation for the DPs who remained in Germany because they were initially barred from immigrating to the Jewish state due to their ill health or age. The American push to transfer the DP centers to German control had the Jews in these centers clamoring to flee the country. Tensions between military police (MP) and Jewish DPs increased over the 1940s just as relations became strained to the breaking point between Germans and the Jewish community. Increased conflict, rioting, protests, and demonstrations plagued most interactions between the Jews and their overseers. As all of these changes were occurring, the Jewish DP community began to see their own limited control over the futures slip away and scrambled to clutch at their last strands of autonomy, insisting that their demands be heard and met. As the 1940s came to a close, many of these looming concerns about the future lives of Jews in Germany came to a head as the Bavarian government and West German Federal Republic finally assumed care and control over Germany's DP population. Up until that point, progress was rocky at the best of moments and treacherous at the worst with continued anti-Semitism, criminality, and clashes plaguing all of the players.

### **American Frustrations**

Illegal trade and barter had been a constant problem for the Allied occupation governments in Western Germany over the course of the postwar period. Claims of Jewish over-involvement in crime, especially the sale and trade of illegally acquired food and other resources, were not only centered on the activities of the Möhlstraße. DP centers continued to be associated

with illegal slaughter and the sale of alcohol, cigarettes, and luxury items in the late 1940s.

While the majority of the clashes during this period involving Jewish Displaced Persons occurred with German police and citizens, the American Military Government was also finding that with certain matters it was becoming increasingly harder to deal with Jewish DPs without conflict. The autonomy accorded the DPs, combined with the protection they received from various organizations, also meant that punishing a Jewish DP offender was often a more involved matter than many were willing to tackle. By 1948, the Jewish DP centers were seemingly off-limits and even occasionally closed to the American military police (MP) who were charged with ensuring that the law was upheld in the areas that were off-limits for German police.

This was the case in November 1948 when German police questioned the driver of an automobile parked outside the Föhrenwald DP camp. The owner of the car had 22 bottles of alcohol in his possession. After further questioning, the car owner, a German national, admitted that he had just purchased 50 bottles of alcohol from another German national and his Jewish partner, a DP named Josef Dessan, and was waiting for the remaining bottles, hence his parked car outside of the center. The driver told the German police that he had previously purchased 50 bottles of alcohol, which came from a shop inside of the camp located on Illinois Strasse.<sup>1</sup> The restrictions in place prevented German police from entering the DP center, so they waited for the other members of the illegal transaction. Within a few minutes, Justus Schachet and Dessan emerged from the camp with the remaining 28 bottles of alcohol, and all three men were arrested for violating alcohol tax laws.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>M.A. Weightman, "Report on Incident at Föhrenwald DP camp," in *OMGBY* (Wolfratshausen: Stadtarchiv Wolfratshausen, 1948), 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

News of the arrest reached the Military Government, and the US Civilian Director of the Kreis, Weightman, issued a search warrant of 24 Illinois Strasse based on the information that the German police had gathered from statements of the three arrested individuals.<sup>3</sup> The warrant was signed by the Inspector of the Landespolizei, Rudolf Burger and was in compliance with EUCOM SOP 96. Weightman then proceeded to call Major Walker, the Executive Officer at the office of the Provost Marshall. He asked for military police to travel to Föhrenwald to conduct the search. Major Walker then contacted officials in the office of the S-5 division in charge of DP affairs who gave him permission to send out two military police to conduct the search of Föhrenwald. Weightman then tried to call Mr. Sorrin at the International Refugee Organization (IRO), but he was away at the time. Having contacted officials at all of the major offices, Weightman issued orders for the MPs to move forward with the search.

The MPs arrived at 4:45 PM but were refused entry by the DP camp police who claimed that IRO permission was necessary for anyone wishing to enter the center.<sup>4</sup> At this time, Corporal Leo S. Maxwell, one of the MPs at the scene, called Weightman for further instructions. Weightman informed him that the DP police had no authority when it came to U.S. legal enforcement officials and that the warrant was adequate permission for entry. By the time that the MPs were finally allowed to enter the camp, a crowd of DPs, some of whom held makeshift weapons, including a hammer and a crowbar, surrounded them. The DPs in the camp had used the 20-minute delay to discard their illegal goods and the streets were "littered with (presumably) black market and contraband material which had been thrown out of doors and windows."<sup>5</sup> The MPs ignored all of this illegal merchandise because their warrant only specified the search of the one building at 24 Illinois Strasse. When they entered the designated building,

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<sup>3</sup> Weightman was a Military Government Court Judge

<sup>4</sup> Weightman, "Report on Incident at Föhrenwald DP camp," 1.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 2.



they found a room filled with empty bottles that looked hastily, and recently, vacated. After thoroughly searching the facility, the MPs exited the building and were met by a crowd of waiting DPs circling their jeep. The MPs notified Weightman that they believed “that they would have been prevented by the crowd from removing anything from the camp if they had found it.”<sup>6</sup> The hostility of the assembled DPs was apparent to all those involved in the search operation.

Before the military police were able to reach headquarters, the phone had begun ringing. Weightman had inadvertently started a debate about the extent of the power of the Military Government relative to Jewish Displaced Persons. Mr. Sorrin of the IRO had heard that something was amiss in Föhrenwald and called Weightman from Gauting to inquire. Weightman informed him of the search and was chastised by Sorrin for not getting IRO permission before sending in MPs. Weightman responded that he had tried to notify Sorrin, but that that was done out of courtesy, not necessity.<sup>7</sup> He cited Circular 81 as proof of the military’s right to search the camp, which stated, “This [prior approval of a commander] does not restrict military law enforcement or investigating agencies or Military Government officers from entering the displaced persons centers in pursuit of their normal duties, such as investigation and arrest of individual violators.”<sup>8</sup> According to Weightman, he had acted well within the parameters of his office.

A formal investigation into Weightman’s activities was ordered and the office of S-5 determined that they had ultimate authority over all DP centers as well as the power to arrest any Displaced Persons who committed a crime. While Weightman was willing to concede that it was important to notify S-5 of all searches of DP camps, he did not believe that it was “required,”

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

stating that the Office of the Military Government and its military police had the right to seek out a known criminal even if that individual lived or worked within the limits of a DP center. The only infraction that Weightman was willing to concede on his part was that he had ordered armed German police to enter the camp, something that was illegal since the Stuttgart raid in 1946. According to Weightman, he had not realized that one of the German officers was armed, and furthermore he had had no choice but to send in some German police as only two MPs had been sent to inspect the camp. Perhaps he had made a poor judgment call, but according to Weightman, he had done nothing to warrant an investigation.

Weightman demanded that the DP side be examined, rather than investigating him, noting that the delaying tactics of the DP police had impeded the search and seizure warrant ordered by the Military Government. Why was it his responsibility to notify every office of his warranted search when the DPs had no responsibility to cooperate with the Army, especially considering that they were charged to enforce law and order within the confines of the camp? Weightman continued to say that the German national who had twice purchased alcohol in the camp had testified that he had simply paid 20 DM to drive into the center to acquire the liquor the first time and had had no problem walking out of the camp, past the guards, with his 50 bottles of alcohol after his second purchase. It had only been his frugality that prevented him from paying 20 more DM to take his vehicle into the camp the second time.<sup>9</sup> Weightman concluded that, "It is apparently a good deal easier for an unauthorized German to gain entry to the camp than for an authorized MP detail to enter on a legitimate mission."<sup>10</sup>

According to Weightman the camp police were supposed to be trained by U.S. military officers, illustrating that they were ultimately under U.S. control. However, he argued that based

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<sup>9</sup> Weightman, "Report on Incident at Föhrenwald DP camp," 4.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

on his time in the Kreis he had seen nothing to indicate that the DP police were prepared for anything beyond standing at the gate. If they had been properly equipped to deal with crime within the camp, Weightman speculated, the illegal liquor ring would have been broken up months before. Instead, the DP police had not made a single arrest during the six months Weightman had been in charge of the area. When the military police did try to request the help of the DP police in apprehending offenders who had slipped into the camp, they often found the camp police phones unattended. On the rare occasion that the military police were able to actually speak with a DP police officer at the center, they were informed that the person for whom they were searching was no longer in the camp because they had just signed themselves out of the center and “left for parts unknown.”<sup>11</sup> Incidents like these did not happen often, but when they did they left the parties involved with tense feelings, resentment, and distrust.

The frustration felt by American officials tasked with dealing with unruly and sometimes criminal Displaced Persons was nothing compared to that felt by German police who had no means of arresting offenders who made it to the safety of the confines of an IRO center. These German police could certainly apprehend Jewish DPs who committed a crime outside of a DP camp, but they could not hold them in German jails, try them in German courts, or send them to German prisons. Instead, they had to hand them over immediately to American authorities for trial so that they could face a U.S. military court within twenty-four hours. American Military jurisdiction continued to shield the Jewish DPs from the German legal system until 1951, but this did not mean that there were no earlier calls for a transfer of legal control.

### **Jewish Business and German Frustrations.**

Public Safety and Order: Foreigners-and Jewish camps that are not under the jurisdiction of the German police continue to be alarming. From the experiences in the police services it appears again and again that particularly inmates of many of these camps are involved in black market

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

## VI. The Times They Are a Changing

activities... Purchase and black slaughtering was carried out under the instruction of the camp. It is urgently requested that the foreigners be placed under the jurisdiction of the German police equally as the natives are.<sup>12</sup>

By 1949, Europe's black market network was well established, transcending international borders, race, and religion. Smugglers traveled to Eastern Europe bringing back luxury items such as nightgowns and silk stockings as well as watches and jewelry. These smugglers then sold their items to middlemen who filled their stores, stalls, and apartments with goods for sale. While the Allies and the West German government had anticipated the dissolution of this network with the currency reform, the cessation of rationing, and the legal sale of American products, the currency exchange had only seriously affected the items being sold on the black market. Now sellers in the second economy trafficked in goods that had at one time been almost impossible to secure and were now available but expensive. Instead of being driven out of business by the sale of these formerly rationed or unavailable goods, the traders on the black market found new partners who could obtain the items cheaper than they could be purchased legally and sold them at lower prices throughout the country.

The cost of goods under the currency reform meant that people still turned to the black market for many daily "necessities." This was argued to be the case in the Landsberg DP camp where a suspected counterfeit saccharine ring was believed to be thriving in 1949. A police investigation conducted by the rural police in the area found bills for 5,300,000 cardboard boxes from Augsburg that they claimed were being used as packaging for fake saccharine. They believed that the labels for the boxes had been printed in the Landsberg DP center and were an almost exact replica of the real saccharine boxes. Police officers throughout Bavaria had come across large quantities of the imitation sugar, and president of the rural police of Bavaria, von

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<sup>12</sup> Chief of Police, "Extract from the Report of the Police Presidium Munich," in *StK* (Munich: BayHStA, 1948), 5.

Godin, estimated that at least 60% of all saccharine sold in Bavaria was counterfeit.<sup>13</sup> The police questioned the shop owners and street sellers of the fake saccharine only to learn that they purchased large boxes of merchandise for prices below market value from wholesalers who were “mainly Jewish DPs” and foreigners.<sup>14</sup> The Bavarian police were able to confiscate most of the saccharine being sold throughout the region; however, von Godin claimed that it was being shipped to areas outside of Bavaria. If the information the police had gathered was correct, then the counterfeiters were making 1,000,000 Marks profit for each batch of saccharine they produced and sold.<sup>15</sup>

Making fake saccharine was not the only illegal activity that the rural police attributed to the inhabitants of the Landsberg DP camp. They estimated that 10-15 cows a week were purchased by “cattle traders” who traveled through the countryside neighboring the camp and bought large animals for slaughter.<sup>16</sup> These animals were then transported by IRO vehicles, exempt from search, back to the camp where they were butchered and the meat sold throughout the country. Von Godin claimed that Polish DPs living in the neighboring Altenstadt Camp also sold cattle to the Jewish camp inhabitants of Landsberg. Bavarian police believed that the Poles from Altenstadt stole cattle from the local farmers, turning them around for sale to the Jewish DPs.<sup>17</sup> These discoveries led von Godin to argue they “corroborate again the large scale-- slaughtering practiced in the camp.”<sup>18</sup> He claimed that these practices not only threatened the food situation in general, but also took raw supplies, such as hides, from the leather industry.

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<sup>13</sup> Freiherr von Godin, "Large Scale Adulteration of and Trade with Saccharine (Police Report)," in *StK* (Munich: BayHStA, 1948), 1.

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

<sup>15</sup> von Godin, "Safety Disturbances caused by DP Camp Inmates and their Influence upon Food Situation and Economy.," in *StK* (Munich: BayHStA, 1949), 1.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

Von Godin's rural police had investigated the theft of several cattle in the area as well as the smuggling of the resultant by-products of the illegal slaughter of these animals. In one case, a truck loaded with 450 kilos of fat, 250 sausages weighing 2 kilo each, 12-15 kilo of raw meat, and 10,000 cigarettes was stopped on the Autobahn in the Neu-Ulm area. When the driver was asked about the hidden goods in the truck, he told police that they had been purchased at the Landsberg DP center and were being transported to the DP camp in Frankfurt. An earlier examination of parcels shipped from the camp with false senders' addresses to individuals in Northern Germany revealed meat, cheese, butter, sausages, American cigarettes, coffee, cocoa, and chocolate.<sup>19</sup> The estimated weight of a few hundred of these parcels was around 2 tons of illegally acquired and sold goods, or the equivalent of the slaughter of 70 large oxen.<sup>20</sup>

Landsberg was not the only Jewish DP center suspected of trafficking in illegally slaughtered meat and of goods acquired illegally or without having paid proper taxes. The Feldafing DP center also caused trouble for von Godin and his rural police. Inhabitants of Feldafing had sent an estimated 80 insured packages a day to western and northern Germany weighing between 15 and 20 kilo before the currency reform. They began sending hundreds of these parcels to Braunschweig alone after the reform.<sup>21</sup> During a check of 35 of these parcels in Braunschweig, the Public Prosecutor's Office secured 148,360 American cigarettes, 900 bars of chocolate, and 225 kilos of cocoa.<sup>22</sup> Assuming that all of the packages contained similar items, von Godin believed that Feldafing was supplying Braunschweig with five million Deutsche Marks' worth of black market goods. During that same month the camp inhabitants of Feldafing also sent 2,500 insured packages to northern and western Germany, which were argued to

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> An estimated 3,281 insured packages were sent there in one month. Ibid., 2.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 3.

contain similar goods. Many of the packages randomly checked upon leaving the Feldafing camp contained the above-mentioned items as well as “large amounts of dripping, butter, grease, and sausage of German origin...”<sup>23</sup> The senders’ addresses on the outside of these parcels were all falsified, making the arrest of the offenders impossible. Von Godin also claimed that often times Jewish DPs inflated their numbers in order to secure more butter than they qualified for so that they could sell their overstock illegally on the black market. A German arrested for having 138 kilos of butter said he had purchased his supply in Feldafing and had paid 20 Deutsche Mark. He continued on to claim that the parcels were packaged for shipment right in the camp. The quantity of fat, drippings, meat and sausage confiscated by the rural police convinced von Godin that inhabitants in Feldafing, like Landsberg, were involved in the illegal slaughter of animals.<sup>24</sup> He believed that these two centers, as well as camp Bad Reichenhall, were the largest black market centers after Zeilsheim Jewish DP camp near Frankfurt. He claimed that similar activities were rampant in all camps “occupied with Jews.”<sup>25</sup>

German police could search non-IRO transports entering and exiting DP centers, but once they cleared the IRO gate the vehicle’s contents were safe from German search and seizure.<sup>26</sup> German jurisdiction was juxtaposed to the autonomy of the Jews once they were within the confines of the IRO centers. The fact that the Jewish DPs were beyond the authority of German law when in the camps, and did not fall under the control of the German Judicial system, caused increasing problems as the postwar continued and Germany regained power. Godin believed that goods transported in vehicles, other than those used by the IRO, were sent on a circuitous route positioned behind passenger cars whose drivers warned them if the rural police began to search

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 5.

DP cars. He also believed that there were false bottoms and hidden compartments in these vehicles containing illegal goods. These, according to von Godin, went without notice because they were so well hidden. Even if the rural police were able to track a “cattle trader” to the camp, the cattle would have been slaughtered and distributed within the center, leaving little evidence beyond a pool of blood, some bones, and hides in a communal area by the time they had either gotten permission to enter the camp or had gotten the Constabulary to the center.<sup>27</sup> Those DPs who were caught were alleged to have received too light a sentence and according to von Godin authorities returned their illegally acquired “victuals and luxuries after the proceedings are concluded.”<sup>28</sup> It was this practice that von Godin cited when explaining why the rural police had stopped arresting DPs who were not under German jurisdiction.<sup>29</sup> The system in place left von Godin and several other German police arguing that all of their efforts were in vain. He said, “This fact means that all efforts of German police taken in this respect are predestined to remain resultless and even ridiculous.”<sup>30</sup>

While von Godin’s report does note a lot of the common issues mentioned by both German police and government officials, it also includes anti-Jewish and anti-DP sentiment. He ends his account by arguing that millions of Deutsche Marks were diverted into “dark channels” rather than being sent to the State or helping the newly reestablished German government. More than this, it is the “honest” and hard working German who suffered because of these activities. Von Godin asked the question, why do these Germans have to live on their meager rations when “those individuals of questionable character who often do not deserve the privilege of being considered ‘Dp’s’ are granted special protection and are provided with an abundance of victuals

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>29</sup> von Godin, "Large Scale Adulteration of and Trade with Saccharine (Police Report)," 3.

<sup>30</sup> von Godin, "Safety Disturbances caused by DP Camp Inmates and their Influence upon Food Situation and Economy.," 5.



and other consumer goods which they may use unhindered for their manipulations [?]"<sup>31</sup> Von Godin felt that the Jewish DPs were not the true victim in Bavaria, and that they were imposters who did not deserve the protection given to the displaced in the country. It was his belief in the "injustice" of the existing system that led von Godin to demand redress from the Military Government.

By April 1949, von Godin's voice was not the only one heard calling for a change. The criminal activities occurring throughout Bavaria had led German officials to issue calls for the transfer of jurisdiction over the Jewish Displaced Persons into their control citing "disturbances of public safety" by DPs as their motivating factor.<sup>32</sup> The German call for jurisdiction over Displaced Persons had began early on as German ministries and government began again to gain some power in the postwar period. Like the *Landesverband des Bayerischen Einzelhandels* and the *Landesvereinigung des Bayerischen Lebensmittel-Großhandels*, discussed in chapter three, members of the Bavarian Ministry had begun to re-campaign for the transfer of American jurisdiction over Jewish Displaced Persons to German authority in April 1949.<sup>33</sup> Citing an increase in police reports dealing with criminals from the DP community in various different counties, Dr. Erhard, the Bavarian Ministry President, wrote to the Bavarian President of the State Parliament as well as Murray D. van Wagoner, the Land Director, pleading his case.<sup>34</sup> The response to Erhard's request was the same as that issued to all similar appeals: Authority over Displaced Persons falls under German control outside of the DP centers and it was the failure of German police to exercise this power that had led to an increase in criminal activities by non-

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>32</sup> Hans Erhard, "Disturbances of Public Safety Caused by Inmates of DP-Camps (Letter to the land director in Bavaria)," in *StK* (Munich: BayHStA, 1949), 1.

<sup>33</sup> Refer back to chapter 4 for more information on these organizations

<sup>34</sup> Hans Erhard, "Deutsche Polizeihochheit über DPs (Letter)," in *StK* (Munich: BayHstA, 1949), 1.

Germans in Bavaria.<sup>35</sup> When asked why they did not arrest an offender, Wagoner noted that most German police claimed that they had no jurisdiction in these matters, leading him to call for clarification from the higher up officials in the German police. Wagoner also noted that it was not only dereliction of duty regarding Displaced Persons, but additionally, that many German authorities blatantly ignored rationing laws pertaining to German citizens as well, issuing only token calls for obedience to American collection quotas. He continued on to say that some German authorities were even heard making public statements of non-support for these laws. Wagoner took this as a sign of German unpreparedness for the transfer of jurisdiction. He argued, "These officials are encouraging practices by the Bavarian population, which practices by Displaced Persons you have cited as illustrating the necessity of extending the jurisdiction of the German Police over such persons."<sup>36</sup> Wagoner ended his letter by stating that he could not support their suggestion of a transfer of power until they actually began using the power they had at their disposal to arrest offenders, both German and non-German. Perhaps once the German police began to "exercise their present jurisdiction over such persons [DPs] and enforce compliance with the collection quotas and ration program by the Bavarian population as a whole," they would then prove that they were ready for total control over all residents in Germany.<sup>37</sup>

### **German Dereliction of Duty or Lack of German Jurisdiction?**

The feeling that the German Police were ignoring their duty when it came to apprehending criminals, both DPs and German citizens, caused the American Military Government continual problems. While there were clear restrictions against the entry of German

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<sup>35</sup> Murray D. Wagoner, "Disturbances of Public Safety Caused by Inmates of DP-Centers (Land Directors response to calls for the transfer of power from USHCG to the Federal Republic)," in *SzK* (Munich: BayHStA, 1949), 1.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

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

police into IRO Displaced Persons centers, the fact that most police continued to refuse to arrest DP criminals under their jurisdiction presented OMGB with on-going difficulty as the crime rate increased and American officials had to intervene. Just as OMGB's desks were flooded with requests for a transfer of control from American authority over DPs to German jurisdiction, so too were they filled with complaints from American officials who had first hand knowledge of German police inactivity. The fact that German police continued to shirk their responsibility to arrest offenders, both German and non-German, meant that American officials had to do the job instead. In a report compiled by Walter L. Crawford, the U.S. Field Inspector sent to investigate crime on Möhlstraße, Crawford expressed his concern over the "lack of enforcement by Bavarian German police regarding Displaced Persons throughout the cities and towns of Bavaria."<sup>38</sup> Crawford noted this type of non-enforcement by German police in Munich, Augsburg, Ansbach, Coburg, Regensburg, Bad Reichenhall, Weilheim, Ulm, Günzburg, Aschaffenburg, Nürnberg and Bamberg as well as other localities throughout Bavaria.<sup>39</sup> His examination of the situation on Möhlstraße was not unique in its analysis of the individuals there but is insightful when he discusses the role played by German police. He described the daily events of Möhlstraße, saying:

a person cannot walk along on the side walk without practically being disrobed in broad daylight by thugs and every other type of known criminal. It is a known fact, that counterfeiting of all types of money, travel documents, ration coupons take place in and around Moehlstrasse. There have been many high [sic] way robberies committed on the side walks and streets throughout Moehlstrasse.<sup>40</sup>

Crawford stated that Pitzer, the Police President of the district within which Möhlstraße was located, along with his forces, refused to adhere to or enforce the regulations and stipulations put

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<sup>38</sup> Walter L. Crawford, "Non-Enforcement of Military Government Regulations by Bavarian German Police," in *StK* (Munich: BayHStA, 1949), 1.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

forth by the Military Government.<sup>41</sup> The outright neglect of these duties by German police meant that public safety was in constant jeopardy. Beyond their absolute refusal to intervene in an illegal activity perpetrated by DPs, and their hesitancy when it came to arresting Displaced Persons, Crawford suspected that some high ranking officials in the Munich police department were in fact receiving bribes from “certain DP elements,” explaining their inactivity.<sup>42</sup> He argued that these police were partners with some of the DPs and were profiting from the illegal activities on Möhlstraße.

The German police questioned by Crawford cited several reasons for their lack of enforcement with matters concerning Displaced Persons. They reiterated the argument that they had no jurisdiction over DPs, whether it was in an IRO center or on the streets of Munich. Crawford cited various paragraphs of the Military Government’s regulations to illustrate that these German police did in fact have authority over DPs committing crimes on the streets of Munich, citing Title 9, which gave German police and officials jurisdiction over DPs outside of assembly centers. The German police who Crawford interviewed continued to protest that their jurisdiction over the DPs was non-existent, despite these assurances.<sup>43</sup> Beyond the bribery of some officers, and the ignorance of the law of others, Crawford suspected that many members of the German police department feared the Displaced Persons. Rumors had reached Crawford that German police often expressed feelings of concern because they were afraid of what a DP might say to the press if a German officer arrested them. Members of the “Security Patrol” in Bamberg mentioned being called “Nazi Police” in the press and were heavily criticized for their actions. Crawford said, “Rumors are in many cases, that the DPs have served notice on different German police agencies, that the area where they congregate, are ‘off-limits’ to German police

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 2.

authority.”<sup>44</sup> Whatever the cause, the inactivity of German police in matters concerning United Nations Displaced Persons left many American officials questioning whether the newly formed West German government would be able to care for and control the DPs remaining in the country.

Had the German authorities only neglected their duties when it came to Displaced Persons, the Military Government could have transferred most other control to the Federal Republic. However, the fact that regular reports reached OMGB complaining about the continued neglect of rations regulations by German authorities and the occasional proclamation of German government officials who encouraged German citizens to ignore American directives, meant that the occupation government was kept busy enforcing their rationing regulations throughout Bavaria. In a report compiled by Buford J. Miller, the Chief of the Field Inspection Branch, he noted that anyone with Deutsche Marks could buy meat products such as pork, sausage, and fat, as well as white bread and all other rationed items.<sup>45</sup> In many cases the German Ministry of Food sent out investigators to find offenders ignoring the rationing regulations and to cite them. These officials interviewed 4,400 butchers and examined their books only to find that of the sample they had investigated, the average deficit of meat being handed over to the authorities per butcher was a quarter ton below the regulated amount. This meant that each of the interviewed butchers was providing the rations market with between 0-5 tons below the amount of meat dictated by the American occupation government in Germany. Butchers were not alone in providing less than the regulated amount of their rationed goods. Farmers were also found to be withholding grain that they would later sell on the black market. Just as had

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Buford J. Miller, "Failure of Land Government to make whole hearted efforts to enforce compliance with current Collection and Rationing Restrictions. (Report from the Chief of the Field Inspection Branch)," in *StK* (Munich: BayHStA, 1949), 1.

occurred in the immediate postwar period, farmers kept a portion of the agriculture produced on their farms including eggs, milk, fat, and wheat. They then took these items and traded them on the black market for goods that they needed. German and American employees from the Ministry of Food, Agriculture, and Forestry Division would regularly visit German farms to inventory the goods being grown by the farmer. The farmers were then expected to hand over a specified portion of this agriculture at the end of the growing season. The farmer had to account for any discrepancies in his products. If his yield was too different from the amount he was supposed to provide he would be investigated and could face fines and jail time. The arrest of individuals caught trading withheld agriculture made clear to the authorities just how much was really being diverted from the legal rations market. It was estimated that only 70% of the grain ration actually reached authorities and in the autumn of 1949, at the beginning of the threshing season, Minister Schlögl made a public proclamation that really no more than 70% of the total could be expected.<sup>46</sup> In areas like Kreis Altötting and Mühldorf, no checks were made of individual farms to ensure that they were not withholding grain, and in some instances the local courts refused to issue search warrants ensuring that farmers who were siphoning grain for sale on the black market could do so without recourse.

Although many German officials worked to stop rationing, other German authorities proclaimed their disfavor with existing rationing regulations at public meetings and in the press. Miller noted, “Public officials who should have been supportive have been quoted in public statements, not in support of the collection quotas and rationing program in force.”<sup>47</sup> One of the politicians who was against rationing was Minister Schlögl who announced his disapproval with the existing rationing laws after the currency reform in the summer of 1949, proposing that

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 2.

instead of meeting rationing quotas, “a basic ration would be guaranteed and all other food would be sold ration-free.”<sup>48</sup> He issued a statement in the local paper, the *Fränkischer Tag*, saying that only 60% of the American regulated rations would be collected and that the remaining 40% would be sold on the free market. It was his belief that food ration cards should only be issued to individuals making less than a certain amount, around 300 DM a month, and that all others could purchase their food on the now functioning economy.<sup>49</sup> Similar announcements from Schlögl appeared in the *Landwirtschaftliches Wochenblatt* where he proclaimed that the current price conditions were unhealthy for the German economy and that the control system in place could not be kept any longer. In fact “A new course, as already indicated by the Bavarian market legislature is inevitable.”<sup>50</sup> Schlögl went as far as telling an audience of 600 farmers that he had “no objections to people getting something extra for themselves...I do object to all this food going out to other Laender.”<sup>51</sup> While the Military Government never passed this “split” plan, it was unofficially permitted because the Bavarian government refused to enforce the rationing system. OMGB found that the split system was detrimental to the working population who often could not afford ration free items but found stores selling “rationed” goods for Deutsche Marks rather than ration coupons.

Schlögl was not alone in his opposition to the existing rationing system. The most blatantly defiant announcement came from the Honorary Head of the Food Office “A,” the Deputy Landrat of Neumarkt, who stated, “Gentlemen, I think it is clearly understood between us that we will not draw from the farmers every pound of grain for the Americans; [sic] those

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 3.

rascals. Being Germans we have to help the farmers and the Americans shall deliver.”<sup>52</sup>

However, others like Bauernverband President Rothermel made their own proclamations against continued rationing restrictions. Rothermel announced that the control over rationing had disappeared and that it should remain that way. He believed that rationing had run its course and had become unnecessary.<sup>53</sup> Another Bavarian Bauernverband official, Dr. Horlacher “told farmers to sell their products freely and continuously and that they should not pay any particular attention to governmental controls over agriculture.”<sup>54</sup> Proclamations like these undermined the authority of the American Military Government and encouraged people to ignore rationing laws.

Beyond these announcements against rationing, many officials just stopped enforcing or supporting those tasked with ensuring that rationing continued. Many food offices began reducing their staffs by a third or even half, without OMGB approval, despite the steady increase of the sale of rationed goods on the black market.<sup>55</sup> Officials in these food bureaus realized that the USHCG was beginning to transfer power to German authorities and hoped to rid themselves of one of the most hated aspects of the occupation: rationing. The larger governmental shifts encouraged administrators in these offices to initiate changes even when they went against the position espoused by American authorities. In one case, the President of the Landtag issued orders that the “B” food offices be closed, resulting in the dismissal of their entire staff. Other German authorities interfered with American orders or issued contradictory orders resulting in the hindrance of collections and the involvement of the Military Government Food, Agriculture and Forestry Division who had to step in to ensure that rationing continued.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.



Incidents like these became more and more frequent as the American occupation government worked to transfer power in their zone to West German control. Arguing that they knew best about how to ensure Germany's future success and believing that the West German government was not yet ready for total authority, the Office of the High Commissioner to Germany slowly released control over various governmental branches during the course of the late 1940s and early 1950s. USHCG continued to act as an ally and consultant in German affairs even after the total transfer of their control to the West German government, interceding when they felt it necessary. As the 1950s wore on, the West German government secured more and more control over the running of the country, but there were certain offices the American occupation government was cautious about transferring to German control. Paramount among these was control over Germany's remaining DP centers. The Americans did not retain their power out of an overwhelming love of the Displaced Persons, but out of a sense of responsibility, one that had extended from the first days after liberation. These feelings left American authorities hesitant about the transfer of control until they were sure that the West German government had established a system of checks to guarantee fair treatment of the DPs and to ensure that the Germans were ready for the task ahead: Resettling thousands of children, elderly, sick, infirm, and mentally unstable individuals who needed special care and understanding.

### **My Brothers Keeper? The German Takeover of the Jewish Displaced Persons Centers.**

We have no desire to be under either the political or legal protection of those who murdered our parents, children, sisters and brothers.<sup>57</sup>

By the end of the 1940s USHCG officials had moved forward with their plans to transfer almost total control in their zone to West German authorities despite their reservations. The numerous offices involved with the care and control of Displaced Persons throughout the

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<sup>57</sup> Angelika Königseder and Juliane Wetzel, *Waiting for Hope: Jewish Displaced Persons in Post- World War II Germany* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2001). 150.

American zone of occupation remained firmly under American control until December 1, 1951.<sup>58</sup> By that time the authorities had begun closing the more than thirty major DP centers in the zone, and most DPs had been moved into Bavaria. The Landsberg DP center closed its gates on November 1, 1950 and Feldafing ceased to function as a Jewish-only Displaced Persons center in March 1953, leaving Föhrenwald as the only functioning Jewish DP center in Bavaria.<sup>59</sup> While the responsibility for the control and care for these centers transferred hands in late 1951, the International Refugee Organization continued to function within the camps for months as they worked to wrap up their affairs. Members of the JDC feared that the IRO would try to pull out their workers in November 1951, leaving the Bavarian and West German governments in a position where they were unable to adequately take over control.<sup>60</sup> The IRO had drastically reduced its staff leaving few qualified individuals to help facilitate the smooth transfer of power. After extensive meetings between the IRO, the JDC, and the Land Commissioner for Bavaria, it was decided that the IRO would spend extra time preparing for the transfer. As the largest remaining camp in West Germany, Föhrenwald, needed special concessions when it came to the removal of the IRO and the transfer of power to German control. The JDC and IRO both agreed that the “special character of Camp Föhrenwald” needed to be recognized when planning for its future under the Germans.<sup>61</sup> This “special character” denoted the nature of the remaining DPs in the center mainly the elderly, those with TB, and their families. Once the IRO ceased to function as the administrative body running the remaining centers, all of the care, both financial and managerial, fell on the Bavarian and West German authorities.

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<sup>58</sup> The American Occupation Government could intercede in legal proceedings if they felt that events were unjust or discriminatory and when asked to by DPs or German authorities.

<sup>59</sup> The remaining 1,096 camp residents in Landsberg were transferred to Föhrenwald. Elke Kiefer, "Lang is der Veg: Das Displaced Persons Camp Landsberg am Lech 1945-1950," *Landsberger Geschichtsblätter* 105: 77.

<sup>60</sup> Samuel Haber, L. Dr., "Transfer of Foehrenwald (JDC report)," in *Germany, Displaced Persons, Camps: Foehrenwald, July-December 1954* (New York: AJJDC, 1951), 1.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

The American occupation government had put a series of checks into place over the course of the three years of discussions leading up to the eventual transfer of control to the Germans to ensure the level of care and respect given to the DPs now under German authority. The law on the legal status of stateless foreigners, adopted on April 25, 1951, guaranteed all stateless individuals legally living in Germany the same constitutional rights as those of German citizens.<sup>62</sup> This was especially important when it came to the Jewish Displaced Persons who had survived the Shoah and had cause to fear German rule. In order to ease the fears of these Jewish DPs, the West German government had agreed that the Jewish camps would remain strictly Jewish centers where the inhabitants were guaranteed that they would not be transferred without their approval. Additionally, Shabbat and other Jewish holidays and rituals would be observed without interference from German officials. They were also guaranteed that any German employed in camp administration could only be hired after ascertaining that that person had no Nazi past. Along with the aforementioned demands, the JDC also requested that they have the same status and power that they had under the IRO, all in an effort to ease the fears of the remaining camp inhabitants.<sup>63</sup>

The JDC realized that the Jewish DPs living throughout West Germany would meet the handover of camp control with fear, hesitancy, anger, and concern. The Joint met with the Land Commissioner for Bavaria whose offices would be assigned part of the managerial and monetary responsibility for the running of the DP centers. They also met with authorities from the medical and welfare offices in the West German government in order to guarantee that they understood

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<sup>62</sup> While the West German government now called the Displaced Persons throughout the country *Heimatlose Ausländer*, the Jews who fell under this title, as well as the Jewish aid organizations, working with them continued to call these individuals Displaced Persons. It is for this reason that I continue to refer to them as DPs throughout the remainder of this dissertation. Königseder and Wetzel, *Waiting for Hope*: 165.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

the “special nature of Camp Föhrenwald” and how best to deal with the needs of its residents.<sup>64</sup>

The JDC then met with representatives of the DP community to keep them apprised of the ongoing negotiations and agreements. They believed that it would eventually be the responsibility of the camp committees to work with the German government during the handover. With this understanding, JDC officials moved forward cautiously in their negotiations with the Germans, always informing the camp committees and the DP community in Munich of any developments.

Notwithstanding all of these efforts and assurances, the Jewish committee and inhabitants in the various existing camps protested the handover of power. Members of Föhrenwald DP camp began openly objecting to the transfer of power in the fall of 1951. In a letter sent to *Undzer Shtime*, a Yiddish newspaper published in Paris, they stated, “When we heard that the camp would be turned over to German protection, there was the utmost bitterness among us.”<sup>65</sup> Outrage over this turn of events led camp inhabitants to call a meeting in which they unanimously voted for a resolution condemning the transfer of power to the German authorities. These individuals personally held the Joint responsible for the transfer and the accelerated rate at which it was being conducted.<sup>66</sup> They called on the camp committee to do everything within their power to stop the transfer of control.

The act of transferring power was already well underway by the time that the Jewish DPs came to the full realization that there was little they could do to stop it. Despite this understanding, the Jewish DPs moved to convince the world that they could not live under German control. The displaced Jews in camp Föhrenwald launched an appeal upon learning of a German mandated registration of all DPs living in centers, scheduled to take place on October

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<sup>64</sup> Haber, "Transfer of Föhrenwald (JDC report)," 1.

<sup>65</sup> Föhrenwald Committee, "We Must Not Let this Happen," *Undzer Shtime*, November 14, 1951 1951, 1; Zloto, "We Must Not Let this Happen (Newspaper article Undzer Shtime)," in *Report from Germany, Germany Legal Bulletins, ORG 2, Office of General Counsel* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1951), 1.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid*

31, 1951, and threatened to go on a hunger strike if the registration was not called off. They also sent letters and published appeals in newspapers around the world begging Jewish organizations to “do everything to combat this scandal...”<sup>67</sup> A representative of the Tubercular (TB) Committee turned to Mr. Weinberger, a representative of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, who informed him that the German-Jewish community was not fighting against the transfer, but rather was working to negotiate with the Joint and German authorities to find the best means of seeing that the transfer went smoothly.<sup>68</sup> No satisfactory reply came to the Föhrenwald appeal and so on October 28, 1951, the camp inhabitants took to the streets to protest the forthcoming registration and transfer of control.<sup>69</sup> This led to a meeting held between the camp inhabitants, the IRO, the Joint, and representatives of the German-Jewish community. Mr. Calif, of the Joint, informed the camp representatives in the meeting that if the camp inhabitants did not register the JDC, would stop providing the assistance that the camp residents had enjoyed since 1945.<sup>70</sup> Dr. Graubart of the Central Council of Jews in Germany encouraged the camp members to negotiate with the German authorities so that they could arrange for the best possible outcome. This statement caused an outcry from several members of the Föhrenwald group, especially from the TB Committee, as they did not believe that the Central Council had any right to speak for the DPs.<sup>71</sup> One representative of the TB Committee asked Graubart, “In whose name have you assumed the right to negotiate with the German authorities for the transfer of the camp’s control?” Despite all of these objections and protests, the DP community soon realized that registration was inevitable and became resigned to its

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<sup>67</sup> Committee, "We Must Not Let this Happen," 1.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Das Lager Befelkerung, in *Germany, Displaced Persons, Camps: Foehrenwald, July-December 1954* (New York: AJJDC, 1951), 1.

<sup>70</sup> Zloto, "We Must Not Let this Happen," 1.

<sup>71</sup> The Tubercular Committee in Föhrenwald represented a significant portion of the camp’s residents and argued that they should act as the organization speaking for the center’s inhabitants.

administration. However, Jewish fears of a German takeover were not assuaged when uniformed German officials with dogs entered the camp to conduct the registration, calling to mind images of the days before deportation. Samuel Haber, director of the JDC, reported “typical of the German mentality, of course they immediately made some drastic blunders such as sending police into the camp with loud-speakers and police dogs to begin the simple process of registration.”<sup>72</sup> Deterred by these actions, many Jews refused to register and stated that they would never live under German authority.<sup>73</sup> Mr. Cox of the IRO eventually had to deny entry to German police after several frightened DPs had approached him expressing their fear of the German officers.<sup>74</sup> In the end, registration took place without much incident, but the Jewish DPs did not give up on the possibility of preventing the German takeover.

For these Jewish Displaced Persons it was enough of a disgrace to have to remain on German soil. They argued that it would be a tremendous insult and irony to rely on their former oppressors for care and financial support. An article in *Undzer Shtime* stated,

it is bad enough to have to live in the bloody land of Germany, but it is intolerable to have to remain here under the protection of the Germans. After the expiration of IRO, we propose that a representative Jewish organization-such as the Jewish World Congress-take over the camp and that the inmates actually run it themselves.<sup>75</sup>

The DPs realized that they only had one month in which to convince the world that the transfer of American authority over the camps to the Bavarian and West German governments was a mistake. Understanding that stopping the handover might not work, the Jewish DPs called for their emigration from Germany. They spoke out against the DP Bill, which was ending in the coming month and under which several visas to America had been temporarily postponed for six months to a year. If the DPs who had valid visas to the U.S. could not immigrate, what did that

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<sup>72</sup> Haber, "Transfer of Foehrenwald (JDC report)," 2.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Zloto, "We Must Not Let this Happen," 1.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 2.

mean for the remaining displaced Jews who were often sick or infirm and had little to no chance of qualifying for a visa?<sup>76</sup> Would these Jewish DPs remain indefinitely under German control? This situation was unacceptable to many Jews who demanded their immediate emigration and threatened to protest if they were forced to live under German control. Within a matter of weeks the Jewish DPs realized the impossibility of preventing the transfer of control and instead began to push for the closing of camp Föhrenwald, as this could only happen, they believed, with the emigration of every last Jewish Displaced Person. While relations between the Germans and Jewish DPs settled into an ambivalent working relationship, resentment and hatred continued to exist between both parties.

For their part, the German authorities met the calls and demands set forth for them by the American occupation government and worked hard to keep the Displaced Persons in clean, well kept facilities with adequate rations and emigration grants available for those who qualified. Although the German government wanted to close the DP centers as quickly as possible, they were willing to work with the Joint and the Central Council of Jews in Germany to try to resettle as many Jews abroad as possible. Camp life was no worse under the Germans than it had been under the IRO. In fact, the West German government invested in Camp Föhrenwald funding the opening of a new school in 1952 and bringing in German teachers to help get the camp's children who remained in Germany ready for the German school curriculum. They also funded the YMCA and *Haus der offenen Tür* whose members worked with the camp youth trying to help them overcome their hostilities toward Germany and her inhabitants.<sup>77</sup> Just like JDC

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<sup>76</sup> The majority of the Jewish DP population after 1952 consisted of individuals with TB, or mental, and physical traumas caused by their war experiences. These people were considered the least attractive candidates for emigration and were often viewed as a burden by the countries willing to take displaced Jews. The care, treatment, and eventual resettlement of the Jewish DPs remaining in centers after 1952 is examined in detail in the coming chapters.

<sup>77</sup> Königseder and Wetzel, *Waiting for Hope*: 153.

officials, the German authorities realized that securing visas for all of the remaining 12,000 Jewish DPs would be impossible.<sup>78</sup> Instead they began to introduce programs in Jewish DP centers that would help them to cope with their eventual integration into German society. Mistakenly believing that the DP era was rapidly coming to a close, the German authorities prepared for a future without any more Displaced Persons. However, nearly six years after securing power from USHCG the West German government still found itself caring for more than 1,000 Jewish DPs who either did not qualify for emigration or refused to resettle outside of the camps. While relations between the West German government and the remaining Jewish DPs had settled into an amicable and generally ambivalent relationship, there were still problems and conflicts between the two parties that marred the final years of DP life in Germany. Believing that their demands for emigration, higher rations, government grants, and autonomy should be met by the Germans without any resistance, the Jewish DPs refused to believe that the West German government acted as a major player in determining their futures. Years of perceived autonomy and a sense of entitlement motivated the Jewish DPs to continue to fight to see their demands were met. This belief, combined with continued anti-Semitism and occasional acts of criminality, left the West German government and the Jewish DPs at an impasse where neither side could fully understand the position of the other. The lack of Jews able to emigrate meant that the situation in Germany remained at a standstill occasionally punctuated by conflict and protest over the remainder of the DP period. The interactions between German authorities and the displaced Jews were generally amicable but when tensions arose they often resulted in fighting in the streets between members of these two parties.

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<sup>78</sup> Michael Brenner, *After the Holocaust: Rebuilding Jewish Lives in Postwar Germany* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997). 41.



VII.  
TROUBLES IN PARADISE:  
JEWISH DP ATTEMPTS TO REMAIN AUTONOMOUS

Never have so few people created so much work for so many, for so little.<sup>1</sup>

The 1951 transfer of power over the Jewish DP centers resulted in the Bavarian administration and the remaining displaced Jews in Germany entering into an uneasy alliance motivated by necessity. Both of these parties understood that they needed to cooperate with the other in order to achieve their goals. While this relationship could rarely be described as more than amicable, months went by without any major clashes. However, when conflict did arise, it quickly escalated to physical violence and verbal abuse that not only captured the attention of the German population, but also that of Jews and non-Jews outside of Germany. This was the case with the 1952 attempted raid on Föhrenwald as well as the 1954 Möhlstraße demonstration facilitated by the remaining Jewish Displaced Persons in Germany. These events show the changing relationships between displaced Jews, the international Jewish aid agencies, and the Federal Republic. The raid and demonstration also illustrate the continued sense of entitlement and autonomy shared by the Jewish DPs who in actuality had very little control over their lives and their futures. The DPs' belief in their safety and security within the camps, even after the handover of power to the Germans, combined with the Federal Republics' need to end the extraterritorial nature of the Jewish centers, resulted in conflict as both sides fought for what they understood to be their rights.

### **The 1952 Föhrenwald Raid**

We are not aware of any German village, city, or town where the entire village was surrounded and an operation against the entire village was taken, because some shops were forced to perform a customs or audit search.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ronald Webster, "American Relief and Jews in Germany, 1945-1960," *Leo Baeck Institute* 38, no. 1 (1993): 300.

<sup>2</sup> Samuel and Jakobowitz Zahler, David, "Memorandum," in *StK* (Munich: BayHStA, 1952), 3.

After the initial fears, protests, and demonstrations against the inevitable takeover of the care and control of Germany's remaining Jewish Displaced Persons by the West German government had begun to settle, life in the DP centers returned to the way that it had been before the IRO pullout. This did not mean that either party was especially happy about the prospect of continuing to work together to achieve their mutual goals: the final closure of the DP centers and the emigration from Germany of Europe's remaining Jewish DPs. The cost of running the camps was astronomically high for the Bavarian and Federal Government of West Germany, and working with the JDC and camp representatives was a difficult task. The constant negotiations with German authorities, as well as the weekly meetings, and verbal and physical battery by members of the Jewish Displaced Persons' community, exhausted JDC officials. Lastly, the Jewish DPs were exasperated by the state of their affairs, which seemed to be the same they had been living for the past several years. Despite these rising tensions, there had been no real outburst of violence between the parties in nearly six months. During that time the German authorities had conducted regular searches of the camps without any problems. These inspections of the centers in search of individuals committing customs evasions, or any other crime, had occurred without incident.<sup>3</sup> The fact that the first half of 1952 had passed without any conflict led many DPs to feel some sense of security under German control. This feeling of protection, especially when in the DP camps, was a carryover from the preceding period of American control. The residents of Föhrenwald, mainly the old and ill, had no objections to the occasional searches of the camp grounds by one or two officials. However, the introduction of dozens of armed police struck fear into the hearts of the Jewish DPs.

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<sup>3</sup> Samuel Haber, L. Dr., "Raid on Foehrenwald," in *Germany, Displaced Persons Camps: Foehrenwald, July-December 1954* (New York: AJJDC, 1952), 1.

This was exactly what happened on May 28, 1952 at 11:00 AM when 33 armed German police, along with 115 officials from the State Revenue offices and officers of the Bavarian customs police, tried to enter camp Föhrenwald to conduct a raid on the small businesses in the center, alleged to have been selling black market goods.<sup>4</sup> In his account of the events Samuel Haber, the director of the Joint reported that several hundred German police with truncheons in hand and dogs on leashes surrounded the camp in preparation of entering the facility. A number of Föhrenwald residents were gathered out front of the camp administration building socializing, as often happened on sunny days. The Jewish Telegraphic Agency reported that several hundred other camp residents quickly joined these DPs as “the uniformed Germans surrounded the camp in military-textbook fashion.”<sup>5</sup> Haber compared the incident to the actions of the Nazis, and the ensuing violent response of the Displaced Persons demonstrated that the sight of hundreds of German police did in fact strike a cord of memory among Holocaust survivors in the camp.<sup>6</sup> It is important to keep in mind that many of the inhabitants in Föhrenwald remained in the camp because of lasting illness or other health issues that prevented them from emigration. The police were “met by a vociferous expression of derision,” and the residents of Föhrenwald grabbed what they could throw and proceeded to rain rocks and chunks of wood down upon the police cars as they made their way toward the camp.<sup>7</sup> Intense rioting resulted and several DPs reported that they had been injured when they were beaten with rubber hoses.<sup>8</sup> Shattered windshields and

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<sup>4</sup> Freiherr von Godin, "Zollfahndungsaktion im Regierungslager Föhrenwald am 28. 5. 1952," in *StK* (Munich: BayHStA, 1952), 1.

<sup>5</sup> "Germans Indict Seven Jewish Dp's for Foehrenwald Riot in 1952," in *The Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA- Jewish News Agency, October 14, 1954), 1.

<sup>6</sup> Samuel Haber, L, Dr., "Letter," in *Germany, Displaced Persons Camps: Foehrenwald, July- December 1954* (Internet: AJJDC, 1952), 1.

<sup>7</sup> "German Government Charged with Unfairness in Handling Jewish DP's," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA- Jewish News Archive, July 10, 1952), 1.

<sup>8</sup> "German Customs Officers Attack Jews in Camp Föhrenwald: Customs officials and Police Planned Search of Föhrenwald- Jews Protest Against the conducted "raid," Authorities forced to leave, Could not Penetrate into the Camp," *Naye Yidishe Tsaytung*, May 29, 1952, 1.

dent trucks finally came to a halt as one officer discharged his weapon, leading to mayhem among the gathered DPs.<sup>9</sup> Afraid to proceed too far into the camp, the police stopped before reaching the camp gates and the riot occurred on the periphery.<sup>10</sup> The police then regrouped to discuss the situation. In the meantime, JDC members in the camp called Haber requesting help. Haber then contacted “an important German official in Munich who called the police officials and asked that the police be removed from the camp.”<sup>11</sup> The frustration caused by the clash with the DPs, combined with the orders from Munich, resulted in the police officer in charge of the raid calling off the action without searching a single store. However, the police officers did not withdraw before hurling anti-Semitic insults at the DPs, yelling that the “gas chambers are waiting for you and are still warm,” and “the crematorium are still there.”<sup>12</sup> Other police shouted, “The accursed Jew, the oven is not yet closed, it stands open for you. This is only the beginning.”<sup>13</sup> Shocked by the events, the DPs requested the facilitation of their immediate emigration abroad, claiming they would go anywhere to get away from Germany.<sup>14</sup> This was impossible considering that the great majority of Föhrenwalders had previously been denied visas because of their ill health or criminal records.<sup>15</sup>

Dr. Kohane and Mr. Kolieb were sent by the JDC to the camp in an effort to calm the DPs and convince the police to depart. They arrived at the center just as German authorities were leaving and were almost attacked by the crowd of Displaced Persons who were incited to

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Haber, "Raid on Föhrenwald," 2.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Dr. Gillitzer, "Vormerkung," in *StK* (Munich: BayHStA, 1952), 2.

<sup>13</sup> Zahler, "Memorandum," 4.

<sup>14</sup> Most of the remaining DPs in Germany continued to cling to the hope that they would be able to immigrate to America.

<sup>15</sup> "German Parliamentary Body Vindicates Dr. Auerbach; Issues Report," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Munich: JTA Jewish News Archive, March 2, 1952), 1.

violence.<sup>16</sup> Haber wrote that general feelings of resentment were inflamed by “underworld characters in the camp,” who pushed the crowd to physically assault the newly arrived JDC officials.<sup>17</sup> Realizing the level of emotional distress expressed by the crowd of assembled DPs, Dr. Kohane called an immediate meeting to discuss the events and how to proceed. Over 1,000 residents attended, but there were no shouts of joy over their “victory” against the German officials.<sup>18</sup> Instead the air was filled with “vexation and worries.”<sup>19</sup> In the end, Dr. Kohane was able to calm the crowd and convince them to disperse.

The threat of violence against JDC officials, brought on tangentially by the raid created its own issues for Joint members who now had to fear attack by the DPs. In order to immediately address this matter, Haber met with the Camp Committee and stressed that while he understood that “generally the camp consists of frightfully helpless people who can be propagandized and emotionally disturbed by unhealthy elements living in the camp,” if even one JDC member was harmed, the Joint would fully withdraw any and all assistance.<sup>20</sup> Interestingly, Haber noted that while he had to direct his threat to the Camp Committee, there was actually very little they could do as the individuals inciting this violence were usually not the ones receiving any JDC support and were in fact the “strong armed people in the camp.”<sup>21</sup> While Haber was able to put his foot down with the Camp Committee, how far their authority stretched was truly unknown.

In his report sent to the Paris JDC office, Haber questioned whether or not the raid had in fact been directed at the illegal businesses in the camp, insisting instead that the event was a

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<sup>16</sup> Haber, "Raid on Foehrenwald," 2.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Marjan Gide, "Foehrenwald Before a German Court," *Naye Yidishe Tsaytung*, March 1, 1955.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Haber, "Raid on Foehrenwald," 2.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

search and seizure action. He cited the sheer number of people involved to illustrate that the raid was not meant to deter the black market industry in the camp, but rather to confiscate whatever the Germans could seize. Haber noted that the actions of the German police were “stupid, unnecessary and brutal,” but “so characteristic of the Germans.”<sup>22</sup> He was not arguing that the German authorities had the right to enter the camp to inspect for illegal trade, especially since the camp was now part of the German economy. However, he believed that “yesterday’s raid was conducted in the style of the Einsatzgruppen.”<sup>23</sup> Haber argued that for many DPs the actions of the German authorities had reminded them of “similar actions by Germans under the Nazis in liquidations of Ghettos [and] Concentration camps.”<sup>24</sup> According to Haber, it was only the quick resistance of the Föhrenwald residents that prevented the situation from getting out of hand and becoming worse than it had. While the raid itself had been stopped and the issue seemed resolved, Haber feared that similar events would happen in the not too distant future, especially because “German police have already indicated resentment at the fact that the Jewish population of Foehrenwald balked them of a good time.”<sup>25</sup> JDC members quickly arranged to meet with German Ministers in order to help prevent future incidents like these and the matter seemed, to the JDC, to have been resolved.<sup>26</sup>

### **The Jewish Response**

The raid had reminded many DPs that their lives in Germany were at the mercy of their German overseers. With this understanding came the realization that they had lost what little control they believed they had held. The Germans were no longer kept at bay by American

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Haber, "Raid on Foehrenwald."

<sup>24</sup> Samuel Haber, Dr., "Telegram to Jack Raymond," in *JDC Journal, Report from Germany, Germany Legal Bulletins, ORG 2, Office of the General Counsel* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1952), 1.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid

<sup>26</sup> "German Customs Officers Attack Jews in Camp Föhrenwald: Customs officials and Police Planned Search of Föhrenwald- Jews Protest Against the conducted "raid," Authorities forced to leave, Could not Penetrate into the Camp," 1.

regulations preventing their entry into the camps. Additionally, the fact that the Germans had methodically planned the raid on Föhrenwald to occur a mere two days after the Allies had further reduced their control in Germany did not escape the attention of the Jewish residents who attributed it with special significance.<sup>27</sup> The DPs felt that the Germans were testing the reaction of the Americans and taking further drastic steps toward “dealing” with the Jews with every subsequent reduction in American control. They believed that the timing illustrated that the Germans had just been waiting for the Allied pullout to attack the Jews. The sense of security once enjoyed by the DPs was shattered, and the fear associated with this realization incited feelings of terror, hatred, and resentment. In a newspaper article published in the *Naye Yidishe Tsaytung* on May 29, the author stated that the DPs felt trapped by the Germans and noted that the “*Operation*” committed against the Jews in Föhrenwald was reminiscent of those conducted in the Ghettos.

The outcry against Nazi tactics stretched far and wide, reaching all the way to the White House. In a telegram to President Truman, David Jakobowitz, the Chairman of the Camp Committee in Föhrenwald, described the incident as an “unwarranted mass raid served to remind the two-thousand remaining Jewish inhabitants of Foehrenwald of liquidation raids of the Gestapo and SS.”<sup>28</sup> Jakobowitz sent similar telegrams in German to Adenauer and Heuss, but in his English telegram to Truman he admitted that that DPs felt the West German authorities did not have the “common humanity” necessary to intercede on the DPs’ behalf.<sup>29</sup> The Camp Committee implored Truman, Churchill, and the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees in Germany, to protest the actions perpetrated by the German authorities because they felt it was the

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> David Jakobowitz, "Telegram to President Harry S. Truman," in *JDC Journal, Report from Germany, Germany Legal Bulletins, ORG 2, Office of the General Counsel* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1952), 1.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

job of the western democracies, of which Germany was a new member, to stop these “terror raid[s].”<sup>30</sup> The Camp Committee ended the missive saying, “we look to you as to other world leaders to use your influence to rescue us by assisting in emigration to your and other countries.”<sup>31</sup> The *Naye Yidishe Tsaytung* reported the greatest wish of the DPs in Föhrenwald was to leave Germany and German control. The author of the article asked, “what about the Jewish world? What must happen in order for them to rescue the sick living in the last Jewish camp in Germany from their destruction?”<sup>32</sup> This was a question often muttered by the DPs. Why had they been left in Germany when their only desire was to be resettled away from Europe? This question was especially galling considering that there was now a state to which they should have been able to go and yet so many of them remained “trapped” in Germany.<sup>33</sup> For the Jewish DPs left in Germany, emigration was the only solution to end their suffering and yet many of them would remain there for at least another five years, others forever.<sup>34</sup>

Understanding that the full emigration of Germany’s remaining Jewish DPs might not occur as quickly as they had hoped, Samuel Zahler and David Jakobowitz wrote to Dr. Theodor Oberländer, the Secretary of State for the matters of the Expellees, on June 4, 1952, on behalf of the Föhrenwald camp residents. The memorandum sent to Oberländer stressed the severity of the situation by including a detailed outline of the day’s events as experienced by the Jewish DPs, as well as the extremely anti-Semitic statements made by the German police, the feelings of the camp residents in association with the incident, and the demands of the camp population. Zahler

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> “German Customs Officers Attack Jews in Camp Föhrenwald,” 1.

<sup>33</sup> In order to get the most leverage out of their argument, the DPs omitted the fact that many of the remaining Displaced Jews could have gone to Israel but had decided that they were too old or sick to start their lives anew in the war torn Jewish state. They claimed that the climate in Israel was not good for the health of those with tuberculosis. Instead they argued they were willing to go anywhere as long as it was away from Europe.

<sup>34</sup> These DPs were unhappy with the emigration and integration efforts put forth by the JDC. While many of these DPs were unwilling to leave the camp until they felt their demands had been satisfied, they still blamed the Joint for having not yet met these requirements.



and Jakubowitz's account of the events occurred in a different order from that given by the German police. They began their explanation after the arrival of the officers starting with cocked guns leveled at the DPs and shouts of "stand still" echoing throughout the camp periphery.<sup>35</sup> When the Jewish DPs began to complain that the camp was looking a lot like a ghetto, one of the officers responded, "it may be even worse than the Ghetto."<sup>36</sup> One of the DPs then asked to whom they could turn for help, only to be met with the rather flippant answer, "you can turn to Auerbach and Ohrenstein for help," taunting the Jews with the recent loss of two of their most prominent leaders.<sup>37</sup> Zahler and Jakubowitz referenced several respectable camp residents as well as authorities from the Joint offices within the camp as witnesses to these taunts. These anti-Semitic shouts were so offensive to many of the DPs that sporadic clashes erupted followed by chaotic fighting. The Customs officials made full use of their rubber truncheons, hitting DPs over the head and then continued to attack their bodies when they fell on the ground. Zahler and Jakubowitz recorded the severe beating of several TB patients, a pregnant woman, and a 50-year-old lady who had undergone extensive surgery just two months prior. German workers in the camp did everything possible to reason with the police to bring the attack to an end, but according to Jewish sources, there was no reasoning with the excited officers.<sup>38</sup> The single shot fired by a Customs officer promised coming bloodshed, so it was a good decision that the Customs officer in charge finally called all of the officers back and canceled the raid. However, Zahler and Jakubowitz both agreed that the true tragedy of the raid was not the fighting, but rather the way that it was implemented because the operation was so extreme and violent, when

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<sup>35</sup> Zahler, "Memorandum," 4.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 6.

in fact there was no need at all for a full-scale action.<sup>39</sup> When had bloodhounds and armed police become necessary in customs searches and paperwork inspections, Zahler and Jakobowitz asked? How did they help determine if a business was properly licensed? They also asked why the entire camp was surrounded and every inhabitant considered a person of interest in the search if only certain “illegal” shops were listed on the search warrant? The letter writers noted that the camp inhabitants strongly protested the targeting of the “peaceful, helpless and unfortunate residents” of Föhrenwald just because they were Jews.<sup>40</sup>

What made matters worse was that according to the terms of the German takeover of the DP centers on December 1, 1951, all Displaced Jews who were forced to remain in Germany would have the same rights as German citizens.<sup>41</sup> Zahler and Jakobowitz argued that “The camp inhabitants note that the raid was a flagrant violation of these principles.”<sup>42</sup> They pointed out to Oberländer that there had never been a complete search of any German village, town, city, or state, where every resident was a suspect until proven otherwise. The raid that had taken place on camp Föhrenwald could never have been translated into a larger operation targeting Germans because it would have violated their fundamental rights as citizens, the same rights guaranteed to the Jewish DPs in April 1951.

For the DPs the indignities did not end with the cancelation of the raid. Later they learned that members of the Customs Office had contacted Oberländer personally while also broadcasting false radio messages claiming that shots had been fired from the crowd of assembled DPs and subsequently that officers were injured.<sup>43</sup> These reports were later proven to be lies, but they illustrate the methods employed by the Customs Office to make the Jewish DPs

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 2-3.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

look like the aggressors.<sup>44</sup> Reports like these severely damaged the image of the Jewish DP in Germany and contributed to a further breakdown of relations between these Jews and the Bavarian and West German government.

The Jewish camp residents met with members of the JDC to discuss the raid and how to proceed before meeting with or contacting the West German and American occupation authorities. In order to move toward rebuilding their working relationship with the German government, the DPs needed reassurances that a raid like that of May 28 would never be repeated again. They also proposed several “necessary” steps that the Camp Committee believed would help calm the feelings of the camp population. These included the punishment of the officials who had planned and implemented “this unprecedented attack on the peaceful camp population.”<sup>45</sup> Additionally, the officer who fired the single shot during the raid, as well as the police who were shouting Nazi and anti-Semitic insults against the Jewish DPs, must, the camp population insisted, “be punished severely and mercilessly.”<sup>46</sup> Finally, and most importantly, the population of Föhrenwald insisted that the West German government guarantee their legal equality with the German population.

The Camp Committee stated that they strongly condemned all illegal activity within the camp, but the raid was not the proper way to handle these actions. Instead, “normal police measures” were necessary. These measures should have been the same ones implemented in German towns for similar offenses committed by German citizens.<sup>47</sup> The camp population proclaimed that they would not be bullied by German authorities within the gates of their camp. They declared that the “terror attacks” employed by the Customs Office would not intimidate

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

them and they appealed to the heads of the German Federal Republic to call for the retirement of the methods used in Majdanek and Auschwitz in 1942.<sup>48</sup> Although they had very little leverage to wield when it came to negotiating with the German authorities, the DPs knew that they could sway German officials to make certain concessions if they could get the support of countries like the United States. The Jewish Displaced Persons hoped that this influence would be enough to help protect them in Germany.

In the end, the Camp Committee and members of the JDC submitted a memorandum to the High Commissioner for Refugees, Dr. Adenauer, the Ministry President, and the Bavarian Parliament describing all of the details of the raid. The memo ended with a note acknowledging that the representatives of the DPs understood that the German government would try a number of the individual DPs involved in the riot, but that their sentences would be appealed. They ended by asking that no future raids like that of May 28 take place again at Föhrenwald, “the last Jewish camp in Germany.”<sup>49</sup> Future searches for those committing crimes were allowable, but a whole scale raid targeting all of the Jews living in the camp would not be tolerated.

### **The German Account**

Many of the German officials who were asked to help calm relations between the Jewish DPs and the Bavarian and West German government were able to acknowledge the blunder committed by the Customs Office in their implementation of the raid on camp Föhrenwald. However, the police report regarding the raid provided a very different account of the events that occurred, placing the blame squarely on the Jews. The description of the raid provided by von Godin stated that Customs officials and police arrived at the periphery of Camp Föhrenwald on May 29, 1952, prepared to carry out a simple search within the camp of the businesses selling

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

untaxed merchandise.<sup>50</sup> Before they were even able to approach the gates, a number of the camp residents gathered together and prevented their entry. Those police who left their vehicles were attacked with stones and fists. In total four Customs officers were injured by rocks, both thrown and used as a weapon for beating, and one agent was knocked to the ground where he was repeatedly kicked by DPs.<sup>51</sup> The officers tried to use their truncheons to disperse the crowd to little avail, and in the end one officer discharged his weapon in order to stop the ensuing riot. After the warning shot, the Customs officer on the ground was freed. Another Customs agent was hit hard in the face during the chaos that followed the shot and had to be taken to the hospital in Wolfratshausen where he was diagnosed with a broken nose and a contusion on the left side of his face. Additionally, the flying stones thrown by the Displaced Persons damaged several of the motor vehicles employed for the action.<sup>52</sup>

The Customs officials brought the provincial police with them for protection and they were able to break up the demonstration, restore order, and prevent further violence. Officer Ermer, the Customs official in charge of the raid, then notified the camp inhabitants and the protestors that attacking the customs officials had been a serious breach of peace on the part of the DPs.<sup>53</sup> Based on the preceding events, Ermer decided that the action must be canceled. He had the district inspector of the rural police of Wolfratshausen then get on the loud speaker and announce the cancelation of the search. He also had a member of the Camp Committee repeat the proclamation in Yiddish so that all of the camp residents would leave peacefully. According to von Godin it was at that point that the “camp was abandoned by the officers.”<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> von Godin, "Zollfahndungsaktion im Regierungslager Föhrenwald am 28. 5. 1952," 1.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

The entire conflict had taken less than 20 minutes and by 11:20 AM Theodor Oberländer had received a call from the Customs Office notifying him of the raid and the heavy clashes that had accompanied it. Oberländer spoke with both von Godin and the Chief Finance President expressing his deep displeasure that the action had taken place without the “competent” departments being notified, meaning his own.<sup>55</sup> He was then told that the Ministry of the Interior had been notified according to procedure. While Oberländer agreed that the operation to search for the merchandise held in Föhrenwald was most probably worth the harm such an action might bring about to foreign policy, he took issue with the manner in which the raid was carried out. He said that the Bavarian State Ministry of the Interior “had worked hard over the last three quarters of a year, since taking over control of the camp from the IRO, to treat the sensitive inhabitants of the camp fairly and with decency.”<sup>56</sup> The Camp Committee, he argued, had even recognized this. However, he feared that “The operation, which had ended in an inconclusive withdrawal has caused serious psychological damage.”<sup>57</sup> He continued to say that had he been notified about the raid in advance he would have informed the customs officers to “use the microphone to ask the inmates to remain in their homes and to stay calm.” He also believed that “the involvement of the Jewish Camp Committee would probably have resulted in the avoidance of all difficulties.”<sup>58</sup> Oberländer understood that had the camp inhabitants been informed of the raid instead of being surrounded by armed police, they would have been more likely to have cooperated with officials. According to Oberländer incidents such as these caused tremendous damage and could have been avoided. The failure of the Customs Office to contact the correct

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<sup>55</sup> Dr. Theodor Oberländer, "Regierungslager Föhrenwald, Zollfahndungsaktion am 28.5.1952," in *StK* (Munich: BayHStA, 1952), 2.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

departments had led to a disastrous situation that affected not only the camp residents and the West German government, but also the image of Germany in the eyes of the world.

In the week following the raid Dr. Kohane, Mr. Jacobowitz, Mr. Long of the U.S. High Commissioner's Office, Dr. Oberländer, and a handful of other representatives from camp Föhrenwald met to discuss ways that they could prevent a future blunder like the raid of May 28. The German writer who reported on the meeting noted there was an overall sense of excitement among the camp representatives because "the men were very angry."<sup>59</sup> He acknowledged the fact that "the raid would have recalled the condition in the concentration camps and the Warsaw Ghetto."<sup>60</sup> While the representatives of the Jewish Camp Committee stated that they did not want any special status or privileges, neither did they want to be treated more harshly than German citizens. They demanded that the officials involved in the riot be punished for their crimes, and noted the fact that the Customs officials had requested that the Red Cross ambulance be prepared and parked at the camp gates illustrated that the German officials who had planned the raid understood that there was the potential for bloodshed. Additionally, the presence of a female commando unit tasked with searching female residents was considered wholly inappropriate to the male camp representatives who felt that the women in the center should have been left out of the search altogether. The camp representatives declared that if they did not feel that a satisfactory outcome of the meeting was reached, they would have no problem approaching the world press to discuss this "unfortunate incident."<sup>61</sup> In an attempt to quell some of the Jewish DPs fears of future raids, Mr. Long, stated that he had already notified his office to

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Gillitzer, "Vormerkung," 2.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

look into the matter and that he was scheduled to meet with Mr. Hale that very afternoon to try to come up with some kind of a solution.<sup>62</sup>

Blame for the raid, according to the Jewish representative body present, fell on the West German government for failing to anticipate the outcome of the planned event. However, both the men from the Joint and the members of the Camp Committee felt that officer Ermer or von Godin should have stopped the raid at the last minute when he realized that the situation had the potential to get out of control. It is evident from the statements of praise issued by the Camp Committee for the German personnel in the camp that the Jewish residents of Föhrenwald did not group all Germans together as “enemies” and really respected some members of the population. They said they were grateful for the “position of the German camp staff, whose commitment to the inmates and their prudence helped to avoid a greater disaster.”<sup>63</sup> The camp representatives continued on to point out the efforts of Dockal, the German camp director, and the kindergarten teachers in the camp who had refused searches of their respective areas, although both were rumored to be listed on the search warrant.<sup>64</sup> It was the declarations of the German personnel and camp inhabitants who stated that they were united with the Jewish DPs that helped alleviate some of the tension felt in the camp.<sup>65</sup>

Members of the West German and Bavarian government worked to reconstruct the events of May 28 and to ferret out the true culprits responsible for the riot. They simultaneously worked to ease the fears and concerns of the Displaced Jews residing in Föhrenwald. Hoping to resettle as many of the remaining DPs as possible, the JDC began to seek out new countries that might be willing to take the elderly and infirm inhabitants of the camp. For many of the DPs in

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>65</sup> Zahler, "Memorandum," 3.



camp Föhrenwald, life went back to the way that it had been before the raid with the addition of extra caution when it came to interactions with German officials. However, the events of May 28 would not be forgotten any time soon and would not find final resolution until March 1955.

### **The Fallout of the Raid**

While the West German government was willing to try to ensure that no raids like that of May 28 would occur in the future, this did not mean that they were willing to allow lawbreakers to go without punishment. After twenty-eight months of a threatened indictment and numerous unsuccessful attempts on the part of the Camp Committee to see the case dismissed, six Föhrenwalders were put on trial in connection with the events of the May 1952 riot in Föhrenwald.<sup>66</sup> Two of the accused were charged with misdemeanor riot and breach of public peace. The remaining four were charged with the same crimes, but at the level of felony.<sup>67</sup> Members of Föhrenwald, as well as the Jewish press expressed outrage over the indictment. Marjin Gide stated utter surprise in February 1955 when he learned that the trial would actually take place. He stated that the German Public Prosecutor had other more important duties to attend to including the arrest of the Nazis who were still going free after “the death of hundreds and thousands of people.”<sup>68</sup>

Believing that the case could be dismissed, Mr. Gaubart, a representative of the Camp Committee, had tried to appeal to the Prosecutor’s Office but was unsuccessful. He then tried to appeal to the office of the High Commissioner for Refugees in Bonn but again failed. In early February 1955 several residents of Föhrenwald bearing the order of the criminal court and the

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<sup>66</sup> "Germans Indict Seven Jewish Dp's for Foehrenwald Riot in 1952," *The Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, October 14, 1952 1954, 1.

<sup>67</sup> M. Einziger, "Foehrenwald Riot 1952," in *Report from Germany, Germany Legal Bulletins, ORG 2, Office of General Council* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1952), 1.

<sup>68</sup> Gide, "Foehrenwald Before a German Court," 1.

final indictment approached him.<sup>69</sup> With no other course of action available but court, Gaubart proposed hiring a lawyer at the expense of the Joint. Gaubart was not sure whom to hire to defend the accused. He suggested both a Jewish and a non-Jewish attorney, but could not decide on which one to approach. The Jewish lawyer that he had in mind was Dr. Nathanson, a former American lawyer who had moved to Germany and was practicing in Munich. He also proposed Dr. Miehr, the attorney who had represented Philipp Auerbach, and was considered one of the best lawyers in Bavaria, as his non-Jewish selection. However, he did not want to approach either until the defendants had made their decision on whom they wanted to represent them.<sup>70</sup> Gaubart thought that the expertise provided by a lawyer might help convince the court to reduce the charges to misdemeanors, which carried a three-month sentence instead of the two years that came with the conviction of a felony. If this outcome could be successfully achieved, the defendants could then appeal to have their prison sentences dropped under the amnesty law that had recently been published by the German government. In order to precede he promptly needed DM- 500 from the Joint.<sup>71</sup>

In the middle of February 1955, the Joint found itself in discussions about who was responsible for the lawyer's fees that would accompany the defense of the six individuals on trial. The response of the Joint amazed Gaubart as well as the residents of Camp Föhrenwald.<sup>72</sup> The JDC issued a statement that there would be no support from their offices. Gaubart argued that the six defendants were "seized by chance" from a crowd of several hundred excited camp residents, all of whom were involved in the riot to some degree. He noted that even the indictment listed the "general excitement" running through the camp during the raid and argued

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<sup>69</sup> B. Prof. Graubard, "Letter," in *Report from Germany, Germany Legal Bulletins, ORG 2, Office of General Council* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1955), 1.

<sup>70</sup> Einziger, "Foehrenwald Riot 1952," 1.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>72</sup> Graubard, "Letter," 2.

that since the riot involved “the entire community of Foehrenwald” it was the responsibility of the Joint, as the sponsors of the camp, to provide the cost of the defense for these “victims of chance.”<sup>73</sup> Gaubart was not defending the actions of the accused, he said, but rather took issue with six individuals taking the blame and punishment for the acts of hundreds of people. If the Joint should in the end decide not to support the defendants, he believed it was still the responsibility of one of the Jewish institutions to cover their legal costs.

For their part, the JDC denied any responsibility for the DPs living in Germany. James P. Rice, the director of the JDC offices in Frankfurt, responded to Gaubart’s letter by explaining that the JDC was not actually responsible for Camp Föhrenwald, nor were they the camp’s sponsors. The camp was strictly under German authority, just as the camp residents and every Jew and German were under German legal jurisdiction. Rice continued on to say that the JDC did not provide any legal services to Jews who had been involved in committing criminal activities.<sup>74</sup> However, he did not have any objection to other Jewish organizations taking on this responsibility “if they have funds allocated for such purpose.”<sup>75</sup> Rice argued that providing lawyers for these DPs fell under the responsibilities of the Kultusgemeinde or the Landesverband, not the Joint.<sup>76</sup> He acknowledged that he was well aware of the problem, having spoken with the Camp Committee about it several months prior, but he stuck to his position that it was not the Joint’s responsibility to cover these costs. However, Gaubart informed Rice that Einziger of the Welfare Department had been notified that the members of the Kultusgemeinde and Landesverband were repeatedly told not to get involved in camp affairs. Additionally, the lawyers of the Kultusgemeinde were very busy and highly specialized, only dealing in matters of

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> James P. Rice, "Letter to Dr. Gaubard," in *Report from Germany, Germany Legal Bulletins, ORG 2, Office of General Council* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1955), 1.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> M. Einziger, "Lawyers for the Foehrenwalders," 1.

restitution and billeting. Gaubart pointed out that he did not believe any of the lawyers of the Kultusgemeinde should be used just because they worked for the Jewish representative organization. The Landesverband who the JDC had suggested was responsible for the expense refused to pay, and Gaubart noted that no lawyer would work without knowing who was paying his bill. He threatened to tell the Camp Committee about the JDC's decision not to provide the accused with a lawyer, knowing that this would make the task a real problem for Joint workers.<sup>77</sup> Additionally, the JDC offices received calls from representatives of the Camp Committee noting that tensions were very high in the center and that an immediate meeting between camp members and Joint officials was necessary in order to try to prevent a future outbreak of violence.<sup>78</sup>

Rather than deal with the very possible outcry of the Camp Committee, the JDC proposed some possible solutions that would allow them to remain as secondary and anonymous players in this legal case. The first suggestion was that the accused turn to the Jewish community in Germany for legal aid. They suggested the president of the Kultusgemeinde, Dr. Neuland, and Mr. Müller, a member of the Loan Department, as possible attorneys.<sup>79</sup> Rice argued that he was not familiar with Dr. Nathanson, the Jewish lawyer proposed by Gaubart but saw no harm in approaching him. What the JDC proposed was that the defendants contact these lawyers and see if they felt "the accused Föhrenwalders deserve such help."<sup>80</sup> If for some reason none of these lawyers were available, or chose not to represent these individuals, free legal representation was available to the defendants from the German court. If the accused Föhrenwalders chose not to use the services of the aforementioned lawyers, they could always choose their own

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Einziger, "Meeting with the Camp," in *Report from Germany, Germany Legal Bulletins, ORG 2, Office of General Council* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1955), 1.

<sup>79</sup> James P. Rice, "Föhrenwald Riot, 1952," in *Report from Germany, Germany Legal Bulletins, ORG 2, Office of General Council* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1955), 1.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

representation, but the JDC would not, under any terms, provide the funds for this legal aid. The fact that the Joint had closed down its own legal office before 1955 illustrated that the JDC was no longer providing “legal services of any kind to Jews in Germany,” Rice said.<sup>81</sup> Should the Föhrenwalders choose to hire their own defense they had a couple of options available for covering the fees they would incur: They could pay the lawyer out of their own funds, they could turn to the Jewish Community and hope that the Zentralrat would possibly provide some funds from the Claims Conference money meant for the Jewish community, or they could ask the Zentralwohlfahrtsstelle who had some money set aside for legal aid. The final option was for the accused to turn to the Camp Committee for funding.<sup>82</sup> If the Camp Committee were convinced to provide some funding, they could take money from their “salaries” and that of the “so-called TB committee” to provide the necessary funds.<sup>83</sup> The Camp Committee had, in the past, spent a substantial amount on representation. This was a way for the defendants to get their fees covered with JDC funds, because the Joint provided all of the salaries for camp representatives but allowed the JDC to remain outside of any public connection to the case. In subsequent letters Rice pointed out all of the problems associated with these avenues including the fact that “none of the Claims Conference budget of the Zentralwohlfahrtsstelle can be used for this purpose, since the Zentralwohlfahrtsstelle responsibility does not include assistance of any kind to Foehrenwald residents.”<sup>84</sup> In actuality, the only truly viable options available to the accused DPs were to hope for free legal aid or to pay for a lawyer from personal funds.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Rice, "Letter to Dr. Gaubard," 1.

<sup>85</sup> Einziger, "Foehrenwald Riot, 1952," 1.

In the end, the accused Föhrenwalders found counsel with Mr. Miehr who began defending them in court on March 3, 1955.<sup>86</sup> An eyewitness account of the legal proceedings presented a very sad picture of the six accused Jews, two of whom were invalids and could only move with the help of crutches. The report stated that all of the defendants declared themselves not guilty. According to the indictment, the riot erupted after Chaim Neumann, the oldest DP on trial (43), gave a very “inflammatory” speech telling the gathered DPs to resist the Germans while shouting to the Germans that they needed to leave. All of the Jewish witnesses recounted their feelings upon seeing the uniformed and armed German police with attack dogs at the ready. Every one of the defendants had lived through the Shoah and had memories of the “actions” in the concentration camps and ghettos. Neumann recounted the loss of his home as a young man and told the court that he was trying to calm the amassed Jews with his speech rather than incite them. He was followed by Gedalje Bines who told of his imprisonment in a concentration camp as a small child. It was then Miehr Rozenberg’s turn to testify. Rozenberg shouted about his experiences of pain, worry, and torture at the hands of the Nazis. He said, “I am not a criminal and I never want to become one. I am a fearless Polish Jew. I was beaten because I am a Jew. I accuse the German people of being guilty of all the misery that has befallen us.”<sup>87</sup> Daniel Zeifer, who had been 21 at the time of the riot, testified to the fear and hatred toward Germans in uniforms felt by the Jews who had survived the concentration camps. He said that it was not just the six defendants on trial but all of world Jewry again being attacked by the Germans.<sup>88</sup> The testimony of the two infirm defendants, Kopl and Leszberg, followed. Those in the courtroom learned that Chil Kopl’s act of rioting had consisted of his standing, propped upright on crutches,

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<sup>86</sup> B. Prof. Graubard, "Foehrenwald Proceedings," in *Report from Germany, Germany Legal Bulletins, ORG 2, Office of General Council* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1955), 1.

<sup>87</sup> "Report on the Legal Proceedings Against the DPs Involved in the Foehrenwald Raid," in *Report from Germany, Germany Legal Bulletins, ORG 2, Office of General Council* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1955), 3.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

in front of one of the advancing German vehicles, blocking its path.<sup>89</sup> Laszberg claimed that he had remained in one spot among the “rebels” without moving, even as a German Customs official beat him.<sup>90</sup>

The German testimony that followed continued to reiterate earlier claims of a total lack of culpability. Ermer gave an account of the planning and execution of the failed raid, noting that his office had increased the number of police officers on the scene because they had to “expect resistance. His people did not want to harm anybody--they only wanted to fulfill their duties.”<sup>91</sup> Mr. Ermer argued that the Jewish representations of the events that occurred on May 28 resulted in a negative portrayal of Germany in foreign newspapers. To this Mr. Miehr asked if Ermer could recall a “case when 150 men, armed and with dogs, had been used in order to make a raid on a German village?”<sup>92</sup> At this point Ermer replied demurely that he did indeed know of just such a case in which a number of police officers and officials were sent to search a German village. Miehr then followed up by asking where and when this search had taken place, to which Ermer replied it had been either 1925 or 1927. No such operation had happened in almost thirty years.<sup>93</sup> The testimony of several other German witnesses, including that of a police officer, followed that of Ermer. The officer stated that he had heard an inflammatory speech as the officials on site in Föhrenwald tried to move forward into the camp. When asked the language of this speech the officer acknowledged that it was Yiddish, a language that he did not really understand. However, he did clearly recognize “SS-bandits.”<sup>94</sup> Overall, though, the eyewitnesses, with the exception of the former German camp leader, Dockal, the German

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<sup>89</sup> Gide, "Foehrenwald Before a German Court," 2.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> "Report on the Legal Proceedings Against the DPs Involved in the Foehrenwald Raid," 4.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

testimonies were detrimental to the Jewish case. The eyewitness at the trial noted that Dockal's words "were full of understanding, warmth and sincere friendship."<sup>95</sup>

Despite Dockal's glowing testimony of the Föhrenwalders, it was the efforts of the lawyer Miehr that made the judges postpone their ruling. While Miehr had aggressively cross-examined all of the German witnesses, it was his statements about the psychological trauma suffered by Holocaust survivors that gave the judges pause. In a time before the diagnosis of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Miehr struggled to explain why the sight of so many uniformed and armed German police would send the residents of Föhrenwald into such a state of agitation, "that the people were incapable to control their actions."<sup>96</sup> He posited that the experiences of the survivors who had lived through the horrors of the Nazi regime left the DPs "suffering from a certain complex, from a certain psychosis."<sup>97</sup> At this point in the proceedings the judges left to discuss the matter and announced upon their return that the trial would be postponed while a psychiatrist examined four of the defendants. The judges wanted the psychiatrist to determine if the sight of so many armed units, which was reminiscent of so much suffering for the survivors, could in fact send them into a "psychological shock" so many years later.<sup>98</sup>

The eyewitness ended his account by asking what feelings someone listening to the proceedings took away with them that night? His response was that the trial did not feel as if it targeted only the accused Jews, but rather "Everyone with his grief, all invalids, sick persons and chronically sick persons with their ailments, with their wounds open and bandaged up."<sup>99</sup> He felt that had the trial occurred three years earlier when the event actually took place, the German

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.



accusers would have become the accused, but the delay brought with it a distancing from the Holocaust that numbed the world's empathy for the Jewish survivors left on German soil.<sup>100</sup>

Despite all of his efforts, Miehr was unsuccessful at having the trial dismissed. While the determination of the psychiatrist that the DPs were not “fully responsible” for their deeds resulted in lighter sentences than the 14 months demanded by the Public Prosecutor, the four Jewish DPs accused of felony disturbance of the peace and rioting were all found guilty.<sup>101</sup> An article in the *Naye Yidische Tsaytung* stated that the sentences were unusually harsh considering when the actual offense had taken place and that a German court tried the Jewish defendants.<sup>102</sup> The sentences for Gedalje Bines, Chaim Neuman, Dan Zeifer and Chil Koppel ranged from 7 to 9 months with Neuman's sentence being suspended. Meier Rosenberg and Aron Leszberg were both acquitted of all charges against them.<sup>103</sup>

Although the outcome of the case could have been much worse for the defendants, the fact that the trial took place at all, and that four of the six accused were sentenced to time in prison, indicated to the Jewish DPs that their situation in Germany had changed drastically. The article about the sentencing in the *Naye Yidische Tsaytung* ended by noting that no one cared any longer about the “persons who experienced bloody ‘actions’ or deportations into ghettos during the Nazi Regime.”<sup>104</sup> It was clear that the period of close scrutiny of Germany's every action by the world had come to an end. Like all other Western countries, Germany was again able to control those living within its borders without international intervention. As residents in Germany, the Jews found themselves fully at the mercy of German police, welfare agencies,

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> M. Einziger, "Court Trial Against Föhrenwalders," in *Report from Germany, Germany Legal Bulletins, ORG 2, Office of General Council* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1955), 1.

<sup>102</sup> "Sentence in Föhrenwald Trial," *Naye Yidische Tsaytung*, March 18, 1955, 2.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

judges, courts, and penal workers. The Jewish DPs could no longer turn to the Allies to intervene on their behalf when they thought they were being treated unfairly. They could only appeal to German authorities. The Displaced Jews living in Germany continually stated that they had been forgotten by the democratic world, especially the Jewish contingency living abroad. They often expressed feelings of desolation, isolation, and loneliness. Camp Föhrenwald was steeped in a sense of helplessness as well as hopelessness remarked upon by almost all visitors, who feared that the camp inhabitants were slipping into a state of deep depression and moral decay.

### **The Föhrenwald Demonstration**

The Joint Distribution Committee is today continuing its large-scale supplementary assistance program on behalf of the residents of Camp Foehrenwald as well as all needy Jews in Germany. In cooperation with international organizations, governmental authorities and local Jewish groups, JDC is attempting to find a permanent solution to their problems. It should be clear that the JDC is at all times ready to meet individual representatives and committees representing Jewish groups in Germany for an orderly discussion of their problems, and stands ready to provide justifiable help within the limits of its resources. JDC cannot, however, permit the disruption of its work and of offices serving all Jews in Germany by a small group of irresponsible persons who disregard their own authorized representatives, whom they themselves recently elected. In this regard it should be noted that the Camp Committee itself had informed us prior to the demonstration that they could no longer control the situation and that the attempted invasion of JDC's office was occurring against the Committee's advice.<sup>105</sup>

By 1953, the residents remaining in Föhrenwald were almost exclusively DPs who had suffered from TB as well as a small number of infirm individuals and the elderly. These ill DPs were joined by their families bringing the center's population to nearly 2,000. The last camp residents were known as "Hardcore" DPs because they had proved to be the most difficult emigration cases for the international Jewish aid organizations working to resettle them abroad. A substantial number of Jewish Holocaust survivors had been infected with tuberculosis and the close quarters in concentration camp barracks had led to the rapid spread of the disease. The lack of medicines in the wake of the war combined with the fact that there was no effective cure

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<sup>105</sup> Irving R. Dickman, "JDC Statement on Munich Incident," in *Germany: localities: Munich 1945-1954* (New York: AJJDC, 1954), 1.

available in postwar Germany meant that the disease was hard to control. Additionally, many patients who went into remission would later have a flare up of the disease. This made the DPs with TB unattractive candidates for emigration. In an effort to find new home countries for the Jewish DPs, JDC representatives began meeting with delegates from several different countries with climates believed to be conducive to preventing future relapses of tuberculosis and who had adequate medical facilities to care for infirm DPs.

Of the 1,750 inhabitants in Föhrenwald, 1,300 had come directly to the DP centers in Germany after the war and remained because of the state of their health over the course of 1940s and 1950s.<sup>106</sup> They were the absolute hardest cases to resettle. In a confidential statement issued by the JDC, the author noted that perhaps a more fitting name than Hard-core cases would be the “unwanted,” because they were so difficult to place. He continued on to say:

They were the ones whom the Nazi persecution had hurt most. The years of incarceration, forced labor and torture had left damaging marks upon their bodies and upon their minds. They were the ones with TB, with heart ailments, with physical handicaps, with everlasting aches and pains and tortured minds. Though they more than any needed to leave Germany it was difficult to find a country that would accept them.<sup>107</sup>

Despite this, the JDC still hoped that they might be able to secure a limited number of visas for the almost five hundred TB and post TB patients and their families who had been initially barred from emigration.<sup>108</sup> This ban, interestingly enough, also included Israel. While the new Jewish State did not have a total ban on allowing the sick and infirm to immigrate there, the number accepted was initially low and continued to be so until March 1955 when a new plan was devised by the JDC, the Jewish agency, and the Israeli government to provide visas for those previously

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<sup>106</sup> George Vida, "Letter to Dr. Emil Lehman," in *Germany, Displaced Persons, Camps: Foehrenwald, July-December 1954* (New York: AJJDC, 1954), 1.

<sup>107</sup> The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, "The Foehrenwald Story " in *JDC AR 45/54 #327 Germany, Displaced Persons camps: Foehrenwald, Jan-Jun 1954* (New York: AJJDC, 1954), 2.

<sup>108</sup> "Germany Starts Moving Jewish DPs from Föhrenwald, " in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Archive, December 9, 1954), 1.

denied entry.<sup>109</sup> In September 1954, the JDC had already begun plying the Israeli Government with requests to relax their health requirements.<sup>110</sup> The ban had not been imposed because those in power did not care about their brethren stuck in Europe, but because the climate was initially argued to be unsuitable to those with TB, and the country lacked the resources, especially medical infrastructure, necessary to facilitate the needs of the old, sick, and infirm.<sup>111</sup> With the plan enacted in 1955, Jews previously denied entry into Israel because of their health would now be cared for by Malben, a branch of the JDC active in Israel that tended to disabled immigrants.

JDC and HIAS efforts at resettling the remaining Jewish DPs resulted in the successful emigration of a small portion of the legal and illegal DPs who had lived in the last remaining camp by 1954. However, the situation in Föhrenwald did not change drastically over the course of 1952 or 1953. Despite the best efforts of the organizations working to settle the last remnant of Germany's displaced Jews, more than 1,700 individuals continued to call the camp their home.<sup>112</sup> The West German government, Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, and the Displaced Jews in Bavaria as well as world Jewry, all continued to argue that their primary objective was the closing of Camp Föhrenwald. Although the general sense of security shared by the residents of Föhrenwald in the 1940s had disappeared, their sense of autonomy and entitlement had not. The inhabitants who called Föhrenwald home continued to fight for the things they believed they deserved, and struggled to ensure that their futures outside of the camps resembled the ones of which they dreamed. Unfortunately, their deteriorated health prevented them from settling in the countries that they hoped to live in and made resettling them a

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<sup>109</sup> "First Foehrenwald Family Leaves for Israel Under New Plan," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Munich: JTA-Jewish News Archive, March 30, 1955), 1.

<sup>110</sup> Morris Laub, "Letter to Mr. Sobeloff," in *Germany, Displaced Persons, Camps, Föhrenwald* (New York: AJJDC, 1954), 1.

<sup>111</sup> Committee, "The Foehrenwald Story " 2.

<sup>112</sup> For more on the illegal return of former Jewish DPs who had immigrated abroad please see chapter eight, part one.

Herculean task for the organizations assigned that job. The costs associated with the running of the camp, the upsurge of disputes between the authoritative institutions involved in controlling the center and the DPs, as well as the continued despair permeating Föhrenwald led to calls from all parties for the immediate dissolution of the last remaining camp.<sup>113</sup> The only obstacle standing in their way was finding a plausible solution to this problem.

By 1953 the process of closing the camp was well underway. German authorities met regularly with JDC officials, camp representatives, and members of the German-Jewish community to discuss how best to proceed toward the resettlement, emigration, or absorption of Germany's remaining Displaced Jews. Realizing the cost associated with the care and control of the DP camps, which for Föhrenwald alone amounted to almost 11 million Marks, or the equivalent of \$8,000,000 for the period from German takeover in 1951 to March 1956, led the Bavarian and West German government to work toward the quick closure of the center.<sup>114</sup> However, these administrations did not realize the magnitude of the situation that faced them and found that their best efforts continued to fail. The JDC worked to make German officials understand that while they were in support of closing the camp, it had to be done slowly, in a manner that would allow for the largest number of Jewish DPs to be resettled abroad and leaving only the most dire cases to be integrated into German society.

The West German government worked with JDC officials and the Central Council of Jews in Germany to try and develop a plausible plan to resettle those in Föhrenwald as quickly and cheaply as possible, but the Camp Committee argued that the financial support offered by the German government was insufficient for the needs of those being "evicted" from their

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<sup>113</sup> Vida, "Letter to Dr. Emil Lehman," 1.

<sup>114</sup> Angelika Königseder and Juliane Wetzel, *Waiting for Hope: Jewish Displaced Persons in Post- World War II Germany* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2001). 163.

homes.<sup>115</sup> German officials agreed to match the funding provided by the JDC and Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany as a possible solution, but still the DPs demanded more.<sup>116</sup> The German government also stated that they would secure housing and employment opportunities for those who decided to remain in the country and provide institutional assistance for those too sick to live without constant medical care.<sup>117</sup> Unfortunately, the devastation of German housing caused during the war initially made these promises impossible to keep, and unemployment continued to plague the entire country. The dire nature of the situation was illustrated in late 1953 when the West German government agreed to pay for housing units for 500 camp residents at a time when 1,300 legal DPs still lived in Föhrenwald.<sup>118</sup> Both the monetary strain that building new housing caused the Federal Republic, and the staunch resistance of the Jewish DPs to integrate into German society, meant that actually closing the camp would be a difficult task. While the promises issued by the German government were meant to ease the fears of the Jewish DPs, especially the sick and infirm, they often caused increased tensions as the DPs felt the only suitable solution for closing Föhrenwald would be their emigration elsewhere, not their integration in Germany.

Matters only seemed to worsen for the Displaced Jews with the appointment of Professor Theodor Oberländer to the position of the Bavarian Secretary for Refugees. This led many Jews to question whether or not the German government understood, or even cared about the sensitive nature of dealing with the Jewish camp inhabitants. Oberländer had held a position as a high-ranking Nazi official during the war and was alleged to be an anti-Semite by Jewish officials in

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<sup>115</sup> "Foehrenwald Jewish DPs Advance Demands on German Government," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Munich: JTA- Jewish News Archives, May 10, 1954), 1.

<sup>116</sup> "J.D.C Close Refugee Camps in Germany, Austria and Italy," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Munich: JTA- Jewish News Archive, April 20, 1954), 1.

<sup>117</sup> "Foehrenwald Jewish DPs Advance Demands on German Government," 1.

<sup>118</sup> "J.D.C Close Refugee Camps in Germany, Austria and Italy," 1.

the Association of Jewish Communities in Bavaria. Oberländer wanted to end the “DP problem” in Germany and argued that Camp Föhrenwald was a hot bed of criminal activity, stating that there were “‘criminal elements’ among the Jewish DP’s in the camp.”<sup>119</sup> When threatened with legal proceedings by Mr. Weinberger, a representative of the Association of the Jewish Communities in Bavaria, Oberländer “insisted that the existence of ‘criminal elements’ at Föhrenwald had been proved.”<sup>120</sup> Despite this, he was tasked with creating a solution to end the refugee problem in Bavaria, a job that brought him into constant contact with the remaining residents of Föhrenwald. His Nazi past was a regular topic of discussion among Jewish DPs, aid workers, and journalists who often claimed he intentionally proposed measures to make the lives of Jewish DPs more difficult.<sup>121</sup> The Jewish DPs demanded that they “be given the same assistance as ‘volksdeutsche’ refugees expelled from Eastern Europe.”<sup>122</sup> To this Oberländer proposed that the government slash subsidies to the camp where the great majority of the inhabitants often had no income of their own and relied on German relief to survive.<sup>123</sup> As part of the German government’s efforts to close the camp and cut costs, Oberländer requested extraordinary powers to “create order in Föhrenwald.”<sup>124</sup> He suggested that the Bavarian government make drastic cuts in camp funding, and proposed the replacement of the Jewish DP police with German officers, and recommended the transfer of the best apartment buildings in the camp from Jewish DPs to German Volksdeutsche. All of the aforementioned were argued by the Jewish DPs to be deliberate harassment on Oberländer’s part in an attempt to motivate the

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<sup>119</sup> "Jews in Bavaria Demand Better Treatment for Jewish DP's," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Munich: JTA Jewish News Archive, May 22, 1953), 1.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> "Stand on Jewish DP camp Becomes Political Issue in Bavaria," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Munich: JTA Jewish News Archive, May 21, 1953), 1.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

camp inhabitants to resettle elsewhere.<sup>125</sup> While constant calls for Oberländer's removal echoed throughout Jewish meetings in Bavaria, he continued on his path to reduce spending and close the DP centers in Germany. In 1953, in an effort to cut costs, the German authorities announced that they would close the camp hospital, dismiss the majority of Föhrenwald's Jewish employees and proceeded with the dissolution of the camp police force, all of which went against the original agreement between the JDC and the German government concerning operations in Föhrenwald reached in 1951. According to a German official, the period of "magnanimity" with which the German government had been treating the Jews was coming to an end, and the Jewish DPs were terrified of the potential outcome of this threat.<sup>126</sup> With these propositions came an upsurge in hostilities, tensions, and fear between the Jewish Displaced Persons and their German overseers.

Although relations were strained after the 1952 attempted raid and the appointment of Dr. Oberländer, minor advancements had been made in resettling some of the hardest of Föhrenwald's "Hard Core" cases.<sup>127</sup> The JDC worked tirelessly to find a solution to bring about an end to the displacement of the remaining Föhrenwalders. They secured \$650,000 from the Claims Conference to help pay for the emigration of those DPs left in Germany, Italy, and Austria who were able to emigrate or for those who were forced to settle in the countries where they currently resided. The West German government agreed to provide an additional \$714,000 for these endeavors as "recognition of the harm done the Jewish people by the Nazis."<sup>128</sup> The JDC would pay travel expenses and a cash grant for incidentals associated with leaving Germany for those emigrating and would pay for furniture and short-term living expenses for those

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>127</sup> Jewish aid organizations as well as the press used the term Hardcore to denote the Jewish DPs in Föhrenwald who had been in the camps the longest and had the least chance of emigrating elsewhere.

<sup>128</sup> "J.D.C Close Refugee Camps in Germany, Austria and Italy," 1.



remaining in the country, but the JDC continued to face the actual problem of finding a place to resettle these Jews.<sup>129</sup>

A very limited number of countries accepted difficult cases. Norway and Sweden were the first countries, besides Israel, to agree to take a select number of hard-core DPs for emigration.<sup>130</sup> In 1952 both Norway and Sweden successfully resettled 70 hard-core cases, with 42 immigrating to Norway and 28 to Sweden.<sup>131</sup> Norway again sent a convoy to Föhrenwald on April 22, 1953. This time an eight-man mission arrived in the camp from Oslo to interview 120 DPs to determine the likelihood that they would be able to adapt to life in Norway. In the end, two small groups were selected for resettlement,<sup>132</sup> consisting of 47 post-TB patients and their families.<sup>133</sup> By February 1954, there were only 400 TB and infirm individuals left in Föhrenwald, which does not seem to be a large number. However, when taken into account that there were an additional 900 people who made up the families of the ill who would not leave them to resettle abroad, the JDC's task appears much more difficult.<sup>134</sup> The Norwegian government again sent a mission in 1955 to take an additional 100 Föhrenwalders who had expressed interest in settling in the country.<sup>135</sup> Sweden also agreed to take 25 TB cases and their 50 dependents.<sup>136</sup> The JDC worked with the Schweizer Europahilfe organization in Germany to ensure that the DPs with TB residing in the Gauting Sanatorium and Föhrenwald received the best possible care. Not only did this relationship with the Schweizer Europahilfe aid the sick

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<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> "Norwegian Mission Arrives in Germany to Select "hard core" DPs," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (New York: JTA- Jewish News Archive, April 22, 1953), 1.

<sup>131</sup> Moses Leavitt, "Report of the Executive Vice-Chairman to the Executive Committee Meeting," in *Germany, Displaced Persons, Camps, Foehrenwald* (New York: AJJDC, 1953), 1.

<sup>132</sup> Laub, "Letter to Mr. Sobeloff," 1.

<sup>133</sup> Moses Leavitt, "Report of the Executive Vice-Chairman to the Executive Committee Meeting," in *Germany, Displaced Persons, Camps, Foehrenwald* (New York: AJJDC, 1953), 1.

<sup>134</sup> Committee, "The Foehrenwald Story " 3.

<sup>135</sup> "Norwegian Delegation Arrives in Germany to Select Jewish DPs," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Munich: JTA- Jewish News Archive, May 4, 1955), 1.

<sup>136</sup> Leavitt, "Report of the Executive Vice-Chairman to the Executive Committee Meeting," 1.

DPs in Germany, but JDC workers hoped that their interactions with this Swiss organization would help them to one day convince Switzerland to resettle a portion of the ill or old-aged left in Germany.<sup>137</sup> Although the aforementioned foreign governments agreed to permit these DPs to settle in their countries, it was the responsibility of the JDC to see to their transportation and resettlement costs.

While these expenses were not too high within Europe, they were a bigger issue for South American countries such as Argentina and Brazil where the communities the Jewish DPs were being settled in were unable to assume the financial costs of their integration.<sup>138</sup> This became a matter of concern for the JDC in January 1954 when General Juan Peron issued a statement saying that Argentina would take 100 DP families from Föhrenwald.<sup>139</sup> With this declaration came the establishment of a schedule of grants for those who would eventually immigrate to Argentina.<sup>140</sup> Peron stated that these DPs would be able to emigrate in three months.<sup>141</sup> However, they still remained in Föhrenwald awaiting Peron's follow-through on his promise nearly a year later.<sup>142</sup> He sent a delegate to the camp in May, 1954, to select the individuals who would get visas, but this representative only ended up handing out 60 of the hundred, and these went mainly to DPs with agricultural experience who would eventually be settled outside of the major cities in the countryside.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> Only one Jewish DP chose to immigrate to Switzerland in the late 1950s. Charles Jordan, "Report by Schweiser Europahilfe concerning clarification of the OSE hospitalization project for TBC refugees in the camps Gauting and Foehrenwald," in *Germany, Dispalced Persons, Camps; Foehrenwald* (New York: AJJDC, 1953), 1.

<sup>138</sup> "J.D.C. Outlines Plans for Aid to Jews in Europe in 1955," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (New York: JTA Jewish News Archive, December 24, 1954), 1.

<sup>139</sup> "Peron Permits Jewish DPs from Germany to Settle in Argentina," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Buenos Aires: JTA Jewish News Archive, May 26, 1954), 1.

<sup>140</sup> "J.D.C. Outlines Plans for Aid to Jews in Europe in 1955," 1.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> "Peron Grants 100 Argentine Visas for Jewish DPs in Germany," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (New York: JTA- Jewish News Archive, January 17, 1955), 1.

<sup>143</sup> "Peron Permits Jewish DPs from Germany to Settle in Argentina," 1.

Even with the offers issued by Norway, Sweden, and Argentina, the JDC was still desperate to secure visas from countries that would take the remaining Föhrenwald DPs. The JDC was so anxious to meet the needs of the remaining long term Jewish residents that they issued a call asking more countries, especially those in South America, to help take at least 700 of Föhrenwald's remaining Jews.<sup>144</sup> Unfortunately for the DPs these calls seemed to fall on deaf ears and the number of Jews in Föhrenwald remained fairly steady until 1956 when resettlement programs worked to emigrate and integrate the remaining camp residents.

Despite all of the claims of the remaining Jewish Displaced Persons that they were ready to go anywhere as long as it meant they could leave Germany, many of them were unwilling to resettle in Israel or South America and were unprepared to leave Föhrenwald. Eighty-six percent of Föhrenwald's 1,000 plus residents admitted that they would not be ready to leave Germany by the proposed closing date in late 1955.<sup>145</sup> Additionally, they were disillusioned by the progress of the JDC's attempts at resettling them and felt as though they were under constant pressure from Germany because of German demands to close the camp quickly. However, 55% of those in the aforementioned 86% said they would only remain in Germany temporarily while awaiting their visas to other countries, mainly the United States and Canada. To ensure that these DPs would be able to leave, if in fact they received a visa, the Föhrenwald Camp Committee demanded that the German Government make cash immigration grants of \$475 available to any Jewish DP who might eventually emigrate at a later date.<sup>146</sup> While the West German government was initially unwilling to agree to these demands, they did make concessions by

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<sup>144</sup> "Last Camp for Jewish DPs in Germany to be Closed Next Year," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Munich: JTA-Jewish News Archive, March 12, 1954), 1; Samuel Jaffe, "Mass Movement Out of Camp Foehrenwald Announced by Overseas Director of AJDC," in *Camp Foehrenwald* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1956), 4.

<sup>145</sup> "86 Percent of Foehrenwald DPs Wish to Remain in Germany," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Munich: JTA-Jewish News Archive, May 26, 1954), 1; Stain, "Report from the Staatminister," in *StK* (Munich: BayHstA, 1955), 1.

<sup>146</sup> "Foehrenwald Jewish DPs Advance Demands on German Government," 2.

providing emigration grants to the DPs who had valid visas, and they worked with the JDC to help finance the Jews who would have to remain in Germany.

While it is clear that the JDC worked to resettle the Jewish DPs, many of the camps' inhabitants were disgruntled over the perceived lack of effort put forth by Joint social workers to secure visas and "adequate compensation" for the Jews who still remained in Germany. These DPs did not understand why their demands were not met immediately. According to Elyahu Goldfarb, the secretary of the TB Committee of Camp Föhrenwald, the JDC had provided care for the sick and their families until 1953 when Miss Palevsky arrived in the camp as the JDC representative. Goldfarb contended it was at this time that all of the applications for aid submitted by the "sufferers" in the camp began to be rejected and no cooperation between the camp inhabitants and JDC could be reached.<sup>147</sup> Relations between the JDC and the camp inhabitants began to really breakdown after the handover of control to the Germans in 1951, but matters only worsened as the 1950s progressed and camp life continued.<sup>148</sup> George Vida, a former American Jewish Army Chaplain described the situation by saying,

The relationship between these DPs and the officials of the American Joint Distribution Committee has gradually and increasingly deteriorated to the point where now they are fighting pitched battles. The officials of the AJDC have lost patience with these people and the people have lost every last ounce of confidence in the officials of the AJJDC.<sup>149</sup>

By 1954 most interactions between JDC officials and the camp inhabitants were colored by feelings of apprehension and distrust. The DPs often expressed feelings of fear when discussing their futures. Despite their best efforts to stop it, the camp would close, and they realized that for many of them the only choice left was integration into German society. Despite this knowledge, the DPs were not willing to give in without a fight. Feeling fearful about how they would

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<sup>147</sup> Elyahu Goldfarb, "An Open Letter to the Poet H. Levick," in *Germany, Displaced Persons, Camps: Föhrenwald* (New York: AJJDC, 1954), 2.

<sup>148</sup> Vida, "Letter to Dr. Emil Lehman," 1.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

survive among their “enemies,” many DPs tried to push the JDC to find the Föhrenwalders somewhere that they deemed suitable to resettle. In the meantime, the DPs wanted to build up their resources to ensure that they could get by when the camp closed, which led them to demand grants and funding from both the German government and the world Jewish organizations tasked with caring for them. These incessant demands led the JDC, the middleman between the DPs and almost all other aid organizations including the German government, to become weary of the camp residents. The Jewish DPs, were also unhappy with their interactions with the JDC and argued that the Joint was actively working to prevent them from receiving the compensation they felt they deserved while reducing the amount of their monetary supplements.

This was the case in January 1954 when the Föhrenwald Camp Committee requested a \$5,000,000 restitution and resettlement grant from the Claims Conference. This request was denied with an explanation from the Claims Conference attesting to the fact that the funds they had received from the West German government were for all of the Jews who had suffered under the Nazis, not just those who remained in Föhrenwald. The rejection letter continued on to say that the DPs in Föhrenwald received the most money out of any group who were given assistance by the Claims Conference and that a \$5,000,000 grant would be unfair to the rest of the survivors of the Shoah.<sup>150</sup> The Camp Committee had asked the JDC to intervene on their behalf only to hear the same response. This led Goldfarb and other members of the Camp Committee to claim that the JDC was actively blocking their restitution efforts, and relations between the Jewish DPs and the JDC started to deteriorate into shouting matches and threatened violence.<sup>151</sup>

Disillusioned with the JDC, the Camp Committee began to argue that there was no point in

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<sup>150</sup> Moses Beckelman, "Telephone Message from Moses W. Beckelman, Paris New York," in *Germany: localities: Munich 1945-1954* (New York: AJJDC, 1954), 1.

<sup>151</sup> "Monthly Report for Camp Föhrenwald: March," in *Germany: localities: Munich 1945-1954* (New York: AJJDC, 1954), 3.

working with the Jointfund, the branch of the JDC that processed the money issued by the Claims Conference. Instead they again approached the Claims Conference pleading their case for the requested \$5,000,000 grant, but again it was rejected. The second rejection motivated a small group of Föhrenwalders to demand that the JDC close its Jointfund office in the camp on Friday February 12, as, they argued, it was obviously unnecessary and failed to do its job.<sup>152</sup> The Jointfund staff heeded the Föhrenwalders' call and withdrew from the camp. The situation deteriorated quickly, and within a matter of days the Camp Committee and JDC were embroiled in a shouting match that would soon turn violent.

The following weekend the Camp Committee called a mass meeting of all inhabitants to discuss the state of affairs in the center. Outraged over the rejected grant proposal and frustrated over rationing changes in the camp, the residents of Föhrenwald demanded immediate action.<sup>153</sup> Rumors soon spread throughout the camp, reaching as far as James Rice, the JDC director in Germany, claiming that buses had been hired to take 700 camp residents into Munich to occupy JDC headquarters. Rice argued that interfering with the JDC offices in Föhrenwald was a local matter, and one that happened quiet regularly. However, the invasion of the JDC offices in Munich was intolerable and would not be permitted. Instead Rice notified the German police of the impending convergence of the Föhrenwald DPs asking them to prevent the demonstrators from entering the Joint offices while protecting the JDC workers.<sup>154</sup> Nothing developed at the beginning of the week, but members of the Camp Committee did call Moses Beckelman, the Director General of Overseas Operations for the JDC, in Paris, on Tuesday February 16, 1954, alleging that they would not be able to control the camp population and that Beckelman was

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<sup>152</sup> Beckelman, "Telephone Message from Moses W. Beckelman, Paris New York," 1.

<sup>153</sup> "Demonstrationen in Möhlstraßenviertel," *Münchner Merkur*, February 18 1954, 1.

<sup>154</sup> "Monthly Report: Foehrenwald," in *Germany, Displaced Persons, Camps: Foehrenwald, July-December 1954* (New York: AJJDC, 1954), 3.

needed in Germany immediately.<sup>155</sup> He indicated that it was impossible for him to come right away, but he proposed that he would schedule a visit for the following week if the Camp Committee agreed to meet with Rice to discuss their demands. Beckelman continued on to note that the current demands and complaints of the camp residents were exaggerated, but that that need not deter them from meeting with Rice to voice their grievances.<sup>156</sup> Beckelman said that the Camp Committee “could count on fair sympathetic treatment from Jointfund Munich.”<sup>157</sup> He strongly urged the Camp Committee members to attend the regularly scheduled Jointfund meeting that afternoon and reminded them that the JDC was there to help. Beckelman warned that any rash action on the part of the Föhrenwalders would be strongly frowned upon. The Committee refused to agree, ending their conversation by stating that the “situation [was] out of their hands.”<sup>158</sup>

The camp inhabitants’ dissatisfaction with the JDC boiled over the next morning, February 17, 1954, resulting in the arrival in Munich of several hired buses carrying over 200 demonstrators from Föhrenwald. These DPs set out to occupy the JDC offices and prevent its employees from working until their demands were met. The camp inhabitants had decided they had had enough with talk and that the only option left was action. The ensuing riot and the discussions that followed illustrate the Jewish DPs’ continued belief in their own autonomy and their abilities to see their demands met. The general sense of entitlement shared by the remaining DPs led the organizers of the demonstration to make outlandish demands of the JDC and resulted in days of aggressive discussions, occupation of Jewish aid offices, and overall unrest.

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<sup>155</sup> Beckelman, "Telephone Message from Moses W. Beckelman, Paris New York," 1.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

Hoping to pressure the JDC and the organizations with whom they worked into giving in to their demands, the DPs rushed the JDC buildings only to meet 250 riot police who had been waiting in readiness with water cannons for the demonstrators since the beginning of the week when Rice had contacted them.<sup>159</sup> The streets surrounding the JDC offices were closed in anticipation of the sit-in. The police were armed with clubs and they acted as instructed by preventing the demonstrating DPs from entering the JDC buildings.<sup>160</sup> However, the presence of the police officers shocked many of the DPs and a sense of hysteria permeated the crowd. In the ensuing clashes, several DPs were wounded, and three needed hospitalization.<sup>161</sup>

Many of the DPs, including the Action and Camp Committee representatives, swelled into the street and neighboring buildings, first occupying the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) offices located 100 yards from the JDC and later those held by the *Obshestvo Remeslenofo zemledelcheskofo Truda* (ORT). At the time HIAS had 12 employees in the offices, mainly women, who could not disperse the crowd without police intervention, a measure that HIAS was unwilling to employ. The DPs occupying the HIAS offices and telephones called Jacob Pat of the Jewish Labor Committee in New York, Moses Beckelman in Paris, and several other leading Jews around the world. Unable to physically stop or expel the DPs who had invaded HIAS, the staff there waited for the return of Jerry Kolieb, the HIAS director in Germany, who appealed to the demonstrators to leave. The 30 DPs departed making their way upstairs into the ORT offices.

Just as had been the case in 1952, the Jewish Camp Committee was quick to reach out to their “supporters” worldwide, and by the morning of the 18th Goldfarb had already notified the

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<sup>159</sup> Beckelman, "Statement by Moses Beckelman," in *Germany: localities: Munich 1945-1954* (New York: AJJDC, 1954), 2.

<sup>160</sup> Arthur T. Dr. Jacobs, "Munich- Fohrenwald (Report on the Möhlstraße Demonstration)," in *Germany: localities: Munich 1945-1954* (New York: AJJDC, 1954), 1.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*



Bundist presses that Jacob Pat had assured him that the Jewish Labor Committee would come out on the side of the demonstrators against the JDC.<sup>162</sup> While the Camp Committee was in contact with their supporters, the JDC was reaching out to these same individuals in the hopes of convincing them to intervene and help quell the hysteria spreading among the Föhrenwalders.<sup>163</sup> An ocean away, Jacob Pat worked to try to figure out what was actually happening on Möhlstraße. Goldfarb informed him on the 17th that “blood ran in the streets of Munich.”<sup>164</sup> He also told Pat that 65 people were injured, 15 of them seriously wounded. Assuring Goldfarb that he would get to the bottom of the matter, Pat contacted Morris Laub who told him that there was nothing to clarify. Laub stated that he was fully in support of the actions taken by the JDC offices in Paris and Munich. He argued that if the Camp Committee had not incited a riot, there would have been no injuries. Beckelman stated that DP claims of Jointfund reductions of the welfare stipends received in Föhrenwald were categorically false. Instead, he argued that the problem was that the “Foehrenwald residents and Committees mistakenly envisage extravagant amounts of money for socially unsound and impracticable schemes.”<sup>165</sup> Laub believed that it was the DPs’ hopes of receiving impossible amounts of money that led them to act irrationally. He urged Pat to issue a strong clear message to the Jewish Labor Committee offices in Munich and Paris “disavowing the tactics now being pursued” by the DPs.<sup>166</sup> Laub noted that Pat was distressed over the events in Munich and that members of the Jewish Labor Committee were

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<sup>162</sup> The Yiddish press and radio ran editorials about the demonstration on the 17<sup>th</sup>, but almost nothing was heard about the protest on the 18. None of the English presses, except the Times, carried any reports on the clashes in Munich. Moses Beckelman, "Incoming Cable From Paris, PSX457 ZP Paris 65 17 " in *Germany: localities: Munich 1945-1954* (AJJDC: New York, 1954), 1.

<sup>163</sup> Morris Laub, "Let. #412," in *Germany: localities: Munich 1945-1954* (New York: AJJDC, 1954), 1.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid.

<sup>165</sup> Moses Beckelman, "Incoming Cable from Paris, NA005 160/156 PD INTL FR ZP EL PARIS " in *Germany: localities: Munich 1945-1954* (New York: AJJDC, 1954), 1.

<sup>166</sup> Laub, "Let. #412," 1.

“contrite in their tone.” Despite this, Laub hoped that they would be able to help sooth the feelings of the DPs.

Simultaneously, the remaining Jewish protestors spread throughout the city, the majority making their way to the Möhlstraße Synagogue seeking sanctuary, but not ready to depart downtown Munich.<sup>167</sup> More than 100 demonstrators remained in the synagogue overnight despite police objections, demanding that Moses Beckelman come to Munich to resolve the DPs’ grievances.<sup>168</sup> While not occupied, the JDC offices were under siege. Police surrounded the JDC buildings for two days, and one of the JDC buildings was occupied by 75 hidden police protecting the staff manning phones as the demonstration unfolded around them.

Outraged over the use of “SS troops” and the fact that the JDC would not give in to their demands, the Camp Committee asked to meet with Mr. Lewinski, a HIAS official, and Dr. Jacobs, the Executive Director of HIAS, to discuss their complaints and demands while telling their story.<sup>169</sup> Jacobs and Lewinski spoke with Rice and Kohane at the JDC who agreed to the meeting, hoping it might help settle the situation.<sup>170</sup> Lewinski and Jacobs then spent nearly four and a half hours in the HIAS offices meeting with the Camp Committee listening to their demands. These included the continuation of the JDC’s supplementary relief of 30 DM or \$6.50 a month despite the fact that they were receiving immigration grants and restitution from the German government. They claimed that the funds from the German government were, “‘blood money’ to indemnify them from TB and other diseases they contracted in German concentration camps,” while the money from the JDC would be used to help them become self-sufficient in the

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<sup>167</sup> Dr. Jacobs, "Munich- Foehrenwald " 1.

<sup>168</sup> Moses Beckelman, "Incoming Cable from Paris, NA129 134/131 1/50 PD INTL FR N ZP WUX PARIS," in *Germany: localities: Munich 1945-1954* (AJJDC New York, 1954), 1.

<sup>169</sup> Dr. Jacobs, "Munich- Foehrenwald " 2.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

countries to which they hoped to emigrate.<sup>171</sup> The Camp Committee argued that the JDC was given \$3,000,000 by the Claims Conference and a further \$320,000 from the Ford Foundation for just this purpose but chose to withhold the money from the DPs. They argued that they had been in touch with all of the leading figures of World Jewry including Adolph Held, Jacob Pat, and the top officials of the World Jewish Congress and the American Jewish committee, who informed them that the \$3,000,000 was earmarked for use by the remaining DPs in Germany.<sup>172</sup> In order to prevent the loss of the JDC supplementary relief, the Camp Committee had advised the center's residents to ignore the JDC forms sent out to determine the correct amount of relief that each household should receive, which was adjusted according to the amount they received from the German government. However, this plan was not working quite as they had hoped as the JDC decided to withhold all relief to any family who failed to submit their form.

The Camp representatives told Jacobs and Lawinski that the arrival of Mary Palevsky, the director of the JDC's Department of Social Services, had brought with it several changes they did not approve of, including the dissolution of the Camp Committee that had met regularly with the JDC Social Services Department to determine relief for camp inhabitants. They were also very unhappy about the appointment of James Rice as the new country director because he did not speak Yiddish or German and this made communication difficult. Additionally, they argued that Rice had no real authority and that all requests had to be approved by Moses Beckelman. The Camp Committee demanded to deal only with him in the future when they absolutely had to speak with a JDC representative. They noted that they hoped that these future interactions would be infrequent because they held Beckelman personally responsible for having sent "German police to attack a peaceable demonstration of sick hard-core Jewish persons." "The Jewish

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<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

blood which flowed in the streets of Munich' was shed on Beckelman's responsibility," they stated.<sup>173</sup> This led the Camp Committee to their final demand that all future relief should be removed from JDC hands and instead administered through the Jewish communities in Germany. They argued that their emigration should be handled solely by HIAS and that the JDC needed to leave Germany permanently.<sup>174</sup>

Lewinski and Jacobs pleaded with the camp representatives to speak with Rice. Lewinski tried to explain the Jewish situation around the world including Israel so that the DPs could better understand why more money was not forthcoming. Jacobs felt that five of the six members of the Committee were convinced by their remarks, but that Goldfarb kept preventing the Committee from accepting their suggestions. Jacobs described Goldfarb as easily excitable, quickly becoming hysterical. Fearing the occupation of their office again, Jacobs decided to close up before the 30 Committee members housed upstairs and their Föhrenwald supporters could take over.

The demonstrations and street scuffles continued the following day, but police presence around the JDC offices was much smaller.<sup>175</sup> Incensed meetings continued to take place on February 18 in the Möhlstraße synagogue without police intervention.<sup>176</sup> In the end, four people were arrested for their violent involvement in the demonstration, but the majority of them were released shortly afterwards.<sup>177</sup> The HIAS employees decided that returning to their offices on the 18th would only invite further trouble from the demonstrators and instead they worked from the Haus der Kunst and the Bayerischer Hof Hotel where they remained until 3:00 PM, when

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<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> Moses Beckelman, "Incoming Cable," 1.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

<sup>177</sup> Dr. Seiß, "Einsatz der Schutzmannschaft anlässlich der Demonstration staatenloser jüdische Mitbürger am 17. und 18.2.54 in der Sieberstraße (Police Report)," in *Pol. dir. München* (Munich: Stadtarchiv München, 1954), 2-3.

they received notice that it was safe to return to their office and resume work.<sup>178</sup> After two days of fighting, the demonstration finally came to an end.

Although the JDC had moved to protect themselves against the DPs, it does not mean that they were not involved in the events occurring on February 17 and 18. Beckelman described the demonstration in a statement, saying,

The attempted forcible entry and occupation of 200 residents of camp Foehrenwald of the Munich offices of the American Joint Distribution Committee, reflects a desperate and exasperated action on the part of a group of unfortunates whose efforts to leave Germany have been thwarted again and again by circumstances outside their or our control.<sup>179</sup>

The JDC, as well as international organizations, local bodies, and governmental authorities, worked around the clock to try to find a permanent solution to close Camp Föhrenwald.

Unfortunately, the JDC could not force a solution that did not exist.

Instead they kept working to resettle the DPs left in the center both abroad and in Germany.

Beckelman explained in his statement that the JDC was more than willing to meet with organized committees for orderly discussions, but could not permit the disruptions and occupation attempted by the DPs.<sup>180</sup>

The JDC executive staff hoped to end the turmoil in Munich but was unwilling to submit to the demands of the Jewish DPs. The primary demand made of the JDC was that Beckelman come immediately to Germany. Viewing his acquiescence as a “fatal” error for future DP-JDC relations, Beckelman proposed that he remain abroad until calm was restored in Munich. Once James Rice instructed Beckelman that tensions had settled, Beckelman would come and meet with the Camp Committee. Until then it was up to Rice to subdue the tumult in Munich.

To this end, Rice called a meeting with the support of the Landesverband to end the demonstration against the JDC by the Föhrenwald residents. Mr. Hellman of the Landesverband

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<sup>178</sup> Dr. Jacobs, "Munich- Foehrenwald " 1.

<sup>179</sup> Beckelman, "Statement by Moses Beckelman," 1.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., 2.

had been in contact with Rice throughout the afternoon of February 18, and had expressed his concern for the Jews of Munich who were affected by the demonstration although they were not involved.<sup>181</sup> The JDC staff in Munich was notified late that evening that the meeting had been arranged for ten o'clock PM. The meeting time was so late because it had taken most of the day to track down the scattered members of the Camp Committee. The meeting did not actually start until 11:00 and finally ended at 2:30 AM. Mr. Elkes, Mr. Goldfarb, and Mr. Cohen represented the Camp Committee. Mr. Goldstein of the TB Committee and Mr. Kassler of the Action Committee were also allowed to attend as long as they "behaved."<sup>182</sup>

The assembled DPs were immediately told that Beckelman would come to Munich to meet with the Committee on Wednesday, February 24, if they stopped the demonstration right away. Believing that they held the power in the negotiations, the three Committee members left the room to discuss the matter, returning after an hour with a statement rejecting Rice's offer. Rice noted that it was clear that Goldfarb was in charge of the Committee, and that he was the main obstacle to calming the aggression of the Föhrenwalders.<sup>183</sup> Marian Gide had reported earlier that day that Goldfarb had threatened him with violence.<sup>184</sup> Gide urged Beckelman to contact Jacob Pat and Adolph Held in the hope that they might be able to convince Goldfarb to be reasonable because he continued to incite the demonstrators.<sup>185</sup> This was clear in the Committee's statement that demanded that Beckelman arrive no later than Monday and their threat that the demonstration would continue until he reached Munich. The proclamation continued on to denounce the "JDC for having called the police, placing the guilt for what had

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<sup>181</sup> James P. Rice, "Meeting with Camp Committee at Landesverband," in *Germany: localities: Munich 1945-1954* (New York: AJJDC, 1954), 1.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

<sup>183</sup> Beckelman, "Incoming Cable from Paris," 1.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

happened to the Jewish camp residents, sick, aged and innocent people, on the JDC.”<sup>186</sup> It appeared that the meeting had reached an impasse. Thoroughly distressed by this rejection, the Landesverband members tried to pressure the Camp Committee into agreeing to the JDC’s proposal. Instead Goldfarb claimed “Innocent Jewish men and women were pushed around and injured by German police in front of the JDC building in Munich, and that the staff looked out of the window and laughed at what was happening.”<sup>187</sup> Rice intervened, stating that the JDC regretted that their proposal that satisfied the number one request of the Committee was unacceptable. He noted in his report that he did not even acknowledge Goldfarb’s false and malicious accusations against the JDC Munich staff and the deputy of the Joint as that would only have led the participants to deviate from the meeting’s purpose.

Rice made the only proposition that the JDC felt remained available: Moving the JDC offices from Munich. He reiterated Haber’s statements from 1952 explaining that Joint staff would not work under siege. The demonstration could not continue indefinitely, just as the JDC offices could not remain under police protection until Föhrenwald closed. Rice explained that the choice of Munich as the location for JDC headquarters had originally been made because of the organization’s desire to work with the Föhrenwald residents. However, the JDC did not work exclusively for or with the DPs and helped communities throughout all of Germany. If it became impossible to work with the Föhrenwalders, as the recent actions of the DPs had proven, the JDC would have no choice but to move its headquarters.<sup>188</sup> After hours of debate the Camp Committee agreed to call a mass meeting of all of the camp residents the following day, asking the people if they wanted to call an end to the demonstration and wait for Beckelman to arrive on

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<sup>186</sup> Rice, "Meeting with Camp Committee at Landesverband," 2.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid., 3.

Wednesday. Rice noted that the participants left feeling fairly optimistic that the matter would be resolved the following day.

Although there was some dissention among the DPs about how best to proceed, the demonstration was finally called off with the assurance that the Camp Committee would come to Munich to discuss the matter with JDC officials. Late Friday evening the DPs who had taken shelter in the Möhlstraße synagogue departed and the Joint was able to dismiss the uniformed police protecting the JDC buildings.<sup>189</sup> This of course was only a temporary reprieve while everyone awaited the arrival of Beckelman. If the discussions failed, the demonstration would resume on a much larger scale and would involve the use of Föhrenwald's school children, threatened the Camp Committee.<sup>190</sup> The Camp Committee claimed that they would ruin the Joint by slandering it in the press if their demands were not met.<sup>191</sup>

The JDC received a list of demands before the actual meeting between the Camp Committee and Beckelman. These demands were very similar to those stated at the meeting between the Camp Committee and HIAS, with a few additions and amendments. Paramount among these was the universalization of cash relief grants with an increase in the amounts without any reference to actual need. The Camp Committee also demanded that the Welfare Committee in the camp should have the final say on the amounts of all grants, that the JDC Social Services team, under the direction of Mary Palevsky, should have nothing to do with any of the welfare problems in the camp, and that all of the future demands of the camp should go through the Kultusgemeinde because the Camp Committee no longer wanted to work with the JDC in Munich. Finally, the Camp Committee demanded that they approve all future

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<sup>189</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>190</sup> "Monthly Report for Camp Foehrenwald: March," 8.

<sup>191</sup> JDC Paris, "Incoming Cable From Paris, PSI641 ZP WUX Paris 347/341 1/50 22 1011," in *Germany, Displaced Persons, Camps: Foehrenwald, July- December 1954* (New York: AJJDC, 1954), 1.



instructions issued by the JDC pertaining to the camp population.<sup>192</sup> Beckelman hoped to reach a modus vivendi, but he believed that the aforementioned demands were “incompatible” with the responsibilities of the JDC offices in Germany. He acknowledged that he would do his best to reach some kind of an agreement with the Camp Committee, but that he believed that a true breakthrough would not occur for several days or even a couple of weeks. Once some kind of an agreement was reached, Beckelman declared that he intended to close the Munich JDC offices and move them to the Frankfurt emigration offices where the JDC would work on an emergency basis. He said, “it is impossible to deal with the instigators of the demonstration, who flatly said they want casualties.”<sup>193</sup>

Even though the JDC had begun to physically distance themselves from the DPs in Föhrenwald, they still worked to emigrate them abroad and close the camp. When discussing the task lying before the JDC in the wake of the demonstration, one Joint official described the Föhrenwalders by saying,

The majority of the inhabitants [of Föhrenwald] have not led normal, productive lives for at least ten years and more. There are grown up men and women in the camp who never did a day's work in their lives, in many cases because of circumstances beyond their control. They are a people who have spent a decade living on welfare assistance, leading a life without planning, without aims and ambitions, without hope for a better future.<sup>194</sup>

He continued on to note that the only solution that the JDC could see was,

To settle them elsewhere in normal communities, either in other countries, or within the German economy, is the greatest possible good we could do them. It is sad to record that many now in the camp fail to realize this. The life in the camp has become such a natural one for them that they refuse to cooperate with either JDC or the German Authorities in moves made toward the closing of Föhrenwald. They make impossible demands, they refuse to listen to reason. And JDC must, because it wishes to help them, be firm with them at times- a firmness that some of these people look upon as harshness.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> "Monthly Report for Camp Foehrenwald: March," 3.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

<sup>194</sup> Committee, "The Foehrenwald Story " 8.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

Despite all of the conflict associated with working with the Föhrenwald population, the JDC continued to struggle to see to their eventual resettlement outside of the camp. The Camp Committee informed Beckelman that they were just as eager to close the camp as the JDC and that they needed a substantial lump sum payment for each individual in the camp in order to achieve this goal. The Camp Committee stated that they would reduce the sum from the previously demanded \$5,000,000 to \$2,000,000.<sup>196</sup> They argued that they had support from the Jewish Labor Committee, the World Jewish Congress, and several other organizations who were members of the Claim Conference, which they claimed illustrated that most of the parties involved in determining who should get grant funding backed their demands for a substantial sum of money.<sup>197</sup> Dr. Schwartz, the European Director of the JDC, explained this position by saying that the DPs in Föhrenwald incorrectly believed that the money the Claims Conference had received as indemnification from Germany was solely for their use. The Föhrenwalders' claims that the aforementioned organizations supported this argument, and their belief that it was the JDC that stood in their way, led them to demonstrate in Munich in an effort to pressure the JDC into yielding. Dr. Schwartz believed that this action was unconscionable and he threatened to not only remove the JDC offices from Munich, but from Germany. He argued that the Joint could still provide Germany with the assistance they needed from Paris.<sup>198</sup>

On February 24 and 25, Beckelman finally met with representatives of Camp Föhrenwald to discuss the DPs' demands and see if some kind of a mutual agreement could be reached between the two parties. The DPs agreed to refrain from further violent actions in exchange for the JDC's promise to ignore all restitution and indemnification payments when determining a

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<sup>196</sup> Paris, "Incoming Cable from Paris," 1.

<sup>197</sup> "Monthly Report for Camp Foehrenwald: March," 4; *ibid.*

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

DP's eligibility for JDC supplemental funding.<sup>199</sup> While Beckelman agreed that this could be arranged, he noted that the DPs would not receive the amounts that they requested. As to the other demands, Beckelman finally convinced the Camp Committee that many of these were "unrealistic requests," and after hours of discussion the Committee dropped them.<sup>200</sup> However, they did insist that the camp's Welfare Committee be reestablished to help the JDC allocate relief to the camp's inhabitants. To this demand Beckelman responded that he agreed with the Jointfund position that they needed to work without the cooperation of the Refuge Welfare Committee.<sup>201</sup> This led the Camp Committee to declare itself unable to continue negotiations. Matters were not helped when the DPs learned that the JDC was referring to many of the camp residents as "a gang of criminals, underworld people, knife-wielders" and stated "that these people have come to stage a hold up."<sup>202</sup> However, the JDC continued to meet with camp representatives and work toward creating an amicable relationship.

JDC representatives were still working to find a solution that would satisfy the camp residents in Föhrenwald in early March 1954. Finally, on March 9, 1954, the Joint was able to reach an agreement with the Camp Committee. The terms of this agreement dictated that the Camp Committee would not stage another demonstration and that the Joint would reopen its liaison office and resume medical care in the camp.<sup>203</sup> Despite this agreement, not all parties were satisfied and negotiations continued throughout the course of March. In a letter to Laub, Charles Jordan noted that the camp population still held out for Claims Conference funding as

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<sup>199</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>201</sup> Moses Beckelman, "Incoming Cable From Munich," in *Germany: localities: Munich 1945-1954* (New York: AJJDC, 1954), 1.

<sup>202</sup> Goldfarb, "An Open Letter to the Poet H. Levick," 1.

<sup>203</sup> "J.D.C Reaches Agreement with the Jewish Dp's: Bars Demonstrations," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (New York: JTA- Jewish News Archive, March 9, 1954), 1.

their incentive to finally leave the center.<sup>204</sup> He continued on to argue the DPs were “too comfortable where they are and that the Germans will have to blast them out of the place [Föhrenwald] since no amount of coaxing would do any good.”<sup>205</sup> Instead of conceding to the camp residents’ demands for emigration grants to help them move, Jordan suggested that he would make it clear to the Camp Committee that the JDC was only willing to provide funds to the DPs after they left the camp. He said that he would present the proposal to the camp on March 19. Jordan was confident that he could explain the JDC’s position to the camp in such a way as to make them understand that there would be no future bargaining or negotiating over the matter.<sup>206</sup> Jordan suggested that the Joint contact the press prior to meeting with the Camp Committee in order to get the JDC’s proposal out to World Jewry before the camp population could slander it. He said that in so doing this, the JDC could “spell out, in great detail what we are prepared to do for the people after they left camp.”<sup>207</sup> This then

would show us in such a generous, such a fair, such a just position that it would undoubtedly be endorsed by all fair-minded people whose opinion is of any concern to us, and would completely cut the ground from under the Foehrenwald crowd if they would not accept the proposal or not get moving, or squawk or do worse.<sup>208</sup>

Despite all of the trouble and grief associated with aiding the DPs expressed by the staff of the JDC, they continued to work toward closing the camp. Their efforts over the course of 1952 and 1953 had resulted in the resettlement of 250 of Föhrenwald’s DPs including 17 patients diagnosed as chronically ill with diseases other than TB who were sent to Israel and the U.S.<sup>209</sup> The knowledge that the JDC had already resettled some of the hardest cases in Föhrenwald helped the Joint’s employees to continue with their nearly impossible task and encouraged the

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<sup>204</sup> Charles Jordan, "Letter to Laub," in *Germany, Displaced Persons, Camps: Foehrenwald, July - December 1954* (New York: AJJDC, 1954), 1.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid.

<sup>209</sup> Committee, "The Foehrenwald Story " 1.

DPs to persist in their policy of foreign emigration as the only possible solution to ending life in Föhrenwald. The relations between the two parties returned to their pre-demonstration strained, but functional status. The threat to close the JDC offices in Munich came to naught and while the number of employees in the office was reduced, the office itself was not officially closed until 1957. All former offices in the camp were combined into one office located in Munich. One exception was made for “direct services” such as medical aid, consultation by social workers, and emigration registration, which would be conducted in the camp by liaisons who would regularly visit the center.<sup>210</sup> As the actual closing date for Föhrenwald neared, and it became clear to everyone that the last remaining DP camp would soon cease to exist, the JDC started to move its offices to Frankfurt to be closer to the other Jewish aid organizations as well as the Central Council of Jews in Germany. However, the JDC staff in Germany continued to work for the eventual resettlement of all of Föhrenwald’s Jews in adequate housing with welfare services for those who needed it, and emigration and integration grants for all.

By the beginning of 1955, the calls to close the camp were becoming more insistent. The events of the years since the creation of the State of Israel and the German takeover of the control of the DPs were filled with conflict, aggression, and depression. The DPs were dissatisfied with the efforts made by the organizations working to care for and control them and the demands made by these displaced Jews had led to feelings of resentment and anger from all of the parties working on their behalf. The 1952 raid on the camp had led to the shattering of any sense of security held by the DPs when dealing with German authorities. The trial that followed it had convinced them that there would be no true justice for the crimes committed against them and that they were at the mercy of their enemies. The use of German police against them by the JDC in the 1954 demonstration led the DPs to distrust the Joint and left them with

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<sup>210</sup> "Monthly Report for Camp Foehrenwald: March," 1.

feelings of hatred for the one organization that had worked tirelessly for their wellbeing. Despite these feelings, the Jewish DPs had no choice but to remain in Föhrenwald until these organizations could arrange a future outside of the camp for them. Unbeknownst to the displaced Jews, this future was not as far off as many of them hoped or believed. The long and drawn-out closing of Föhrenwald, while still two years away, would take on a new urgency in 1955 resulting in increased pressure to find homes for the DPs. However, as difficult as resettlement had been for the DPs since 1945, the last phase presented the remaining displaced Jews, the JDC, and HIAS with an almost impossible task because the last Jews fell into three problematic groups: illegal returners, the ill and infirm, and the last of Germany's DP orthodox community. While the end of camp life was rapidly approaching the remaining Jewish DPs continued to hold to their beliefs in their own autonomy and entitlement and hoped that these would allow for their eventual resettlement away from Germany in a country that they deemed suitable.

VIII.  
FAREWELL TO FÖHRENWALD:  
THE CLOSING OF THE LAST JEWISH-ONLY CAMP IN GERMANY

Föhrenwald is a corrupt and outlaw society. Its method of getting what it wants is organized blackmail.<sup>1</sup>

By 1953 the remaining Jewish DPs in Germany were consolidated in Föhrenwald bringing the population to more than 2,000. It was during this year that the West German government began to seriously discuss the closure of Föhrenwald. They hoped to transform the camp into a training facility for the Federal Border Guard.<sup>2</sup> However, the numerous authorities involved in the care and control of the Jews of Föhrenwald continued to fail to close the camp over the course of the next four years. The influx of an estimated 800 illegal Jewish returners into Föhrenwald between 1949 and 1953, combined with the existing Tubercular community, and the orthodox Jews in the center, made closing the camp a monumental task. Despite the fact that this final group of DPs was so difficult to place abroad, the Federal Republic, Jewish aid organizations, and the displaced Jews in Föhrenwald themselves worked to ensure that the remaining Jewish DPs were able to resettle under the best possible terms. Additionally, the West German government did not push the Jews in the camps to leave against their will or force them into another center until housing or emigration opportunities became available. Instead, they continued to allow the Jewish DPs the separate space they needed to feel safe, autonomous, and protected in Germany. This led to the continuation of Jewish DP camp life, and in many cases contributed to the deterioration of German-Jewish relations. However, it also allowed the displaced Jews in Germany to continue their shtetl life until they were able to settle outside of

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<sup>1</sup> Ronald Webster, "American Relief and Jews in Germany, 1945-1960," *Leo Baeck Institute* 38, no. 1 (1993): 315.

<sup>2</sup> Angelika Königseder and Juliane Wetzel, *Waiting for Hope: Jewish Displaced Persons in Post- World War II Germany* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2001). 163.

the Jewish centers. The West German government worked with the Jewish agencies and the DPs to come up with a viable solution, and eventually resettled every last DP.

### **Illegal Chozrim: Jewish Returners to Germany**

Surely all of these stories of German anti-Semitism, extermination, and persecution must have been exaggerated. Look how the Jews are returning. Not just German Jews, but DP's who have suffered the most. Not just from other countries, but also from the one place of which they have dreamed for 2,000 years, etc, etc. They are returning to the so-called cursed land of Germany.<sup>3</sup>

1948 marked a period of change for Jewish survivors living both within Germany and abroad. The UN decision in 1947 to partition Palestine into a Jewish and Palestinian state had sparked hope among the more than two hundred thousand Jewish Displaced Persons waiting to be resettled away from the "accursed" soil of Europe. For many of these DPs who were too sick or elderly to qualify for visas elsewhere, the creation of the state of Israel in 1948 would afford their only chance at leaving the camps and building their lives anew. The declaration of the Jewish state of Israel symbolized an end to Jewish wandering for these DPs who had spent three years waiting in limbo for their emigration. The gradual handover of control from the American Occupation forces to the West German government, started in 1948, also signified to these DPs the coming change in their administration, care, and control.<sup>4</sup> This led many Jews, as well as the Jewish organizations working with them in Germany, to push for their immediate emigration and resettlement in Israel. Over the course of the first seven years of its existence, Israel took in an estimated 100,000 Jewish Displaced Persons, and while immediate emigration was not a possibility for many DPs until the early 1950s, hope remained for those waiting with their suitcases packed, ready to emigrate.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Leonard Seidenman, "Field Trip to Germany concerning Camp Foehrenwald," in *45/54 Germany, Displaced Persons, Camps: Foehrenwald, 1945-1953* (New York: AJJDC, 1952), 19.

<sup>4</sup> Jordon, "The Story of Föhrenwald," in *Legal records* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1957), 2.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.



Interestingly, within a year of the declaration of the state of Israel, a new wave of “infiltrates” began to trickle into Germany and resettle in the American-run Displaced Persons camps, mainly Föhrenwald.<sup>6</sup> These individuals left their new homeland to cross illegally into Germany and resettle in the remaining Displaced Persons camps. This drastic move illustrated a general sense of dissatisfaction with their new lives in Israel, North and South America, and the Soviet zone.<sup>7</sup> Unlike the hundreds of Soviet Jews, motivated by increased anti-Semitism and the rise in east-west aggression who were quickly resettled in South America or integrated into west German society, the majority of the Israeli returner population resettled illegally in camp Föhrenwald, living there for years while awaiting new visas.<sup>8</sup>

The first Israeli illegal returners arrived in Germany on passports marked invalid for travel in Germany; but they entered the country with visas legally acquired at embassies in Rome and Paris. They cited several reasons for leaving Israel including the climate, ill health, separation from family members, and their inability to adapt to the “pioneer” lifestyle.<sup>9</sup> Those with chronic illnesses cited a lack of Israeli facilities capable of caring for their medical disorders as their excuse for returning to Germany.<sup>10</sup> The Israeli returners argued that they had come back to Europe to find what they could not get in Israel: permanent settlement, medical care, viable business opportunities, and a chance to emigrate. They claimed that they would have a better chance of prospering elsewhere. The illegal returners believed that the only path available for their emigration included a stopover in Germany where a chance existed to secure visas to the

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<sup>6</sup> The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, "The Foehrenwald Story " in *JDC AR 45/54 #327 Germany, Displaced Persons camps: Foehrenwald, Jan-Jun 1954* (New York: AJJDC, 1954), 1.

<sup>7</sup> While these illegal returners occasionally arrived in Germany via Eastern Europe, their numbers were predominantly made up of “Israeli” Jews. This is the core group that I will examine in this section.

<sup>8</sup> Both Canada and Brazil offered to take immigrants who were properly sponsored, including those who had lived in Israel, but in the end their visas were slow in coming and were very limited.

<sup>9</sup> Committee, "The Foehrenwald Story " 1.

<sup>10</sup> Meron Mendel, "The Policy for the Past in West Germany and Israel: The Case of Jewish Remigration," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* January(2004): 306.

United States and Canada.<sup>11</sup> The prospect of restitution also drew a significant number of returners back to Germany. The compensation negotiations between the Adenauer and Ben-Gurion governments in 1952 had made it easier for those seeking restitution to secure these funds if they were present in Germany.<sup>12</sup> The reparations laws of 1953 and 1956, as well as the restitution laws of 1957, made it still easier to reclaim “aryanized” property and to qualify for compensation for Jews residing in the country.<sup>13</sup>

Many aid workers argued that it was none of the abovementioned reasons that brought these illegal returners back to Germany, but rather their inability to build their lives anew after the war. According to George Vida, an American Chaplain in Munich, there were returners who had been resettled in five different countries who came back to Germany in search of a way to secure a new life. This was the case with a group of illegal returners who had registered for emigration to Brazil in 1949. Within six weeks of their resettlement they took to the streets of Sao Paulo protesting for their immediate remigration to Israel. Unable to integrate into Brazilian society, these returners wanted to go back to the Jewish state in the hope of having a better experience the second time.<sup>14</sup> Vida noted that it was not in fact a new beginning that these Jews needed but instead a new soul because these individuals were so damaged by their war experiences that they could not rebuild the lives they had lost.<sup>15</sup> He believed that many Jewish survivors were permanently damaged by the trauma they had experienced during the war and that their search for a new home was somewhat futile. Regardless, the returners came in ever increasing numbers and resettled in camp Föhrenwald in the hope of acquiring a visa abroad. The

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<sup>11</sup> Committee, "The Foehrenwald Story " 1.

<sup>12</sup> Webster, "American Relief and Jews in Germany, 1945-1960," 306.

<sup>13</sup> Mendel, "The Policy for the Past in West Germany and Israel," 122.

<sup>14</sup> "Jewish Immigrants Demonstrate in Brazil; Ask Return to Israel," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (New York: JTA- Jewish News Archive, February 1, 1954), 1.

<sup>15</sup> Königseder and Wetzel, *Waiting for Hope*: 160.

vast majority of these returners hoped to immigrate to the United States but visas there continued to be limited. Although a number of countries refused to accept illegal returners, they were resettled more quickly and easily than the majority of Jewish DPs who remained in postwar Germany, who did not qualify because of ill health, age, and criminal records. However, very few Jews, illegal returners or otherwise, qualified for resettlement in the U.S. and Canada and thus their waiting stretched on.<sup>16</sup>

Although the number of illegal returners started off very low, their presence in Germany led to rumors among the German population claiming that thousands of former Jewish DPs were clamoring to leave Israel and resettle in Germany.<sup>17</sup> The number of illegal returners reached its height in 1953 creating a noticeable problem in southern Bavaria. In June of that year, there were an estimated 418 illegals living in the camp despite the official closing of the center to newcomers.<sup>18</sup> This number had grown to around 800 by August 1953.<sup>19</sup> By the end of 1953, the number of illegal returners who had come through Föhrenwald was estimated at about 3,500 and with their arrival spread the urgency to prevent the future influx of more Israeli returners into the country.

Rumors “that thousands upon thousands of Israelis were waiting for the opportunity to leave the country and to throw themselves upon the German economy,” were only heightened when the Israeli government announced that they had passed laws restricting emigration from the country.<sup>20</sup> The need for such laws reconfirmed German beliefs in an impending Israeli exodus to Germany. As the 1940s came to a close and the 1950s wore on, the number of illegal returners

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<sup>16</sup> Several of the countries that were willing to accept DPs declared that they would not take any of the Jewish returners. Webster, "American Relief and Jews in Germany, 1945-1960," 308.

<sup>17</sup> Committee, "The Foehrenwald Story " 2.

<sup>18</sup> Moses Leavitt, "Report of the Executive Vice-Chairman to the Executive Committee Meeting," in *Germany, Displaced Persons, Camps, Foehrenwald* (New York: AJJDC, 1953), 1.

<sup>19</sup> Samuel Jaffe, "Mass Movement Out of Camp Foehrenwald Announced by Overseas Director of AJDC," in *Camp Foehrenwald* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1956), 2.

<sup>20</sup> Committee, "The Foehrenwald Story " 4.

quickly increased, reaching a point where more illegal returners entered camp Föhrenwald every month than the number of Jews emigrating out.<sup>21</sup> This is evident in October 1952, when there were 31 departures and 38 new arrivals.<sup>22</sup> Föhrenwald's population was 1,800 in October 1952, of which an estimated fifty-percent were believed to have been illegal returners making them the single largest group in the camp.<sup>23</sup>

As the years passed and the flow of Israeli illegal returners did not cease but rather increased, the Bavarian Government enacted laws to stop the legal entry of Jews from Israel into Germany while also working with the Israeli Government to stop immigration from Israel to Europe. However, these changes were not made until the spring of 1953, allowing immigrants to freely make their way into Germany for more than four years before laws were enacted to stop their movements. This is not to say that the Bavarian government did not attempt to restrict the flow of these Israelis into the area or to make the move as difficult as possible.

The use of valid visas in invalid passports by Israeli returners left these individuals in a legal grey zone in Germany. According to Israeli law, no Israeli citizen was allowed to enter Germany.<sup>24</sup> However, the first illegal returners entered under the provisions specified in the 1951 law on "the legal status of stateless foreigners," which allowed stateless individuals who had formerly lived in Germany to return to the country within two years of their departure.<sup>25</sup> There was no existing protocol in place in Germany to deal with these returners because no one had ever anticipated that any of the resettled Jewish DPs would return to the country. Claiming that they could not be restricted by the strictures of Israeli law as they did not consider

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Leonard Seidenman, "Field Trip to Germany concerning Camp Föhrenwald," 4.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>24</sup> Mendel, "The Policy for the Past in West Germany and Israel," 123.

<sup>25</sup> Angelika Königseder and Juliane Wetzel, *Lebensmut im Wartesaal: die jüdischen DPs (displaced persons) im Nachkriegsdeutschland*, Originalausg. ed., Zeit des Nationalsozialismus (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch, 1994). 167.

themselves Israelis but rather Displaced Persons, these returners instead attempted to revert to their former status as stateless DPs.<sup>26</sup> Clinging to the sense of autonomy and entitlement developed in the early DP camps, the Jewish returners attempted to assert their will by reclaiming their previous status in Germany, and demanding that they be resettled on their own terms. The Jewish aid organizations and the West German government considered these returners nationals of the countries they had left, but these returners insisted on their DP status.<sup>27</sup> In a JDC report from August 2, 1954, James P. Rice, the director of JDC affairs in Munich, noted that the illegal returners with whom he had met emphasized “the Israeli Mission had no right to speak on their behalf since the returnees did not recognize that they were Israeli Nationals.”<sup>28</sup> Melech Chemney, a reporter at the *Jewish Morning Journal*, expressed his shock that Jews who had been resettled abroad should come back to Germany desiring “to become again camp Jews, DP Jews.”<sup>29</sup> While they technically entered the country within the legal parameters of German law, they were no longer considered Displaced Persons as they now had Israeli citizenship. DPs surrendered their stateless Displaced Persons papers, which had guaranteed them support, when they left the country because they received their new citizenships upon reaching their countries of emigration.<sup>30</sup>

While these Jewish illegal returners could freely enter Germany and settle into the existing Jewish communities there, they could not reenter the Displaced Persons camps, which

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<sup>26</sup> Committee, "The Foehrenwald Story " 3.

<sup>27</sup> It is important to note that not all of the returners had been DPs, or had been resettled after the Second World War. A small number of the Jews who came back to Germany after 1949 were German and East European Jews who had immigrated to Palestine/Israel from their respective countries. Among this number were also a handful of individuals who had immigrated to the Middle East before the outbreak of the war or in the first couple of years of fighting. "German Government Declines to Waive Visa Requirements for Israelis," in *The Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA Jewish News Agency, March 1, 1956), 1; Webster, "American Relief and Jews in Germany, 1945-1960," 307.

<sup>28</sup> James P. Rice, "Emigration Grants by the German Government for Legal Residents of Camp Foehrenwald," in *JDC AR 45/54 Germany, Displaced Persons, Camps: Foehrenwald, July- December 1954* (New York: AJJDC, 1954), 7.

<sup>29</sup> Webster, "American Relief and Jews in Germany, 1945-1960," 307.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

were being closed. The camps were their former homes and the only life they had ever known in Germany.<sup>31</sup> The American occupation government was still in the position of overseeing all DP affairs when the returners began to reenter Germany and make their way into the camps. As USHCG worked to transfer its power to the newly formed West German government, they struggled to get the affairs of the Displaced Persons' camps in order, paramount among which was the problem of illegal returners.

Hoping to root out the returners who had settled illegally in camp Föhrenwald once and for all, USHCG authorized a raid on the center in April 1951. The raid began early in the morning, 5:15 AM, during the Passover holiday. At that time JDC officials were notified that the raid only targeted certain individuals whose names were compiled on a list, all of whom were believed to have been living in Föhrenwald. Despite the small number of people being sought out for questioning, all 3,000 residents of the camp were held under "protective custody" while the handful of "wrongdoers" were tracked down and arrested. Upon entry into the camp some 200 military police (MPs) and officers fanned out throughout the center and, with the use of loud speakers, told the camp inhabitants to remain in their homes. The MPs then conducted a house-by-house search for the offenders. The center was completely surrounded and no one could enter or leave the facility without their documents being checked, answering questions, and having their inner wrist stamped.<sup>32</sup> Much to the outrage of the DPs themselves, as well as JDC officials, these stamps were often placed right next to the numbers forcefully tattooed on survivors by the Nazis.<sup>33</sup> Even JDC officials were prevented from entering the camp until they were able to prove their position and had had their wrists stamped. In the end, seventeen people were

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<sup>31</sup> Committee, "The Foehrenwald Story " 4.

<sup>32</sup> "Monthly Report for April 1951, DP Camp Foehrenwald," in *Germany, Displaced Persons Camps: Foehrenwald, July- December 1954* (New York: AJJDC, 1951), 7.

<sup>33</sup> Samuel Haber, L, Dr., "Letter," in *Germany, Displaced Persons Camps: Foehrenwald, July- December 1954* (New York: AJJDC, 1951), 2.

arrested, but only three people were held, and these three were not charged for any crimes.<sup>34</sup>

Additionally, those held by the American military police were kept in a prison unable to eat because the American officials in charge did not have any food that met Passover laws.<sup>35</sup>

JDC officials noted that overall the raid was conducted very well and both the camp inhabitants and the MPs behaved in a mannerly way.<sup>36</sup> Aerial photos of the camp had been taken and studied by all those involved in the raid. The MPs knew exactly where they would be stationed and went to these locations as soon as the operation began. The entire affair was over by 10 AM when the well-armed police officers reentered their Jeeps and trucks and left. However well everyone acted, there were still strong feelings of resentment and outrage over the raid in general. Samuel Haber, the director of the JDC, wrote to Dr. George N. Schuster, the Land Commissioner for Bavaria, and Mr. McCloy, the U.S. High Commissioner, to express his unhappiness over the raid. Haber questioned the raid and the method used to carry it out. He told Schuster that the actions of the military police, the small number of individuals actually arrested compared to those affected by the raid, and the deployment of so many American troops and officers in the dark to conduct the raid “was unwarranted, unjustified and heaped indignities upon people who have suffered long enough.”<sup>37</sup> Haber argued that no one had any problems with the arrest of those who broke the law or of due process, but that this particular raid was totally unnecessary, especially considering the number of individuals illegally settled in the camp. Haber suggested that the military police should have issued warrants for the lawbreakers

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<sup>34</sup> The other 14 people were released within 24 to 48 hours.

<sup>35</sup> Haber, "Letter," 2.

<sup>36</sup> "Monthly Report for April 1951, DP Camp Foehrenwald," 7.

<sup>37</sup> Haber, "Letter," 2.

and left the rest of the “innocent” population alone. Instead they were lumped in with the offenders, subjected to terror, and “allegedly guilty” themselves.<sup>38</sup>

The issue of the illegal returners was an especially difficult one for the *She'erit Hapletah* who often felt conflicted between the emotional need to aid their fellow Jewish brethren and their own concerns about having new competition for resources and emigration visas. The Bavarian government, the JDC, and the *Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland* were all actively working to see to the closure of the last remaining Jewish centers. Emigration was the top priority for the legal DPs living in the camp, and the American aid organizations, including the Joint and HIAS, were working to secure visas and funding to resettle DPs abroad. The legal contingency of camp Föhrenwald, where the majority of the Israeli returners had settled, was mainly comprised of the “Hardcore” cases or those who had been in the camp since liberation. They were kept there by the long-lasting effects of the Holocaust, such as disease, mental, and physical illness. These individuals and their families had been waiting for the chance to emigrate and wanted nothing more than to resettle without the new competition that the illegal returners created. Additionally, the *She'erit Hapletah* felt resentment toward the illegal population who had been resettled at least once, an accomplishment that they were denied. The introduction of the illegal returners meant that the JDC, the main organization caring, resettling, and supplying the legal community, had to divide its efforts between the legal and illegal residents in Föhrenwald.

The JDC received letters as early as November 1950, requesting intervention with the IRO over the closing of so many centers because of severe overcrowding. In one of these letters the Camp Committee of Föhrenwald noted that the more than 900 illegal returners living in Feldafing, Föhrenwald, and Lechfeld, added to more than 9,000 legal residents meant that there

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.



would be “thousands of Jews practically staying in the streets” if any more centers were closed or more illegal returners continued to arrive and resettle in the camps.<sup>39</sup> By late 1952, Föhrenwald’s Camp Committee had decided that there were enough Jews living in Föhrenwald fighting for space, care, and supplies. According to a report from Charles Jordan, it was at the insistence of the Camp Committee that Dr. Oberländer, Under-Secretary of State, began to push for the closing of Föhrenwald to all newcomers.<sup>40</sup> This was seconded by Dr. Erhard, the German Minister of Economics who said, “The Jews themselves demanded protection against the illegals.”<sup>41</sup> In several reports from August through October 1952, the DP Camp Committee of Föhrenwald asked the Joint and the Bavarian government to hermetically seal the center, illustrating their desire to remain separated from the returner community. When sealing the gates of the camp failed, the sick and elderly approached Wilhelm Hoegner, the Interior Minister, and asked him to remove the illegals from the camp. Despite their best efforts, the camp residents were unable to rid themselves of the returnees, some of whom remained in the camp until it closed.<sup>42</sup>

Many DPs were sympathetic to the daily struggles faced by the returners. The first wave of returners to arrive in Föhrenwald after the closing of its gates in 1952 were threatened with deportation and were initially denied any welfare by the Bavarian government.<sup>43</sup> These individuals had come to Paris believing that they would be accepted for immigration to Canada, but made their way into Germany when the Canadian Consul denied them entry visas and the

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<sup>39</sup> Camp Committee, "Letter," in *JDC Report from Germany, Germany Legal Bulletin, Org 2, Office of the General Consul* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1950), 1.

<sup>40</sup> Charles Jordan, "Letter," in *45/54 Germany, Displaced Persons, Camps: Foehrenwald, 1945-1953* (New York: AJJDC, 1952), 1.

<sup>41</sup> Bavaria Der Ministerrat, "Auszug aus dem Protokoll des Ministerrats (Minutes for the Bavarian Ministry Meeting on the Jewish illegal returners)," in *StK* (Munich: BayHStA, 1953), 11.

<sup>42</sup> Königseder and Wetzel, *Waiting for Hope*: 163.

<sup>43</sup> "Jews in Bavaria Demand Better Treatment for Jewish DP's," in *The Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Munich: JTA Jewish News Archive, May 22, 1953), 1.

Parisian *Prefecture de Police* rejected their French visas.<sup>44</sup> These 100 plus Jews who were illegally living in the camp were housed and cared for by their friends and relatives until the JDC convinced the German government to provide them with emergency relief.<sup>45</sup>

Despite the hospitality extended by many of the long-term residents of Föhrenwald, tensions existed between the Chozrim, as they called themselves, and the legal inhabitants of the camp. The returners presented the DPs, and the world, with the absolute worst picture of Israel, describing it as an uninhabitable place. These descriptions convinced many of the DPs for whom Israel was the only option that they could not begin their lives anew in the fledgling Jewish country. In a special report on Germany, the author noted, "They [returners] are the source of most of the horror stories about Israel making the rounds in Germany."<sup>46</sup> Stories of the trials of life in Israel convinced many DPs to reject visas to Israel and await the slim possibility of a visa elsewhere. The DPs also noted experiencing increased feelings of resentment from Jewish aid workers as well as non-Jewish Germans, which they felt had only come about after the arrival of the illegal returners. H. Levik, the Yiddishist, gave voice to these feelings when he asked his readers to try to distinguish between the legal residents and illegal returners in Föhrenwald. He said, "I believe, however, that the shade of disdain that we have towards the 'Chozrim' should not fall on the sick D.P.s."<sup>47</sup> Not all those living in Föhrenwald shared the same story even though they were often portrayed as one single group. The DPs resented the presence of the returners in their midst as well as the negativity that they brought on the Jewish DP camp and its inhabitants.

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<sup>44</sup> Morris Laub, "Notes on the Report from Sam Haber," in *JDC/AR 46/54 Germany, Displaced Persons, Camps: Föhrenwald, 1945-1953* (New York: AJJDC, 1953), 1.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> Königseder and Wetzel, *Waiting for Hope*: 160.

<sup>47</sup> H. Levik, "Föhrenwald-The Last Camp on German Soil," *Undzer Shtime*, July 8, 1953, 1.

The illegal returners caused innumerable problems for the various governments and aid organizations that had cared for them over the course of the first half of the DP period. Groups such as the Joint, the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society or HIAS, the Jewish Labor Movement, the United Services for New Americans, and the World Jewish Congress (WJC), had all sent representatives, aid, and funding to help care for the Jewish Displaced Persons and continued to do so into the 1950s. However, for organizations like the Joint, their position in Germany had changed with the transfer of power, from one of influential decision makers to that of consultants to the Bavarian government on cases concerning the Jewish Displaced Persons. This is not to say that they were not an influential force; in fact the Bavarian government deferred to and consulted the Joint when making all major decisions dealing with Jewish DPs. Millions of dollars earmarked by the Conference on Materials Claims against Germany for DP use were filtered through the Joint until the closing of Föhrenwald in 1957, and the Joint continued to work with the Jewish communities in Germany even after the last DP was resettled. That said, it is important to note that the JDC was no longer the central group dealing with the DPs because this title had shifted to the Bavarian government.

While still focused on the care and eventual emigration of the remaining legal DPs in Föhrenwald, the Joint did not feel it was their responsibility to care for the illegal returners. Leonard Seidenman seconded this position in a report from October 1952 when he said, “What the Germans do for them [returners] is their own affair, but I personally feel that it is morally wrong on the part of the JDC to provide any assistance for any of these people.”<sup>48</sup> He ended his report by noting that there should be “No assistance for new returners to Germany.”<sup>49</sup> Despite their proclaimed separation from the returner issue, the JDC did become active participants to a

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<sup>48</sup> Seidenman, "Field Trip to Germany concerning Camp Foehrenwald," 19.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

limited extent in the care and resettlement of the illegals in Germany. While the JDC's initial response to the returner problem had started as a total disavowal of any responsibility, they begrudgingly admitted that they would help hardcore cases on an individual basis, and over the course of the 1950s they became involved in several aspects of the returner issue. This involvement ranged from only supplying supplemental resources and medical care to "hardship" cases, to intervention with the Bavarian and German Federal government on behalf of the returners. Initially motivated by the fact that they had already cared for and paid to resettle these Jews abroad, the JDC held a firm stance against providing anything for the returners, except in cases of definite need. Members of the JDC reiterated this position when they met with representatives of the Bonn and Bavarian government in 1953 to discuss how best to stop the flow of returners into Germany. When asked what the JDC was doing to discourage the returners from entering Germany, one JDC official stated, "in order not to encourage this kind of movement we do not render services to returnees except in compassionate hardship situations."<sup>50</sup> Realizing the impossibility of remaining totally apart from the returner problem, Charles Jordan, the Director General for Overseas Operations, stated, "of course from a purely JDC point of view we are equally concerned because no matter how hard we try to stay out of helping these people when they get to Germany we have had to extend some assistance to them in the past and we would have to do it increasingly in the future because of the absence of any IRO installations or services."<sup>51</sup> Despite the strong desire to remain uninvolved with the illegal returners, the JDC

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<sup>50</sup> JDC Executive Vice-Chairman, "Report of the Executive Vice-Chairman To the Executive Committee Meeting," in *AR/JDC 45/54 Germany, Displaced Persons, Camps: Föhrenwald, July-December 1954* (New York: AJJDC, 1953), 2.

<sup>51</sup> Charles Jordan, "Letter to Charles Passman," in *Legal Bulletin, ORG 2, Office of the General Consul, Camp Foehrenwald* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1951), 1; Jordan, "Notes on the Meeting in Bonn," in *JDC/AR 45/54 Germany, Displaced Persons, Camps: Foehrenwald, July-December 1954* (New York: AJJDC, 1953), 1.

understood that there would be cases that could not be ignored. This sentiment permeated JDC documents throughout the 1950s. In a report from July 1952, Moses Beckelman wrote,

Obviously, we have decided that the returnees from Israel are not our problem and that as a matter of principle we will not assist them. Nevertheless, we cannot close our eyes to the fact that in any number of cases of returnees, welfare and medical problems arise which must be dealt with, regardless of our policy and that to an extent they are as much of a problem to us as are the others [legal DP's].<sup>52</sup>

Hardship cases arose in several forms including medical need, requests for winter clothing, and legal assistance.<sup>53</sup> As the 1950s wore on and more returners arrived in Germany, the JDC was called to intervene in more and more cases.

It initially appeared to Joint workers that the Bavarian Government would make no move to limit the number of Israeli returners crossing Germany's borders.<sup>54</sup> In an official report from September 1953, Moses Leavitt of the Joint noted that the Bavarian government initially handled the early returners with leniency and seemed "inclined to legalize the returners in Föhrenwald."<sup>55</sup> The semi-legal status of the first returners left many of Bavaria's leaders questioning what could be done. Realizing the potential for a real problem in the summer of 1952, when 42 individuals left camp Föhrenwald and 50 arrived, the Bavarian Government began to discuss possible options for the solution to the problem. In an effort to curtail the continued influx of Jewish illegal returners, they officially closed the gates of Föhrenwald to any newcomers in October 1952, making their entrance an illegal and punishable offense. This closure extended to all Jewish individuals except Jewish Displaced Persons who recovered from tuberculosis and were released from the local TB sanitarium in Gauting.<sup>56</sup> Although the Bavarian government acted to prevent future settlement in Föhrenwald, they did nothing to stop

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<sup>52</sup> Moses Beckelman, "Speech Notes," in *Föhrenwald* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1952), 1.

<sup>53</sup> Laub, "Notes on the Report from Sam Haber," 1.

<sup>54</sup> Committee, "The Föhrenwald Story," 1.

<sup>55</sup> Leavitt, "Report of the Executive Vice-Chairman to the Executive Committee Meeting," 2.

<sup>56</sup> Jordan, "Letter," 1.

future immigrants into the country.<sup>57</sup> Despite all efforts to prevent resettlement in Föhrenwald, 20 people entered in November of that year and 200 more settled in the camp in December of 1952.<sup>58</sup> Not all of those who came into camp Föhrenwald remained there or registered with the JDC. Of the 200 who entered the camp at the end of 1952, 87 remained in the center while the other 113 settled in Munich.<sup>59</sup>

Although the Bavarian government had closed Föhrenwald to newcomers in 1952, the majority of these illegal returners made their way back to southern Germany and continued to attempt to resettle in the last remaining Jewish DP camps. Who was responsible for these illegal returners? The claims of DP status issued by the Chozrim fell on deaf ears, as the German government and the Joint denied any responsibility for the cost of these individuals.<sup>60</sup> In a letter from July 1952, Moses Beckelman, the JDC overseas operations chief, stated, "Obviously, we [the JDC] have decided that the returners from Israel are not our problem and that as a matter of principle we will not assist them."<sup>61</sup> This meant that the illegal returners could not count on help from the one group who traditionally provided the majority of all aid to Europe's Jews. Instead, they had to turn to the IRO, HIAS, the German-Jewish Communities, and the Claims Conference in order to try to secure housing, rations, and monetary subsidies as well as emigration grants. These groups almost universally ignored their pleas, but in the end HIAS and the JDC did carry most of the responsibility for resettling the illegal returners while the Bavarian and German government covered their living costs. Still later these Jews received emigration grants and *Wiedergutmachung* from the German and Bavarian government as incentives to leave

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<sup>57</sup> Königseder and Wetzel, *Lebensmut im Wartesaal*: 167.

<sup>58</sup> Dr. von Trützscher, "Letter," in *StK* (Munich: BayHstA, 1953), 1.

<sup>59</sup> Leavitt, "Report of the Executive Vice-Chairman to the Executive Committee Meeting," 2.

<sup>60</sup> Committee, "The Foehrenwald Story " 3.

<sup>61</sup> Moses Beckelman, "Report," in *Germany, Germany Legal Bulletin, Org 2, Office of the General Consul, Camp Foehrenwald* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1952), 1.

Föhrenwald and emigrate elsewhere. While HIAS covered the cost of emigration, the JDC eventually issued a statement saying that they would not abandon any Jews in need and so supplied all of the inhabitants in Föhrenwald with rations, clothing, and medical care whether they were there legally or illegally.<sup>62</sup> However, illegal returners received fewer rations than legal Displaced Persons did, and their struggle to secure these resources was not an easy one.

The returning Jews were met with shock, anger, a lack of understanding, and rejection from world Jewry. In a newspaper article published in July 1953, Levik, stated

My heart cannot be with the Jewish 'chozer' (returnee) who comes back from Israel or from some other country to a place which not so long ago he was cursing, to a country where the violation and extermination of his people took place and where he himself was a victim of the extermination and the violation...the problem of the 'chozrim' is in itself bitter.<sup>63</sup>

The presence of the returners on German soil caused confusion for Jews and Germans alike and led many to question the true severity of the atrocities of the Holocaust. Discussions regarding the possibility of Jewish exaggerations of their war experiences spread among the German population as more and more illegal Jewish returners resettled in Germany.<sup>64</sup> Many questioned the true extent of the cruelty of the Nazi concentration camps with the continued return of thousands of Jews from Israel. According to a report compiled by Leonard Seidenman in 1952, the positive propaganda opportunities available for improving the German image in relation to the Jews, attached with the continued arrival of the illegal returners was assumed to be enough to explain why the German government did not staunch the flow of Jews into Germany. He said, "This is too good a thing for them [the Germans] to pass up. It is no wonder the DP's do not have a difficult time at the border. I am convinced that we will shortly begin to hear openly this line [that the Holocaust was not as bad as previously believed] from the Germans."<sup>65</sup> Many Jews

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<sup>62</sup> Committee, "The Foehrenwald Story " 6.

<sup>63</sup> Leivik, "Foehrenwald-The Last Camp on German Soil," 1.

<sup>64</sup> Seidenman, "Field Trip to Germany concerning Camp Foehrenwald," 19.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

feared that knowledge of the true horrors of the Shoah would be threatened by the return of so many survivors seeking shelter in Germany.

It was believed that the Joint would know how best to solve the problem of the returners because it was the organization that had worked closest with the DP population since the end of the war. Additionally, the JDC wanted to be rid of the returner population as much as the German government, which meant working with them was mutually beneficial for both the Joint and the Germans. In a meeting with representatives of the Federal Republic in 1953, Charles Jordan was assured that the returners were not the responsibility of the JDC and “that the German government accepts this problem as their responsibility.”<sup>66</sup> Despite these assurances, the JDC found itself more and more entangled with the illegal returners as advisors, middlemen, and financial supporters. When asked why they felt the returners were coming back to Germany, JDC officials noted that the continued existence of Föhrenwald acted as a beacon for these returners. However, the presence of the returners in Föhrenwald created more and more problems for the JDC, and they believed the only solution was the liquidation of the camp. The JDC’s Munich staff argued that the “availability of Foehrenwald encourages return from Israel and that recently more and more persons who have left Israel to return to countries like France, Belgium, etc., drift into Foehrenwald as the only place in which they are tolerantly assisted.”<sup>67</sup> When the Bavarian government asked how they might be able to curtail the continued influx of illegal returners into Föhrenwald, one JDC official suggested destroying the housing left emptied by Jews who had emigrated, “thereby gradually eliminating the greatest attraction for these returners.”<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Executive Vice-Chairman, "Report of the Executive Vice-Chairman To the Executive Committee Meeting," 1; Jordan, "Notes on the Meeting in Bonn," 1.

<sup>67</sup> Jordan, "Memorandum: Foehrenwald," in *Camp Foehrenwald, January-April 1957* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1952), 2.

<sup>68</sup> Jordan, "Notes on the Meeting in Bonn," 1.



The JDC noted that the continued existence of Föhrenwald was not the only problem that had to be remedied. They suggested that perhaps the flow of returners could be stopped at the source if the JDC sent an official to Israel to “point out to the government its responsibility in stemming the tide of the returners.”<sup>69</sup> Talks between the JDC, Israel, and the Bavarian government took place over the course of the 1950s and Israel did attempt to stop possible returners from leaving the country. However, efforts to stop the flow of Jewish returners to Germany continued to fail. The Bavarian government was left scrambling to enact some measure that would help solve the problem. While initial conversations with the Israeli consulate had been encouraging, future discussions were needed as more and more Israeli returners left Israel and settled in Germany.<sup>70</sup> The meeting minutes of the Bavarian Ministers from February 1953 noted an agreement reached between the Bavarian government and the Israeli consulate in Munich. This agreement stipulated that the Israeli government agree to pay for the care of the returners while they were living in Germany as well as the immigration costs attributed with bringing them back to Israel.<sup>71</sup> Despite this agreement, the Israeli government only successfully arranged one transport of deported returners back to Israel, leaving the issue unresolved.<sup>72</sup> The Bavarian government and Israeli representatives agreed to set a deadline of April 1, 1953 as the date by which the returner problem would be solved.<sup>73</sup> This date came and went and still the number of returners increased. Dr. Obreländer received a letter from Dr. von

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<sup>69</sup> JDC, "Minutes on the Meeting of the Administration Committee of the Joint Distribution Committee," in *JDC/AR 45/54 Germany, Displaced Persons, Camps: Foehrenwald, July-December 1954* (New York: AJJDC, 1953), 1.

<sup>70</sup> Although the Israeli government said that it would help with the problem of Jewish returners from Israel, some members of the JDC, like Charles Jordan, suspected that “an assortment of flotsam and jetsam, ne’er-do-wells, irresponsible, and not infrequently gangster types,” were being helped to return to Germany by members of the Israeli government. Webster, "American Relief and Jews in Germany, 1945-1960," 314.

<sup>71</sup> Der Ministerrat, "Auszug aus dem Protokoll des Ministerrats (Minutes from the ministers' meeting on illegal returners)," in *Stk* (Munich: BayHStA, 1953), 1.

<sup>72</sup> The Israeli government cited “technical” difficulties when explaining why they had not taken more returners back. "German Government Declines to Waive Visa Requirements for Israelis," 1.

<sup>73</sup> Der Ministerrat, "Auszug aus dem Protokoll des Ministerrats," 1; Dr. Philipp Oberländer, "Letter," in *Stk* (Munich: BayHstA, 1953), 1.

Trützscher, a local Bavarian minister, just six days after the deadline, discussing the possibility of moving the 200 plus returners living in Föhrenwald to the immigration camp in Bremen where they would wait until the Israel-Mission could arrange for their departure from Germany.<sup>74</sup>

Despite these discussions with the Israeli government, Israeli returners continued to make their way to Germany, settle in the camp, and demand welfare assistance.

Motivated by the continued influx of Jewish returners, as well as newspaper articles claiming that Germany was welcoming back 200 new citizens, the Council of Bavarian Ministers met to discuss the problem plaguing the Bavarian government in the spring of 1953.<sup>75</sup> Their desire to see Föhrenwald closed, combined with the fact that they were responsible for the cost of supplying and caring for the legal camp inhabitants, led them to push for an immediate solution. The ministers' meeting not only discussed the problems inherent with the arrival of so many unwanted illegal returners, but also included the solutions thought most effective in curbing the flow of Jews from Israel. It was determined that the Foreign office was wholly responsible for the returner problem as they issued the visas, and while the office assured everyone in the government that they would take care of the problem within four weeks, more Jews continued to arrive in Germany on a daily basis.<sup>76</sup> There was some question as to whether the fact that several of the returners had legal visas meant that they should in fact be the responsibility of the federal government, but Dr. Oberländer, argued, "The passports are not valid in Germany so the visas are not valid."<sup>77</sup> In the end, the Jews who were able to independently integrate into German society were left to their own devices, while those who

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<sup>74</sup> Trützscher, "Letter," 1.

<sup>75</sup> Oberländer, "Letter," 1.

<sup>76</sup> Der Ministerrat, "Auszug aus dem Protokoll des Ministerrats (Minutes for the Bavarian Ministry Meeting on the Jewish illegal returners)," 11.

<sup>77</sup> The use of their Israeli passports to enter Germany was considered illegal by the Israeli government, but these Jews had originally come under the legal auspices of the legal status of stateless foreigners making their entry into the country legal by German law. Ibid.

tried to resettle in Föhrenwald, and needed German assistance, were deemed illegal. It was proposed that a new camp be established to absorb these illegal returners.<sup>78</sup> The imminent arrival of Jews from the Soviet Union motivated Oberländer to push for the removal of the illegal Jews in Föhrenwald in order to make room and ensure that the two groups did not overlap.<sup>79</sup> Motivated by the realization that the more Jews who moved into Föhrenwald, the less likely the camp's closing, the various state ministers worked to find a solution. It was decided that the Jews living outside of Föhrenwald who had returned from Israel would be tolerated, despite the cries of various ministers that this would only encourage further re-migrations. Dr. Öchsle suggested dividing the returners into groups of 50 and settling them among the various Jewish communities in western Germany. Dr. Oberländer argued that perhaps the best incentive to help motivate the returners to leave was to provide them with welfare assistance that could only be collected in countries away from Europe.<sup>80</sup>

Eventually, the council came up with two resolutions pertaining to returners from Israel. First, Camp Föhrenwald would be closed. The implementation of this decision would be “set in conjunction with the relevant Federal agencies and the Joint.” Second, “any further immigration should be prevented at all cost. Any Jewish returners caught crossing the border illegally will be deported back across the border from whence they came. To this end the Federal Government is requested to notify the frontier authorities accordingly.” Finally, “the illegals will get no support from us [the Bavarian government].”<sup>81</sup> With these two declarations, the Bavarian Government began actively seeking out new returners and punishing those who were caught. From this

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<sup>78</sup> Ministerrat, "Auszug aus dem Protokoll des Ministerrats," 2.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid. Unlike the illegal returners who were viewed by the Bavarian government as unwelcome supplicants/beggars, the Soviet Jews were viewed as the responsibility of the Federal government and were welcomed in Föhrenwald while they awaited their resettlement.

<sup>80</sup> Der Ministerrat, "Auszug aus dem Protokoll des Ministerrats (Minutes for the Bavarian Ministry Meeting on the Jewish illegal returners)," 11.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 12.

meeting forward, any Jew who entered the country did so illegally thereby committing a crime.<sup>82</sup> The German Federal government moved quickly in the Spring of 1953, to limit immigration by ceasing to issue visas to returners who could not provide a substantial deposit. These measures only criminalized the illegal returners and created tensions between the Jews and Germans living in Bavaria.<sup>83</sup>

The Germans' first attempt to curb the flow of new emigrants led them to notify officials at their embassies in Rome and Paris to take a \$300 deposit from all Jewish returners seeking visas who arrived in Europe on an Israeli passport marked invalid for travel in Germany.<sup>84</sup> It was believed that this policy would only allow those who could afford to settle in Germany to enter the country legally while deterring those who would try to resettle in Föhrenwald or would need welfare assistance from the state. This act did in fact lead to a slight decrease in the number of officially recognized emigrants but simultaneously led to a jump in the number of illegal returners who stole across the border under the cover of night.<sup>85</sup> Returners caught crossing illegally into Germany faced prison time and deportation. An entire smuggling industry arose in the countries bordering Germany solely focused on getting returners across the border illegally.<sup>86</sup> The number of returners entering the country continued to increase as did the camp population in Föhrenwald.

In July, the terms for those imprisoned for illegally crossing the border increased from two to six weeks and the first deportations occurred.<sup>87</sup> In one case a family with small children

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<sup>82</sup> Committee, "The Foehrenwald Story " 4.

<sup>83</sup> It was not until the Spring of 1953, that the German government stopped issuing visas to illegal returners, thereby making their entry into the country a crime.

<sup>84</sup> Königseder and Wetzel, *Lebensmut im Wartesaal*: 168.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Returners who employed these services paid on a case-by-case basis and were informed to discard their Israeli passports in order to make it harder for the Jewish aid organizations to determine if they did in fact qualify for assistance. Webster, "American Relief and Jews in Germany, 1945-1960," 314.

<sup>87</sup> Leavitt, "Report of the Executive Vice-Chairman to the Executive Committee Meeting," 1.

returned to Föhrenwald illegally in July 1953. While the Bavarian government normally allowed parents to serve their sentences at different times so that the children would not be left alone, both the mother and father refused to go to jail. This led the Bavarian police to arrest both parents at the same time. This, in turn, left their two-and-four-year-old children alone in the care of the Chozrim community in the camp. The children refused to eat until the mother was finally released three days later, leading the Chozrim committee to publish diatribes against the cruelty of the Bavarian government.<sup>88</sup> German authorities continuously found themselves caught between doing what the law dictated and dealing with the attacks of the disgruntled returner population. Unsure of how best to proceed, the Bavarian government turned to the only organization they felt could deal with these former DPs: The JDC.

Regardless of their position on the returners, the JDC became the main organization to which the illegal returners turned when in need, and the agency to take the brunt of the returners' abuse when things did not work out as they had hoped they would. In early July 1953, rumor spread throughout the camp that the Germans intended to deport 12 illegal returners on August 14. Sent into a frenzy, 150 illegal returners traveled to Munich to occupy the JDC offices for a two-day sit-in from August 12 to 13.<sup>89</sup> They asked for asylum in the Bundes Republik until they were able to migrate to other overseas countries.<sup>90</sup> They remained in the building of the American Jewish welfare organization, stating that they would not leave until they were reassured that no deportations would take place. JDC officials met with the Bavarian government and worked strenuously to convince them to stop the deportations. In the end, the

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<sup>88</sup> Zloto, "The Peculiar Strike of Two Little Children (Newspaper article Undzer Shtime)," in *JDC and Germany 45/54* (New York: AJJDC, 1953), 1.

<sup>89</sup> Committee, "The Foehrenwald Story " 6.

<sup>90</sup> *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, "Jüdische Rückwanderer streiken in München," in *ZA Auslander 47* (Munich: Stadtarchiv München, August 29, 1953), 1.

Bavarian government agreed not to deport the illegal returners immediately, but pushed the Joint to develop a plan to end the returner problem.

Motivated by the preceding events, Dr. Nahum Goldmann of the World Jewish Congress and Samuel Haber of the Joint, met in Geneva with Dr. Chaim Yahil, an emissary from the Israeli-Mission, Cologne, and Dr. Frohwein, the German Foreign Minister, in early August 1953, to discuss the problem of illegal returners in Föhrenwald.<sup>91</sup> Dr. Frohwein told the assembled organizations of Bavaria's proposal to the Returners' Committee on June 12, 1953. This offer stated that the Bavarian government would care for the returners if they resettled in Funk-Kaserne, the largest non-Jewish camp for Displaced Persons in southern Germany, located in Munich. The various German ministries and international aid organizations hoped that by transferring the returner population from Föhrenwald, it would illustrate to other potential returners that there was no possibility for their resettlement in the center. Additionally, they hoped that this move would allow them to begin closing the camp. Those who willingly moved to Funk-Kaserne would be allowed to remain in the center until their final resettlement.<sup>92</sup> Under this arrangement, any new returners arriving after the June 12 deadline would be deported. The June 12 offer was not new to the JDC who had been contacted by the "Chozrim" Committee when the Bavarian government originally ordered all illegals to move out of Föhrenwald. These representatives of the JDC, as well as the *Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland*, were asked what options were available to the returnees.<sup>93</sup> When approached by the *Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland*, officials from the Bavarian government reiterated that those who moved into Funk-

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<sup>91</sup> Königseder and Wetzel, *Lebensmut im Wartesaal*: 168.

<sup>92</sup> Leavitt, "Report of the Executive Vice-Chairman to the Executive Committee Meeting," 3.

<sup>93</sup> Like the other groups of Jews who had lived through the horrors of the Holocaust and settled in postwar Bavaria, the illegal returners also quickly formed their own representative committee. The Committee of the "chozrim" of Föhrenwald numbered 693 people in December 1953.<sup>93</sup> They met with the JDC, the Bavarian State Ministry and the German Federal Government to make demands of these groups and to argue their case for aid and emigration help.

Kaserne were safe from the future deportations, and the returners were urged by both organizations to make the move. The returners rejected the proposal, sending an official letter from their lawyer to Dr. Hoegner, the Bavarian Minister of the Interior, demanding that their stay in Föhrenwald be legalized. Refusing to be bullied, the Bavarian Parliament met to discuss ways to close Föhrenwald, measures to stop future returners from entering the country and camp, and methods to remove the illegal returners who were living in the camp at the time.<sup>94</sup> Fully aware that the returners would never agree to a plan they had already rejected, the Jewish organizations proposed that another solution be found. In the end, it was decided that all illegal returners living in Föhrenwald must register with the Bavarian administration. Those who did so would be allowed a six-month stay in the camp in order to arrange their emigration from Germany.<sup>95</sup> During that time the German government would cover their food and housing costs.

Within a matter of days, August 14-17, official registration took place with 687 illegal returners willingly registering.<sup>96</sup> Although those who registered were allowed to remain in the camp and receive care, their semi-legal status was not equal to that of legal residents of the center. The illegal returners were denied supplemental rations and had no voting rights for Föhrenwald elections. They were also denied residents' permits, which prevented them from settlement in Germany, employment, passports, and marriage.<sup>97</sup> Those who did not register by August 17 could be deported. This policy was tested just days after registration closed when three unregistered illegal returners were caught by German police and arrested. The Chozrim committee fought for the move of these unregistered returnees to Funk-Kaserne where they would await their emigration. Although the Bavarian government was willing to make this one

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<sup>94</sup> Leavitt, "Report of the Executive Vice-Chairman to the Executive Committee Meeting," 3.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Angelika Königseder and Juliane Wetzel, *Waiting for Hope: Jewish Displaced Persons in Post-World War II Germany* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2001). 163.

concession, they felt it necessary to illustrate the seriousness of their position against new returners by picking up three returnees who had arrived from Austria after August 17 and sentencing them to six weeks in jail. Upon their release they were immediately arrested and deported to Austria where they were put into detention centers.<sup>98</sup> Despite statements that they were not responsible for the returners, the JDC ended up having to involve themselves on behalf of the three deported individuals because they all had families living in Föhrenwald. Eventually the JDC was able to secure their release and they were returned to the camp from Austria.

The illegal returners who were not arrested upon crossing the border and who were turned away from camp Föhrenwald, made their way to the Munich synagogue where 150 illegal returners slept and an additional 70 also spent their days in October 1953.<sup>99</sup> The Jewish Telegraphic Agency described the situation of these returners stating they “ had been living under the most wretched physical conditions.”<sup>100</sup> These conditions did not improve much over the course of their three-month stay in the synagogue. Those living in the Munich Synagogue posed a special problem as they had arrived in Germany after the Geneva meeting held by the Federal Government in Bonn, meaning that they had no rights and were considered illegal, making their deportation a very real possibility. However, negotiations between the JDC, HIAS, and West German government had ended in the agreement that the returners who continued to live in the Möhlstraße synagogue would be given a few months reprieve in which time the Joint and HIAS would work to secure their emigration abroad. The JDC and central Welfare Agency of Jews in Germany had agreed to cover the cost of these returners during their stay in the country, and HIAS paid for their eventual emigration. On January 4, 1954, the remaining 110

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<sup>98</sup> Committee, "The Foehrenwald Story " 5.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>100</sup> "110 "returnees" Moved to Hamburg: Will Immigrate to Latin America," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (New York: JTA- Jewish News Archive, January 4, 1954), 1.



“bedraggled” individuals left the synagogue for Hamburg where they would remain in an emigrants’ hostel until they were moved to countries in South America.<sup>101</sup>

JDC’s work with the returners was rife with problems. Their intervention on behalf of the returners was soon forgotten, and just a few months later JDC work was met with an open public reprimand for their “failed” efforts to resettle the returners. In a memorandum issued by the Chozrim and sent to *Undzer Stimme* the Paris based Yiddish newspaper, the Chozrim committee chastised the Joint for failing to resettle them as promised at the Bonn conference in August 1953. They noted that three months had passed and only 45 returners had been resettled, 41 of whom had arranged their own emigration with the help of HIAS financing. The remaining four had been placed by HIAS, but the Joint “had not succeeded in sending 1 person despite registration.”<sup>102</sup> As was true of so many Displaced Persons, the returners felt empowered by the securities granted them during their stay in Föhrenwald. They believed that they had autonomy over their futures despite their precarious position in Germany. They felt entitled, which allowed them to make demands that they felt should be met. This was the case in their open reprimand in which they demanded that HIAS and the Joint bypass any bureaucratic problems that might arise in the path of their resettlement efforts in order to ensure their immediate emigration.<sup>103</sup>

By the end of 1953, the JDC was embroiled with the affairs of the illegal returners. They found themselves dealing with the returners on a daily basis and while they held their position of only providing supplies for those who qualified as hardship cases, they acted as the middleman between the Chozrim and the German and Bavarian governments on a fairly regular basis. This was the case in March 1954 when they met with the German government to secure equal

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Chozrim Committee, "Memorandum of the Chozrim," in *JDC AR 45/54, Germany, displaced Persons, Camps: Foehrenwald, July-December 1954* (New York: AJJDC, 1953), 1.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

*Wiedergutmachung* for the returners as that received by the legal inhabitants of Föhrenwald.<sup>104</sup>

In the meeting with the Chozrim committee, during which JDC officials attempted to discuss the outcome and achievements they had made with the German government on behalf of the returners, the Chozrim attacked them for not accomplishing more. Additionally, the chairman of the committee, Mr. Alfischer, accused the JDC of being responsible for the deportation letters that 200 illegal returners had received from the government. Mr. Alfischer, one of the recipients, demanded that the JDC pay the lawyer representing the group “in order to fight the deportation order.”<sup>105</sup> Mr. Rice responded that while the JDC did not support the German government’s methods, they did not believe that the German expulsion letter was unreasonable and in the end the decision belonged wholly to the Germans.<sup>106</sup> He continued on to point out that those who received the letter could certainly choose to remedy the situation by volunteering to immigrate to Brazil or be repatriated to Israel. His suggestion was met with protests and threats. Mr. Alfischer noted that there were many elderly and sick among the returnees who could not qualify for Brazil and were too weak for Israel, hence their return to Germany. He argued that they should be allowed to remain in Germany indefinitely “since they were morally a responsibility of the German government.”<sup>107</sup>

When the JDC did not produce the desired results, the Returner Committee threatened to “make a scandal in order to draw the world’s attention to the cruel treatment on the part of the AJDC.”<sup>108</sup> They continued by claiming that the JDC, HIAS, and the Israeli-Mission had betrayed them when they had met on the returners’ behalf with the German government. The

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<sup>104</sup> James P. Rice, "Letter # 3629, Foehrenwald-Munich-Frankfurt," in *45/54 Germany, Displaced Persons, Camps: Foehrenwald, July-December 1954* (New York: AJJDC, 1954), 5.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 6.

returners stated that their real enemies were not the Germans but the Jewish organizations and that they were reminded of the “Hitler period when the most diabolical method used against the Jews was to set up a ‘Judenrat’ to aid in liquidation!”<sup>109</sup> They threatened to make a scene in the media and went as far as stating that they might convert as they had heard that those survivors who became Christians had a better chance at receiving emigration visas and were better treated. The returners ended their tirade by saying that they might as well work directly with the Germans for all the good it was doing them to meet with the JDC.<sup>110</sup> In response, James Rice noted that the returners were shirking all of their own responsibilities for their current predicament. It was, after all, their decision to leave Israel without considering the consequences for themselves and their families that had led to their current situation. To this the Chozrim responded by demanding that a new conference be arranged between the Joint and the German government at which the topic of deportations would be addressed and remedied. Ultimately, 10 of the 200 returners who had received deportation letters signed up for immigration to Brazil hoping to stall their deportation by complying with registration. The Chozrim committee moved forward with their Supreme Court case against the German government arguing that their deportation was illegal.<sup>111</sup> The JDC decided to continue to work on securing the visas for those who had registered to ensure that if these individuals chose not to emigrate the JDC was in a position in the future to say that the “Jewish organizations will no longer assume any responsibility for their emigration and welfare problems” since they had decided voluntarily to remain in Germany.<sup>112</sup> The Chozrim did publically denounce the JDC, however, they continued to turn to them for help.

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., Addendum 1.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

The Chozrim continuously attacked the JDC, and in June 1954 an anonymous pamphlet was circulated throughout camp Föhrenwald stating that the Joint was playing a belated Purim joke on the returners when they announced the July 1 deportation date for the illegals who had not found possible sites of emigration. The author stated, “The returnees will be neither expelled nor will anything be taken from them... together with senator McCarthy we will bring the guilty committees Joint and HIAS before the courts, because they have sold their Jewishness for money.”<sup>113</sup> He ended the announcement by saying, “the end will be that the returnees will stay and the committee and the guilty officers of the JOINT and HIAS, Mr. Weigand, Mr. Dorsch and Mrs. Ortenau will leave.”<sup>114</sup> Members of the JDC were not concerned with the rants of the “obviously deranged,” author, but Arthur Jacobs, the executive director of HIAS, wrote to Moses Leavitt expressing some concern that returners might give some credence to the contents of the pamphlet.<sup>115</sup>

Despite their initial move to deport unregistered illegals, German policy had relaxed a bit by 1954. This is evident in their treatment of the 84 illegal returners who were found in the camp. These illegal returners refused to register with the Bavarian government nor with the Joint or HIAS for emigration.<sup>116</sup> When asked about possibly providing an integration grant for these 84 individuals, Moses Leavitt said, “the integration grants we talked about are for real DPs in Foehrenwald and we saw no reason why we had to pay it presumably to these illegals who

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<sup>113</sup> Some members of the Camp Committee claimed that communist supporters ran the JDC. It was this argument that led the author to reference the support of Senator McCarthy against the Joint executives in this pamphlet. Anonymous, "To the Camp Population and Particularly to the Returnees," in *JDC AR 45/54 Germany, Displaced Persons, Camps: Foehrenwald, July- December 1954* (New York: AJJDC, 1954), 1.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Arthur T. Jacobs, "Letter," in *JDC AR 45/54 Germany, Displaced Persons, Camps: Foehrenwald, July - December 1954* (New York: AJJDC, 1954), 1.

<sup>116</sup> Moses Beckelman, "Telegram," in *JDC AR 45/54 Germany, Displaced Persons, Camps: Foehrenwald, July- December 1954* (New York: AJJDC, 1954), 1.

decided to defy the authorities and insist on staying in the camp.”<sup>117</sup> Nahum Goldmann responded to Leavitt by noting that in time the returners would become the JDC’s responsibility regardless of their position of non-intervention, noting that the camp would never be closed if returners continued to live there. Leavitt argued that the grants would be bribery for the 84 returners, and as the returners were not the responsibility of the JDC, he saw no point in giving them any money or reinforcing their behavior. However, the JDC did get involved on their behalf when they convinced the Bavarian government to refrain from deporting them. Realizing the mass hysteria that rumors about deportation had caused in August 1953, the Joint recommended that these returners be convinced to register and possibly become legal inhabitants of the camp. In so doing they could be more quickly resettled abroad. The Bavarian government agreed in the hope that the JDC would include these 84 in their integration plans rather than moving for their immediate forced repatriation back to Israel.<sup>118</sup> Integration and mass deportation were not the only measure suggested by the various governments and organizations dealing with the returners. Israelis such as Akiba Lewinsky and others met with Dr. von Trützschler to discuss the possibility of deporting between 3 and 5 people at a time to “show the recalcitrant returnees that they [the German government] mean business.”<sup>119</sup> In the end, the Bavarian government allowed these 84 individuals to remain in the camp as illegal residents while awaiting their eventual emigration, and the JDC worked with HIAS to see to the resettlement of as many illegal returners as they possibly could.<sup>120</sup> While the Bavarian government was willing to work with the JDC and the already existing returners population in

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<sup>117</sup> Moses Leavitt, "Letter," in *JDC Ar 45/54 Germany, Displaced Persons, Camps: Foehrenwald, July-December 1954* (New York: AJJDC, 1954), 1.

<sup>118</sup> Charles Jordan, "Letter to Moses Leavitt," in *JDC AR 45/54, Displaced Persons, Camps; Föhrenwald, September to Jan 1954* (New York: AJJDC, 1954), 1.

<sup>119</sup> Jordan, "Paris Letter No. 154 Re: Foehrenwald," in *45/54 Germany, Displaced Persons, Camps: Foehrenwald, July-December 1954* (New York: AJJDC, 1954), 1.

<sup>120</sup> Committee, "The Foehrenwald Story " 6.

Föhrenwald, they were staunchly against the admission of any new illegals into the center. To this end, Bavarian officials replaced the DP police with German officers in August 1954. These officers oversaw the entrance of all individuals into the camp, checking to make sure that everyone who entered the camp did so legally, and the number of returners began to stabilize.<sup>121</sup>

Six months passed from the Geneva meeting held in 1953, and the date for the March 1954 expulsion arrived without any mass deportations. The German government decided to give the remaining illegal returners a four-month reprieve, extending the deadline to July 1, 1954, in acknowledgement of the extraordinary efforts put forth by the JDC and HIAS who had been struggling to resettle abroad as many returnees as possible.<sup>122</sup> This deadline also passed. By January 1955, the Joint and HIAS had persuaded some 500 of the registered illegals to emigrate to countries other than the United States, mainly to South America.<sup>123</sup> The remaining Jewish returners were notified that they had until January 1, 1956, to emigrate. The Catholic Settlement Work and the Archdiocese of Munich-Freising had purchased the land and buildings at Föhrenwald and this was the date on which the camp's new owners were scheduled to take over possession of the center.<sup>124</sup> This date also passed and a new one was set for February 15, 1956. The JDC believed that 200 more returnees could be resettled by the new deadline and hoped to finally be able to solve the problem that had plagued Germany since 1949.

The Bavarian State Ministry of Work and Social Welfare decided that whoever remained of the illegal returners on February 15, 1956 would be moved to the Forchheim barracks in the district of Beilngries, a former transit camp for refugees from the Soviet Union.<sup>125</sup> On February

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Königseder and Wetzel, *Waiting for Hope*: 162.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Dr. Geisshöringer, "Auflösung des Regierungslagers für heimatlose jüdische Ausländer Föhrenwald (Ministers' Meeting)," in *Bayern Staatskanzlei* (Munich: BayHStA, 1956), 1.

<sup>125</sup> *Sueddeutsche Zeitung*, "Beilngries Does Not Want to Accept any 'Föhrenwalders'" (Translated by JDC Staff)," in *Legal Records; Föhrenwald* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, March 28, 1956), 1.

17, 1956 there were still 152 Israeli returners in Föhrenwald and discussions began regarding their transfer to Forchheim.<sup>126</sup> In this camp the returners would await their emigration or repatriation to Israel.<sup>127</sup> Forchheim boasted barracks that could house between 15 and 25 individuals, were furnished with most of the necessities necessary for daily life, and were heated by stoves. The camp administration would provide individual cooking facilities so that communal meals would not be necessary.<sup>128</sup> It was argued that all of the necessities were present in the camp and it would act as the perfect holding space for the returners, thereby emptying Föhrenwald of many of its inhabitants and making its closing that much easier.

Learning of the potential transfer of these 50 families from Föhrenwald to Forchheim, the Beilngreis City Council submitted an appeal to the Ministry of Labor stating that they met the news of the up-coming transfer “with indignation, consternation and great anxiety”<sup>129</sup> When they had offered to help the government they had not meant to take in unruly illegal returners. The City Council cited “fear that ‘also in the area of Beilngries the Foehrenwalders would not behave in a more civilized manner than they did at their former place of residence.”<sup>130</sup> Rumors about the disruptive, argumentative, and hostile actions of the Föhrenwalders in general, and the returners in particular, caused the City Council to question the benefits of allowing these Jewish returners to settle in the area, no matter how temporary their stay might be. They argued that the inclusion of Föhrenwalders in the “economically under-developed” area would extinguish “all hope to get an industrial firm interested in the camp.”<sup>131</sup> The City Council feared that if the returners settled in Forchheim they would just create a situation similar to that in Föhrenwald where the camp had

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<sup>126</sup> "DP-Lager Föhrenwald verschwindet: Katholisches Siedlungswerk übernimmt die 300 Häuser," *Frankfurter Rundschau*, February 17, 1956, 2.

<sup>127</sup> Geislhöringer, "Auflösung dea Regierungslagers für heimatlose jüdische Ausländer Föhrenwald (Ministers' Meeting)," 1.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Zeitung, "Beilngries Does Not Want to Accept any "Foehrenwalders" " 1.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

been sold but could not be vacated because of the continued presence of the Jewish DPs. The Ministry of Labor conceded to the protests made by the people of Beilngries and announced that they would not transfer the Föhrenwalders to the center at Forchheim.<sup>132</sup> In the meantime, the camp had been sold to a Nuremberg firm, making it unavailable for use as the future transfer center for Föhrenwald's illegal returners.<sup>133</sup> The economic interests of the area outweighed the need to move the returners to the camp, and the Bavarian Minister of Labor, Walter Stain, noted that he could not have guaranteed that the illegals would have refrained from creating unrest in the area.<sup>134</sup>

According to members of the Bavarian Refugee Administration, the biggest concern plaguing them as they worked to close Föhrenwald in 1956 was the continued existence of the illegal returners who had no residency permits in the country.<sup>135</sup> What could be done with these individuals when the camp closed? They formed a special group differing from legal Displaced Persons who could integrate into German society. By March 1956 there were 141 Jewish returners remaining in camp Föhrenwald who had entered the camp after its closing in October 1952.<sup>136</sup> The more than 650 other returners, both registered and un-registered, who called the camp their home had been resettled abroad by the AJDC, HIAS, and their successor organization the United Hias service by 1956.<sup>137</sup> The German administrators running camp Föhrenwald conducted a survey of the remaining returners in the camp in 1956 in order to ascertain at which stage of emigration they found themselves.<sup>138</sup> The Bavarian government moved forward with

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<sup>132</sup> "Announcement of the Bavarian Radio," in *Legal Records* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1956), 1.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>134</sup> Meunchener Markur, "No Foehrenwalders to Beilngries (Translated by JDC staff)," in *Legal Records* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1956), 1.

<sup>135</sup> "DP-Lager Föhrenwald verschwindet: Katholisches Siedlungswerk übernimmt die 300 Hauser," 1.

<sup>136</sup> Jaffe, "Mass Movement Out of Camp Foehrenwald Announced by Overseas Director of AJDC," 1.

<sup>137</sup> An estimated 50 returners chose to re-immigrate to Israel in early 1956. *Ibid.*

<sup>138</sup> "Five More Jewish 'returnees' Sentenced by German Court," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (New York: JTA-Jewish News Archive, January 26, 1954), 1.



the camp liquidation based on the information collected. The Ministry of Work and Social Welfare mandated that 84 of the remaining returners in Föhrenwald be transferred to the Ludwigsfeld center near Munich.<sup>139</sup> Ludwigsfeld was a non-Jewish center mainly inhabited by East European DPs, and the 87 returners resettled there were those with valid emigration visas awaiting their departure, which was scheduled to take place within the year.<sup>140</sup> This left 54 returners in Föhrenwald, most of whom were booked to depart Germany within a matter of weeks. A further three families were notified that they would be transported to Ludwigsfeld in November 1956.<sup>141</sup> These families threatened to cause problems for the JDC and West German government, but were reminded by the Joint that if they did not cooperate they would jeopardize their emigration.<sup>142</sup> Finally, the three families left Föhrenwald willingly on November 26, 1956. The remaining returners were those with no chance of emigrating, but who were still ineligible for integration in Germany or resettlement grants there.<sup>143</sup> These returners were eventually given the same legal status as the former DPs and were able to integrate into German society.<sup>144</sup> Any Jews left in the camp almost one year later who could emigrate when the center closed would be “held” in Munich until their emigration visas were processed.<sup>145</sup> Those who were ineligible for emigration, refused to emigrate, or return to Israel, would be transferred to non-Jewish DP camps in the Munich area.<sup>146</sup> The local Bavarian government ordered all illegals living in the camp to move to one of these centers or to suffer arrest and imprisonment. To this end, a full search was

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<sup>139</sup> "Jewish Refugees Transferred from Foehrenwald to Non-Jewish Camp," in *The Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA- Jewish News Agency, April 19, 1956), 1.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> Mary Palevsky, "Re: Mr. Feder's Letter to Dr. Burmeister, dated November 15, 1956," in *Legal records, JDC, Germany* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1956), 1.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> "Jewish Refugees Transferred from Foehrenwald to Non-Jewish Camp," 1.

<sup>144</sup> To read more on these returners please see ORI Yehudi's up-coming dissertation, *Out from Zion: Jewish Emigration from Palestine and Israel, 1945-1960*

<sup>145</sup> Jaffe, "Mass Movement Out of Camp Foehrenwald Announced by Overseas Director of AJDC," 2.

<sup>146</sup> Theodore Feder, "Camp Foehrenwald," in *Camp Foehrenwald* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1956), 2.

conducted in camp Föhrenwald in 1956, during which all men without residents' permits were arrested and removed from the camp.<sup>147</sup> While some returners remained in the camp hidden in the homes of family and friends who were legal inhabitants of the center, the vast majority had been resettled abroad or transferred by the end of 1956, bringing their illegal stay in Föhrenwald to a close.

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<sup>147</sup> This raid targeted men as the head of the household during the search. It appears that women were often left out of these searches and when they were not, it led to protests by the male DPs in the center. "Notes on the Illegal Returners," in *LRA, Reg Lager Föhrenwald* (Munich: BayHStA, 1956), 1.

### **Föhrenwald's Unwanted: The Fate of the Chronically Ill**

The present population [in Föhrenwald] consists of all types of people left over from the great postwar emigrations from more than 60 different camps. There are TB and post-TB cases. There are people rejected by country after country for health, political or moral reasons. (We must face the facts that there a small number in Foehrenwald today who are there because it offers them protection from the police outside.) There are, of course, the returnees who were not able to take root in Israel. There are people who could not make a living in the various communities in Germany and drifted to Foehrenwald...Despite all this, JDC believes the residents can be provided for elsewhere and Foehrenwald can be closed. It has been proved during the past two years that it is possible to move these people and provide them with a viable existence in normal surroundings.<sup>1</sup>

While Camp Föhrenwald had originally housed physically healthy displaced Jews, its absorption of all of Germany's remaining Jewish DPs as emigration increased and the other Jewish IRO centers were closed, resulted in a total shift of its demographic. Föhrenwald became a center of the most "undesirable" DPs in Germany mainly because of their health problems or criminal records. With the introduction of the Displaced Persons Act in 1948, and its extension in 1949, the JDC began to work on acquiring pardons for the Displaced Jews who had previously been rejected from U.S. immigration on the grounds of moral turpitude, usually because they had a criminal record.<sup>2</sup> By clearing the records of these otherwise qualified candidates, the JDC was able to help them secure emigration visas abroad, further lowering the number of camp residents. This left behind the sick and aged who could do nothing to make themselves appear more attractive to emigration boards.

Although the Jews who called Föhrenwald home after 1950 were healthy enough to reside in the camp rather than in nursing homes or in the neighboring Gauting Sanatorium, they could not be resettled as part of a mass migration plan as had so many other DPs before them.<sup>3</sup> These displaced Jews were different from their brethren. Their age, physical and mental health,

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<sup>1</sup> The American Joint Distribution Committee, "The Foehrenwald Story," in *Germany, Displaced Persons, Camps: Foehrenwald, July-December 1954* (New York: AJJDC, 1954), 8.

<sup>2</sup> JDC Legal Department, "Clearing of Records of Convicted DPs," in *Camp Föhrenwald, January 1956- April 1957* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1950), 1.

<sup>3</sup> Samuel Jaffe, "Mass Movement Out of Camp Foehrenwald Announced by Overseas Director of AJDC," in *Camp Foehrenwald* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1956), 2.

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asocial personalities and the fact that they were, more often than not, unemployable meant that they remained in the camp waiting for the miraculous to happen: For some country to agree to grant them a visa.<sup>4</sup> In addition to the above-mentioned displaced Jews were their families, some of whom had survived the war, some of whom were born in the camps. This was the case for the more than 250 children living in Föhrenwald in 1956 who knew no life beyond the gates of the center.<sup>5</sup> These families had already applied to the United States, as well as several other countries, only to be rejected. They argued that they would remain in Föhrenwald until they finally qualified for a visa; however, the German government and Jewish aid organizations had different plans. Desperate to close camp Föhrenwald, the West German government had set several closing dates for the center only to see them pass without any real reduction in the camp population, or with a huge increase as happened with the arrival of the illegal returnees. By the mid-1950s the calls for the closure of Föhrenwald were heard from everyone involved in the care of the DPs as well as from the DPs themselves. In late 1954 the West German government announced that it would move forward with its efforts to close the camp with more energy than it had used in the past.<sup>6</sup> It was with this knowledge that the JDC moved determinedly forward with its plan to resettle all of the remaining 1,300-1,600 DPs left in Föhrenwald so that the camp could finally be closed.<sup>7</sup>

Driven by a desire to see an end to the misery and hopelessness rampant in the camp, the JDC set forth to find new homes for the center's residents. Speaking on behalf of the JDC, Samuel Jaffe, the Joint's Public Relations Director said, "We believe that the camp must be

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<sup>4</sup> Charles Jordan, "The Story of Föhrenwald," in *Legal records* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1957), 5.

<sup>5</sup> Jaffe, "Mass Movement Out of Camp Foehrenwald Announced by Overseas Director of AJDC," 3.

<sup>6</sup> "Germany Starts Moving Jewish Dp's from Foehrenwald to New Homes," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA- Jewish News Archive, December 9, 1954), 1.

<sup>7</sup> The number of Jews left in Föhrenwald was in constant flux because of the flow of those who left the camp for resettlement and the arrival of Jewish returnees from Israel, Europe, and communities throughout Germany.

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closed not only because of the effect it has upon the adults, but because it is vital that the nearly 250 children still remaining be taken out of this demoralizing atmosphere and given the opportunity to grow up in normal surroundings.”<sup>8</sup> With this daunting task before them, the JDC emigration offices went to work contacting countries where it was believed that emigration might be possible, while simultaneously working with the German government to ensure that those who could not qualify for emigration, or chose not to emigrate, could be absorbed into German society.

Heartened by the more than 200,000 Jewish DPs that the JDC had aided in immigrating to Israel, the United States, South America, Australia, and Canada, Joint officials set forth to finish the job.<sup>9</sup> While the task before them seemed insurmountable, the JDC was able to settle more than five hundred old and infirm DPs as well as their families, over the course of 1952-1955. The Joint enlisted the help of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration in order to find hospitable countries willing to take these DPs.<sup>10</sup> It also received a special grant from the Ford Foundation, which helped them to cover the costs associated with these resettlements.<sup>11</sup> By 1955 not only Norway and Sweden had agreed to accept some of the most ill residents of Föhrenwald, but also Argentina, Uruguay and Australia, as well as Brazil, which offered to take 1,000 camp residents.<sup>12</sup> Perhaps the most significant country to lift its immigration ban against the elderly and ill was Israel. In 1955 the JDC worked with the Israeli government to arrange for a special dispensation that allowed elderly and sick DPs to make Aliyah by waiving the health regulations

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<sup>8</sup> Jaffe, "Mass Movement Out of Camp Foehrenwald Announced by Overseas Director of AJDC," 5.

<sup>9</sup> Jordan, "The Story of Föhrenwald," 1.

<sup>10</sup> Jaffe, "Mass Movement Out of Camp Foehrenwald Announced by Overseas Director of AJDC," 3.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Jordan, "The Story of Föhrenwald," 6.

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that had been blocking their immigration.<sup>13</sup> In order to bring about this solution, the JDC agreed to take full responsibility for all of the medical costs associated with these immigrants and opened special health facilities under their Malben division for the ill and disabled.<sup>14</sup> They also established nursing homes for the elderly in Israel.<sup>15</sup> With the assistance of the Jewish Agency in Israel, the Joint made it possible for families in Föhrenwald to buy homes in the Jewish state before their departure, ensuring that the family members of the chronically ill and elderly could avoid transit centers and settle directly into their new homes.<sup>16</sup> The first family to leave Föhrenwald for Israel under this new plan left the camp on March 30, 1955 leading the way for future emigrations.<sup>17</sup> By June 1955 the plan was in full effect and Jewish DPs left for new homes in Israel on a regular basis.<sup>18</sup> In addition, the JDC and HIAS had worked out an emigration plan for South America in which they agreed to pay the transportation costs, housing, and furnishing expenses, welfare costs, and medical payments for the hardcore DPs who settled there.

In order to cover these costs, the JDC entered into fierce negotiations with the West German government. The Federal Republic, acknowledging the “special needs” of the remaining DPs in Föhrenwald agreed to establish a fund of 3,000,000 Deutsche Marks, or \$714,000 for emigration grants. This fund would be divided among the DPs who would receive enough to resettle in their prospective country. This money would only be released to the new emigrant upon his or her arrival at said destination. The JDC decided in the wake of the 1954 Föhrenwald demonstration that the easiest way to close Föhrenwald was by establishing a

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<sup>13</sup> Jaffe, "Mass Movement Out of Camp Foehrenwald Announced by Overseas Director of AJDC," 3.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>15</sup> Samuel Jaffe, "Paris Letter #36," in *Legal Records, JDC* (New York: AJJDC, 1956), 1.

<sup>16</sup> "Jewish Dp's from Foehrenwald Camp Leave Germany for Israel," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA-Jewish News Archive, June 28, 1955), 1.

<sup>17</sup> "First Foehrenwald Family Leaves for Israel Under New Plan," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA-Jewish News Archive, March 30, 1955), 1.

<sup>18</sup> "Jewish Dp's from Foehrenwald Camp Leave Germany for Israel," 1.

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rehabilitation program on a case-by-case basis rather than giving the camp a lump sum of money to be dispersed among the camp inhabitants at the discretion of the various camp committees.<sup>19</sup> To this end the JDC promised \$650,000 from grant money issued by the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany “to provide émigrés from Foehrenwald with cash to tide them over the difficult period of adjustment in their new countries.”<sup>20</sup> This translated as a cash grant amounting to enough money to cover basic subsistence for the emigrating DPs’ first year in their new home country.<sup>21</sup> By only dispensing these grant funds when the DPs reached their new homes, the West German government and JDC were able to ensure that the former Föhrenwalder left the camp, while simultaneously ending the practice of many of the Hardcore who argued that they would remain in the center until they received their emigration grants and restitution funds. Removing any chance of receiving their grants before departure prevented these DPs from demanding more money or heeding rumors that their funding would be increased if they remained in the camp longer, two common practices in the center.<sup>22</sup> The substantial amounts assigned for the resettlement of the remaining Föhrenwalders illustrated the monumental size of the project before the JDC and the West German government and showed that there really was no other organization providing aid to which the DPs could turn for support in their calls for resettlement. Nahum Goldmann stated that the monetary funds promised by the JDC and the

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<sup>19</sup> Warburg, "Outgoing Cable to Munich," in *Germany, Displaced Persons, Camp: Foehrenwald, July- December 1954* (New York: AJJDC, 1954), 1.

<sup>20</sup> Jaffe, "Mass Movement Out of Camp Foehrenwald Announced by Overseas Director of AJDC," 3.

<sup>21</sup> "Goldmann Lauds J. D. C. Plan for Resettlement of Last Jewish Dp's," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA- Jewish News Archive, April 30, 1954), 1.

<sup>22</sup> This was actually the case in 1953. One hundred post- TB Jewish DPs being transported to Sweden for their resettlement demanded that the train they were traveling on turn around and take them back to Föhrenwald. These DPs had heard a rumor that the Bundestag was discussing restitution funds and they feared that if they left the country they would not be able to acquire their compensation. The JDC team escorting them to Sweden were finally able to calm the group and get them to continue on their way. Ronald Webster, "American Relief and Jews in Germany, 1945-1960," *Leo Baeck Institute* 38, no. 1 (1993): 303.

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West German government would expedite the closure of the camp and he was not wrong in his assessment.<sup>23</sup>

Those “resigned” to remain in Germany, or those who had no way of emigrating, also received German and JDC grants. Most of the money provided by Germany for this use actually went into building homes for these displaced Jews in towns throughout the country. However, the German government also agreed to aid the DPs remaining in Germany to integrate into the German economy and to find employment opportunities. For its part, the JDC provided a grant for furniture and other household goods for those who were able to move into their new German housing. They also made money available to help these Jews settle into their lives outside of the camp. The money was only intended to help them through the difficult period of unemployment or until they were able to support themselves.<sup>24</sup> For those requiring additional assistance, the JDC established funding for “institutional care” for the “aged, chronically ill or physically handicapped individuals,” who would settle throughout the country.<sup>25</sup> Additionally, the JDC provided welfare opportunities for these DPs in the German-Jewish communities where the DPs were settled and sent workers from the Munich offices to work in JDC offices throughout the country.<sup>26</sup>

Cities like Stuttgart, Frankfurt, Düsseldorf, and Passau took large numbers of former DPs, and Munich agreed to allow the largest number to settle within the city. Of 473 people integrated into German society in 1956, 350 were housed in Munich.<sup>27</sup> Two hundred apartments

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<sup>23</sup> "Goldmann Lauds J. D. C. Plan for Resettlement of Last Jewish Dp's," 1.

<sup>24</sup> Jaffe, "Mass Movement Out of Camp Föhrenwald Announced by Overseas Director of AJDC," 5.

<sup>25</sup> "Goldmann Lauds J. D. C. Plan for Resettlement of Last Jewish Dp's," 1.

<sup>26</sup> "Report from 1/10/1956," in *Germany, Displaced Persons, General, 1954, 1955-1958, 1960* (New York: AJJDC, 1956), 1.

<sup>27</sup> "Monthly Report, January, 1957," in *Germany, Displaced Persons, Camps: Föhrenwald, 1956-1957, 1962* (New York: AJJDC, 1957), 2.



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in total were scheduled for completion throughout German cities.<sup>28</sup> The fact that each town had the right to accept or deny the admission of former DPs meant that places such as Hesse notified the Minister of Labor that “it felt neither a moral nor an ethical obligation to accept refugees from Bavaria.”<sup>29</sup> Proclamations like these led Ministers like State Secretary, Walter Stain to issue “bitter words [about] his dissatisfaction with the lacking solidarity of the federal Länder in housing foreign refugees and with the obstinacy on the part of the refugees” who refused to “move into the houses in Munich especially built for them.”<sup>30</sup> Germany’s desire to see the camp closed was so great that the German government took a small number of camp residents to court to see to their eviction.<sup>31</sup> These DPs had originally agreed to leave the camp and housing had been built for this purpose, but they refused to depart when their assigned housing became available.<sup>32</sup> The JDC suspected that if Displaced Persons continued to refuse resettlement in Germany, German authorities would begin to forcefully move them. While the Joint did not condone the forceful eviction of the camp residents, they understood that they had no say over the matter. Seidenman noted that German officials would soon begin moving the DPs’ possessions to their new residences and then the camp inhabitants would “be politely invited to join their belongings.”<sup>33</sup> Although Seidenman hoped that this method would only need to be employed in a few cases, he did see the benefit in illustrating to the DPs that the Germans were serious about closing the center.<sup>34</sup> Many of the remaining Jews who had signed up for housing

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<sup>28</sup> "Germany Starts Moving Jewish Dp's from Foehrenwald to New Homes," 1.

<sup>29</sup> "Bavaria at the end of its Tether (translated from the original by a JDC official)," *Münchener Merkur*, April 11, 1956, 1.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Motivated by their own fears of a forceful eviction, a small number of Jewish DPs also sued the Federal Republic in the hopes of ensuring that they were not compelled to leave against their will.

<sup>32</sup> JDC Paris- Office of the General Counsel, "Foehrenwald," in *Legal Records JDC Germany* (New York: AJJDC, 1956), 1.

<sup>33</sup> Leonard Seidenman, "Internal Report," in *Camp Foehrenwald January 1956- April 1957* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1956), 2.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

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in Germany argued that they were only doing so temporarily, until they became eligible for visas to the United States.<sup>35</sup> Viewing their situation as a provisional arrangement, they did not feel any rush to leave Föhrenwald to settle outside of the camp. They could wait just as easily within the comfort of their homes in the center as they could elsewhere.

The residences made available throughout Germany were “adequate by German public-housing standards.”<sup>36</sup> They consisted of three bedrooms with coal stoves for heat and charged “normal” rents. German regulations stipulated that each apartment have a minimum of four adults, or three adults and two children per unit.<sup>37</sup> Most families could not meet these requirements on their own and were thus required to take on a tenant from Föhrenwald to meet the quota. Although the new accommodations were a definite improvement over the one room often shared by a family in Föhrenwald, it was not an ideal situation for many DPs trying to begin their lives anew in Germany. This situation led many DPs who had agreed to resettlement in Germany to refuse their new housing. In order to convince these Jews to settle in their assigned housing, the German government agreed to allow those who absolutely refused to take on a tenant to move into their homes until an agreement could be reached. More baffling to the German authorities than families that did not want to take on a new tenant was a single Föhrenwalder who refused to live with other camp residents. Minister Middelmann noted that many single Föhrenwalders refused to move into shared residences even when they had their own entrance to the apartment that allowed them to avoid the family’s main rooms.<sup>38</sup> The German government could not afford to make an apartment for one individual for fewer than

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<sup>35</sup> "Germany Starts Moving Jewish Dp's from Foehrenwald to New Homes," 1.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> "Germany Starts Moving Jewish DPs from Föhrenwald ", in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA- Jewish News Agency, December 9, 1954), 1.

<sup>38</sup> Middelmann, "Report on the Meeting of Minister Middelmann and the Representatives of Frankfurt and Düsseldorf," in *Germany, Displaced Persons, General* (New York: AJJDC, 1956), 1.

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14,000 Deutsche Marks which would decimate their funds set aside for housing these DPs. This problem was partially solved in March 1956 when Düsseldorf offered to build 39 single apartments, thereby housing a good portion of these individual Föhrenwalders.<sup>39</sup>

Notwithstanding the challenges that the German government and the JDC faced, they were confident that the camp could be closed fairly quickly. For the West German government this meant by the end of 1955. With this date in mind, the government sold the land and three hundred buildings on the property to the archdiocese of Munich-Freising in 1955.<sup>40</sup> The announced date for the closing of the camp passed and still more than 1,000 DPs called Föhrenwald their home. This led the West German government to propose the new closing date of March 31, 1956, and they were fairly confident that despite all of the other failed attempts at liquidating Föhrenwald, this time they would be able to meet the deadline.<sup>41</sup> The JDC was less sure that this deadline was realistic. Leonard Seidenman wrote that he believed the deadline was more for “internal composition and to prepare the Foehrenwalders for the action which is in preparation.”<sup>42</sup> He thought that in actuality it would be impossible to resettle everyone by March 31, if for no other reason than that many of the remaining residents were awaiting the completion of their new housing in Germany.

Initially, the integration grant could not be used because there was no available housing. While housing became more readily available in 1956, this had not been the case even six months before. The destruction wrought by the war combined with the influx of thousands of Volksdeutsche requiring housing meant that there was still a shortage of houses a decade after

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> "German Catholics Intend to Buy Buildings of Foehrenwald Camp," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA- Jewish News Archive, August 18, 1955), 1.

<sup>41</sup> "Katholisches Siedlungswerk übernimmt die 300 Häuser," *Frankfurter Rundschau*, February 17, 1956, 1.

<sup>42</sup> Seidenman, "Internal Report," 1.

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the end of the war.<sup>43</sup> The DPs who would remain in Germany had to stay in Föhrenwald until accommodations were available.<sup>44</sup> This did not even begin to happen until October 1955 when the first apartments became ready.<sup>45</sup> The JDC and camp inhabitants then had to wait while other apartments were “rushed to completion in various cities in Germany.”<sup>46</sup> This meant that the liquidation of the camp depended on the speed with which housing could be completed, adding yet another delay to the process. Even in early March 1956, just 24 days before the German proclaimed day for the camp closure, Charles Jordan noted that there were families in the camp who were ready for resettlement but their new homes were not yet finished.<sup>47</sup> This was the case in late 1956 when an estimated 400 DPs remained in the camp awaiting their resettlement in Frankfurt, a city argued not yet to have “carried out its promise to absorb them.”<sup>48</sup> The representatives of Frankfurt, as well as Düsseldorf, argued that the cold weather at the beginning of 1956 had brought their building endeavors to a standstill. This lack of housing in these two cities led the Bavarian Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare to decide that it was better to keep the DPs in Föhrenwald past the March 31, 1956 closing deadline than it was to evacuate the camp.<sup>49</sup>

While the JDC had been very successful at resettling a large segment of the Föhrenwald residents in 1955, assisting 350 DPs to emigrate between January and November of that year, with an additional 90 Föhrenwalders integrating into German society, there were still 1,123

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<sup>43</sup> Jordan, "The Story of Föhrenwald," 5.

<sup>44</sup> "Germany Starts Moving Jewish Dp's from Foehrenwald to New Homes," 1.

<sup>45</sup> Jaffe, "Mass Movement Out of Camp Foehrenwald Announced by Overseas Director of AJDC," 5.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> "Dedicate Synagogue for Ex-DPs Resettled in Munich," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA- Jewish News Archive, September 5, 1956), 1.

<sup>49</sup> Middelmann, "Report on the Meeting of Minister Middelmann and the Representatives of Frankfurt and Düsseldorf," 1.

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remaining residents in early 1956.<sup>50</sup> Integration picked up in January and February 1956, when 136 residents were moved into houses throughout the country. A further 11 DPs emigrated abroad and 103 returners were transferred to the non-Jewish camp at Ludwigsfeld in April 1956. This left 640 legal residents in the center in March 1956, Germany's proposed closing date for that year.<sup>51</sup> The resettlement process sped up yet again in November 1956 when authorities moved 64 legal camp residents, who had yet to decide where they wanted to settle, into three Displaced Persons camps near Munich. The inhabitants in these camps were some of the remaining non-Jewish Displaced Persons who stayed in West Germany while they awaited their resettlement.<sup>52</sup> The number was further reduced to 261 inhabitants with the eventual resettlement of the center's orthodox community who were resettled in Munich and Pasing. Many of the final residents in camp Föhrenwald were awaiting their new residences in Germany or were just waiting to be processed for emigration.<sup>53</sup>

### **JDC Efforts**

Desperate to fulfill the Jewish DPs' wishes to be resettled abroad and to close the camp, the JDC's Emigration Headquarters wrote to various offices around the world in the hope of contriving some working plan for emigration. As the rejection letters continued to arrive at the Emigration Office, new letters were sent out to the same organizations refining the previously proposed plans in the hope of hitting on some new combination of suggestions that might convince emigration officials throughout Europe, and overseas, to accept the last remnant of Germany's Displaced Jews. The JDC emigration office spent the period from 1953-1957

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<sup>50</sup> "End of Year Report: Foehrenwald," in *Germany, Displaced Persons, Camps: Foehrenwald* (New York: AJJDC, 1955), 1.

<sup>51</sup> "JDC Outlines Plans for Aid to Jews in Europe in 1955," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA- Jewish News Archive, December 24, 1954), 1.

<sup>52</sup> "Monthly Report for January, 1957," in *Germany, Displaced Persons, Camps: Foehrenwald 1956-1957, 1962* (New York: AJJDC 1957), 1.

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

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contacting diplomats around the world and creating distinct plans for the possible emigration of DPs to these countries.

Although finding homes for the sick and elderly was “slow, arduous work... rehabilitation was possible.”<sup>54</sup> The JDC set itself to the task with a fair amount of success. The Joint and HIAS again contacted Jewish communities and governments worldwide pleading for help in their resettlement efforts. According to Charles Jordan these pleas did not fall on deaf ears and “Wherever we turned for help, in our efforts to resettle these last and perhaps most scarred of Hitler’s victims, we met with heartwarming response from cooperating Jewish communities throughout the world.”<sup>55</sup> One Joint worker noted “the word ‘Hardcore’ turned out to be not as inflexible as it sounds. Many were cured sufficiently so that they were able to pass physical tests and leave for other countries. Outlets for emigration were even found for the bedridden.”<sup>56</sup> However, finding homes for the remaining DPs in the mid to late 1950s proved even harder than it had previously been. Many of the countries willing to take ill, elderly, and disabled DPs had already met their quotas, and the DPs themselves were often resistant to emigrating to some of the countries willing to take them. While the DPs publically proclaimed they would resettle anywhere away from Germany, they often failed to register for available visas to Israel, South America, and Australia, hoping for a chance to emigrate to North America. Despite these obstacles, the JDC was confident that “The majority of the present residents will no doubt leave the camp to be migrated to other countries.”<sup>57</sup> For the rest of the DPs, integration into German society was the only option. In order to determine which group a DP fell into, the JDC began to reevaluate all of the remaining DPs to see if emigration was possible or if

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<sup>54</sup> George Vida, "Letter to Dr. Emil Lehman," in *Germany, Displaced Persons, Camps: Foehrenwald, July-December 1954* (New York: AJJDC, 1954), 2.

<sup>55</sup> Jordan, "The Story of Föhrenwald," 1.

<sup>56</sup> Committee, "The Foehrenwald Story," 3.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

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integration was necessary. The Joint's emigration staff scoured the files of every single remaining DP to ensure that there was nothing they had initially missed that might make these displaced Jews attractive to one of the countries that had previously taken DPs from Föhrenwald.

The JDC established an office in 1952 to study the case files of each DP individually in order to assess whether a DP and his family should emigrate or integrate. This office consisted of a team of doctors, nurses, social workers, and vocational analysts who evaluated each DP and assessed the likelihood of their ability to integrate into new surroundings both abroad and domestically.<sup>58</sup> The bundling of DPs to fill a given quota for a particular country would not work for these remaining Jews and so the Joint set out to evaluate each of these Föhrenwalders by interviewing the head of each household several times as well as meeting with each individual family member.<sup>59</sup> Jordan described this endeavor by saying

It could only be done by studying each and every case individually, planning for every family unit separately, bringing to bear the concerted efforts of every government and agency, every professional social worker and emigration counselor available, in order to solve one of the most complex and diseased social aftermaths of the war.<sup>60</sup>

While the stated goal of the JDC, HIAS who helped with the emigration side of the process, and the German government involved in integration, was the quick closure of Föhrenwald, it still took 3 years of work before the camp was officially closed. This happened on April 1, 1956 when the name of the center was again changed to "The Liquidation Commission Föhrenwald."<sup>61</sup> Despite its official closure, 633 residents still remained within the confines of the camp.<sup>62</sup> The JDC's insistence that the camp closure be as easy on the DPs as possible resulted in the continued life of these DPs in Föhrenwald until February 1957. The JDC was unwilling to do

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<sup>58</sup> Boris Sapir, "Letter," in *Germany, Displaced Persons, Camps: Foehrenwald 1956-1957, 1962* (New York: AJJDC, 1962), 2.

<sup>59</sup> Jordan, "The Story of Föhrenwald," 3.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>61</sup> "Report from June 19, 1956," in *Germany, Displaced Persons, Camps: Foehrenwald, 1956-1957, 1962* (New York: AJJDC, 1956), 3.

<sup>62</sup> Seven DPs had been resettled at the end of March 1956. *Ibid.*

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anything that would be detrimental to the residents of the center and did not believe that moving them to a new camp while awaiting their integration would be beneficial to anyone other than the Germans who wanted to hand the center over to its new owners.<sup>63</sup>

Despite all of the problems and delays experienced by the JDC, Joint workers moved forward with their emigration and integration plans. The JDC worked not only to find new homes for the last of Föhrenwald's DPs, but also to ensure their future care and that these Jews would have full legal rights upon reaching their new home countries.<sup>64</sup> While the JDC was not able to satisfy all of the demands put forth by the DP community in Germany, they were successful at resettling a significant number of the population abroad. In 1956 alone, the Joint arranged emigration for 250 residents of Föhrenwald and integrated a further 473 DPs in Germany.<sup>65</sup> This success continued in early 1957 when they resettled nearly 300 people outside of the center. The JDC was even able to resettle 339 DPs in America under the United States Refugee Relief Act between 1953 and 1956.<sup>66</sup> However, there were some DPs that despite the best efforts of the JDC could not qualify for emigration.

### **The TB Community in Föhrenwald**

We, the victims of the Second World War, victim of the Ghettos and the Concentration Camps of Hitler Germany, we, who have suffered the most, are in a position without a way out and the world- the democratic world- has forgotten us.<sup>67</sup>

There was one group that continued to present the JDC with problems through no fault of their own: The TB community. There was a de facto ranking of the remaining Hardcore DPs in Föhrenwald from most difficult to resettle to those for whom securing a visa would be difficult but not impossible. Within this ranking system the DPs with tuberculosis were by far the hardest

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<sup>63</sup> Jordan, "The Story of Föhrenwald," 4.

<sup>64</sup> Jaffe, "Mass Movement Out of Camp Föhrenwald Announced by Overseas Director of AJDC," 5.

<sup>65</sup> "Monthly Report, January, 1957," 1.

<sup>66</sup> Jordan, "The Story of Föhrenwald."

<sup>67</sup> TB Committee of Camp Föhrenwald, "Memorandum," in *Germany, Displaced Persons, Camps: Föhrenwald, July- December 1954* (New York: AJDC, 1954), 1.



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to emigrate. The resettlement efforts of the JDC had resulted in a vast reduction in the number of chronically ill DPs in Föhrenwald, leaving TB and post-TB cases, one hundred of whom were considered healthy enough to emigrate by their German doctors, and their families awaiting emigration in 1954.<sup>68</sup> No country wanted to take on new citizens who were sick with a communicable illness that, even when in remission, had a very good chance of coming back. Additionally, and perhaps more importantly, was the fact that there was no known cure for tuberculosis. Reports from within Föhrenwald lamented the new cases of the disease that occurred in the camp when a “post-TB” patient had an outbreak of TB, and instead of immediately going to the Gauting Sanatorium, he unknowingly infected other residents. Even for those who did not have any outbreaks of the disease after their initial treatment, their past struggles with TB continued to bar their emigration abroad.<sup>69</sup> Several countries were unwilling to take the risk of the disease spreading among their population and refused to accept any DPs who had a history with TB. This meant that the majority of the so-called Hardcore were TB patients, those who had recovered from TB, or were family members. Thirty percent of the residents in Föhrenwald in 1955 had at some point had tuberculosis.<sup>70</sup>

Unwilling to sit idly by while awaiting their chance to qualify for a visa, the Jewish TB community of Föhrenwald acted as most other Jewish sects in the camps had, by establishing a representative committee to act as their voice when making demands and negotiating terms. This committee would not wait for the future of the TB contingency to unfold without any say and its representatives reached to the highest authorities, including U.S. President Eisenhower, in order to ensure that their voice was heard and their personal autonomy in the camp was

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<sup>68</sup> Vida, "Letter to Dr. Emil Lehman," 1.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> "JDC Outlines Plans for Aid to Jews in Europe in 1955," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA-Jewish News Archive, December 23, 1955), 1.

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respected. Understanding the precarious nature of their situation, the TB community in Föhrenwald struggled all the harder to ensure that they were not forcefully integrated into German society. This is not to say that members of the TB community did not choose to settle in Germany when given the choice between remaining in the country and immigrating to Israel, often the only country that would take them. However, it is important to understand that the efforts of the TB community, combined with the endless work undertaken by the JDC, allowed these Jews some choice in their futures even if it was not the exact outcome for which they had hoped.

The TB and post-TB community in Föhrenwald organized themselves into a very vocal committee in the late 1940s when many former TB patients were deemed healthy enough for their release from the Gauting Sanatorium and their resettlement in the camp. Despite the knowledge that they were considered the least attractive residents of Föhrenwald, the TB Committee issued regular calls for their immediate resettlement away from Germany. These calls for emigration became more insistent with the German takeover of control of the center, and as threats to close the camp became more real. The demands of the TBers became ever more urgent as many of the illegal returners were again resettled abroad while the members of the TB community still awaited initial visas for their emigration.<sup>71</sup> Demanding to know when they would be settled outside of the camp, the TB community in Föhrenwald began writing letters. These letters reached around the world to leaders from Israeli President, Yitzhak Ben-Zvi and the Israeli Prime Minister, Moshe Sharett, to Ed Warburg the President of the Universal Joint, the Jewish Labor committee, and members of the Claims Conference, just to name a few. The plight of these sick Jews reached as far as the *New York Times*, which published an article about their

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<sup>71</sup> Ann S. Petluck, "Residents of Foehrenwald," in *Germany, Displaced Persons, Camps: Foehrenwald, July-December 1954* (New York: AJJDC, 1954), 1.

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continued displacement in 1952. In this article entitled, "Sick D.P.'s Make Plea," the 300 displaced Jews who had suffered from TB, and made up the Föhrenwald TB Committee, "appealed to Western Europe and the United States to help the inmates to emigrate."<sup>72</sup> The article noted that the sick residents of Föhrenwald had already been rejected for emigration by most countries. The feelings of hopelessness, despair, and abandonment shared by the TB community only increased as the 1950s stretched on and no end to their internment materialized.

By 1954 the TB Committee was utterly disillusioned with the Joint's efforts to see them resettled.<sup>73</sup> Looking to bring about their own change to their situation, the TB Committee increased its letter writing campaign and sent missives to "The Claims Conference, all of the Jewish world organizations, and to the Jewish world public."<sup>74</sup> These letters informed the world that despite all of their "appeals and cries of woe the sick post-TB in Föhrenwald and the sick from the TB Sanatorium in Gauting, still need to emigrate."<sup>75</sup> One letter explained that Joint officials had declared that the TB community needed to be resettled outside of Föhrenwald, and rehabilitated into a "constructive people," but that they lacked the resources to do so without outside help. If this was the JDC's stated goal, why then were they resettling everyone but the TB patients? The TB community found it especially frustrating that the funds for their rehabilitation and resettlement were in the hands of the Claims Conference, but that no change was being made to their care or emigration status. They argued that the Conference on Material Claims Against Germany had received money "to help those who had directly suffered from the

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<sup>72</sup> "Sick D.P.'s Make Plea; Tubercular Group in German Camp Seeks to Emigrate," in *New York Times* (New York February 22, 1952), 3.

<sup>73</sup> Perhaps the best example of the lack of faith in the Joint's ability to bring about an end to their waiting is illustrated by the involvement of members of the TB community in the 1954 Föhrenwald demonstration.

<sup>74</sup> The TB Committee in Camp Föhrenwald, "Letter to the Claims Conference, All of the world Jewish Organizations, and the Jewish World Public," in *Germany, Displaced Persons, Camps: Foehrenwald, July-December 1954* (New York: AJJDC, 1954), 1. (Translated by the Author)

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

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Nazis,” and yet the TB community saw none of these funds.<sup>76</sup> Who should this money go to if not the TB community? The TB Committee argued that “it is clear to those of us who are still very sick 15 years after the last war, that we must get our proper funding in order to return to a normal life both physically and mentally.”<sup>77</sup> This normal life must occur away from the horrors of the Holocaust and should include “a proper home, medical treatment, and a satisfactory minimum allowance to help the DPs reestablish their lives.”<sup>78</sup> Instead of having any of these things, the TB Committee argued that they lived in “a place full of misery for the remnants of the Szejrit Haplajta in Germany.”<sup>79</sup> The DPs plagued by TB argued that it was the “moral duty” of all of the democratic countries to do everything in their power, with the aid of the Jewish organizations, to ensure that the sick population of Föhrenwald and their families were resettled abroad as soon as possible, even if this meant that they temporarily stayed in a “transit country.”<sup>80</sup> They said “The democratic world will not have completed her task for the DPs, as long as one victim of Hitler had not finally been resettled somewhere.”<sup>81</sup>

These legal Jewish DPs with TB argued that they were willing to resettle anywhere as long as it was away from the “accursed soil of Germany.” However, in actuality, some of these individuals, mostly those designated as post-TB, had a chance of acquiring a visas to Israel or South America, but chose not to emigrate there, often fearing that the life in these countries would be too hard for them. This occurrence was so common that the JDC began to stop supplemental payments to DPs who qualified for resettlement but remained in the camp.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Föhrenwald, "Letter to the Claims Conference, All of the world Jewish Organizations, and the Jewish World Public."

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Föhrenwald, "Memorandum," 1.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> James P. Rice, "Letter # 3629, Foehrenwald-Munich-Frankfurt," in *45/54 Germany, Displaced Persons, Camps: Foehrenwald, July-December 1954* (New York: AJJDC, 1954), 3.

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Despite this, these Jews declared that there were 60-70 families who were willing to settle in Israel, but that the Joint had not yet established a system for their emigration to the Jewish state. Fearing that their families would be left in transit camps struggling to survive, the TB community refused to leave for Israel without a plan in place, not only for themselves, but also for their loved ones. While the JDC and Jewish Agency had established a plan in 1954 which allowed DPs in Föhrenwald to buy homes in Israel before their departure, thereby ensuring that these DPs could avoid reception centers and new immigrant camps, the plan expired in December of that year and thus was no longer available to the TB community once the Malben program went into effect.<sup>83</sup> The JDC had already ensured that the DPs, TB and otherwise, who settled to countries like Norway, Sweden, and Australia, as well as several countries in South America, had the resources that they needed to rebuild their lives once they arrived there. This care included their healthy family members.<sup>84</sup> Unfortunately, these countries were only willing to saddle themselves with a few sick Föhrenwalders, leaving the TB community to demand their immediate resettlement in Israel. The fact that Israel remained closed to the TBers in Föhrenwald led the TB Committee to argue that the Joint was working about as hard to see to their future settlement in Israel as they were to immigrating them to the United States and Canada, which according to the TBers was not very hard at all.<sup>85</sup> It was for all of these reasons that the TB communities in Föhrenwald and Gauting called out to the world's Jews for help. While the JDC argued that these appeals only slowed the process of closing Föhrenwald and resettling its inhabitants, the TB Committee believed that it was solely through these pleas to

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<sup>83</sup> "Jewish Dp's in Germany Offered Homes in Israel by Jewish Agency," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (Internet: JTA- Jewish News Archive, November 1, 1954), 1.

<sup>84</sup> Föhrenwald, "Letter to the Claims Conference, All of the world Jewish Organizations, and the Jewish World Public," 2.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

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influential individuals that any meaningful consideration would be given to their continued confinement.

Although the TB community often claimed that they had been abandoned by world Jewry and the western democracies, they did not deny that several organizations had helped the DP community over the course of the first nine years of camp life. They acknowledged that the IRO, the JWC, AJDC, Jewish Workers Committee, and several other organizations had helped to bring about an end to the wandering of so many thousands of Jews. These Jews were able, the TB Committee argued, to stop living on relief and had “left the country and the people which are responsible for the extermination of 6 Million Jews - who were our fathers, mothers, sisters and brothers.”<sup>86</sup> Why, the TB community asked, had these organizations worked so hard for the resettlement of their brethren but now abandoned them to life in Germany? “We are the ones who have suffered most, and our destiny is that we, men women and children, have to carry the burden of the terrible consequences of the Second World War.”<sup>87</sup> The TB community demanded to know when they would be able to emigrate as well as the terms of their resettlement.

### **The American blockade**

The difficulty in placing the TB community meant that special efforts beyond those already being employed by the Joint emigration staff, had to be implemented to try to find new countries of settlement for this group of Föhrenwalders. An additional burden was the insistence of the majority of the TB community to be resettled in the United States, a country closed to the immigration of individuals with TB. While they were willing to put their names onto emigration lists to other countries, these DPs with TB held hope that some day they would find new homes in America. However, American immigration laws were some of the strictest of all of the

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<sup>86</sup> Föhrenwald, "Memorandum," 1.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

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countries willing to accept refugees from Europe. The Public Health Service Department in the United States required that a patient have a clean lung x-ray two years after his last outbreak of tuberculosis in order to even be considered for emigration. This meant that these DPs were faced with long periods of waiting as they clung to their dreams of immigrating to North America without any guarantee that they would finally be issued a visa.

The United States enacted bills after 1948 that made special dispensations for Europe's displaced. They adapted the DP Bill in 1949 to increase the quotas available for Jewish DPs, but it did not allow those with TB to immigrate to America. The TB Committee stressed that it would be "very good, if we sick people- excluded until now from the DP Emigration Law to the USA- had a possibility to emigrate to the USA as well."<sup>88</sup> They continued on to say, "The cruel fate, which brought TBC to our families, our fathers and mothers, will not force the people to perish in the country where they acquired the disease."<sup>89</sup> That would be too cruel of an outcome for them to contemplate. In order to convince the U.S. to reconsider removing the ban against the emigration of TB patients from Germany, the healthy members of TB families pledged that they were willing to work and take care of their family members upon arrival in the United States. They educated their children in the Föhrenwald schools for a new life in America by teaching them English and reading books about the country; all they needed was the United States to give them the chance.<sup>90</sup>

To this end JDC officials kept in fairly constant correspondence with the United States' immigration offices in the hope of creating some plan that would allow TB patients to settle there. Unfortunately, no broad working plan could be achieved. Despite the knowledge that the U.S. was closed to almost all DP medical cases, Joint workers persisted in trying to change the

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

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minds of American bureaucrats in the hope that even a few ill Föhrenwalders could settle in the United States. This was the case in March 1954, when Louis D. Horwitz, the Director of European Emigration Headquarters for the JDC, contacted the United Services for New Americans (USNA) in order to see if some new legislation could be enacted allowing Jews who were fighting TB, or were considered post-TB, to immigrate to the States. This was not the first time that a member of the JDC emigration staff had contacted the USNA with this proposition. In 1952, Bob Pilpel of the JDC New York had contacted the United Services for New Americans' office asking about the possible admission of DPs with tuberculosis. At that time the UNSA had explored the problems facing these possible immigrants only to find that there was "no receptivity in the States for such a plan."<sup>91</sup> During his inquiry Horwitz was put into contact with Ann S. Petluck, the Assistant Executive Director of the United Services for New Americans. Horwitz explained to Petluck that the Social Services Offices of the JDC in Munich were evaluating all of the cases that included individuals who were hard to resettle because of medical problems in order to decide whether the best option "for each family is integration in Germany or emigration to [the] U.S."<sup>92</sup> Petluck told Horwitz that a small number of medical cases could be accepted for American immigration if a particular community granted them permission to settle there.<sup>93</sup> Unfortunately, this exemption did not extend to include active-TB cases. Instead it was reserved for DPs with heart disease, amputated limbs or other ailments.

Horwitz would not be deterred by the dismissal of his plans to resettle TB patients in the United States. He argued that there were plenty of places in Jewish TB hospitals throughout the

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<sup>91</sup> Petluck, "Residents of Foehrenwald," 1.

<sup>92</sup> Louis D. Horwitz, "Foehrenwald Residents," in *Germany, Displaced PErsons, Camps: Foehrenwald, July-December 1954* (New York: AJJDC, 1954), 1.

<sup>93</sup> Petluck, "Residents of Foehrenwald," 1.



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U.S. that would be well equipped to take the remaining DPs with active cases of TB.<sup>94</sup> Petluck responded by explaining to Horwitz that while DPs with active TB could occasionally come to the U.S. for temporary care, there was no special legislation that would allow them permanent residence there. She reminded Horwitz that there had been demands for an investigation of those rejected for emigration under the DP Act because the Public Health Services in Germany had diagnosed them with active TB when German doctors working with those in Föhrenwald diagnosed them as post-TB. An independent committee had been organized in the United States comprised of three doctors, two of whom had been selected by the various voluntary agencies working with Europe's DPs. Petluck noted that all three doctors were well respected in their field. These doctors reexamined 439 cases and found that only 24 had been incorrectly diagnosed, illustrating that the majority of the DPs with TB initially rejected had been denied on valid grounds.<sup>95</sup> Interestingly, Petluck continued on to note a case in which the intervention of a Jewish organization speaking on behalf of the TB community had led to the foreclosure of "the possibility of bringing some very worthwhile cases here from other parts of the world for actual TB treatment."<sup>96</sup> She said that the Jewish Labor Committee had given a number of DPs hope that they could eventually be brought to the United States, only to find that their discussions with Washington had in fact made matters worse for the TB community abroad. Petluck informed Horwitz that it was unrealistic to count on the United States as a possible location for the resettlement of active TBers.<sup>97</sup> If, however, the JDC did have actual cases of post-TB DPs, these individuals were entitled to Class B certificates of immigration, which the United Services for New Americans could help them secure. She told Horwitz to keep in mind that even those cases

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<sup>94</sup> Horwitz, "Foehrenwald Residents," 1.

<sup>95</sup> The 24 cases found to be free from TB were issued Class B certificates for immigration to the United States. Petluck, "Residents of Foehrenwald," 4.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

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had to be approved for settlement by a particular community before they could qualify for emigration. Unfortunately this meant that the vast majority of the TB community would never see the United States, let alone be resettled there.

Despite all of the calls for their immediate emigration, and all of the effort put forth by the JDC's special action teams and emigration offices, the patients with active TB, as well as a good sized portion of those diagnosed as post-TB, were deemed ineligible for emigration and large numbers of the TB population were integrated into Germany. While these DPs were found to be unfit for emigration by all of the countries contacted, the TB community continued to cling to the hope that they would be allowed to emigrate at some future time. This desire for future emigration continued even after the integration of these Jews.

### A New Ghetto in Germany? Resettling the Orthodox Community in Föhrenwald

It is an old Foehrenwald custom to work up at least one major crisis each year, preferably in February. This year the crisis is connected with the integration in Munich of the orthodox group of Foehrenwald.<sup>1</sup>

In the midst of the struggle to close Camp Föhrenwald and resettle as many of its remaining DPs abroad as possible, one community within the camp willingly volunteered to remain in Germany. The group comprised of 298 orthodox Jews who had contemplated their possible immigration to Israel, but in the end decided to integrate into German society.<sup>2</sup> They had originally opted to register for housing in Frankfurt but changed their minds and chose to remain in Munich, arguing that it would best suit them. They were originally told that there was not enough housing in Munich, and that the apartments that existed there were reserved for those with family and business connections in the city. The West German government finally agreed to place the nearly 50 families in apartments throughout Munich and its surrounding suburbs.<sup>3</sup> Their situation appeared rather straightforward and originally it was believed that they could be quickly resettled. However, moving them into new housing proved to be one of the more trying tasks faced by the Jewish aid organizations in Germany, the JDC, and German authorities as they worked to permanently close Föhrenwald. The demands of the Föhrenwald orthodox community pushed the Federal Republic and the JDC to the limits of their patience and understanding. The sense of entitlement driving the orthodox community led them to make unrealistic requests that threatened to destroy the tenuous relationship existing between the Jewish DPs in Föhrenwald and the Federal Republic of Germany.

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<sup>1</sup> Mary Palevsky, "Memorendom Concerning the Integration of the Camp Foehrenwald Orthodox group," in *Camp Foehrenwald* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1956), 1.

<sup>2</sup> Palevsky, "Camp Foehrenwald Orthodox Group," in *Camp Foehrenwald January 1956- April 1957* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1956), 5.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

The orthodox community in Föhrenwald continually failed to register for any housing as the locations for new apartments became available, and in April 1954 they petitioned the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare asking that the whole community be housed together in one closed settlement.<sup>4</sup> They demanded that this new settlement have a synagogue, mikvah, and cheder, or religious school. The orthodox community, as well as the Lubavitcher rabbi, argued that religious life could not continue without a ritual bath or an area where the community could form a Minyan. Additionally, they stated that the only option for schooling in areas a good distance from Jewish schools was to attend the local German school where Christianity was taught as part of the daily curriculum. While the Jewish children would be dismissed from participating in these activities, this would only further segregate them from the rest of the student body. For orthodox students too embarrassed to leave the classroom, the only option was sitting through the “direct religious influences of another faith.”<sup>5</sup> Dr. Burmeister from the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare suggested that perhaps the JDC could provide a bus that would take the orthodox children from settlements outside of Munich to the religious institutions in the city center.<sup>6</sup> However, the orthodox argued that any suggestion that did not involve their resettlement together in a closed community threatened their religious rights.<sup>7</sup>

Undeterred by the West German government’s refusal to allow the group to settle *en masse* and their explanation that Munich was already equipped with the necessary religious facilities, the orthodox community fought on to demand that their integration take place on their

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Secretariat of the Lubavitcher Rabbi, "Future of Religious Group in Föhrenwald," in *Camp Foehrenwald* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1956), 1.

<sup>6</sup> Theodore Feder, "Meeting at the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in Munich," in *Legal Records, JDC, Germany* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1956), 4.

<sup>7</sup> Secretariat of the Lubavitcher Rabbi, "Future of the Religious Group at Foehrenwald," in *Foehrenwald, January 1956- April 1957* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1956), 2.

terms.<sup>8</sup> Unbeknownst to anyone at the time, negotiations with these orthodox Displaced Persons would stretch on for more than two years and would become the central focus of the camp, the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, and the JDC, from January to April 1956. The demands of the orthodox group, and their insistence that their religious rights were being inhibited, led to the complete standstill of resettlement efforts and no progress was made until a compromise was finally reached in April 1956. While not all of their demands were met, the orthodox group was successful in their insistence to be resettled in suitable apartments with the necessary religious facilities within walking distance. It was their belief in their own autonomy and their continued persistence that brought about the group's settlement in two communities equipped with the religious necessities that allowed them to continue to lead orthodox lives in one of the most unlikely places: Germany.

Unlike the other groups in Föhrenwald, the orthodox community was not unanimously united in their demands or their desires for their future. In fact, the JDC watched as prominent members of the orthodox community attempted to bring the various camp residents together into one unified orthodox body. Realizing that there was strength in numbers, the larger sect of orthodox Jews who had registered to settle in Munich approached the smaller orthodox group who had decided to move to Frankfurt in 1954, hoping to convince them to change their registration status. They believed that their combined numbers would help them convince the West German government that settling all of the orthodox in one location was the best solution available. While the matter was not initially settled, it led Charles Jordan, Mary Palevsky, and Ted Feder of the JDC to begin discussing how best to prevent these individuals from forming

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<sup>8</sup> Palevsky, "Camp Foehrenwald Orthodox Group," 1.

into a group that could “become [a] serious issue.”<sup>9</sup> Believing that finding adequate space in Munich might be an insurmountable problem, the orthodox in Föhrenwald approached the *Massauische Heimataetten Gesellschaft*, the private construction company contracted by the West German government to build DP housing in Frankfurt, demanding that they build religious facilities for the community in the new settlement.<sup>10</sup> These orthodox Jews felt it necessary to have a back up plan in case they were unable to convince the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare to house them all in Munich. The appearance of so many demanding orthodox Jews alarmed the construction company who complained to the Ministry, and according to Mary Palevsky, that might have accounted for the very long delay in completing the new housing in Frankfurt dog-eared for Föhrenwald DPs.<sup>11</sup>

While the JDC had decided to actively avoid any involvement in the affairs concerning the orthodox community, this was impossible. Unsure how best to proceed in dealing with the orthodox community, the West German government approached the *Zentralwohlfahrtstelle*, the *Landesverband*, and the Joint to ask for advice. These Jewish bodies agreed that they were wholly against moving the orthodox community into one settlement. The JDC argued that this action would lead to a new Jewish ghetto in Munich and would in no way solve the psychological problems associated with Föhrenwald, but rather would transfer them *en bloc* to a new location.<sup>12</sup>

Despite these logical arguments, the fact that the West German government could only build residences in areas where none had existed, or where entire buildings had been destroyed during the war, meant that hundreds of Föhrenwalders would invariably be resettled together

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<sup>9</sup> Leonard Seidenman, "Resume on a Telephone Conversation Between Mr. Charles H. Jordon and Mrs. Mary Palevsky and Ted Feder," in *Camp Foehrenwald* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1956), 1.

<sup>10</sup> Palevsky, "Camp Foehrenwald Orthodox Group," 2.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

outside of the camp. This was the case in December 1955 when the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare announced the availability of 54 apartments that could house approximately 178 people in the *Ostfriedhof Siedlung*. The apartments were located in Munich near public transportation and would have been ideal for the Föhrenwald religious community. However, not a single orthodox family registered for housing in Ostfriedhof and non-orthodox residents eventually filled the apartments.

As negotiations got underway between the West German government and the orthodox community, members of the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare asked the religious representatives why they had not moved the whole orthodox community to Ostfriedhof.<sup>13</sup> Mr. Abraham, the leader of the orthodox community in Föhrenwald, answered that there was infighting and indecision among the religious Jews in the center that had led them to refrain from registering for housing in the complex. The Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare countered this argument by stating that they knew that the real reason that the orthodox community had not yet registered for any housing in Germany was because they hoped to receive higher emigration grants making the question of where they would stay in Munich a non-issue.<sup>14</sup> Abraham rebutted that Ostfriedhof would have been an unsuitable location for the orthodox community, citing the treatment of the non-orthodox Jewish children who were housed there as evidence. He argued that these children were discriminated against by the other students and teachers in the area and that the only way to avoid this was by settling the orthodox together in an area where the German population was used to their appearance and behavior. According to Abraham, the only suitable location for the orthodox community in Germany was in the Munich city center near Möhlstraße

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<sup>13</sup> Feder, "Meeting at the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in Munich," 2.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

and Rupprechtstrasse.<sup>15</sup> While the West German government had built 19 apartments on Rupprechtstrasse that were available for the orthodox community beginning on January 1, 1956, the religious Föhrenwalders rejected this proposal out of hand because there were not enough residences to house the entire orthodox population. They were informed that an additional 30 apartments in Pasing, just 15 kilometers from central Munich, were available for the remaining religious residents of camp Föhrenwald. This housing was also rejected because it lacked any religious facilities and was too far from central Munich for the religious to walk to services on Shabbat.

The Camp Committee intervened on behalf of the orthodox community in late 1955 to see if they might broker a better arrangement for the religious Jews in Föhrenwald. After sending numerous petitions explaining the demands of the orthodox community to several offices of the West German government, including Chancellor Adenauer's, and not having received any responses, they approached the JDC. The representatives of the Camp Committee argued that the housing set aside for the orthodox community was unsuitable because it divided them into two groups making it hard for them to perform their religious rituals, and arguing that the location of the housing in Pasing was unacceptable. Mr. Feder, the JDC Country Director in Germany who met with these camp representatives, reiterated that the JDC would not back the settlement of 250 Jewish Föhrenwalders in one community, and that the Joint would neither reject nor support the demands of the orthodox community as the JDC was not involved in this particular fight.<sup>16</sup> Even had they wanted to intercede on behalf of the orthodox community, Feder noted that the JDC did not have the same influence in Germany that they had once possessed. The American Occupation Government had lent the JDC some authority, but the

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Palevsky, "Camp Foehrenwald Orthodox Group," 3.



West German government no longer had any reason to listen to the opinions expressed by the Joint in 1956. He did point out to the Camp Committee that around the world religious Jews walked a “reasonable” distance to attend school and synagogue, but perhaps more importantly than that information was the fact that “Many of the Föhrenwald residents have elected to remain in Germany where of all places, they can hardly expect ideal surroundings for a Jewish way of life.”<sup>17</sup>

Despite their stated position of non-intervention, the JDC wanted to see that the residents of Föhrenwald were resettled without their forceful eviction, and that the camp was closed. To this end they asked Oberrabbiner Snieg to act as the middleman between the orthodox community and the West German government. Snieg willingly accepted the position telling the JDC that it was his moral responsibility to ensure that the orthodox community could live a religious life in Germany.<sup>18</sup> He believed that “we cannot expect these vulnerable people to be scattered in small units among hostile Germans.”<sup>19</sup> However, the orthodox community continually ignored his suggestions regarding the proper way to approach the West German government. As had happened several times before when a middleman was employed to help broker an agreement between the West German government and a group of Föhrenwald residents, the orthodox community ignored Snieg and proceeded to pester Minister Burmeister, demanding that their needs be met. The orthodox community had no real success beyond further aggravating the Ministry.

Joint officials met with representatives of the West German government on January 13, 1956, hoping to help formulate a plan that would meet the main demands of the DPs within the parameters set forth for their housing by the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare. The JDC had

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

realized the very real threat of a long drawn out struggle between the orthodox community and the West German government. In a letter, Theodor Feder said, "As I see it, it is going to be a close finish to who will last longer, our orthodox Jews in Foehrenwald, or the members of the Department of Refugees in the Bavarian Ministry of the Interior."<sup>20</sup> The proposed closing date of the camp was just two months away and negotiations had come to a standstill. The Ministry officials explained that the Federal Republic was willing to consider the reasonable requests put forth by the orthodox community. These did not include the building of a huge house in Bogenhausen that could accommodate the entirety of the orthodox community or the addition of several floors to the existing housing on Rupprechtstrasse, as the orthodox had suggested.<sup>21</sup> The JDC proposed that in the interest of closing Föhrenwald, perhaps it was best for the Ministry to concede to their demand to be housed together. The Joint admitted that as the housing situation currently stood, Ostfriedhof had essentially become a pseudo ghetto within Munich's city limits.<sup>22</sup> It was even referred to as "New Foehrenwald," by the Jewish community living there. If the Federal Republic did not give in on this one point, the Joint argued that there was a good chance that the orthodox community would never agree to a resettlement plan and would have to be forcefully removed from the center. This, the JDC pointed out, could only reflect negatively on the West German government, especially in the press.<sup>23</sup>

With these suggestions in mind, the Ministry entered into negotiations with the orthodox community on January 15, 1956. These negotiations continued until February 6 and still the question of the orthodox community remained unresolved until mid April of that year. Although the negotiations were unsuccessful, they were the platform on which a plan was created that

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<sup>20</sup> Theodore Feder, "PDP # 1034, Re: Camp Foehrenwald (JDC Report)," in *Camp Foehrenwald January 1956-April 1957* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1956), 1.

<sup>21</sup> Palevsky, "Camp Foehrenwald Orthodox Group," 5.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

would eventually satisfy the orthodox communities' demands. While this plan was rejected and reoffered several times over the course of the following four months, there were no drastic changes before its eventual acceptance by the Föhrenwald orthodox group. Realizing that Pasing was the only working option, the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare again proposed the settlement, along with the 19 apartments in Rupprechtstrasse, as the solution to the orthodox housing problem. The apartments at Pasing were considered much nicer than those elsewhere in the Munich area. They had bathtubs and were surrounded by open fields perfect for a playground. The fact that there were no major highways nearby meant that the area was safe for children, and the proximity of the complex to central Munich, and the settlement on Rupprechtstrasse, made Pasing ideal. Rabbi Snieg expressed the opinion that Pasing was definitely workable in terms of the demands put forth by the orthodox community, and he believed that he could convince the West German government to build the necessary religious facilities. The two problems that no one wanted to acknowledge, but that were ever present, were the fact that none of the orthodox community wanted to settle in Pasing and that the 30 apartments were not enough to house the entire orthodox community together.<sup>24</sup>

After strenuous negotiations, the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare agreed to give the orthodox all of Pasing and Rupprechtstrasse with one apartment in these complexes acting as the prayer room and religious school. Additionally, they would build a mikvah in the cellar of the Pasing apartments. They gave the orthodox community one day to decide on the offer, but like most deadlines in Föhrenwald, this one was flexible and was pushed back three times. The Ministry told the orthodox community that if they rejected the offer, which was considered extremely fair by rabbi Snieg and the JDC, they would cut off all negotiations and open the Pasing apartments to all the camp residents waiting to integrate. Any apartments that were not

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 6.

voluntarily taken would then be assigned to a mixed group of Föhrenwalders by the camp administration. The orthodox community refused the offer on February 6. They also cut all diplomatic ties to rabbi Snieg, claiming that he had betrayed them to the Germans. The orthodox community, a group with no bargaining power beyond their sheer force of will, felt certain that they would have their demands met if they continued to protest, petition, and push for what they wanted.

When asked by a reporter at the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* why the process of resettlement was going so poorly, Minister Burmeister answered that Föhrenwald offered its inhabitants both physical and mental security, which made a return to “normal life” difficult. He commented that many of the camp residents did “not have the strength to build up a new life.”<sup>25</sup> It was this security offered by the center and a fear of life outside of Föhrenwald that, according to Burmeister, motivated the orthodox community to continue to reject the offers put before them, all in an attempt to delay their eventual departure from the camp. He speculated that the orthodox community pushed for resettlement in Munich because they were familiar with the city and could join the existing Kultusgemeinde there, making business and personal contacts. While the presence of the existing religious community in Munich might make integration easier, the proximity of Pasing to downtown Munich meant that the orthodox community from Föhrenwald would still have access to these benefits. The Ministry argued that while the efforts of the orthodox community might slow down the process of integration, they could not stop the inevitable closure of Föhrenwald. It was, the Ministry claimed, just a matter of time.

True to their word, the Ministry ordered the camp administration to begin filling the Pasing apartments immediately. Within days seven families had signed up for eight

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<sup>25</sup> "The Liquidation of Camp Föhrenwald," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, April 5, 1956, 2.

apartments.<sup>26</sup> The remaining 22 apartments were assigned to other Föhrenwalders who had registered for settlement in Munich. The Ministry wanted to fill the apartments as quickly as possible, not just to bring about the camps' closure, but also because the apartments had been vacant since January 1, 1956, and the owners were pushing for tenants and the rents they would pay. All the new inhabitants, both voluntary and assigned, were scheduled to move into Pasing by February 15, 1956. Several of the "forcefully" assigned DPs came to the JDC offices stating that while they "did not approve of the political game played by their leaders, they nevertheless were compelled to stick with the group and, therefore, were not prepared to accept the JDC grant and move."<sup>27</sup> It looked to the JDC as if the only way to resettle the remaining residents of Föhrenwald was by force, a plan they did not support, but one that they could not prevent.

While the matter seemed resolved, the JDC received a visit from Mr. Zucker, the chairman of the Orthodox Committee, on February 7 begging for their intervention. He appeared distressed and disheveled and was shouting that the orthodox community had completely fallen apart. He claimed that they had rejected all of their elected leaders and that if a solution was not found soon "blood would flow in Foehrenwald."<sup>28</sup> The JDC said they could not give official advice as they were not directly involved in the matter, but they suggested that the orthodox community take the 22 remaining apartments in Pasing and those at Rupprechtstrasse because that was the best offer they were going to get from the Ministry. After this encounter, the Ministry contacted the JDC and asked them to come to a meeting on February 9, not as consultants, but just to inform them of the decisions they had made regarding how the Germans

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<sup>26</sup>One family had 12 children. They were assigned two apartments to accommodate all the members of their family. Palevsky, "Camp Foehrenwald Orthodox Group," 7.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

would proceed with the orthodox community.<sup>29</sup> At this meeting JDC members proposed that the Ministry offer the Pasing and Rupprechtstrasse apartments to the orthodox community one last time. They suggested that the seven families already settled in Pasing be offered better apartments in Rupprechtstrasse, making Pasing an orthodox complex. The 29 apartments in Pasing and the 10 remaining residences in Rupprechtstrasse would be enough for the remaining orthodox Jews in Föhrenwald because their number had shrunk over the course of negotiations.<sup>30</sup>

Although Minister Burmeister was against further negotiations with the orthodox community, he made several calls and was given permission to reoffer the original plan. Wishing to refrain from another full-blown negotiation, the Ministry asked rabbi Snieg to again act as the middleman between the two groups. Rather than calling a group meeting, Snieg invited the former leaders of the orthodox community to his home. He decided that the best approach was to convince the orthodox representatives that it was their idea to take the housing at Pasing and Rupprechtstrasse. He told them that if that plan was agreeable he would be able to convince the Germans to reoffer the two complexes. The orthodox community agreed with one stipulation, that the seven families already in Pasing be housed somewhere other than Rupprechtstrasse because, they argued, they needed those apartments for the orthodox Jews in the camp who were registered for Frankfurt in case they should change their minds and decide to remain in Munich. Burmeister refused to remove the seven families unless he could offer them better housing in Munich, which meant that they must be moved to Rupprechtstrasse. Finally, it looked as if a compromise had been reached. The orthodox community would get Pasing and

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

fourteen of the available apartments in Rupprechtstrasse. The seven families already settled in Pasing would be moved into nice apartments in Germering, another suburb of Munich.<sup>31</sup>

The following day Minister Burmeister sent Herr Kraus to Föhrenwald to see to the immediate registration of the orthodox community. After several delays, the registration began at noon, but only 24 families registered as six refused the new housing plan and two families were away from the camp.<sup>32</sup> Even after all of the fighting, both among the orthodox community and with the Ministry, the orthodox community felt that they could change the terms of the agreement to better suit them. This is clearly illustrated in the stipulations put forth by the 24 families who did register. While four of the families willingly agreed to move to Pasing, six said they would only consider Pasing if it was inhabited by orthodox families, and the remaining 14 families refused Pasing outright, but said they would settle in Rupprechtstrasse or other centrally located apartments in Munich.<sup>33</sup> Declaring himself “at his wits end,” Kraus returned to the ministry to discuss how to proceed.

Realizing the imminent dissolution of the negotiations, the JDC tried to intervene to convince the orthodox community that they were being unreasonable. They were unsuccessful and the orthodox community continued to petition the German government, reiterating their same demand to be housed together as one group. Disillusioned with the negotiations, the Ministry announced drastic steps to “solve” the problem.<sup>34</sup> They proposed settlement of the Jews who had voluntarily registered for Pasing on February 21, 1956, and the forced eviction of the remainder on February 22. The Germans declared that if they had to resort to this plan, Pasing would no longer be an orthodox community and so they would no longer feel obligated to

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

provide religious facilities. This announcement led to panic among the orthodox Jews who had willingly registered to move to Pasing.<sup>35</sup> Despite their concern, these families had moved into their new homes by February 23. The religious families now living in Pasing approached the Ministry as a separate group begging for religious facilities. The Ministry agreed to provide a prayer room and mikvah if a further eight to ten families registered for the Pasing complex, and orthodox Jews began to do so over the course of the next several weeks.<sup>36</sup>

While it appeared to the JDC and the Ministry that the issue of housing the orthodox community had been resolved in early February, several members of the orthodox community continued to resist resettlement. The camp administration sent letters to the families slotted to move in early March stating that Föhrenwald must close. These letters opened by noting that the camp would no longer be home to these DPs after their listed date of departure because an apartment had been provided for them at a given address. The letter continued on to say that if the DPs refused to leave on their own, the administration would have to resort to a forceful eviction. If the DPs still refused to resettle in their new homes they would become homeless because their continued presence in the camp was not possible.<sup>37</sup> Anticipating a fight from the orthodox community, the Ministry threatened to hire German police to keep the peace and protect the movers.<sup>38</sup> Unwilling to concede, the orthodox community issued press releases and contacted the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees' office (UNHCR), in Munich demanding that someone intervene to ensure that they were settled together.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> "Räumung des Regierungslager Föhrenwald (Announcement issued to DPs sloughed for integration when their housing became available)," in *Reg Lag Föhrenwald* (Munich: BayHStA, 1956), 1.

<sup>38</sup> Morris Laub, "Conversations with Mr. Feder from Frankfurt," in *Camp Föhrenwald, January 1956- April 1957* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1956), 1.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.



Hoping to finally resolve the matter, the UNHCR called a meeting of all of the involved parties in April 1956. The Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare came in determined to ferret out why the orthodox community was so resistant to settling in Pasing. Mr. Abraham, the representative of the orthodox community, stated that the religious Jews in Föhrenwald were scared of the Germans living in Pasing. He said that they were stared at and viewed as “strange animals” by the Germans in Munich, and that this situation was worse in Pasing. He claimed that the Germans in the Föhrenwald area were used to seeing the orthodox because they had lived there for ten years, and that the presence of Jews in central Munich meant that the Germans there were better able to deal with their strange appearance.<sup>40</sup> Besides citing the usual reasons for why Pasing was unsuitable for the orthodox community, Abraham also noted that the Pasing complex had too many floors, and that the apartments, which could house three or four people, were too small for the larger religious families.<sup>41</sup> Additionally, he argued that the members of the orthodox community who also had TB were guaranteed their own room and this was, Abraham argued, not possible with the apartments assigned in Pasing.<sup>42</sup> This had been the case with Ischok Schönberger and his wife Karol Gerel who had TB. They were members of the orthodox community resettled in Munich who took the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare to court demanding resettlement in central Munich in an apartment with an additional room. While they finally dropped the case in April 1956, they only did so after months of fighting, and more than \$200 in court fees.<sup>43</sup>

According to the orthodox, the only real option available for their resettlement was the erection of a building large enough to house 199 people in central Munich. As this was not a

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<sup>40</sup> Feder, "Meeting at the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in Munich," 1.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> "Bericht," in *Reg Lager Föhrenwald* (Munich: BayHStA, 1956), 1.

plausible solution, the Ministry suggested settling non-Jewish refugees in Pasing and moving the remaining orthodox community in Föhrenwald into the housing that had originally been earmarked for these other refugees. The Ministry stated that the only other options were a legal case against the orthodox community for renegeing on their registration or moving the whole community to another camp.<sup>44</sup> While the orthodox representatives did seriously consider the transfer of apartments, Theodor Feder asked them if they were willing to take responsibility if something happened to the Jews already in Pasing who would now find themselves living among non-Jewish Poles and Ukrainians? Abraham could not agree to this, and so he rejected the transfer of apartments. What then could be done? Abraham insisted that none of the orthodox DPs who had registered for Munich would move to Pasing.

Desperate to find some solution that would finally end the drawn out debate on what should be done with the Föhrenwald orthodox community, the Ministry stumbled onto a “suitable” plan. They suggested that the remaining apartments in Pasing go to the portion of the orthodox community who had originally registered for Frankfurt, but now demanded to stay in Munich. Surely Pasing was a better option for these DPs than their forceful move to Frankfurt. If this arrangement was found to be acceptable, the West German government would build the mikvah in Pasing. Abraham agreed that this solution just might work and returned to the community to see if they would accept it. They were given until April 10 to decide, and the Ministry stressed that they would hold to that deadline. The new owners of the Föhrenwald center, the Munich-Freising Arch-Diocese and the Catholic Settlement Works, were pushing for the transfer of the control of the facilities. They had originally been told that they could take over the camp by December 31, 1955, but that date had passed. The new date for the center’s

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<sup>44</sup> Feder, "Meeting at the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in Munich," 3.

transfer had been set for April 1, 1956, but still no end seemed to be in sight.<sup>45</sup> The camp had to be evacuated soon.

After years of struggling and months of negotiations, the orthodox community finally agreed to the integration plan offered by the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare on April 15, 1956.<sup>46</sup> The Ministry, as well as the JDC, hoped that the orthodox residents in Föhrenwald could be resettled by May 1956, but found this deadline unrealistic. The orthodox community refused to leave the camp until the mikvah was completed, and the West German government was balking over the cost.<sup>47</sup> While the Ministry had agreed to build a ritual bath in Pasing, they had had no idea that it would cost them an estimated 35,000 DM, and they immediately began to try to find some way to cut costs.<sup>48</sup> This, however, was not the cause of the delay preventing the mikvah's completion. The proposed placement of the mikvah in the cellar of the Pasing complex meant that the bath did not naturally drain. The engineers building the mikvah had proposed the use of a pump to ensure that the ritual bath was properly drained, but the orthodox community questioned whether or not this was religiously acceptable. Members of the community approached the JDC asking for travel funds to see some of the other mikvahs in the country and to visit Rabbi Friedmann, the authority in the area, to ascertain if it was acceptable to employ a pump. Additionally, the engineers in Pasing were having a hard time figuring out how to get the rainwater directly from the roof into the cisterns that would feed the bath.<sup>49</sup> It would still take another month for the actual building of the mikvah once these matters had been settled. These complications dragged on through June and the JDC was anxious to get the orthodox resettled.

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<sup>45</sup> "The Liquidation of Camp Föhrenwald," 1.

<sup>46</sup> Frankfurt JDC, "FDP # 1152," in *Legal Records, JDC, Germany* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1956), 1.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> Theodore Feder, "Bi-Monthly Report 22nd April- 5th May," in *Legal Records, JDC, Germany* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1956), 1.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

Morris Laub asked Theodor Feder in mid-June if there was anything he could “do either to get the orthodox group to move before the mikvah is finished or to get the mikvah finished as soon as possible?”<sup>50</sup> The building of the Pasing mikvah eventually came to an end and with its completion came the long awaited move of the orthodox community out of the camp. On September 4, 1956 the orthodox community, chief rabbi Dr. Adoniyahu Kraus, and Ministry officials gathered for the dedication of the new orthodox synagogue in Pasing thereby bringing about the closure of yet another chapter in Föhrenwald’s history and a new beginning for the orthodox Jews of the center.<sup>51</sup>

With the departure of the orthodox community came a sense that Föhrenwald would actually close in the very near future, and the remaining 416 residents clamored to register for and resettle in their new housing.<sup>52</sup> The issue with resettling the orthodox community had had colossal effects on the JDC’s and West German government’s integration plans. The strain and tension brought about during negotiations left the West German government weary when it came to arranging for the resettlement of the remaining DPs in Föhrenwald. Perhaps more importantly, it had greatly affected the morale of the remaining non-orthodox camp residents. In February 1956, Minister Burmeister informed JDC officials that he had received several disgruntled letters from residents of Föhrenwald complaining that the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare was giving the orthodox community preferential treatment by offering them the best apartments while willing DPs awaited a chance to integrate.<sup>53</sup> These letters informed Burmeister that if things did not change there would be a revolution in Föhrenwald, and

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<sup>50</sup> Morris Laub, "Your FDP # 1216 of June 11, 1956," in *Legal, JDC, Germany* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1956), 1.

<sup>51</sup> "Dedicated Synagogue for Ex-dp's Resettled in Munich," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (New York: JTA- Jewish News Archive, September 5, 1956), 1.

<sup>52</sup> "1956 Yearly Report, Föhrenwald," in *Germany, Displaced Persons, Camps: Foehrenwald, 1956-1957, 1962* (New York: AJJDC, 1956), 1.

<sup>53</sup> Palevsky, "Camp Foehrenwald Orthodox Group," 10.

Burmeister noted that it was in fact not fair to these DPs that all of the apartments in central Munich were promised to the orthodox.<sup>54</sup> Some of the most disgruntled residents of Föhrenwald were those who had willingly registered to move to Pasing when the registration was opened to all camp residents, but were then told that they could not settle there because the complex had been promised to the orthodox community.<sup>55</sup> A sense of listlessness and despair began to permeate the camp, especially as the new owners of the facility began to take over some of the buildings for renovations.<sup>56</sup> In February 1956 the Munich-Freising Arch-Diocese and the Catholic Settlement Works took over the local school and some of the vacant buildings, and the ORT organization closed its doors. These developments symbolized the coming end to Föhrenwald and the remaining DPs became panicked about their resettlement.<sup>57</sup>

Although 150 DPs were resettled in Munich, Frankfurt, Hamburg and Wiesbaden in February 1956, integration really slowed down during the struggle to settle the orthodox because the efforts of all the involved groups were so focused on the task at hand.<sup>58</sup> In April 1956, the JDC had estimated that they would be able to resettle 400 of the 600 remaining camp residents over the course of the following two months, but in actuality there was almost no movement out of the center during that period. In total 24 people were integrated into German society in April and May with 11 settling in Munich, 12 in Düsseldorf and 1 in Stuttgart.<sup>59</sup> While not all of the apartments were ready for the DPs, 174 residences in Munich, Frankfurt, Düsseldorf, Cologne, Hamburg, and Wiesbaden remained empty in April 1956.<sup>60</sup> After the energy expended in

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>56</sup> Feder, "PDP # 1034, Re: Camp Foehrenwald (JDC Report)," 2.

<sup>57</sup> Palevsky, "Camp Foehrenwald Orthodox Group," 13.

<sup>58</sup> Laub, "Conversations with Mr. Feder from Frankfurt," 1.

<sup>59</sup> Feder, "Bi-Monthly Report 22nd April- 5th May," 1.

<sup>60</sup> "The Liquidation of Camp Föhrenwald," 1.

compromising with the orthodox community, the Ministry took some time off from resettling the DPs in Föhrenwald, instead focusing on other non-Jewish refugees in Germany.

The liquidation of camp Föhrenwald happened quickly once integration began again in the fall of 1956. In the days leading up to the closing of Föhrenwald, seventy-five Jews who had called the camp home for twelve years exited its gates bringing with them the “end of the post-Hitler epoch.”<sup>61</sup> On February 28, 1957 Alter Haimowitz, along with 11 other DPs, was the last resident of Föhrenwald to leave the center. He had spent seventeen years in German camps both during the Shoah and after the end of the Second World War. His departure was accompanied by speeches given by officials from the West German government, the JDC, and HIAS, all of whom commented on the monumental nature of the day. There would be no big “Victory” celebration by the JDC or the Ministry of the Interior for, as Theodor Feder noted, this would not “make a good impression on the Foehrenwalders who still have to remain and live in Germany.”<sup>62</sup> Instead, a small private dinner was planned and a twenty word internal note stating, “Congratulations to all on the job well done in liquidating one of the most difficult problems JDC has ever had” circulated through Joint offices.<sup>63</sup> In his final report on Föhrenwald, Charles Jordan noted that “When human dignity and self-respect have been so thoroughly destroyed as was [the DPs’] theirs, it takes many years of normal and independent living to restore them.”<sup>64</sup> It was hoped that the final closing of Föhrenwald would bring with it the chance for these displaced Jews to begin their lives anew.

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<sup>61</sup> Charles Jordan, "The Story of Föhrenwald," in *Legal records* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1957), 1.

<sup>62</sup> Theodore Feder, "FDP #1054 (JDC Report)," in *Camp Foehrenwald, January 1956- April 1957* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1956), 1.

<sup>63</sup> Katzki, "Jointfund Munich (Memo)," in *Camp Foehrenwald, January 1956-April 1957* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1957), 1.

<sup>64</sup> Jordan, "The Story of Föhrenwald," 7.

Although Föhrenwald's inhabitants had left the center, they had not all been permanently resettled. Some of the "undecided" DPs who had been transferred to four non-Jewish Displaced Persons camps in the Munich area in March 1956 remained in a state of limbo in March 1957.<sup>65</sup> A total of 93 former Föhrenwalders remained in these centers, 68 of whom awaited housing in Germany. Three people were awaiting their emigration abroad and the remaining 22 were still undecided as to whether they wanted to integrate or emigrate. The JDC was confident that the majority of these individuals would be resettled in a matter of months. The rest were awaiting unfinished housing and would be resettled within the year, thereby truly bringing a close to the DP era.<sup>66</sup>

The Munich-Freising Arch-Diocese and the Catholic Settlement Works quickly took over the grounds of Föhrenwald. One of the first acts implemented by the new owners was to change all of the street names in the center from American states, severing any ties to the DP period. Within a matter of months after its closing Föhrenwald reopened as a German settlement.<sup>67</sup> Renamed Waldram, the 300 buildings in the neighborhood were renovated and new families moved into the now vacant homes. On August 12, 1957 the last truly Jewish facility in Föhrenwald, its former main synagogue, was reopened as a training seminary for Catholic priests, thereby erasing any trace of the settlement's former purpose.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Akiva Kohane, "Former Legal Residents of Foehrenwald," in *Legal Residents, JDC, Germany* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1957), 1.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Angelika Königseder and Juliane Wetzel, *Lebensmut im Wartesaal: die jüdischen DPs (displaced persons) im Nachkriegsdeutschland*, Originalausg. ed., Zeit des Nationalsozialismus (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch, 1994). 172.

<sup>68</sup> "Seminary for Training Catholic Priests Opened in Former Synagogue," in *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (New York: JTA- Jewish News Archive, August 13, 1957), 1.

## CONCLUSION



## CONCLUSION

1957 saw the end of Jewish DP life in Germany. However, for many former Jewish Displaced Persons this did not signify an end to Jewish displacement. The fact that these Jews could never return to their pre-war lives left many of them feeling uprooted despite their resettlement. This is especially true for the Jewish DPs who felt forced to integrate into German society and the former Jewish DPs who returned from their countries of emigration to Germany seeking resettlement. These Jewish returners and the DPs who refused to integrate into German society continued to live in German camps even after 1957 hoping for a chance to finally end their displacement. Life within the Jewish-only Displaced Persons centers throughout the American zone had afforded Jewish DPs a sense of security and autonomy. The situation in Germany changed drastically throughout the period from 1945-1957, especially with the creation of a functioning German democracy and economy, and the eventual transfer of all control from the Allies to the Federal Republic. However, daily life within the Jewish DP camps in the American zone continued without significant change. The camp residents still felt safe and in charge of their lives regardless of the fact that they were housed in Germany and that their former oppressors gained control of their care in December 1951. Although these external shifts did not radically change the internal life of Jewish Displaced Persons living in American camps, they did affect the relations and perceptions between Jewish DPs, Germans, and Americans. The transformation of the U.S. Military Government's position from one of an occupying nation to an ally with Germany led to their gradual transfer of power to the newly formed West German Federal Republic. Finally, these changes to the role of the Americans in Germany, combined with the continued involvement of some Jewish Displaced Persons on the grey and black market

after the 1948 currency reform, allowed many Germans and Americans to express the anti-Semitism they had always felt but had kept suppressed in the immediate postwar period.

This dissertation provides a comparative analysis of life in postwar Bavaria. It examines the internal Jewish organization of three Displaced Persons centers in the American occupation zone: Landsberg, Feldafing, and Föhrenwald. It studies the rebirth of Jewish life in these centers and the struggles of the camp inhabitants to ensure that their futures developed as they imagined they should. In order to do this, this dissertation has analyzed the various types of interactions between Jewish DPs and their non-Jewish neighbors over the course of the 12 years of DP life in Germany. These include their relations with the Germans living throughout Bavaria, the authorities at the Office of the Military Government, United States (OMGUS), German-Jews, non-Jewish DPs, international aid organizations, and after 1951, the Federal Republic. While this narrative focuses on Bavaria, its findings are true for the entire American zone.

Additionally, This dissertation's examination of the reemergence of German anti-Semitism in the postwar period is indicative of developments throughout Western Germany.<sup>1</sup> By studying the evolution of Jewish perceptions of their own security and autonomy in Jewish DP centers, the shifts in power occurring in the late 1940s as well as the changes in the relations and perceptions of Jewish DPs, Germans, and Americans, and, finally, anti-Semitism, this dissertation is able to recreate the history of Jewish Displaced Persons within the larger context of West Germany. In conclusion this section of the dissertation will briefly elaborate on these abovementioned themes.

The Jewish Displaced Persons' belief in their security and autonomy within the confines of the Jewish DP centers began to develop soon after the war's end. The Allied first line soldiers were shocked by what they saw and were extremely sympathetic toward the survivors of the Holocaust. These soldiers often offered the survivors food, clothing, and occasionally

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<sup>1</sup> Please see chapter 4 for more information on anti-Semitism in the three Western zones.

companionship, as well as a sense of protection in the days following liberation. This belief in the safety offered by American soldiers shared by Jewish Holocaust survivors grew with the creation of American-run Jewish camps after the Harrison Report. While most Jewish DPs felt a sense of safety and personal autonomy within the confines of their camps, it was only partially real. The anonymous acts of vandalism perpetrated against Jewish cemeteries and shops throughout Germany right after the Holocaust illustrated that German feelings of anti-Semitism had not disappeared in the wake of the Shoah. The increased displays and expressions of anti-Semitism over the course of the late 1940s and 1950s only reaffirmed for many of Germany's displaced that they needed to be resettled abroad. These activities reminded Germany's Jewish Displaced Persons that the "safety" offered by the camps did not necessarily extend beyond their gates. However, it allowed many DPs to settle into their lives within these camps in postwar Germany without fear of attack by their German neighbors. These feelings of security and personal control lasted from 1945 to 1951 when power over Germany's displaced was transferred to the Federal Republic. The Jewish DPs in the American zone protested this handover of power stating that they could not be expected to live under German authority. However, despite the change, Jews continued to feel fairly protected within these centers even after the transfer of power. The Jewish DPs who found themselves under German control demanded that their "forced" stay in Germany progress on their terms and that they be resettled in the countries of their choice. They expressed a sense of entitlement and believed that it was the responsibility of the Western world, which included Germany, to ensure that their requests were met.

The Central Committee of Liberated Jews in Bavaria and the numerous camp committees in centers throughout the American zone fought for the special interests of the camp inhabitants.

This included better rations, increased restitution and monetary supplements, and most importantly to the DPs, emigration. These organizations acted as the official voice of the Jewish DPs and worked to ensure that the requests of the displaced Jews throughout the American zone were satisfied. They wrote letters, published newspaper articles, met with representatives from the government and Jewish aid organizations, and took to the streets to protest when they felt their requests were being ignored. Even though the camp consisted of numerous different factions, each DP considered himself a part of the larger population of displaced Jews in Germany and as such fought for the combined goals of the Jewish DP community. Not only did these DPs protest and demonstrate for what they believed were their rights, but they also banded together into a unified group when they felt physically threatened. Gone was the image of the docile and compliant Jew often memorialized in early accounts of the Shoah. Despite the distinctions of the various Jewish DPs, there was still a sense of cohesion, collective loss, and a common desire for the future shared by all of these Jews. The Jewish DPs were willing to fight, protest, and make demands in order to ensure that their expectations became reality.

The fact that the camps were closed to everyone living outside of the centers unless these individuals had the correct paperwork to grant them entry, or were invited in by camp residents, ensured that at least within the centers, the Jewish DP could feel like he or she was living in an independent community. It is clear that these Jewish DPs interacted with German and American officials on a regular basis, especially since the authorities in charge of running and supplying the DP centers were often American. Additionally, the targeting of the Jewish intelligentsia by the Nazis meant that many Jewish DPs seeking medical help had no choice other than to turn to German doctors and nurses for care. However, the enclosed nature of these Jewish centers allowed Jewish DPs to at least choose where, why, and when they interacted with Germans, non-

Jewish DPs, German-Jews, and Americans living outside of these centers. This meant that the Jewish DP could interact with the external population as much or as little as they liked.

The initial relationships formed between Jewish DPs, Germans, and Americans were centered on the needs of the displaced Jews and their German neighbors who wanted to acquire essential supplies in a postwar Bavaria where these provisions were scarce. The need to secure supplies was so great in the immediate postwar period that it led the Jewish Holocaust survivors to trade with their former enemies. Interactions like these became more and more frequent over the course of the second half of the 1940s as the devastation brought on by the war, combined with the sheer number of displaced individuals needing care in Germany perpetuated the period of suffering. The shortages of the legal rations market meant that the majority of the population in Germany turned to the functioning second economy, left active from the war period. This illegal economy was initially allowed to operate as long as the exchanges were conducted out of necessity and not for profit. This type of trade and barter as a means for survival facilitated some of the first interactions between Jewish Displaced Persons and the Germans living in the neighboring area. While the camps may have been closed to everyone but their Jewish residents, these Jewish DPs interacted with the larger German society on a fairly regular basis.

Daily life within the Jewish DP centers in the American occupation zone in Germany continued without any great changes during this period. This is significant considering that the direct control over the running of these centers transferred from the Office of the Military Government, United States to the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) in 1946, and then again to UNRRA's predecessor the International Refugee Organization (IRO) in 1947. It was at this same time that the United Nations decided to partition Palestine into Jewish and Arab states, a monumental change for the displaced Jews in Germany

who had been awaiting the chance to resettle there. This seeming lack of considerable change within the camps is also interesting because between 1948 and 1952 the majority of Germany's displaced Jews were resettled abroad. Germany's Jewish DP population was resettled around the world with significant portions of the DP community immigrating to Israel and the United States. It is estimated that Palestine, and later Israel, accepted up to 142,000 Jewish DPs from Germany while the United States accepted around 80,000 displaced Jews between 1945 and 1952.<sup>2</sup> With this reduction came the consolidation of Germany's DP centers and by 1950 only a handful of these Jewish camps remained. Moreover, the Allies began transferring their power to the fledgling West German government, re-established a functioning legal economy in Germany, and introduced a new currency during the late 1940s.

The extremely significant changes occurring in West Germany at the close of the 1940s may not have drastically affected the lives of those who were in Jewish DP centers in the American zone, but they did influence many aspects of the lives of Jewish Displaced Persons when they were outside of the IRO centers. It was the everyday interactions between Jews, Germans, and Americans that were drastically altered by the larger changes taking place in the country. This is especially true in matters regarding anti-Semitism. The relationships between Jewish DPs, Germans, and Americans developed and evolved as Jewish DPs continued to live in Germany, but apart from Germans. Although their initial interactions were sporadic these contacts occasionally developed into business, friendship, and even sexual relationships as the DP era persisted. Many Jewish DPs continued to hold intense feelings of hatred toward all Germans, and while anti-Semitism was initially suppressed in postwar Germany, it became more commonplace in the late 1940s among both Germans and American troops.

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<sup>2</sup> Atina Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007). 252.

The one constant form of interaction between Jewish DPs, Germans, and Americans was trade. By 1947 the DP situation had changed drastically, and Jewish Displaced Persons were the best-provisioned group in the American zone. While they received better and more rations than other groups in Germany, these Jews still had to turn to the black market to secure some of the resources they needed in order to consume more well rounded diets. With coveted supplies like coffee and cigarettes in hand, these displaced Jews were able to “purchase” most of the available goods that they sought. This made them one of the most envied and resented groups in postwar Germany.

American claims that the black market would cease to exist with the currency reform, cessation of the rations market, and the introduction of goods on the German economy did not come to fruition as anticipated. Instead the black market changed after 1948 to carry the same items as the free market, selling these goods at lower prices than was possible through legal channels. These two markets continued to exist and flourish into the 1950s with Jewish, German, American, and Non-Jewish DP participants. As the task of the Allied forces changed from one of occupation, control, and domination to rebuilding and reestablishing the German government and economy, so too did the relationships between Jewish DPs, OMGUS, and German officials. With the shifts in these relationships came a marked change in the perception of the Jewish Displaced Persons held by many members of the American occupation forces and the German population.

The most notable change to occur between the aforementioned parties was the drastic increase in public expressions of anti-Semitism among Germans and American soldiers. While anti-Semitism had initially been suppressed in the immediate postwar period, signs of its gradual return were evident in the first months after the war. These early acts were usually perpetrated

under the cover of night and often targeted Jewish property. The Allied authorities in Germany ignored these first expressions of anti-Semitism because, they argued they were harmless and had most likely been committed by children. However, by 1948 large portions of the German population were again openly expressing their anti-Semitism. The shift in American and German relations signified a similar change in the understanding of many Germans regarding their position under American control. The Western Allies who needed Germany to act as their ally against the Soviets facilitated the creation of a democracy in Germany. The American initiated shift in Germany from occupier to ally, led to some significant changes in the country. Paramount among these was the fact that the Germans were no longer enemies, and that democratic ideals guaranteed freedom of speech. These two changes allowed German citizens to express their anti-Semitism more openly.

1948 was really the turning point in public expressions of anti-Semitism. By that time anti-Jewish sentiments could be heard on trains, in cafes, on the street, in shops, and in restaurants. These articulations of anti-Semitism usually focused on the perceived over-involvement of the foreign Jews living in Germany in illegal activities, especially trade. This type of anti-Semitism had existed long before the war. However, the continuation of the black market after the currency reform in 1948, and the participation of Jewish and non-Jewish Displaced Persons in these exchanges, only contributed to further the increase of anti-Semitism throughout the American zone. Germans and Americans stereotyped Jewish DPs as black marketers, counterfeiters, and illegal slaughterers among other offenses, arguing that they were the main perpetrators of these crimes. While these continued public articulations of German anti-Semitism concerned the remaining Jews in the country, it was the 1949 publication of the Adolf Bleibtreu letter by the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* that convinced many of the remaining Jewish



Displaced Persons in Germany, as well as several members of world Jewry, that Germany was an unsuitable place for a future Jewish presence. The author's argument that the Jews were "bloodsuckers" and that the Americans were upset that the Germans had not succeeded in killing them all, motivated thousands of Jewish DPs living near Munich to travel to the city center to protest such blatant and public anti-Semitism. The Jewish outcry over German anti-Semitism did not lead to a decrease in these expressions. In fact, public events involving Jews often developed into forums at which Germans could express their anti-Semitism. This was the case with the Auerbach Affair, which was initiated as an indictment of one man accused of the misuse of government funds and developed into a hotbed of anti-Semitic claims in the press and among the country's non-Jewish German population. Incidents like these became more and more frequent over the course of the 1950s.

Additionally, increased commercial competition between Germans and Displaced Persons on both the legal and illegal markets after 1948 fueled feelings of resentment and hatred among many of Germany's shop owners. While the Jewish DPs, like everyone else in Germany, had been involved in trade on the black market since liberation, their continued participation after the reestablishment of the functioning legal economy in Germany only fueled anti-Semitic claims of their inherent criminality. The change in the perception of the role of the black market from a necessity to an obstacle blocking German economic growth led OMGUS and the newly formed West German government to target those participating in illegal trade. Although it is clear that the actual number of Jewish DPs active on the black market was lower than that of both the German and the non-Jewish DP population, their continued involvement led many Germans to claim that they were threatening the reestablishment of a functioning Germany. These beliefs led a number of German citizens, business owners, and German politicians to

petition for the immediate transfer of jurisdiction over the Jewish DPs from OMGUS to German control, arguing that American leniency allowed these DPs to profit on the illegal markets. The Jewish DPs were no longer treated as the helpless victims who needed care and protection, instead they were often viewed as undisciplined, unruly, supplicants who demanded, the most care from OMGUS and later the Federal Republic. These governments desperately wanted to bring about the end to the homelessness of the Displaced Persons. The cost associated with caring for these individuals was astronomical and it was especially hard for West Germany to move on from their war experiences with the constant reminder of their actions living in camps throughout the country.

Perhaps the most significant change to affect the Jewish Displaced Persons in postwar Germany was the eventual transfer over the control of all Displaced Persons in the country from the Office of the Military Government, United State to the Federal Republic in 1951. Although the Federal Republic did not initially want to assume control over the remaining Displaced Persons in Germany, they eventually reached an agreement with OMGUS and moved forward with the task. The Jewish DPs in Germany fought the transfer arguing that it was unfair to ask them to live under German control. Despite the fears about the German takeover articulated by the Jews remaining in Germany, the actual transfer of power took place without any real problems. The Americans had spent years preparing the Federal Republic for their eventual role as the governing power in Germany, including their takeover of the care and control of the remaining DP centers in the country. American restrictions against German entry into the last remaining Jewish only centers existed until the eventual transfer of power. With the handover of control, the extraterritorial and extralegal status of the Jewish centers came to an end. German officials were able to enter these camps, search the grounds, and arrest offenders. German

authorities argued that the Jewish camps had become part of the German economy at the end of 1951 and as such were subject to the same laws and restrictions enjoyed by the rest of Germany. Raids and searches of the centers occurred on a regular basis from 1952 on, but they were usually conducted in a way that did not cause the Jewish DPs undue fear.

The Americans had developed an informal protocol when dealing with the Jewish DPs within the camps and the Federal Republic often followed this procedure after they took over control of Germany's displaced Jews. The few times that these practices were ignored resulted in violence, outrage, and international condemnation of the offending party. This was the case with the American raid on Föhrenwald in 1950 and the German attempted raid on the same camp in 1952. The Jewish DPs regarded these breaks in protocol as a threat to their continued safety and autonomy and fought to ensure that they were able to maintain the status quo.

Claims of Jewish criminality, and the Jewish DPs' continued distrust of the German Federal Republic made the eventual absorption of the displaced Jews who chose to remain in Germany or had no option for emigrating, much more difficult. This was especially evident in the early stages of negotiations between the West German government and representatives of Jewish aid organizations like the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society in the mid-1950s when they discussed the integration of all Jews remaining in Föhrenwald into German society. The Jewish camp residents protest the possibility of their integration into German society citing the recent clashes between Jewish DPs and German officials as well as the intensification of German anti-Semitism. The West German government also questioned the validity of claims made by the JDC stating that many of these displaced Jews remained in the country because of their ill health. Authorities of the Federal Republic asked if it was not true that some of these people were formally convicted for crimes

and had been rejected for emigration because of their records. Despite the aforementioned obstacles, a plan was created for the eventual assimilation of all of Föhrenwald's DPs who would not or could not emigrate.

The Jewish DP centers of Landsberg, Föhrenwald, and Feldafing mirrored several aspects of the pre-war east European shtetl and imbued the inhabitants with a sense of security and familiarity traditionally associated with these small Jewish towns. The inhabitants within the Jewish DP camps were provided with the food, shelter, and the clothing that they needed to survive by the American Military Government, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and several other international aid organizations, and later the Federal Republic. The displaced Jews living in the American zone quickly assembled and organized into their own autonomous representative groups in the form of camp committees and the Central Council of Liberated Jews in the American zone. Jewish life was soon reestablished within the camps in the form of schools, both religious and secular, theater troops, musical ensembles, religious factions, and political parties. Additionally, the Jewish survivors living in these centers quickly met, married, and gave birth to Jewish children in an attempt to continue their lives, which were virtually destroyed by the Shoah.

The lives established in these Jewish DP centers allowed for the final flowering of Europe's shtetl life where Jews could live among their brethren in perceived security. These centers provided the one place in Germany where these Jews DPs believed they could continue to live without fear of their German neighbors. They afforded the Jewish DPs a sense of connection with their former lives, which had been destroyed by the Holocaust; they gave them the feeling of home in a community of individuals like themselves, who had experienced

extreme suffering and loss. The Jewish DP centers gave them a chance to begin their lives anew. Most importantly, these Jewish camps offered the displaced Jews in Germany a seemingly safe haven where they could wait for their emigration and their eventual departure from the memories and horror that they associated with the “cursed soil” of Germany.

The vast majority of Jewish Displaced Persons in Germany never considered their residence in the country as anything more than a temporary stopping point while arrangements were made for their emigration abroad. They viewed their position in Germany as one of settled but transitory visitors, who had the right to dictate not only their daily lives, but also their futures. Despite this understanding the Jewish DPs did not sit idly by waiting for their futures to unfold in front of them. They had spent enough time having others dictate their lives and instead cried out for the world to acquiesce to their requests. This meant that they pushed for an immediate end to their “temporary” stay in Germany while fighting for self-government and autonomy within the camps.

As the postwar period stretched on and the DP era continued, these Jews began to phrase their desires in the form of demands, insisting that it was the Jewish and Western world’s responsibility to ensure that they were settled abroad according to their wishes. The ever-growing protection afforded to Jewish DPs when they were within the confines of these centers, combined with their continued separation from German society, and their increasing sense of autonomy led these Jewish DPs to believe in their right to determine their own lives and futures away from Germany. Although these Jews felt entitled to immigrate to the country of their choosing, it soon became clear that many of them would have to settle for the countries willing to accept them. Furthermore, the Jewish DPs with incurable illnesses or lasting mental and

physical traumas soon realized that emigration to any country other than Israel was not a possibility.

For the vast majority of Germany's displaced Jews, their dreams of emigrating abroad came true. In addition to the number of immigrants taken by Israel and the United States, Canada accepted between 16,000 and 20,000 Jewish DPs, Australia took 5,000, Belgium admitted 8,000, France absorbed 2,000 and Latin American countries and South Africa accepted another 5,000.<sup>3</sup> However, for an estimated 800 Jewish DPs, there was no future home for them abroad. Instead they were integrated into German society. Several of the last residents of Föhrenwald had been moved from one camp to another for 17 years and felt safest when they were within the confines of the Jewish DP centers. These Jews were often the ones with long term illnesses or physical ailments that made them unattractive immigrants. Despite their desires to emigrate away from Germany, these Jews had no choice but to leave Föhrenwald, and move into housing throughout the country. Whether resettled in Germany or abroad, the former inhabitants of Föhrenwald, Feldafing, and Landsberg, as well as the other Jewish DP camps located across Western Germany, went on to start anew as a transplanted people some of whom had their lives put on hold for nearly two decades.<sup>4</sup>

In conclusion, the shtetl like nature of the camps located throughout the American zone, combined with the extraordinary efforts put forth by the Jewish aid organizations active in the country, gave the *She'erith Hapleitah* the tools necessary to build their lives anew. Their life in these centers allowed many of them to recover from the horrors of the Holocaust. The time these displaced Jews spent in these centers acted as a bridge from the Shoah to their futures around the world. It was in the DP centers that many of the survivors of the Holocaust met and married

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Samuel Jaffe, "Mass Movement Out of Camp Foehrenwald Announced by Overseas Director of AJDC," in *Camp Foehrenwald* (Jerusalem: AJJDC, 1956), 1.

their partners, had children and started businesses. The Jewish only centers located throughout the American zone helped to prepare these Jews for their lives after the camps.

Ironically, this holds true for all the Jews, even those absorbed into German society. Between 1954 and 1957 these Jewish DP centers prepared the remaining Jewish DPs in Germany for their possible integration in the country. German authorities introduced the German curriculum in the existing schools in Föhrenwald, funded educational programs at the *Haus der offenen Tür* that facilitated interactions with Germans, and provided job placement opportunities for camp inhabitants. While it took years to come to fruition, these Jews were eventually resettled throughout Germany in housing provided for them by the Federal Republic. These DPs protested that they could not remain on the soil where their families had been murdered, but in end they were left with no choice. Despite their objections, these Jews were able to integrate into German society and their families continue to make up a portion of the Jewish community within the cities where they were settled.

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