The American Jewish Committee and the Admission of Nazi Collaborators into the United States, 1948-1950

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The American Jewish Committee (AJC) focused its attention on the growing antisemitism in America and ways of combating it during the Nazi period. During the 1930s, the AJC had objected to any changes in immigration legislation and strongly opposed mass demonstrations, preferring behind-the-scenes activities to further its goals. After the war, its position changed. It initiated and supported the establishment of the post of "Adviser on Jewish Affairs to the American Army" in order to deal with the Displaced Persons (DPs) in Germany. It decided to lobby openly and determinedly for a new immigration law that would allow the admission of DPs into America.

What were the reasons for these marked changes? What was the role of the AJC in the enactment of the DP Acts of 1948 and 1950? Were the leaders of the AJC aware of the fact that there were Nazi collaborators and *Volksdeutsche* among the Christian DPs? What did the AJC do to prevent the admittance of Nazi collaborators into the country? This article will attempt to deal with these questions.

The American Jewish Committee was established in 1906, with the purpose of protecting the civil and religious rights of Jews around the world. It protested against persecutions of Jews, particularly abroad, and tried to alleviate the consequences of those persecutions. As an elitist organization, comprised principally of well-to-do German Jews, it operated as a pressure group that exerted influence in the appropriate places in order to further its goals. In the 1930s, the Committee opposed mass demonstrations against the Nazi persecution of German Jews and objected to the boycott against German products. Through quiet diplomacy the Committee hoped that its members and friends – who included many politically and socially influential

Jews and Christians – could privately influence the White House and the State Department.[1]

With the rise of anti-alien and antisemitic feelings in the United States during the 1930s, the Committee sought to mold public opinion. It launched an educational campaign to correct misconceptions concerning the number of refugees entering the country. Jewish leaders were particularly eager to highlight Christian activities on behalf of the refugees. They made great efforts to co-opt well-known Christian personalities in order to make the American public aware of Christian interest in the refugee problem. Moreover, the Committee leadership felt that appeals from Christians had a better chance of success. Accordingly, the AJC prepared, printed, and distributed a quarter of a million copies of a pamphlet "Refugee Facts," which appeared under the imprint of the American Friends Service Committee. The pamphlet received wide publicity, and Clarence E. Pickett, executive secretary of the AFSC, was interviewed on the radio, giving him an opportunity to propagate the cause of Christian refugees.[2]

The AJC was involved in a variety of activities on behalf of the admission of Jewish refugees. However, it opposed the increase of immigration, for fear that it would stimulate antisemitic feelings in America. Cyrus Adler,[3] president

[1] See Naomi W. Cohen, *Not Free to Desist: The American Jewish Committee, 1906-1966* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1972), pp. 3-18,154-264; Frederick A. Lazin, "The Response of the AJC to the Crisis of German Jewry, 1933-1939," *American Jewish History*, 68 (March 1979), pp. 283-304; Sheldon Morris Neuringer, "American Jewry and United States Immigration Policy, 1881-1953" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1969), pp. 216, 229-230, 242, 270.

[2] FNT (Frank N. Trager) to SW, December 29, 1938 , H W. Levy to Trager, September, 1939, AJC Archives (AJC), Refugees, 1938-1944; Clarence E. Pickett, *For More Than Bread* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1953), p. 148; Haim Genizi, *American Apathy: The Plight of Christian Refugees from Nazism* (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1983), pp. 189-190, 285-286.

[3] Dr. Cyrus Adler (1863-1940), a Semitic scholar, was a leading figure in the American Jewish community during the first four decades of the twentieth century. The founder of the American Jewish Historical Society and its president (1898-1922); president of Dropsie College for Hebrew and Cognate Learning in Philadelphia; chairman of the United Synagogue of America; and president of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York. He was one of the founders of the AJC, its director, and, for more than two decades, its president, until his death in 1940.

of the AJC, along with other Jewish leaders, adamantly refused to support the Celler-Dickstein bills, which sought to exempt religious or political refugees from some of the immigration laws. Naturally, Adler was not happy with the restrictionist policy. Nevertheless, he considered it a mistake to encourage congressional debates on the refugee issue.[4] "We have refrained from taking any steps in this direction," explained Morris D. Waldman,[5] executive secretary of the Committee, "because we have been advised that there is the danger that some of the members of Congress may voice views which will give encouragement to the Hitlerites. You appreciate that, unless speeches in Congress are all anti-Hitler, a debate is likely to do more harm than good."[6]

What were the achievements of the AJC in respect to antisemitism and refugees during the Holocaust? It is actually difficult to point to any great successes as a result of its efforts. The gates of the United States were not opened to refugees; Congress did not abolish the quotas; and the Roosevelt administration did almost nothing to ease the stringency of the immigration regulations. The hostility toward refugees did not diminish, nor was antisemitism substantially weakened. The Christian public was not aroused from its apathy, and the argument that the refugee question concerned Christians as well as Jews was not generally accepted.[7]

The reasons for the ambivalent response of American Jewry to the Holocaust and who should bear the responsibility have been widely discussed in recent historiography.[8] David Wyman maintained that lack of unity among

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[4] Cyrus Adler to Samuel Dickstein, March 27, 1933, AJC, Immigration.

[5] Morris D. Waldman (1879-1963), a rabbi and a social worker, director of Galveston Movement (1906-1908); director of United Hebrew Charities (1908-1917); lecturer in social science at Columbia University (1916-1918); executive secretary of the AJC (1928-1945); and executive vice-president after 1945.

[6] Morris Waldman to Joseph I. Brody, May 16, 1933, AJC, Germany; see also Emanuel Celler to Cyrus Adler, April 5, 1938; Harry Schneiderman to C. Adler, April 7, 1938, AJC, Refugees.

[7] Lazin, "The Response of the AJC to the Crisis of German Jewry," pp. 285, 289, 295, 301-302.

[8] Among others, see David S. Wyman, *The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941-1945* (New York: Pantheon, 1984); Seymour M. Finger, ed., *American Jewry During the Holocaust* (New York: American Jewish Commission on the Holocaust, 1984); Henry L. Feingold, "Was There Communal Failure? Some Thoughts on the American Jewish

American Jewry was a factor in its failure to influence the administration. The effectiveness of Jewish leaders in directing pressure on the Roosevelt administration and Congress "was severely limited by their failure to create a united Jewish movement and by their lack of sustained action."[9] However, it is an unproved speculation to maintain that a unified Jewish position would have been able to change the course of American restrictionist policy during the 1930s.

The non-Zionist, and sometimes anti-Zionist, approach of the AJC was regarded as one of the causes for the breach in American Jewry. Particularly after the election of Joseph M. Proskauer as the Committee's president in 1943, the anti-Zionist attitude was dominant in the Committee's negotiations with other Jewish organizations. Judge Proskauer (1877-1971), a jurist and a public leader, served as a judge on the Supreme Court of Appeals of the State of New York (1923-1930) before becoming president of the American Jewish Committee (1943-1949). "On one point, in his quarrel with the Zionists, he would not give way: that was his opposition to the idea of a central authority that would speak for the Jews of America and the world," wrote Proskauer's biographers.[10]

The Committee's participation in the American Jewish Conference is a case in point. In January 1943, thirty-two Jewish organizations discussed the establishment of an American Jewish Assembly, aiming to work out a

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Response to the Holocaust," *American Jewish History*, 81 (1993), pp. 60-80; Leonard Dinnerstein, "What Should American Jews Have Done to Rescue Their European Brethren?," *Simon Wiesenthal Center Annual,* 3 (1986), pp. 277-287; Frank W. Brecher, "David Wyman and the Historiography of American Response to the Holocaust: Counter Considerations," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 5 (1990), pp. 423-431; Lucy S. Dawidowicz*, What Is the Use of Jewish History?,* edited by Neal Kozodoy (New York: Schocken, 1992); Rafael Medoff, *The Deafening Silence: American Jewish Leadership and the Holocaust* (New York: Shapolsky, 1987); William D. Rubinstein, *The Myth of Rescue: Why the Democracies Could Not Have Saved More Jews from the Nazis* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997); Jeffrey S. Gurock, ed., *America, American Jews and the Holocaust* (New York and London: Routledge, 1998).

[9] Wyman*, Abandonment of the Jews,* p. 328.

[10] Louis M. Hacker and Mark D. Hirsch, *Proskauer: His Life and Times* (Birmingham: The University of Alabama Press, 1978), p. 133; Joseph M. Proskauer, *A Segment of My Life* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Co., 1950), p. 199.

common program for the postwar problems of world Jewry and to present a united front at the peace negotiations. Suspicious of Zionist motives to bring the Committee into the Zionist-controlled Assembly, the AJC refused to accept the invitation. "We refused to acquiesce in the formation of a centralized Jewish organization in America which would purport to speak authoritatively and in the name of all Jews here," wrote Proskauer later.

After long negotiations the Committee agreed to join a "conference" in which "all organizations with differing ideologies might meet for discussion of common problems and still retain their independence of thought and action."[11] However, when the American Jewish Conference approved the Biltmore declaration, which called for the establishment, after the war, of a Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine, the unity of the Jewish organizations came to an end. In October 1943, the AJC withdrew from the Conference.[12]

The Committee was widely denounced for its withdrawal. This step was regarded as a breach of Jewish unity, impairing the effectiveness of a united effort on behalf of the Jewish people. Ten percent of the AJC's members resigned in protest, and affiliated groups, as well as contributing agencies, also withdrew their support of the Committee.[13]

Aware of his part in the deep hostilities toward his Committee and in the weakening of its position in the American Jewish community, Proskauer embarked on a reorganization effort. "It is my belief that out of this turmoil will come the rebirth of the American Jewish Committee," he declared.[14]

Indeed, in 1944, the Committee had been meaningfully changed. Local chapters and several new departments had been established, and the Committee's membership had been significantly enlarged. Instead of behind-the-scenes operations, the Committee organized a campaign to publicize its activities and achievements. John Slawson, the new, energetic executive vice-president, expressed the Committee's new policy when he stressed, in 1944,

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[11] Proskauer, *A Segment of My Life,* p. 199; see also Cohen, *Not Free to Desist***,** pp. 256-257.
[12] Proskauer*, A Segment of My Life*, pp. 204-205; see also Zvi Ganin, *Truman, American Jewry, and Israel, 1945-1948* (New York and London: Holmes and Meier Publishers,, 1979), p. 11.
[13] Cohen, Not Free to Desist, p. 259; Ganin, Truman, American Jewry, p. 11.
[14] Quoted in Cohen, p. 260.

the need to collaborate with other Jewish organizations: "One cannot do things *for* the Jewish people; one must do it *with* the Jewish people."[15]

In its new approach the AJC did not confine itself to activities within the Jewish community but was eager to foster mutual understanding with Christian groups as well. Therefore, after the war, an Interreligious Department was established to develop working alliances with Catholics and Protestants.[16]

The Research Institute on Peace and Post-War Problems that was established in 1944, prepared a report on the rights of despoiled Jews in Europe. It aimed to investigate and publicize the condition of European Jewry and suggest its rehabilitation. Keenly aware of the cruel predicament of the surviving remnants of European Jews, the Committee outlined its postwar program as follows: to ensure the future of the Holocaust survivors; to publicize Jewish needs at American and international levels; and to assure that such a catastrophe would never recur. "The impact of the Holocaust on the Committee's postwar foreign program was pronounced. Ever conscious of the immeasurable loss world Jewry had sustained, AJC now concentrated on safeguarding the remaining reservoirs of Jewish population," wrote Naomi Cohen, the historian of the AJC.[17]

In the summer of 1945, the Committee dispatched a team to investigate the conditions in the Displaced Persons (DPs) camps in Germany and Austria. The team was shocked to learn of the terrible condition of the survivors and reported accordingly. Responding to a call from British Jewry, the AJC turned to the American administration and asked it to nominate a liaison officer to the commander-in-chief of the American army in Europe.[18] After some hesitation by General Eisenhower, the post of "Adviser on Jewish Affairs to the Theater Commander" was established in August 1945.[19] A cooperating body of the five leading Jewish organizations was established, with the purpose of

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[15] Ibid., p. 262.
[16] Ibid., p. 453.
[17] Ibid., pp. 339, 266.
[18] Report of the AJC (n.d.), AJC, Germany, Immigration, Adviser.
[19] See Haim Genizi, *The Adviser on Jewish Affairs to the American Army and the DPs, 1945-1949* (Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: Moreshet and Sifriat Poalim, 1987), pp. 22-25.

nominating and supervising the "Adviser." This body included the AJC, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, the American Jewish Conference, the World Jewish Congress, and the Jewish Agency for Palestine. The warm cooperation of Zionist and non-Zionist groups for four and a half years was a remarkable phenomenon and indicated an effort to avoid the traditional Jewish disunity. Through the five successive advisers – the first was Judge Simon Rifkind of the AJC – the leading American Jewish organizations were closely involved in the fate of *She'arit Ha-Peletah* in Germany and Austria.[20]

Another AJC step that showed its deep concern for the Jewish Displaced Persons was the initiative for enacting DP legislation in Congress. Despite the fact that the Depression was now over, the restrictionist approach to immigration continued even after the war. While an anti-immigration atmosphere ruled the Congress, the Truman administration was more sympathetic to the DP cause. A combination of a humanitarian impulse with political considerations directed President Truman in his treatment of this subject. He dispatched Earl Harrison to investigate the treatment of DPs in Germany and appealed to Great Britain to open Palestine's door to 100,000 DPs. On December 22, 1945, Truman issued a directive in which he declared that "this Government should take every possible measure to facilitate full immigration to the U.S. under existing quota laws."[21]

However, when AJC leaders saw the new wave of criticism that erupted in the wake of Truman's remarks, they decided to seek an alternative course of action. Jacob Blaustein[22] urged the State Department to use immigration quotas to enable the unfortunate Jews and other DPs to come to America. The State Department rejected the suggestion, referring to Truman's

[20] For a detailed discussion of the history of the Adviser on Jewish Affairs, see ibid.

[21] President's Directive on Immigration from Europe, December 22, 1945,The United Nations Archives,New York, the papers of UNRRA, PAG-4/3.0.11..0.6:12 (UNA/UNRRA).

[22]Jacob Blaustein (1892-1970), oil business executive and philanthropist, was chairman of the AJC executive committee and later served as its president.

Directive, which would take care of the DP problem.[23] However, during 1946, the DP situation worsened. While the hope that 100,000 DPs would find refuge in Palestine vanished, the number of Jewish DPs in the U.S. Zones in Germany and Austria substantially increased because of pogroms and strong antisemitic feelings in Eastern Europe. AJC circles reached the conclusion that "no radical improvement is possible without new legislation."

In view of the public statements, the AJC characterized the chances of a new law quite realistically: "While enormously difficult, passage of remedial legislation does not appear, then, to be impossible."[24] On October 2, 1946, the administrative committee of the AJC decided that "the AJC should undertake to devote its utmost efforts to the promotion of a liberalized policy of immigration into this country." Thus, the AJC embarked upon a new approach. Contrary to the 1930s – and probably because of the mute approach it had assumed in that decade – the Committee now decided to lobby openly for a new law.[25]

To carry out the new policy, a Committee on Immigration was established, with Irving M. Engel[26] as chair. Engel, a New York lawyer, energetically launched into activity. He rightly deserves credit for the adoption of the DP Acts by Congress.[27]

At the same time that the AJC searched for a new policy, Lessing Rosenwald, president of the anti-Zionist American Council for Judaism (ACJ), was also looking for a program to admit Jewish DPs into the United States. When he learned about the AJC initiatives, he suggested to Proskauer that their organizations "integrate efforts in the same direction." With Proskauer's

[23] Department of State, VD to Jacob Blaustein, January 25, 1946, AJC, FAD-1, box 33, YIVO.
[24] AJC, "Memorandum on Immigration," n.d.,(AJC, Immigration, DP, 1945-1947.
[25] Joseph Proskauer to the Members of the AJC, October 7, 1946, AJC, Joseph M. Proskauer papers, DP, Immigration (JMP).
[26] Irving M. Engel (1891-1978), a lawyer, communal leader and active in Democratic and liberal politics, was chairman of the AJC executive committee (1949-1954), and the Committee's president (1954-1959).
[27] Proskauer to John Slawson, October 15, 1946; Slawson to Proskauer, October 22, 1946, AJC, JMP, DP, Immigration, 1946-1953.

positive response, a fruitful cooperation began between the AJC and the ACJ.[28]

When the AJC Immigration Committee discussed desired legislation, they set a goal of 100,000 Jewish DP immigrants to the United States. However, members of the Committee were fully aware that to concentrate solely upon Jewish DPs would cause strong opposition in Congress as well as among the public. Since Jews constituted 20 to 25 percent of the DPs, it would be easier to get Christian support if the program demanded the admission of 400,000 DPs. According to AJC estimates, there were in Germany and Austria approximately 800,000 DPs. Thus, half of this number should be America's "fair share." For tactical reasons the legislation goal was set at 400,000, without mentioning the Jewish DPs at all.

The possibility that Nazi collaborators would be able to come in under the new legislation was taken into consideration from the very beginning, but the members of the Committee thought that "a calculated risk ... should be taken since it was unavoidable if a haven were to be found in this country for any really significant number of displaced Jews." This consideration later became the source of a heated dispute, and the AJC was criticized for its decision.[29]

Intensive consultations, in November 1946, led to the foundation of the Citizens Committee on Displaced Persons (CCDP). Its aim was "the enactment of legislation that will permit the admission to the United States of its fair share of Europe's DPs."[30] In order to organize an efficient congressional lobby, the support of Protestant and Catholic church leaders was most urgent. It was clear to everybody involved in DP legislation that "any effective program in this area required the active support of all sections of the population, particularly of the Catholic and Protestant lay and church groups,

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[28] Lessing Rosenwald to Proskauer, November 13, 1946; Proskauer to Rosenwald, November 19, 1946, AJC, JMP, DP, Immigration, 1946-1953, box 3. See also Thomas A. Kolsky, "Jews Against Zionism: The American Council for Judaism, 1942-1948" (Ph.D. Dissertation, George Washington University, Washington D.C., 1986), p. 342.

[29] Quoted in Leonard Dinnerstein, *America and the Survivors of the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), p. 124.

[30] AJC, Minutes of Immigration Subcommittee, November 5, 1946; CCDP, Articles of Organization, December 26, 1946, AJC, the papers of Irving M. Engel (IME), CCDP, 1946, box 15.

inasmuch as three quarters of the DPs are *not* Jews."[31] Following this policy, Proskauer turned to church leaders, asking for their participation in the organizational meeting of the CCDP. Engel met with Frederick O. Nolde in order to enlist the support of the Federal Council of Churches and with Bishop J. Francis McIntrie, a close associate of Francis Cardinal Spellman of New York. Probably as a result of these conversations, the Annual Meeting of the Catholic Bishops issued a statement, on November 16, 1946, in which it called upon the nation to extend to the DPs "the help that their very human rights demand." Engel also met with Howard J. Carroll, general secretary of the National Catholic Welfare Conference (NCWC), and Edward Swanstrom of the War Relief Services-NCWC.[32]

The non-sectarian appearance of the Citizens Committee notwithstanding, it was initiated, organized, and directed by the AJC. It was financed by Jewish donations, mainly from Lessing Rosenwald and his family, and was led by Irving Engel of the AJC and by William S. Bernard, the Jewish executive secretary. While the efforts to attract non-Jewish organizations to the CCDP were successful, the aim of broadening the base of its financial structure failed. "We are getting practically no help from the non-Jewish groups in raising funds," complained an AJC source.[33]

Despite the fact that Jews organized the CCDP for the purpose of admitting Jewish DPs, nowhere was the term "Jewish DPs" mentioned. On the contrary, CCDP officials made an effort to conceal the fact that the DP issue was, at least partially, a Jewish problem. "It would seem less than wise to build this up as a Jewish problem," warned Engel.[34] Particularly in certain

[31] AJC, "Interim Report on AJC Immigration Campaign," April 14, 1947, AJC, IME, CCDP, 1947.
[32] Proskauer to Frederick O. Nolde, November 18, 1946; Engel to Nolde, November 20, 1946, AJC, JMP, DP, Immigration, 1946-1953, box 3; Minutes, Meeting of Immigration Subcommittee, November 5, 1946; Selma Hirsch to Engel, November 6, 1946; "Humane Treatment of DPs," Excerpt from the Statement of the Catholic Bishops on "Man and Peace," November 16, 1946; Engel to Martin F. Huberth, November 18, 1946; Engel to H.J. Carroll, November 19, 1946; Engel to Edward Swanstrom, November 19, 1946, AJC, IME, Correspondence, 1945-1946.
[33] Ely M. Aaron to Proskauer, May 21, 1947, AJC, Fund Raising, 1947-1948; see also Genizi, *American Apathy*, pp. 285-334.
[34] Engel to Sinton, December 11, 1946, AJC, IME, DP, Corr. 1946.

areas, such as the Midwest, it was "wiser, for public relations, to stress the advantages accruing for Catholics and Protestants," wrote William Bernard, the CCDP executive secretary.[35]

The AJC decision to embark upon a new policy was carried out with remarkable speed, and, by the end of 1946, the Citizens Committee was already active. It soon became an effective lobby on behalf of DP legislation. Leonard Dinnerstein, the historian who investigated the activities of the CCDP, viewed it "as one of the largest and best-run lobbying groups in the nation in 1947 and 1948."[36]

The DP bill was introduced into Congress on April 1, 1947, by Republican Congressman William G. Stratton of Ohio. It called for the admission of 400,000 DPs during four years.[37] The negative reaction in Congress to the Stratton Bill reflected the negative attitudes of the American people at large. These partly derived from the false belief that most of the DPs were Jewish. Therefore, the help of church leaders was crucial for persuading their communities to support the bill. However, the leaders of the Catholic and Protestant churches were confronted by a serious dilemma: They were being asked to reverse their restrictionist approach to immigration legislation. Only after visits to DP camps in Germany and Austria did church leaders become convinced that the great majority of the DPs were Christians: Poles, Baltic peoples, Ukrainians, Romanians, Germans, etc. Gradually, church organizations adopted decisions to support the Stratton Bill.[38]

Despite Catholic statements of support, Walter Dushnyck of the Jesuit *America,* reported, in June 1947, about the existence of strong opposition to the Stratton Bill in Catholic circles in the South. "This, I think, is due in great

[35] William Bernard to Joseph L. Baron, December 15, 1947, AJC, IME, CCDP, 1947.
[36] Dinnerstein, *America and the Survivors*, pp. 126-127.
[37] CCDP, "News Release," April 1, 1947, AJC, Immigration, DP, 1945-1947.
[38] Statement on DPs Adopted by the Executive Committee of the National Catholic Rural Life Conferenece, Meetings held in Des Moines, Iowa, April 16, 1947; Bishop William T. Mulloy to Bernard, April 22, 1947; Engel to George Hexter, January 27, 1947, AJC, IME, DP, Corr. box 20, Editorial, "On Aiding DPs," *America*, 77 (May 3, 1947); Walter Dushnyck, "European Refugees in Grave Danger," ibid., pp. 125-127; Dushnyck and W. J. Gibbons, "For a Positive Refugee Policy," ibid., 77 (June 21, 1947), pp. 317-319.

measure to the tactical error of the Citizens Committee, which failed to emphasize in its campaign the real reasons of the plight of DPs in Europe – namely, that the greatest majority of them are fleeing Soviet totalitarianism."[39]

Dushnyck clearly expressed the Catholic approach to the DP problem: to support the admission of DPs because they were unfortunate victims of Communism. In fact, this was also the Protestant strategy. The *Christian Century*, the influential Protestant weekly, appealed for the admission of DPs, four-fifths of whom were Christians, "who are unable to return to their homes for fear of imprisonment and death at the hands of Communist governments."[40]

This development seems to have been one of the major reasons for the change in the churches' approach to immigration legislation. Whereas during the 1930s the refugees were victims of Nazism, after the war they were fleeing Communism. Since Communism was Christianity's archenemy, the churches gradually called upon America to open its gates to those people who refused to return to their countries of origin because they were now Communist-dominated. An editorial in *America* on February 22, 1947, mirrored the new thinking: "They might be Nazis ... [However] to help them, specifically by taking some of them into our country, is a concrete challenge to Communism."[41] In postwar America, suffused with strong anti-Soviet feelings, the argument that the DPs were running away from Communism was most appealing.

This linkage between the victims of Communism in DP camps in Europe, who should not be repatriated forcibly, and the need to admit some of them into America also appeared in a statement by Cardinal Spellman, archbishop of New York and a leader in the American Catholic hierarchy. At first he had hesitated to support the CCDP and its policy, unlike other Catholic statements in support of the Stratton Bill immediately after its introduction into Congress in April 1947, the cardinal's letter of support was not issued until

[39] Dushnyck to Engel, June 18, 26, 1947, AJC, IME, CCDP, June-August, 1947.
[40] Editorial,*The Christian Century,* April 23, 1947.
[41] "Refugees, Immigrants and Christian Charity," *America*, 76 (February 22, 1947), p. 564.

June 3. In his letter to the CCDP, he expressed his hope that "we not permit these misery-ridden peoples to be forced against their will to return to countries where, enslaved, their human rights will be denied them." He concluded: "I pray that ... we open our hearts and our doors to these starving peoples."[42]

In the Senate, statements of public support notwithstanding, a certain consensus emerged to restrict the admission of Jewish DPs and to demand fair distribution of the DPs by resettlement throughout the country. The outcome was the Wiley-Revercomb Bill, which was approved by the Senate (63-13) in June 1948. The Act allowed the entrance of 200,000 DPs over a two-year period and restricted eligibility to those persons who had been in DP camps on December 22, 1945. Thirty percent of the visas would be reserved for agricultural workers, and forty percent of the visas to those whose countries had been annexed by the Soviet Union, such as Estonians, Lithuanians, Latvians, and Poles. It also recognized the *Volksdeutsche* (ethnic Germans who had been living in East European countries and had been expelled after the war and were living in refugee camps in Germany), as eligible for immigration.[43] The CCDP circles were unable to prevent the adoption of the restrictionist provisions, primarily because of strong antisemitic feelings in Congress.

The DP Act of 1948, as the Wiley-Revercomb Act was called, shocked Jewish circles. "Frankly, ... I believe I would rather have no bill at all than to see this measure become law," wrote Irving Engel.[44]

The question of whether Truman should veto the bill divided the ranks not only between Jews and Christians, but even among the Jews themselves. Catholics and Protestants, in spite of their reservations, favored the bill.[45] Obviously, there was no difference of opinion among the Jewish groups as to the vicious character of the legislation. The disagreements emerged as to

[42] "Statement of his Eminence, Francis Cardinal Spellman, for pamphlet of the CCDP," June 3, 1947; Spellman to Proskauer, June 4, 1947, AJC, JMP, DP, Immigration, 1946-1953.
[43] For a detailed account of the deliberations on the Wiley-Revercomb Bill, see Dinnerstein, *America and the Survivors,* pp. 162-175.
[44] Engel to Benjamin S. Katz, March 12, 1948, AJC, IME, DP, Corr. box 20.
[45] *The New York Times*, June 5, 24, July 15, 1948.

whether to ask the president to veto the bill. The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai Brith (ADL) and the American Jewish Congress demanded a veto.[46] The AJC, however, strenuously opposed this approach. While, in light of the long Jewish effort for DP legislation, the outcome was a shocking irony, the Committee still considered the suggestion to veto the bill "neither morally nor tactically wise." To oppose a bill that permitted the admission of non-Jewish DPs would disrupt the long-cultivated, harmonious relations with Christian organizations. The proposal to veto the bill "produced a tension for which there was no precedent in the hitherto harmonious meetings of the [CCDP] executive committee," reported an AJC source. Nothing would be gained, and much more might be lost by such a move. Instead of promoting Jewish isolation, the AJC called for a fight to amend the bill with Christian help. Therefore, Joseph Proskauer advised the president to "sign this bill with appropriate comment," and expressed his hope that Truman would provide leadership to amend the bill in the near future.[47]

President Truman reluctantly signed the bill, denouncing it as "flagrantly discriminatory," "anti-Semitic and anti-Catholic."[48]

John Slawson, executive vice-president of AJC, summarized the Jewish reaction to the DP Act as follows: "From the point of view of Jewish immigration, it is a calamity. From the tactical point of view it is worse than no immigration at all, because it is designed to discriminate against Jews."[49]

Indeed, several provisions of the Wiley-Revercomb Act were purposely designed to exclude Jewish DPs. First, a DP was defined as one who was in the western zones of Germany, Austria, and Italy on December 22, 1945. Thus, the great majority of Jewish refugees, mainly from Poland, who had fled in 1946-1947 from Eastern Europe because of pogroms and extreme antisemitism, were eliminated. In addition, the legislation reserved 40 percent

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[46] Ibid., June 25, 1948.
[47] A four-page undated AJC memorandum, beginning with the words "The DP Act," AJC, IME, CCDP, box 15; Proskauer to Truman, June 18, 1948, AJC, JMP, Corr. box 3.
[48] Truman to Frank Goldman (B'nai Brith), July 7, 1948, Anti Defamation League Archives, New York City (ADL); *The New York Times*, July 22, 1948.
[49] Slawson to William Haber, June 21, 1948, AJC, Emigration-Immigration, Germany West, 1944-1949, Adviser.

of the visas for people from the Baltic countries, where, after the mass murder of the Holocaust, there were very few Jewish survivors. It also awarded 30 percent of the visas to agricultural workers, an occupation that was not usually a choice for Jews. Furthermore, the entrance of *Volksdeutsche* was permitted, and many believed that there were a great number of Nazi collaborators among them.[50]

Jewish organizations were highly critical of the DP Act. Many emphasized the irony that, while Jews had initiated the bill, they were eventually excluded, whereas their oppressors were eligible for immigration. The bill gave preference "to *Volksdeutsche,* who served as Hitler's fifth column in many European countries, and discriminated against the true surviving victims of Nazi persecution," noted Meier Steinbrink, national chairman of the ADL.[51] Particularly embittered and disappointed were those in the AJC who had labored tirelessly for the adoption of the legislation, like George J. Hexter, AJC's representative to the CCDP. "After coming within inches of substantial if not complete success, we seem destined to end up with total failure." He reminded his friends of the risk that the Committee had taken when it decided to work for all DPs with a nonsectarian approach: "In short, we took a calculated risk. We nearly won. Actually we lost – lost heavily." He wondered whether it would not have been better to concentrate the efforts specifically on Jewish DPs "without involving other groups."[52]

Hexter was not the only one in AJC circles who questioned the effectiveness of the nonsectarian approach. "One of the questions I should like to see the study address itself to is the aspect of the strategy of always getting up a non-Jewish front to press for Jewish causes," read an AJC inter-office memorandum.[53]

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[50] "An Act of Atonement: A Statement by the CCDP," October 24, 1948, AJC, JMP, Corr. box 3; Dinnerstein, *America and the Survivors*, pp. 172-175.
[51] "ADL, Press Release," June 8, 1948, ADL.
[52] George Hexter to CRC, Subject: DP Legislation, June 24, 1948, AJC, IME, CCDP, box 16. This draft letter, which clearly revealed Hexter's feelings, was never sent. See the meaningful changes in the letter of the following day: Hexter to CRC, June 25, 1948, AJC, IME, DP, Corr. box 20.
[53] Memo from Mark [Vosk] to Sandy [Flowerman], Re: DP Legislation, July 9, 1948, AJC, IME, CCDP, box 16.

More vocal and extreme in his criticism was Abraham G. Duker. As one who was a member of the American mission to the Nuremberg Trials Commission, Duker was familiar with the activities of many Baltic peoples, Ukrainians, Croats and Slovaks during the war. He stated that there were many Nazi collaborators and murderers in the DP camps. Many residents of the Baltic countries and the Ukraine had voluntarily joined the Nazis and had served them loyally and devotedly. Their volunteer detachments were responsible for the slaughter of tens of thousands of Jews and partisans. To prevent the entrance of Nazi collaborators, Duker called for the provision of "an effective screening procedure." When his warnings were disregarded, he published a strong attack on Jewish organizations, particularly the CCDP and the AJC. He criticized the nonsectarian policy: Despite the fact that the bulk of the funds for the CCDP actions came from the Jews, the interests of Christians had prevailed. "The protectors of the quislings on the CCDP were not going to give up their preferences for their pogromist protégés." He blamed the CCDP for its false propaganda that depicted all of the DPs as victims of Nazism, purposely hiding the fact that many of them were Nazi collaborators.[54]

Duker's attack prompted angry reactions from the AJC, which accused Duker of deliberately spreading misleading propaganda. Duker's article in the *Day* was "slanted and definitely unfair."[55]

The accusation that the Jewish organizations' eagerness to cooperate with Christian bodies had harmed Jewish interests and had worked to the disadvantage of Jewish DPs frustrated many Jewish officials in the AJC and CCDP, precisely because of their efforts to work on a nonsectarian basis. Rosenwald and Proskauer, among others, had put great emphasis on Jewish cooperation with Protestant and Catholic groups, hoping that it might decrease antisemitism in America and advance tolerance among the religions.

[54] Abraham G. Duker, "Summary of the Statement on the Need for Screening Displaced Persons Applying for the Entry into the U.S.," June 1, 1948, AJC, IME, CCDP, box 16; A.G. Duker, "The DP Scandal Reviewed," The English Section of the *Day,* July 25, 1948.
[55] Hexter to Jacob Billikopf, July 28, 1948, AJC, IME, DP, Corr. box 20.

They were afraid that attacks such as Duker's might disturb the harmonious atmosphere in CCDP meetings, which they considered a great achievement.[56]

In retrospect, the DP Act of June 1948 does not seem as bad as its critics thought. Two years after the establishment of the CCDP, it succeeded in changing the hostility of the American people as well as of Congress toward meaningful liberalization of the immigration laws. Despite its discriminatory articles, the number of Jewish DPs that were actually admitted to the country (20.4 percent) was relative to their proportion in the DP population in Germany and Austria.[57]

While Duker's criticism led to reactions from Jewish groups, David Nussbaum's accusations that DP camps in Germany were packed with Nazi collaborators raised a storm in Christian circles. In two articles in the *New York Post* (November 19 and 21, 1948), which were syndicated throughout the country, Nussbaum maintained that "the DP set-up in Europe today has become a kind of racket" and that many of the non-Jewish DPs were pogromists and collaborators. Therefore, Nussbaum demanded a more rigid screening process.[58]

These publications caused deep concern in various Christian groups. Obviously, the leaders of nationality groups, such as Polish, Latvian, Lithuanian, Ukrainian, and Slovak organizations, were upset and voiced angry protests.[59] Catholic representatives were also angered, particularly in light of the pressure coming from the nationality groups. William J. Gibbons of the National Catholic Resettlement Council turned to Engel to counter the effects of Nussbaum's attacks. Hinting that such accusations might split the ranks of DP friends, Gibbons warned: "All those interested in DP resettlement will find

[56] Proskauer to Engel, March 9, 11, 1949, AJC, JMP, DP, Immigration, 1946-1953.
[57] Harry N. Rosenfield to Kurt Grossman, December 21, 1950, National Archives, Washington, Displaced Persons Commission, box 40; William Haber to Abraham Ruthfeld, August 31, 1948, AJC, Emigration-Immigration, Germany, 1948-1949, Adviser.
[58] *The New York Post*, November 19, 21, 1948.
[59] Edwin A. Brown to Herbert C. Lytle, November 22, 1948; Brown to Almon R. Pepper, November 22, 1948, The Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, the files of the National Council of Churches, the papers of Church World Service, RG-8, S-VIII, box 113, 1948, DP and Refugees.

it advantageous to present a united front in this regard. But meanwhile everything possible must be done to counteract the bad feeling toward non-Jewish refugees which has been stimulated by the Nussbaum attacks." Gibbons also expressed his hope that "responsible Jewish leaders" would not allow their people to be influenced by "such racial thinking or by foreign forces" who wanted to split the front of DP friends.[60]

To soothe Christian resentment, which endangered interfaith cooperation, the AJC pressed for the publication of a conciliatory statement. A compromise was reached between the AJC and the American Jewish Congress and the ADL that expressed their apprehension about the admission of Nazi collaborators and called for a more rigid screening policy. A carefully worded, well-balanced letter was sent to the editor of the *New York Times*. The letter repudiated Nussbaum's sweeping attacks. It condemned as "irresponsible and indefensible any effort to cast blanket aspersions upon any national or religious group of DPs." Since, however, despite screening, "some such persons have succeeded in entering the camps, precaution should be exercised." To assure the exclusion of less democratic elements, the Jewish organizations urged Congress to consider "the desirability of strengthening ... screening techniques to bar Nazis and their collaborators as rigorous as those now properly being used to bar Communists."[61]

The controversy over the existence of collaborators among the DPs went deeper than the war of letters in the *New York Times.* What were the reactions of the Jewish community, and what steps were taken to prevent the entrance of Nazi collaborators into the United States? One can state with certainty that in AJC-CCDP circles there were no illusions with regard to the problem. From the beginning of the DP lobby, these officials were well aware of the existence of collaborators and war criminals in the DP camps. Lessing Rosenwald of the ACJ had admitted that the result of the DP Act of 1948, with the admission of *Volksdeutsche,* obviously meant the possibility that

[60] William J. Gibbons to Engel, December 28, 1948, AJC, JMP, DP, Immigration.

[61] Letters to the *New York Times*, January 12, 1949. The Christian response condemned the "widespread propaganda" concerning the large proportion of former Nazi collaborators among non-Jewish DPs; *The New York Times***,** February 3, 1949.

collaborators would enter the country. William Haber, who knew the situation firsthand as the "Adviser on Jewish Affairs to the Commander in Chief of the European Theater," wrote "That there are fascist-minded individuals and perhaps Nazi collaborators in some of the non-Jewish DP camps is in my judgment not subject to question." He maintained that in order to prevent the admission of antisemites to America, one would have to prohibit all immigration from Europe.[62]

When Senator Alexander Wiley suggested amending the DP Act of 1948, to require adequate screening against infiltration of Communist agents, Irving Engel protested the omission of screening former Nazis and collaborators: "As you know, there is a great deal of controversy raging at the present time on the latter point. Many people are convinced that American officials are not sufficiently alert to the danger that many former active Hitler sympathizers may come in as Displaced Persons." Engel considered the Senator's failure to demand such screening as another example of that unawareness.[63]

A clear indication of the AJC's awareness of the collaboration problem was the compilation of a list of Nazi collaborators in countries occupied by the Nazis. The AJC handed over the list, which contained 1,200 names, to the commissioner of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, saying: "you may find this file useful in identifying" the collaborators.[64]

Nonetheless, the American Jewish Congress, the Jewish Labor Committee, the Jewish War Veterans, and the Anti-Defamation League were more vocal than the AJC in protesting the inclusion of collaborators in the DP Act.[65] Thus, Duker was incorrect in accusing the Jewish establishment, and particularly the AJC, of not being aware of the existence of collaborators and former Nazis among the DPs.

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[62] Hexter to Billikopf, July 28, 1948; Lessing Rosenwald to Charles P. Taft, December 6, 1948, AJC, IME, DP, Corr. box 20; William Haber, "Final Report," December 20, 1948, AJC, Emigration-Immigration, Germany West, 1948-1949, Adviser.
[63] Engel to Baron, December 28, 1948, AJC, IME, DP, Corr. box 20.
[64] Slawson to Watson B. Muller, August 16, 1949, AJC, IME, CCDP, box 19.
[65] Joseph L. Lichten to Arnold Forster, July 9, 1948, ADL; *The New York Post*, November 26, 1948; *The New York Times*, May 31, 1950.

What was in dispute was the strategy: What should be done to solve this problem, and what methods would prove successful? Probably Duker and Nussbaum made a tactical error by publishing a sweeping charge that all, or at least a great number, of the non-Jewish DPs were collaborators. Christian organizations could easily reject a collective condemnation of the DPs, admitting, however, that, obviously, among millions of people a small number of war criminals could be found.[66]

Jewish organizations tried to prevent the entrance of undesirable elements by demanding a more rigid and effective screening policy. As mentioned above, several proposals were put forth, but with no results. To be sure, the screening operation had begun in April 1946, two years before the above calls for a more rigid process. The Counter-Intelligence Corps of the U.S. Army (CIC) was in charge; however, unclear definitions, procedural problems, lack of skilled personnel and of documentation to corroborate the statements provided by the DPs, and difficulties in gathering the required information were among the reasons for the CIC's inefficiency.[67] Reports of the U.S. commanding generals in Austria and Germany confirmed the general view that the interrogations were not being conducted very efficiently. Although 39,403 DPs were turned away by the army as ineligible for UNRRA care, nobody was brought to trial or imprisoned.[68]

Whereas the Jewish agencies criticized the inefficiency of the screenings, many Christian bodies decried the "brutality" of the interrogations. Particularly vocal were Polish, Baltic, and Ukrainian organizations in the United States. The Lithuanian Central Committee complained that "methods of pressure applied with regard to DPs [are] make living conditions intolerable." After an investigation the military authorities reported that this complaint was "without

[66] Engel to Liskofsky, December 18, 1948, AJC, IME, DP, Corr. box 20; *The New York Times,* February 2, 1949.
[67] Dinnerstein, *America and the Survivors*, pp. 192-196; Allan A. Ryan, *Quiet Neighbors: Prosecuting Nazi War Criminals in America* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984), pp. 21-24.
[68] CG USFA (Commanding General, United States Forces in Austria) to WAR for WDSCA-ES, January 3, 1947; HQ, European Command, signed Huebner to AGWAR, July 2, 1947, The National Archives and Records Agency, Suitland, Maryland, RG 383, 7, box 69, Refugees and DPs , 1947 (NARA).

foundation."[69] The editorial of the Catholic *America* complained about the hardships caused by the screening. There could be no harsher methods than those employed by the interrogators: "Some DPs were screened by UNRRA and Military authorities as many as 35 times."[70]

The Displaced Persons Commission (DPC) turned to the AJC for guidelines with respect to the screening policy in order to prevent the admission of collaborators. However, the screening procedure also impeded the emigration process and became the object of repeated criticism by the voluntary agencies. The screening process for collaborators was the victim of this pressure, as the Commission adopted a more lenient approach. As a result thousands of pro-Nazis were allowed to enter the country according to the special investigator of Nazi war criminals.[71]

Christian organizations, unlike Jewish ones, were not deeply disturbed by the possible entrance of collaborators into the United States. For the Lutheran Resettlement Service (LRS), the admission of the so-called Baltic Legion was high on its agenda. This group was composed of Baltic nationals who had served during the war in the Baltic Waffen-SS units. The DP Commission disqualified these people from immigration, because, according to Section 13 of the DP Act of 1948, both SS and Waffen SS units "bore arms against the United States."[72] The Lutherans protested the exclusion of the Baltic Legion, claiming that the Baltic nationals had been "forcibly conscripted into the German Army." Therefore, every candidate for immigration should be selected

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[69] Lithuanian Central Committee to General Joseph McNarney, February 4, 1947; USFA to War for Civil Affairs Division, February 28, 1947, NARA, RG 383, 7 box 69.

[70] "Screening DPs," *America* ,78 (December 1, 1948), p. 251.

[71] Joel D. Wolfsohn to John Slawson, August 13, 1948, (AJC, Immigration, DP, 1945-1947*; The New York Times*, March 16, 1950; Ryan, *Quiet Neighbors***,** pp. 2-10. According to the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles, which specializes in hunting Nazi war criminals, 15,000 Nazis and collaborators entered America. "Chasing Monsters," *Wall Street Journal*, April 16, 1991.

[72] Michael F. Markel to Ugo Carusi, January 12, 1950, The Archives of Cooperative Lutheranism, New York City, the papers of the National Lutheran Council-Lutheran Resettlement Service, Markel (ACRL, NLC-LRS). For a detailed discussion of the Lutheran Resettlement Service, see Haim Genizi, *America's Fair Share: the Admission and Resettlement of Displaced Persons, 1945-1952* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1993), pp. 148-169.

on his own merits, and no group of people should be denied as a group, stated the LRS report.[73]

When Jewish groups opposed the plan to qualify persons who had served in Waffen SS units, Lutheran officials were upset. “We definitely feel that if we do not speak rather insistently for the admission of these Protestant people, we may find ourselves under severe criticism,” wrote LRS’s executive secretary.[74] When the DP Commission, as well as the Jewish agencies refused to change their negative position regarding the Baltic Legion, Cordelia Cox, the resettlement director of the LRS, suggested, in April 1950, that caution be thrown to the winds.

> It does not seem reasonable to assume that in a country where so much anti-Semitism exists, a Jewish group could influence a State Department decision, against the largest group of Protestants among the DPs. ... I just cannot understand how a Jewish group could carry such influence. It seems to me that the effect would be the other way – that if they were against the Balts, it would react favorably for the Balts.[75]

Cordelia Cox was right. Under heavy Christian pressure, the Catholics also cooperated closely with the Lutherans on this issue, and the State Department and the DP Commission eventually capitulated.

The Cold War atmosphere in the United States at that time played an important role here. The Lutheran insistence that the Baltic soldiers had been engaged in fighting not against the Western Allies, but against the Russians, “in an effort to liberate their home-land,” did not go unnoticed. The State Department announced that the soldiers of the Baltic Legion “were largely forcibly recruited” and that therefore they were eligible for visas.[76] The

[73] LRS, “Progress Report,” no. 15, January 29, 1951, ACRL, NLC-LRS.
[74] Clarence Krumbolz to Markel, February 9, 1950, ACRL, NLC-LRS, Baltic Legion, 1950.
[75] Cordelia Cox to Paul C. Empie, and Krumbholz, April 22, 1950, ACRL, NLC-LRS, Baltic Legion, 1950.
[76] Herve J. L’Heureux to Cox, September 13, 1950; James J. McTigue to Cox, December 15, 1950, ACRL, NLC-LRS, DPC, 1948-1950.

Lutherans won the struggle, and the Baltic Waffen-SS men were legally allowed entry into the country.

One may wonder at the total disregard in Lutheran circles for the charges about the sinister character of the Waffen-SS units, including the Baltic Divisions. Contemporary evidence and research point to the considerable positive response among Estonians and Latvians to the German drive to enlist local people as collaborators, using them in local police, as guards in concentration camps, and as fighters against partisans. The sinister character of Latvian, Estonian, and Ukrainian units has been recently substantiated by scholars and by courts in the United States and Israel.[77] Thus, the argument that the soldiers of the Baltic Legion were innocent individuals who had been forcibly conscripted and had done nothing except fight against the Russians was questionable, to say the least. However, the Lutherans were eager to bring these people into America, not only because of their Lutheran faith, but also because they were trying to escape Communist regimes. The Lutherans, like many Americans in the postwar period, were much more anti-Communist than anti-Nazi. No Lutheran group ever demanded that the accusations against the Baltic Legion be investigated. The LRS was very proud of its success with respect to the Baltic soldiers, regarding it as one of its major achievements.[78]

Although there was agreement among the various denominations as to the need to amend the DP Act, several proposals led to heated dispute. Despite the nonsectarian facade of support for changes in the DP Act, serious differences endangered the continuation of a united front. One subject that threatened Jewish-Christian cooperation was the issue of the *Volksdeutsche.* The Jewish groups, organized in the National Community Relations Advisory Council (NCRAC), urged the elimination of Article 12 of the DP Act, because it gave priority to German expellees, many of whom were suspected collaborators. To amend Article 13 the organizations recommended the

[77] Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of European Jews*, Revised Edition (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1985), pp. 312-313, 374, 485-486, 513; Henry Friedlander and Earlean M. McCarrick, “Nazi Criminals in the United States: Denaturalization after Fedorenko,” *Simon Wiesenthal Center Annual*, 3 (1986), pp. 55, 62.
[78] LRS, “Data Prepared for the DPC,” ACRL, NLC-LRS, DPC.

exclusion of people "who advocated or assisted in the persecution of any person because of race, religion or national origin." This addition was "highly desirable, inasmuch as many of the DPs, particularly from the Baltic countries, are known to have collaborated with the Nazis in the persecution of Jews."[79]

Not everybody in Jewish public life was happy with these suggestions. In some institutions, such as the AJC and the American Council for Judaism, the interests of all DPs, not only the Jewish DPs, were considered crucial when the amendments were being suggested. Lessing Rosenwald clearly demonstrated this attitude in December 1948, when he wrote: "From the beginning of my work with the Citizens Committee, I have always emphasized that I was desirous of obtaining fair legislation to ALL DPs, not just those of Jewish faith."[80] Joseph Proskauer also emphasized this point.[81]

As a humanitarian gesture, Congress permitted the admission of 27,377 persons of German ethnic origin, although they were not qualified as DPs. Catholic and Lutheran groups were aware of the severity and scope of the social, moral, economic, and political problems of millions of expellees in Germany. Both denominations launched a campaign to educate the public and Congress about the miserable conditions of the expellees, demanding that Section 12 of the DP Act be continued and "that the numbers now provided for be doubled and extended" beyond June 30, 1950.[82]

Jewish organizations were deeply concerned with the proposition to double the number of expellees. The American Jewish Congress, the ADL, and the United Service for New Americans protested the admission of ethnic Germans into the country.[83]

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[79] Jules Cohen, "Summary of conclusions reached at special meeting of the NCRAC Legislative Information Committee to consider the DP Act", July 20, 1948, ADL; "Recommended Changes in the DP Act of 1948," August 3, 1948, AJC, JMP, Corr. box 3.

[80] Lessing Rosenwald to Charles P. Taft, December 6, 1948, AJC, IME, DP, Corr. box 20.

[81] Proskauer to Truman, June 18, 1948, AJC, JMP, Corr. box 3.

[82] Edward Swanstrom to Ugo Carusi, February 14, 1949, NA, DPC, box 24, NCWC; Minutes, Meeting of CCDP Executive Committee, January 6, 1949, AJC, IME, CCDP, 1949, box 15;Van Dausen, "Statement on the German Expellee problem," August 5, 1949, ACRL, NLC-LRS, Expellees, 1949.

[83] *The New York Times,* May 31, 1950; Harold Menheim to Proskauer, September 9, 1948; Lessing Rosenwald to Charles P. Taft, December 6,

The attitude of the American Jewish Committee to the *Volksdeutsche* provision was not as clear-cut as that of the aforesaid Jewish organizations. The AJC's ambivalent approach to the German expellees derived from its opposition to the sweeping accusations against all ethnic Germans. "We have no right to assume that the bulk of these people [in Sudetenland] became Nazis after 1939," read an AJC report on German expellees. Moreover, "there is a large body of people among X/Rs [Expellees and Refugees] who are not and had never been Nazis, and a considerable number of genuine anti-Nazis." The solution of the expellee problem could not rest solely upon the shoulders of West Germany because it was unable to deal with a problem of such magnitude. "An a priori negative attitude ... towards a solution will prove self-defeating," warned the AJC report.[84]

The Lutherans and Catholics were determined to retain Section 12 and even double the number of ethnic Germans to be admitted. "Of course, no Christian group could go along with the anti-*Volksdeutsche* amendment," wrote William Gibbons of the National Catholic Resettlement Council (NCRC).[85]

In addition to the German expellee issue, the controversy over the subject of "groups and elements" also contributed to the tension between Jewish and Catholic groups. Bending to Catholic nationality organizations' pressure, the NCRC decided on the inclusion of an amendment that would demand

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1948, AJC, IME, DP, Corr. box 20; Arthur Greenleigh to Jewish Members of the State DP Commissions, November 16, 1950, YIVO Institute for Jewish Research Archives (YIVO), Files of United Service for New Americans, box 25: file 570. Catholic sources also stated that 50 percent of the German expellees were ineligible for American visas because they failed to pass the screening. Charles F. Gerhard to Bruce M. Mohler, June 17, 1950; Mohler to S.K. Trau, September 8, 1949, The Archives of Center for Migration Studies, Staten Island, N.Y., the papers of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, DI, GC, box 23, German Ethnic (CMS, NCWC).

[84] "Summary of a Report on German Expellees and Refugees prepared by the AJC," December 5, 1950, The Archives of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, New York City, DP, 1950; Charles Steinberg, "Report on the German Expellees and Refugees," November, 1950, AJC, FAD-1, box 33.

[85] Gibbons to Engel, December 28, 1948, AJC, JMP, DP, Immigration.

proportional representation of various elements within the DPs.[86] The proposition was put forward that visas should be issued to each group and element according to their proportion in the total number of DPs. This was called the "Sage formula," and it gained supporters in certain antisemitic and restrictionist quarters. Thanks to the efficiency of Jewish relief and immigration agencies, the percentage of Jewish DPs who had arrived in the first boats under the DP Act was unproportionally high. To prevent a "Jewish invasion," certain Christian groups favored the Sage formula.[87] The AJC strongly opposed this amendment, because it introduced "the *numerus clausus* into our legislation, and it is contrary to our concept of Americanism," as Engel pointed out.[88]

Members of the AJC were frustrated not only by the Catholics' position on the amendments, but also by their attitude to the Citizens Committee. George J. Hexter, AJC's representative to the CCDP, bitterly complained about "the equivocal performance of the National Catholic Welfare Conference" in 1948, adding that "there is reason to fear a repetition" now that the DP Act is up for amendment."[89]

For Hexter the Sage formula was an example of the NCWC's unfriendly attitude. Although a compromise had been agreed upon with Gibbons of the NCRC, Swanstrom of the NCWC disregarded it. "In private the representatives of the NCWC were influencing members of Congress in directions contrary to the line of the CCDP, to which all other groups faithfully adhered," stated Hexter. He warned that Catholic provisions aimed at restricting the admission of Jewish DPs "cannot but contribute to a further deterioration of Jewish-Catholic relations." He enumerated Jewish concessions on behalf of the Catholics. These concessions were in accordance with the AJC policy to support liberalization of immigration,

[86] *The New York Times*, January 13, 28, 1949; Swanstrom to Carusi, February 14, 1949, NA, DPC, box 24, NCWC.
[87] Liskofsky to Dave Danzig, February 16, 1949, AJC, Immigration, DP, 1945-1947; Engel to Sidney Goldmann, January 31, 1949, AJC, IME, CCDP, box 19.
[88] Engel to Goldmann, January 31, 1949.
[89] GJH [George J. Hexter] to Proskauer, February 4, 1949, AJC, IME, CCDP, box 15.

although the main beneficiaries would be Christians and not Jews. There were many common interests between Catholics and Jews as far as the DP issue was concerned and might serve as a common ground for harmonious work between the two. But this cooperation could not be achieved "as long as the suspicions implicit in the NCRC's statement … of the Sage formula persist," concluded Hexter.[90]

Such complaints about the attitude of the Catholics were not confined to Hexter alone. Irving Engel, who was known for his espousal of interfaith cooperation, also expressed this criticism. He agreed with Hexter that the "groups and elements" proposition might "create a rift between the Catholic and Jewish groups." He notified his Catholic friends that this proposition "will inevitably be interpreted by the Jewish community as unfriendly." If this provision were approved, then fewer Jews would be permitted to enter the country, a troubling development, "which would mean that we would have lost, rather than gained, as a result of all of our efforts of the last two and a half years." To avoid a rift with the Catholics, Engel suggested that Joseph Proskauer discuss the matter with Cardinal Spellman, the leader of the Catholic hierarchy. Through this meeting Engel hoped to "work out something on this which would meet the legitimate needs of the Catholic groups without bringing on another Catholic-Jewish fight."[91]

Engel refuted the Catholic impression that, since the establishment of the State of Israel, American Jews were no longer interested in amending the DP Act. Interestingly, this Catholic accusation reflected the changes that had taken place in the American mood since the 1930s. Whereas, during the Nazi era, Jewish agencies had fought hard to convince Christian groups to support the refugee cause, now the Jews were blamed for not backing the effort to amend the DP Act.[92]

Following Engel's request, Proskauer appealed to Cardinal Spellman to grant him "an off-the-record talk" in order to discuss the "differences of opinion" that had developed between Jews and Catholics regarding the

[90] Ibid.
[91] Engel to Proskauer, February 18, 1949, AJC, IME, CCDP, box 19.
[92] Engel to Edward A. Conway, January 21, 1949; Engel to Bernard Lobman, February 7, 1949, AJC, IME, CCDP, boxes 15, 19.

amendments of the DP Act. Proskauer believed that "these differences could be reconciled."[93] The cardinal reacted immediately, nominating a team to meet the Jewish group in order to work out a compromise.[94] After negotiations, the Catholics hinted that if agreement could be reached on other amendments, such as the cut-off date and the *Volksdeutsche* provision, the Catholics would quietly discontinue their support of the "groups and elements" provision, without announcing the change in public.[95]

Joseph Proskauer was enthusiastic about the Catholic attitude: "I have never sat in a conference where the other side of the table tried to be more cooperative." However, he feared that Jewish groups would impede the progress Engel had made. Therefore, he strongly emphasized the importance of reaching an accord with the Catholics: "My own feeling about this is very strong. It is a matter most vital to good relations with the Catholics," wrote Proskauer to Engel.[96] Engel was also of the opinion that an agreement with the Catholics would produce a healthier atmosphere and would reduce tensions that had existed between the two groups in other fields. However, he warned Proskauer that, even though substantial progress had been made, it was not yet clear whether an accord would be reached. Reacting to Engel's cautious line, Proskauer reiterated his position on the subject, pressing Engel to reach an agreement.

> I am voicing to you my profound conviction that you have got to get a final agreement. The matters on which there still seems to be some slight difference of opinion do not amount to a hill of beans compared with the utter necessity of coming to an agreement with the Catholics on this subject.[97]

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[93] Proskauer to Francis Cardinal Spellman, February 23, 1949, AJC, JMP, DP, Immigration, 1946-1953.
[94] Spellman to Proskauer, February 26, 1949, AJC, JMP, Immigration, 1946-1953.
[95] IME (Engel), Re: "DP Legislation," March 8, 1949, (AJC, JMP, DP, Immigration, 1946-1953; Catharine O'Brien to Engel, March 8, 1949, AJC, IME, CCDP, box 19.
[96] Proskauer to Engel, March 9, 1949, AJC, JMP, Corr. box 3.
[97] Engel to Proskauer, March 10, 1949; Proskauer to Engel, March 11, 1949, AJC, JMP, Corr. box 3.

After another meeting with Gibbons, the exact wording of the formula for the admission of *Volksdeutsche* was agreed on by both groups, and Proskauer was able to report to Cardinal Spellman that a "substantial accord" was reached as a result of the cardinal's intervention.[98] Thus, a serious rupture between the Jewish and Catholic groups was averted, and, by the middle of March 1949, the hectic activity of last month's crisis subsided.

It should be emphasized that during the crisis the major objective of the leaders of the AJC was to "relieve some of the tension which exists in other fields." So, for the sake of interfaith cooperation, not necessarily related to the DP problem, the AJC withdrew its opposition to the admission of German expellees and even agreed to double their number, despite the knowledge that many of them were indeed Nazi collaborators. During the weeks of negotiations, the issue was the omission of the phrase "ethnic German origin," not the prevention of immigration to Nazi war criminals.[99]

The real Jewish achievement was in the "groups and elements" provision. Although the Catholics were reluctant to declare publicly that they no longer demanded such an amendment, privately they agreed not to press for it. Although the March 1949 accord between Jews and Catholics was acceptable in the House of Representatives, further concessions were needed in the Senate.

The lenghty and difficult negotiations of February-March repeated themselves, and the Jews were asked for additional concessions.[100] Democratic Senator Pat McCarran of Nevada led the isolationist and anti-Communist forces in the Senate, aiming to stop any effort to change the DP Act of 1948. In January 1950, McCarran introduced a restrictive immigration bill.[101] The opposition to McCarran produced an alternate bill, led by Senators Harley Kilgore (Democrat, West Virginia) and Homer Ferguson (Republican,

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[98] Engel to Proskauer, March 14, 1949; Proskauer to Spellman, March 15, 1949, AJC, JMP, Corr. box 3.
[99] Engel to Proskauer, March 10, 1949, AJC, JMP, Corr. box 3.
[100] A.J. Wycislo to Engel, September 22, 1949, AJC, IME, CCDP, box 19; CCDP, Memorandum, September 22, 1949, ibid., box 16.
[101] For a detailed discussion of the McCarran bill and the Kilgore-Ferguson alternate bill, see Dinnerstein, *America and the Survivors*, pp. 218-253.

Michigan). It was a liberal and humane bill. However, it did include a provision that not only retained the *Volksdeutsche* article but also doubled the number of expellees eligible for visas, to be charged against the regular German quota, and provided for their overseas transportation.[102]

This provision did not make the Jewish groups happy. The dilemma of supporting the Ferguson-Kilgore bill once again aroused interfaith controversy. Naturally, the conflict of interests between Catholic, Lutheran, and Jewish groups caused continued tension, despite agreements and well-intentioned efforts. The Catholics were frustrated with the Jewish reluctance to support the bill. William J. Gibbons of the National Catholic Resettlement Council, wondered "if it is at all possible to make sure that the unanimity which has prevailed in the past shall continue in the future." [103]

When the McCarran and Ferguson-Kilgore bills were discussed in the Senate in March-April 1950, the Jewish organizations had to make a difficult choice. The AJC took the lead, deciding to support the Ferguson-Kilgore bill. An AJC confidential memorandum summarized the dilemma: "In the course of the long struggle against the McCarran bill, the AJC ... took the position that as the considerable lesser evil the Ferguson-Kilgore bill was not to be opposed, even at the price of the admission of 54,744 ethnic Germans."[104]

The Ferguson-Kilgore bill was adopted by the Senate on April 5, 1950, by a large majority. The final outcome was the amended DP Act of 1950, with the following provisions: the cut-off date was extended to January 1, 1949; the number of DPs increased from 200,000 to 301,500; the number of expellees was doubled to 54,744; and the time-frame for the DP Act was extended to June 30, 1951. All together the number of the various groups of immigrants eligible for admission was set at 415,744.[105]

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[102] William S. Bernard to Cooperating Organizations, Local Citizens Committees and Friends of the CCDP, March 24, 1950, AJC, IME, CCDP, box 17.
[103] Gibbons to Engel, February 23, 1950, AJC, IME, CCDP, box 19.
[104] EH [Eugene Hevesi], "Confidential," "The Question of Resettlement of Refugees and Expellees of German Ethnic Origin," April 24, 1950, AJC, FAD-1, box 33.
[105] Dinnerstein, Survivors of the Holocaust, p. 249.

In conclusion, between the 1930s and the 1940s, the American Jewish Committee underwent a significant transformation. Instead of a small, elitist group that preferred behind-the-scenes activities and opposed the change of the restrictive immigration laws, after the war the AJC opened its ranks to thousands of new members and decided to operate not only for the community but in cooperation with the Jewish community. Stunned by what had happened to their European brethren, the Committee extended help to the survivors. The lesson of the mute approach and the divisiveness of the Jewish community during the Holocaust was learned.

After the war, the Committee fully cooperated with other Jewish groups in the management and supervision of the adviser on Jewish Affairs, who helped the DPs in Germany and Austria. It initiated and organized a campaign to enact the DP Act of 1948 and the amended Act of 1950. Despite its shortcomings and rivalries, the CCDP, which was created and directed by the AJC and the ACJ, was a successful lobby that achieved its major aim of admitting almost 100,000 Jewish DPs. Furthermore, it proved its workability as a nonsectarian body. Lutherans, Catholics, and Jews were able to cooperate, each yielding on some important issues.

The Christian groups also changed their attitude to the refugee issue. In the 1930s, they had strongly opposed immigration, because they believed that all of the refugees were Jewish. However, after the war, when the great majority of the DPs were actually Christians, the Christian organizations were ready to cooperate in order to lobby for a DP Act. At this time the majority of victims were not survivors of Nazism but were attempting to escape from Communism.

While a basic objective of the American Jewish Committee was to enhance nonsectarian cooperation, this goal weakened its position in negotiations with Catholics and Lutherans concerning the entrance of Nazi collaborators and *Volksdeutsche*. Still, it is questionable whether a tougher position would have changed the final outcome in light of the strong restrictionist forces in the Senate. Altogether, under the Truman Directive and

the DP Acts of 1948 and 1950, almost 100,000 Jews entered the United States. This fact represents a considerable achievement.[106]

Source: *Yad Vashem Studies*, XXX, Jerusalem, 2002, pp. 369-404.

[106] Ibid., p. 251.