

# SOUTHERN JEWISH HISTORY

Journal of the Southern Jewish Historical Society

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2023  
Volume 26



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# Southern Jewish History

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Articles appearing in *Southern Jewish History* are abstracted and/or indexed in *Historical Abstracts*; *America: History and Life*; *Index to Jewish Periodicals*; *Journal of American History*; *Journal of Southern History*; *RAMBI-National Library of Israel*; *Immigration and Ethnic History Society Newsletter*; and the *Berman Jewish Policy Archive* ([www.bjpa.org](http://www.bjpa.org)).

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# Training and Dispersing Young Jews Fleeing Hitler: The National Youth Administration Refugee Program and the South

by

Claudia Wilson Anderson \*

The widely circulating tale of “Operation Texas” provides a compelling narrative about future President Lyndon B. Johnson rescuing Holocaust refugees and hiding them in National Youth Administration (NYA) housing. The story includes intrigue, false passports, and illegal aliens hidden in resident centers run by a U.S. government agency. While I previously challenged the credibility of this account, the underlying history of the NYA and its refugee youth program remains to be fully told.<sup>1</sup>

The origins of the tale trace to the dedication of the new synagogue for Congregation Agudas Achim, the Conservative congregation in Austin, Texas. During the festive ceremonies on December 30, 1963, the chairman of the building committee, Jim Novy, delivered a short speech introducing his long-time friend, Lyndon Johnson. Novy cryptically credited Johnson and Jesse Kellam, both former Texas state directors of the NYA, with making little-known arrangements to lodge Jewish immigrants at NYA resident centers in Texas in 1940. The NYA was created during the Great Depression to help youth between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four continue in school or receive vocational training by providing them part-time jobs, thereby allowing them to earn money without sacrificing their education.<sup>2</sup>

Novy was a Polish immigrant who had entered the United States through Galveston in 1913 at the age of sixteen, and his remarks referred to a project to resettle European refugee youth who had fled Hitler’s

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persecution and entered the country legally in the late 1930s and early 1940s. With the help of the National Refugee Service (NRS), refugee youth between eighteen and twenty-four came to Texas and other states where they lived in NYA resident centers and received vocational training and schooling through the NYA. Novy served as the NRS liaison with the Texas NYA, helping to support the young men enrolled in the program in his state.<sup>3</sup> The effort was part of a national partnership, a small but historically interesting cooperative effort, set in the context of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal, to resettle and train refugee youth who fled to the United States under the immigration quota system then in effect.<sup>4</sup>

### *The Galveston Movement, the IRO, and the NYA/NRS*

It was against this background that many young refugees landed in New York City but failed to find suitable employment there. Although Congress limited the use of federal relief funds to assisting citizens of the United States, the NYA, with assistance from the NRS, a private nonprofit organization, found a way to help. It is this story Novy referenced in his speech at the Congregation Agudas Achim synagogue dedication. The story begins at the national level but with important ties in the South. A total of 265 refugee youths participated in the program with 102, or 38.5 percent, located in six southern states.<sup>5</sup> Twenty-two state NYA programs participated, with six located in the NRS's southern district: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, Oklahoma, and Texas.<sup>6</sup> As we shall see, three centers in Georgia provided the pilot for the national program, and Florida was the first to place women in the refugee program. Novy's program in Texas provides historians with an excellent case study.

When Novy agreed to serve as the liaison in Texas between the NYA and the NRS, he must have felt a deep personal connection with the young men arriving in the state from New York City. In 1913, Novy's father in Poland, fearing Russian pogroms and seeing no future for his son, Shimeon Novodvorsky, decided that his son should join his two older brothers who were already in America. Shimeon made his way from Knishin, Poland, to the port city of Bremen, Germany, where he boarded the SS *Chemnitz* and sailed for Galveston under the auspices of the Galveston Movement, a project to settle refugees in the interior of the United States away from more congested cities in the East, particularly New York. The ship docked in Galveston on Yom Kippur eve, and the esteemed and

beloved Rabbi Henry Cohen of Galveston's Congregation B'nai Israel came aboard and delivered a sermon. The next morning about 130 travelers disembarked with assistance from Rabbi Cohen. Immigration officials permitted them to conduct High Holiday services, and at day's end, they ate a meal prepared by the local Jewish community and slept at the U.S. Immigration Station. The next day, with help from Cohen and Galveston's Jewish Immigrants Information Bureau, Shimeon boarded a train to Dallas where his brothers, Louis and Sam, waited. The brothers took Shimeon to their new home in Ennis, Texas, where they had started a junk business. Sam and Louis had already shortened their last name to Novy, and Shimeon soon adopted the name Jim Novy.<sup>7</sup>

The Galveston Movement and the Industrial Removal Office (IRO), whose beginnings preceded those of the Galveston Movement, sought to resettle Jewish immigrants fleeing Russian pogroms between 1907 and 1914. The organizations funded plans to settle or resettle immigrants in the interior of the United States, outside of congested cities on the East Coast where large populations of Jews had already settled. Their goals were to provide more economic opportunities for the immigrants and to stem a feared growth in antisemitism in eastern cities. Jacob Schiff, philanthropist and founder of the Galveston Movement, also hoped to shift some of the responsibility for helping newly arrived immigrants from the New York Jewish community to Jewish communities across the country. The IRO resettled immigrants who entered the United States through ports on the East Coast, particularly New York, but the Galveston Movement recruited immigrants in Europe and brought them to the port of Galveston, diverting them from large eastern cities. Once in Galveston they boarded the railroad and dispersed across the western half of the United States.<sup>8</sup>

Years later, with similar goals in mind, the NRS provided resources to resettle refugees fleeing Hitler's regime. As part of their resettlement strategy, the NRS partnered with the NYA to relocate refugee youths who had entered the country through Ellis Island and were living in New York City. Just as with the IRO and the Galveston Movement, the NRS developed a network of people in Jewish communities who assisted by matching immigrants with jobs and providing them with social and moral support. The NRS drew heavily on this network when implementing the NYA partnership. The NRS, although identified with the Jewish faith, was officially nondenominational, and they planned to include Christian

refugees fleeing discrimination in Europe in their project with the NYA. Although the Galveston Movement and IRO focused on helping Jewish immigrants, Cohen, who did so much work in Galveston, was also well-known for assisting immigrants of other faiths who disembarked in Galveston and needed help. Although the NRS operated much like the earlier IRO and Galveston Movement, its partnership with the NYA exhibited differences. The Galveston Movement focused on diverting Jewish immigrants to states west of the Mississippi River to avoid competition from African American labor in the South, while the NRS and the NRS-NYA partnership resettled many youths in the South. The youths the NRS recruited for the NYA also spoke some degree of English and often had been well-educated, unlike many of their Russian predecessors who landed in Galveston in the early twentieth century.<sup>9</sup>

Little has been written about the NYA's refugee program or the participation of southern states. In 1992, historian Richard Reiman devoted a chapter to the partnership in his book, *The New Deal and American Youth: Ideas & Ideals in a Depression Decade*. Reiman's account includes the reactions of four young men from the first group of NRS refugees to enroll in the NYA program when they arrived in Monroe, Georgia. He makes no other references to refugees sent to the South. Dan Puckett, in his book *In the Shadow of Hitler: Alabama's Jews, the Second World War, and the Holocaust*, described the refugee program at the NYA residential center in Gadsden, Alabama.<sup>10</sup> Other than these references on this noteworthy chapter in American history, no other substantive scholarship has appeared.

#### *Texas as a Case Study*

To aid with Jewish refugee settlement in Texas, Jewish leaders held a conference at the St. Anthony Hotel in San Antonio on October 20, 1940, to organize the Texas National Refugee Service. Although some Texas communities already worked with the NRS to aid and resettle refugees, until the organization of the Texas NRS, the state lacked a unified approach to participation in the NRS's national programs. The conference elected Herbert Mallinson of Dallas as the new chairperson and several other men as vice chairs representing cities throughout the state. Jim Novy won election as the vice chairman from Austin.<sup>11</sup>

Well before the meeting, Novy began working with the NRS Resettlement Department to support the NYA refugee youth program in the

*Jim Novy, c. 1940. (Wikimedia Commons.)*

*Jesse Kellam. (Courtesy of LBJ Library, Austin, TX. Image 35to43-13-20.)*



state. Because of his friendship with the NYA state director, Jesse Kellam, the NRS selected Novy as its liaison for the program. At the luncheon session of the Texas NRS organizational meeting, Novy reported on the NYA: "In resettlement of the refugees comes the question of acclimating them to the new conditions. . . . After the refugees get here we must adjust them to the new life. To make provisions for them to earn a livelihood."<sup>12</sup>

From its beginning in 1935, the NYA operated student aid programs and out-of-school nonresident work projects, but to participate young people had to be able to reach schools or work sites. In late 1936, to address the problem of unemployment among rural youth unable to travel to schools or work sites, the NYA began operating cooperative resident centers where participants could live away from home and receive work experience. Resident centers offered job training but were also intended to teach a "philosophy of life" which included a "bit of tolerance, a bit of fairness, a bit of cooperative-mindedness," the sort of life skills and civic values deemed necessary in a democracy.<sup>13</sup>

Negotiations with Kellam took place in December 1939, whereupon Kellam allocated the NRS twenty-five places in resident centers. Jewish communities in Houston, Austin, and Dallas demonstrated enthusiasm. The Houston Jewish community agreed to finance young men at a resident project near their city. Although the Dallas community agreed to finance refugees, no NYA resident centers existed near enough to Dallas for community members to visit regularly, thus the NRS did not place youth recruited for the refugee program in the Dallas area. Administration of the program came from Austin as the home of the NYA state headquarters, and refugees were placed at Inks Dam Residential Center and Ranger Residential Center, both near Austin.<sup>14</sup>

At the time of the San Antonio meeting, the NRS had filled twelve of the allocated spots; thirteen went unfilled.<sup>15</sup> NYA records do not indicate exactly why the spaces remained vacant, but a letter from the NRS Vocational Field Secretary, Oscar Littlefield, to Jack La Zar, the NYA director at the North Haledon Center in New Jersey, may offer a clue. When La Zar asked about placing nine enrollees in his center, Littlefield responded that "extraordinary care must be exercised in selecting candidates and preparing them for N.Y.A. Center life." Littlefield therefore preferred to refer candidates "singly or in small groups," and continued, "Naturally, I cannot ask you to hold vacancies open indefinitely pending

application." The Texas enrollees were referred to Texas singly or in groups of four or less. Kellam may not have been able to hold spots open long enough to fill all twenty-five with refugees. By the end of 1940, Littlefield also found it difficult to recruit enough refugees to fill spaces in the program.<sup>16</sup>

Possibly money played a part in the decision not to send more refugees to Texas. Local committees were expected to raise money and contribute to participants' salaries. Two resettlement committees in Texas supported NYA refugees. The Texas Émigré Service supported the seven refugees who, taken together, spent a total of thirty-two months at Ranger and Inks Dam, an average of about four and a half months each. The Refugee Committee of Houston supported five in South Houston who altogether spent thirty months in the program, or an average of six months each. The NRS figured the cost for one month for one refugee at approximately thirty dollars. The Texas Émigré Service did not contribute money for the salaries, although a private donor, possibly a refugee's family member, contributed \$225. The Houston committee contributed half of the cost for its refugees. This does not explain why only twelve refugees came to Texas because almost half of the local committees in the states supporting refugees also did not contribute money for their salaries, and with the exception of the Boston resettlement committee, none of the local committees contributed more than 50 percent of the cost of wages for its refugees. Thus, money is not the simple explanation for the inability to fill all twenty-five spaces, but it may have been a factor.<sup>17</sup>

Littlefield often forwarded biographic information on enrollees as well as their letters to W. Thacher Winslow, the NYA staff member in charge of the refugee program. Littlefield encouraged enrollees to write to him with their reactions to the program—possibly a requirement. Correspondence found in the records of the Georgia Farm School and Resettlement Bureau relating to NYA refugees in Georgia indicated that the young men there were required to send monthly letters to the NRS in New York reporting on their work.<sup>18</sup> Although Littlefield referred many biographies and letters to Winslow, a relatively small percentage of the enrollees are actually represented in the NYA records at the National Archives. For example, no letters in Winslow's files from enrollees in Georgia exist, but there are several from Texas enrollees.<sup>19</sup> Either Winslow did not save most of the correspondence or Littlefield only referred a small

portion to him. Such letters in Winslow's file are very positive, and Littlefield may not have referred negative letters to him.

The letters from Texas are typical of those Littlefield referred to Winslow from across the country. They express appreciation for being able to enroll, describe conditions at the residential center, outline daily work schedules and classes, talk about recreational activities, and comment on the friendliness of the NYA staff and the American youths at the centers.<sup>20</sup> Good food provided a common theme in the letters from the state and the rest of the country. About the only complaint was that training did not progress quickly enough; occasionally letters expressed some frustration with the slow pace of vocational classes.<sup>21</sup>

By examining Winslow's NYA files and the NRS Resettlement Division files, historians can learn the names of the twelve refugee youths who resettled in Texas and gain substantial insight into their lives. By 1940, when the refugee youths arrived in Texas, the state's NYA had largely shifted to defense-related projects, and young men received training in metal and mechanical crafts, radio, aviation, and electrical skills. The resident center in South Houston stood out as an example of a war production training project preparing thousands of workers for the ship-building industry and other defense-related jobs in the private sector.<sup>22</sup> Austrians Fredric Rieders, Harry Goldberg, and Kenneth Burley, the first refugees assigned to a Texas NYA center, went to South Houston.<sup>23</sup> Soon after arriving, Rieders wrote to Littlefield in February 1940. He indicated that his work rotated between a week in the auto shop and a week on a construction project building an airplane hangar. He expressed his pleasure and gratitude at the living conditions:

When we arrived on March 18 at the project, we were very cordially welcomed; all the boys were and still are almost incredibly friendly and help us where ever we need any. When we got supper, I thought it was especially prepared for our reception, but I was wrong, as I noticed the following day. You would not believe me if I wrote you how good the food we get is and we can fill our plates as often as we want to. This is but one of the pleasant surprises of which I find every day more and more.

On the second floor are our bedrooms, where we sleep, four in a room and in almost every one of them is a radio, there are further more on the second floor two nice classrooms, where we attend

twice a week school, learning civics, English, mathematics and public speaking, it's a little too elementary but sometimes its really interesting, yes and there is a second bathroom too. Sometimes it reminds me more of a hotel at a summer resort, than on a vocational school.<sup>24</sup>

Austrian born Kenneth Burley, who lived in Belgium before coming to the U.S., also wrote from South Houston:

Even if you hadn't asked me to report to you about my impressions, I would have done it by myself because it is so marvelous here. . . . The living conditions are grand here! I have not had such good and fine food even when I lived in much better conditions, even if it sounds unbelievable. . . . I learn a lot of useful things at once—auto mechanics, manual work, in general, the language, and the customs. . . . You did not lead me to expect as much as this.<sup>25</sup>

The next group of refugees came in late March to the Ranger Resident Center in Central Texas near Austin and the smaller town of San Marcos. Twenty-three-year-old Herman Lille had grown up in Poland, whereas William Freundel, age nineteen, and Joseph Rosenkranz, age twenty, hailed from Vienna. Freundel had escaped to Belgium and then traveled to Cuba; Rosenkranz had escaped to Switzerland and then, like Freundel, gone to Cuba. The fourth person, Harry Westheimer, was an eighteen-year-old from Munich, Germany. The Ranger Center taught fundamental skills of metal and woodworking, and the young men at that site manufactured supplies for Camp Wolters, an Army base in Mineral Wells, Texas.<sup>26</sup>

In May, Fred Horton went to the Inks Dam Resident Center, seventeen miles from Burnet, another small town near Austin. This center accommodated 250 enrollees who gained work experience in a variety of fields including carpentry, landscaping, drafting, woodworking, food preparation, metalworking and plumbing.<sup>27</sup> Horton wrote on May 12 that he was adapting well, making friends, and organizing an orchestra:

I am here in the camp one week now and I must say that I really like it. The teachers and the boys are so nice to me that I feel really at home. My work is not too hard, I guess, but if it is hard, I don't feel it, because it is so wonderful to work in such beautiful surroundings. . . . Our camp is on the Colorado River and we go

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*Buildings and classroom at the Inks Dam Residential Center in Central Texas.  
(Photos by NYA, courtesy of LBJ Library, Austin, TX.  
Images 1973.149.1-9 and 1973.149.1-41.)*

swimming and fishing after work. . . . I try to form an orchestra now, because I see that there are such a lot of boys, who are interested in music and who play really well too. I hope that we will have success.<sup>28</sup>

Horton updated Littlefield in June:

We train 4 hours a day and work 4 hours a day. . . . The training consists of practical working on automobiles, trade tech. and different other courses as first aid, business law, library work and so on. . . . In the afternoon, I work as carpenter and this has nothing to do with my training. . . . But I really like it very much now. The heat gets worse every day and I am very astonished sometimes that it does not matter to me at all. Only the moskitos get very bad sometime and won't let me sleep. We got a good medical against the moskitos, if one can stand it a whole night. We pull our sheets over our head and it looks like, as if 60 mummies would lay in our barack.<sup>29</sup>

In his second letter, Horton mentioned two other NYA refugees, Bernat Ackerman, who came from Hungary, and Bernard Stern from Vienna. Ackerman and Stern, originally scheduled for the Ranger Center in San Marcos, apparently went to the Inks Dam Center instead.<sup>30</sup>

Refugee Egon Goldmann wrote in early June describing the South Houston Resident Center, including a complaint about the slow pace of training. He argued that a year's worth of training at the center could be taught in two months at a factory:

About food I can tell you the same what you already read in my schoolmates' letters. It is very good to satisfy the most pretentious person. We work 40 hours a week and go to schoolclass 3 hours a week. . . . This school gives us a good opportunity to step in into the real American life, to live with Americans, always to speak American, to learn their customs and actings, to learn the history of the U.S. and to learn to love this Nation what will give us our homeland. But, Mr. Littlefield, I have to tell you, that we will learn here automechanics in one year so much we could learn in a shop or factory at most in 2 months.<sup>31</sup>

The last enrollee in the Texas program, Allan Frank, was a nineteen-year-old German who arrived at the South Houston center in September 1940. His family had departed Germany for Amsterdam in 1933. In June 1939 he and his father immigrated to the U.S. from Holland. The

biographical information Littlefield sent to Winslow judged Frank's education at the level of a high school graduate or someone in junior college.<sup>32</sup>

The refugees came to Texas from Germany, Austria, Hungary, and Poland. Several came to the United States after escaping to a third country, such as Cuba, where they waited for visas to enter the U.S.<sup>33</sup> Most had the equivalent of a high school education, although some boasted additional training. All immigrated to the United States under existing immigration quotas. The young men's letters from Texas and other states describe the centers' American residents as welcoming and the settings as agreeable. Judging from their letters, the refugees found acceptance from the non-Jewish Texan youths in their programs and had very positive experiences. The executive director of the Jewish Community Council in Houston, J. B. Lightman, wrote to the NRS director of field relations describing a trip he and others made to the resident center to evaluate the refugees' situation there. He ended the letter thusly: "All in all, we believe the project is worthwhile and so long as the fine cooperation of the government in this respect continues, and our financial resources permit, we shall continue to accept more boys . . . with a view toward making them productive assets to our American economy."<sup>34</sup> After Lightman's letter, the NRS assigned Egon Goldmann and Allan Frank to South Houston.

After Hitler invaded Poland in September 1939, the refugee situation in Europe grew more urgent. Hitler's antisemitic policies became even harsher, and at the same time, the United States and other countries, while expressing sympathy for the refugees, tightened their entrance requirements. Notwithstanding an improved economy, the American public still feared immigrants from Europe would take jobs from citizens; Congress continued to favor restrictive policies; and many feared more liberal policies would allow spies and saboteurs to enter the country. The State Department responded by implementing more stringent alien controls. In addition to the bureaucratic roadblocks, many foreign shipping lines refused to accept German money and, as the war progressed, passenger lines reduced the number of their transatlantic crossings, making it more difficult for refugees to find passage to the United States.<sup>35</sup>

Although the local Jewish communities may have been willing to accept more refugees, Littlefield commented in a letter to Winslow at the beginning of 1941 that "activity has been slight. I believe the principal reason is the unavailability of suitable candidates for N.Y.A. training and

resettlement in the same large numbers as a year ago." In May 1941, Littlefield cited the improving economy and "the fact that very few of the present-day immigration includes young people of N.Y.A. age." By the end of October 1941, Littlefield had added the draft, or military service, to the reasons for poor recruitment. As the supply of suitable candidates dwindled, Littlefield stepped up recruitment within the immigrant communities in New York City, seeking to relocate unemployed youths who were already settled in the metropolis. He met with limited success.<sup>36</sup>

The Texas NYA refugees' experience typified those at NYA centers in other states. The young men's letters from Texas and other states describe the centers' American residents as welcoming and the settings as agreeable. The centers provided the refugees with a bridge to a new life in the United States by offering the opportunity to earn money, learn a vocation, and become accustomed to the U.S. work environment. Just as in other states, training at resident centers varied widely, but its objective was to provide youth with "work experience" under conditions simulating private industry. For example, an enrollee might work in a shop with a skilled mechanic to learn auto repair rather than being taught in a more formal setting. Fredric Rieders mentioned in his letter to Littlefield that he worked in the auto shop.<sup>37</sup> The centers selected by the NRS provided supplemental related training classes and included courses such as English, math, and civics. Generally, the classes, including vocational training, did not have a fixed term, and refugee enrollees stayed in the program until they were proficient enough at a skill to be employed. The overall average duration for a Texas refugee was 5.2 months, close to the national average of 5.7 months for all the refugee enrollees.<sup>38</sup>

The Texas youths' work assignments often failed to relate to their training. The work allowed them to earn money for their room and board with some left over for pocket money. Often the work assignments at the camps involved renovation, construction, or landscaping and land management projects, including renovating and constructing facilities for NYA use such as dormitories. The many civic projects included construction of community centers or additions to schools and libraries. The Inks Dam NYA students worked on projects sponsored by the Lower Colorado River Authority and the U. S. Bureau of Fisheries. Often cities, counties, or state agencies contributed the materials for a project while the NYA supplied the labor. NYA workshops produced wood or metal products



such as furniture for public buildings or the military. In 1938, before refugees enrolled in the NYA, the NYA youths worked between thirty-six and forty-six hours per month and earned a maximum of twenty-two dollars a month. They paid the NYA for room and board and had at least eight dollars left over for themselves. At the time the refugees first came to Texas, the national NYA had set the maximum number of hours a resident center enrollee could spend on work projects at seventy hours per month, but this increased to a maximum of one hundred hours per month with enrollees earning no more than thirty dollars a month. Most refugee youths paid twenty dollars for room and board with ten dollars left over for themselves.<sup>39</sup>

The NRS organized the NYA refugee program in cooperation with local Jewish committees that provided moral, religious, and emotional support and worked to find the refugees jobs and help them integrate into the community when they were ready to leave the residential centers. The NRS did not place refugees in a resident center if the area lacked a local Jewish committee to oversee the program and help the refugees. J. B. Lightman, who wrote Littlefield on behalf of the Jewish Community Council in Houston, described how one of the women working with refugees arranged for the young men to come into the city for a Passover Seder.<sup>40</sup> This sort of community action supported the young men's religious and cultural life. The NRS also expected the local committees to identify potential jobs for the refugees and help them begin their work lives. One of the refugees, Joseph Rosenkranz, who arrived at the Ranger Center in March 1940, worked for Milton Smith, the manager of his family's manufacturing company, Economy Furniture, and prominent member of the Austin Jewish community. Herman Lille, who also arrived at the Ranger Center in March, worked at the Austin Army & Navy Store owned by John Hurwitz in October 1940. Hurwitz became the president of Congregation Agudas Achim in 1955.<sup>41</sup>

Although neither the NRS nor the NYA maintained records on enrollees after they left the program, many immigration, military, census, and obituary records in Ancestry.com contain clues to their later lives. For example, Herman Lille moved to Connecticut in 1941 and by 1950 operated a liquor store there. In 1944 Joseph Rosenkranz graduated with honors from the University of Texas at Austin with a bachelor of science degree in pharmacy. He moved to New York, graduated from the

Columbia School of Social Work, and served as an administrator for the New York City Division of Senior Centers. Bernat Akerman was living in Dallas in 1942 when he registered for the draft, and he enlisted in the army in 1943. By the time of the 1950 census, he was living in the Bronx and worked as an accountant. In 1984, he served as the president of Congregation Sons of Israel in Yonkers. Fredric Rieders had returned to New York by the time he registered for the draft in 1942. During the war, he served in the army as a surgical technician with an armored division in France and Germany. After being discharged, he earned degrees in chemistry from New York University and in 1952 his doctorate in pharmacology from Thomas Jefferson University. He served on the faculty of Jefferson University, became a well-known toxicologist, established Philadelphia's poison-control center, wrote more than one hundred scientific articles and book chapters, and received a distinguished alumnus award from Jefferson University.<sup>42</sup>

Allan Frank registered for the draft in Houston in March 1942 and enlisted there in October. After the war, he returned New York where he was employed as a purchasing agent for a department store. Kenneth Burley registered for the draft in Houston in October 1940 and listed his employer as the Refugee Service Committee. Since the committee was responsible for his salary at the NYA, he was likely still at the NYA Center in October after arriving there in March. In 1944, he married in Chicago, and in the following year enlisted in the army at Fort Snelling, Minnesota, listing his occupation as "accountant." In 1950, he worked as a "food cost accountant" in the field of hotel accounting in Glen Ellyn, Illinois. William Freundel registered for the draft in 1942 in Chicago and listed his employer as the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad. He was at Camp Atterbury, an army post in Indiana, when he was naturalized in 1943. By 1950, he worked part-time as a retail shoe salesman in New York City, probably while in law school at New York University where he graduated in 1954. He was subsequently admitted to the bar and practiced law from an office in Manhattan.<sup>43</sup>

Egon Goldmann registered for the draft in Houston in October 1940 while working for the Kay Manufacturing Corporation. He enlisted in the army in May 1941 and served until 1953. By 1962 he had settled permanently in Santa Clara, California. Harry Westheimer registered for the draft in February 1942 while living on Long Island. He listed his employer

as the Eagle Precision Tool & Die Corporation. He enlisted in the military in 1944 and, by 1950, worked as a tool and die maker at a wholesale tool factory in Queens.<sup>44</sup>

The program in Texas, involving twelve refugees, was small, particularly when compared with statistics on immigration in 1940 when these young men came to the state. That year, the United States issued 27,355 immigration visas to Germans and Austrians, and the NRS count of Jewish refugees entering from all countries in its 1940 fiscal year was 42,424. The twelve refugees sent to Texas reflected a tiny portion of the 5,109 refugees resettled by the NRS in the country the same year, but measured against the total number of immigrants the NRS resettled in Texas, the Texas NYA refugee program was small but more significant. The NRS had two ways of counting the immigrants they resettled: they counted families as units and each person as an individual. A single person without a family was one unit and one individual. In the year that the refugee youths came to the Texas NYA, the NRS resettled eighty-five units in Texas including 124 individuals. Thus, the refugee youths represented 14 percent of the units resettled and almost 10 percent of the individuals who came to Texas through the NRS. On the other hand, from the standpoint of the NYA, the number of places occupied by the refugees was miniscule. In an average month in fiscal year 1940, the Texas NYA employed 14,552 youths in its out-of-school programs, which included the residential programs.<sup>45</sup>

When the number of refugees Texas incorporated into the NYA is compared with other southern states that participated, Texas, with twelve, ranked below Georgia and Florida with twenty-eight each, Oklahoma with nineteen, and Alabama with thirteen. Texas ranked above North Carolina which counted only two but did not participate in the program until late 1941. When compared with the rest of the United States, Texas ranked in the middle with New Jersey at the top with more than thirty-three participants.<sup>46</sup>

The NYA refugee program in Texas was so small that it did not come to the attention of the press in 1940 and received no coverage in local newspapers; it remained virtually hidden from scholars for decades.<sup>47</sup> Novy's words at the synagogue dedication, with Johnson and the press there to hear them, eventually brought the program to the attention of a graduate student who promoted the program in his dissertation as an illegal, clandestine rescue operation carried out by Johnson and Novy.<sup>48</sup>

One reason to study the program is because the “Operation Texas” myth surrounds it. The lack of press coverage and the fact that few people other than Novy even remembered the program enabled a graduate student to promote the program as a rescue operation carried out in secret, outside of the law, and involving hundreds of refugees. What actually happened and how this small program benefited the participants is thus important to understand and set the record straight.

Novy’s dedicatory remarks in 1963 exactly described his state’s NYA refugee program, except that he did mix up Kellam’s and Johnson’s roles. Novy, as the liaison between the local NYA and the NRS, managed the scholarships the young men received and made sure their room and board expenses were covered. In February 1942, the assistant executive director of the NRS thanked Novy for his able leadership in the handling of local refugee work. While the letter may not have been specifically thanking him for his work with the NYA program, it illustrated Novy’s strong commitment to the NRS and to assisting refugees.<sup>49</sup>

A primary objective of the NYA refugees project was to resettle refugees outside of New York City, and as a resettlement project it was only temporarily successful in Texas. None of the nine refugees traced through Ancestry.com stayed in Texas, and five eventually returned to New York. Although the program was small, it impacted the lives of the young men. In addition to providing the refugees with the same benefits the program held for citizens, including employment, income, and the chance to have vocational training and learn work discipline, the program offered them a secure place where they could become accustomed to their adopted country. The refugees trained and nurtured in Texas led successful lives and contributed to their adopted country, communities, and professions.

#### *The National Program*

The Texas program operated as part of a national operation. According to NYA and NRS staff reports, the origins of the NYA refugee program traced to March 1938 when the State Department, with the support of President Roosevelt, appealed to twenty-nine nations for a cooperative effort to support the immigration of refugees from Austria and Germany. Subsequently, Roosevelt suggested that the United States develop a special program for the adjustment and Americanization of refugee youth. Either at Roosevelt’s urging or in response to the State Department’s appeal,

Charles W. Taussig, the chair of the NYA National Advisory Committee to the President, decided to act. Taussig, a close friend of Roosevelt and a member of the president's "Brain Trust" who had risen to prominence as head of the American Molasses Company, enlisted the help of three advisory committee members: Father Edward R. Moore, the pastor of St. Peter's Catholic Church in New York who was well-known for his work with youth; Owen D. Young, a diplomat and industrialist from New York who organized Radio Corporation of America (RCA) and later headed the General Electric Corporation; and Dr. David de Sola Pool, the prominent New York rabbi of Congregation Shearith Israel (the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue). Over lunch, the four discussed courses of action the NYA could take to support the immigration of refugees from Austria and Germany. On May 5, Pool followed up with a letter to Taussig enclosing information from the National Youth Aliyah Committee of Hadassah about transferring Jewish children from cities in Germany and Austria to Palestine and housing them in youth villages. The rabbi envisioned a

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*Franklin Roosevelt, Aubrey Williams, and Charles Taussig at Hyde Park, NY, October 29, 1937, a meeting that preceded discussion of the refugee program.  
(Courtesy of FDR Presidential Library and Museum, Hyde Park, NY.)*

*Letter from  
Rabbi David de Sola Pool to  
Charles Taussig, May 5, 1938.  
(Courtesy of FDR Presidential  
Library and Museum,  
Hyde Park, NY.)*

similar rescue program in which the NYA aided the immigration of European youth, both Jewish and Christian, “who find themselves violently extruded from the life of their homeland.” Once in the United States, they would be enrolled in the NYA. The rabbi suggested that the Hadasah/Palestine model could be modified and used across the United States by housing refugees in the cooperative NYA youth resident centers. Refugees would receive training and a wage until they were better equipped to find a job in industry.<sup>50</sup>

Planning for the program initially moved at a fast clip. Taussig asked Pool, Moore, and Young to join him on a subcommittee of the NYA National Advisory Committee to consider ways for the NYA to assist refugees entering the United States, and planning for a program began. By mid-May, Taussig wrote newsy letters to subcommittee members detailing rapid progress. He had had several discussions with Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles about NYA aid to refugees. Welles asked James McDonald, the acting chair of the President’s Advisory Committee on Political Refugees and former High Commissioner for Refugees of the League of Nations, to get in touch with Taussig.<sup>51</sup> Next McDonald, Welles, and Taussig met for lunch, and then Taussig had a long talk with

McDonald who believed the NYA could be of "great service." Following his meeting with Taussig, McDonald planned to meet with the President's Advisory Committee on Political Refugees and then with NYA administrator Aubrey Williams, who was also "enthusiastic." Taussig even discussed the program with Eleanor Roosevelt, who was "interested and favorably disposed."<sup>52</sup>

Although Pool conceived the program as a rescue effort, the discussion soon focused on resettlement, assimilation, and Americanization of refugees already admitted to the country rather than rescue. Taussig's discussions with Welles probably led the group to change direction. The Immigration Act of 1924 controlled immigration into the United States through strict immigration quotas, but after the *Anschluss*, when Germany annexed Austria in March 1938, Roosevelt combined the quotas for Germany and Austria. Because of the increased number of refugees fleeing those countries, however, pressure on the combined quota remained. Not inclined to widen the quotas, Welles probably discouraged Taussig from attempting an effort leading to increased immigration. The meetings with Welles ended in May, although Taussig's discussions with McDonald continued.<sup>53</sup>

Next Williams asked the NYA state directors of Alabama, Oklahoma, Illinois, Ohio, New York, and Wisconsin, as well as regional directors from the Midwest and Northeast regions and NYA deputy executive director Richard Brown, to meet with him and Taussig. Taussig wanted to outline the plan and have the directors quietly test reactions in their states since the program would require financial and moral support from local Jewish communities. The group met in Washington, D.C., on May 19. W. Thacher Winslow, a young Harvard-educated NYA staff member and expert on foreign youth programs, also attended.<sup>54</sup> The next day, at the suggestion of the State Department, the group went to New York to meet with McDonald. The conference led to the conclusion that a refugee youth aid program could be carried out:

- 1) if there were sufficient local interest and support; 2) if the youth's wages were paid out of private funds; 3) if little or no publicity were given to the enterprise, especially at first; and 4) if emphasis were placed on the fact that the youth were coming here under regularly existing quotas and would, in time, become American citizens.<sup>55</sup>

These four provisions recognized the political realities and financial hurdles the NYA had to overcome to implement a successful program. Given these considerations, the state directors returned to their homes with instructions to "sound out the sentiment of various members of the state and local advisory committees as well as other interested individuals as to the feasibility of the program." Winslow would oversee and coordinate the program. McDonald subsequently wrote Williams congratulating him and Taussig on the success of the May 19 meeting and expressing appreciation for their "initiative."<sup>56</sup>

By 1938, anti-immigration and antisemitic fervor were both on the rise in the United States. For public relations and legal reasons, the NYA had to locate private funding to support noncitizens in the new initiative. In 1936, Congress responded to anti-immigration sentiments by restricting the use of federal relief funds. That year, it prohibited the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and thus the NYA, which was administered by the WPA, from "knowingly" using federal work relief funds appropriated by Congress to benefit aliens known to be in the country illegally. Although the law covered all undocumented immigrants, its effects fell disproportionately on Mexican American families in the Southwest. WPA administrators, particularly in the South and Southwest, often assumed those who could not furnish paperwork proving their legal status resided in the country illegally. In 1937, Congress expanded the ban on WPA employment to aliens who had not filed papers declaring their intention to become citizens. Congress also established a priority scale for WPA employment: first veterans, then American citizens, then noncitizens who had filed citizenship papers. In 1938, Congress allowed the WPA and NYA to hire aliens who had filed citizenship papers by June 1938, but the following year, Congress excluded all noncitizens and required anyone employed by the WPA or NYA to file an affidavit declaring their citizenship.<sup>57</sup> Congress "continued to respond to anti-immigrant public pressure in 1939 by failing to pass the Wagner-Rogers bill, a proposal to admit twenty thousand German refugees aged fourteen and under to the United States outside of the immigration quotas. Despite congressional hearings and public debate, the bill failed to reach the House or Senate floor for a vote."<sup>58</sup>

Because of these restrictions, the NYA faced the challenge of aiding refugees without cost to the government. NYA resident centers offered



that opportunity. Since the NYA already had sufficient personnel and equipment to place additional youths in the resident centers, the refugee program could be operated economically with the assistance of private funding.<sup>59</sup>

By mid-June, four state directors had responded to Taussig's call to "sound out the sentiment" in their communities. The reports ranged from tepid to highly enthusiastic. Karl Hesley of New York, the first state director to respond, wrote, "Supervisors received the idea most favorably and voted unanimously to do all within their power to help." Hesley also reported that his staff voted, also unanimously, to contribute to a fund to support one youth refugee for a year in New York. The state director from Illinois responded eagerly: "When the time comes to act I think we shall be in a position to take care of about 1,000 over the period of each year." His was by far the most optimistic estimate. From Alabama came assurances of support from the local Jewish organizations, church ministers, and civic leaders. Although reporting community support, the Ohio director noted, "It would seem that very little help can be expected outside of the Jewish people in assimilating the Jewish refugees although there are many exceptions in communities where there are individuals who are particularly alive to the problem."<sup>60</sup>

The reports included suggestions on how to proceed. On June 13, 1938, Winslow wrote to Taussig: "A number of plans have been suggested as to what procedure should be followed, but I imagine that you and I had better get together with the national committee in New York before deciding upon which one should be followed." At that point, Hesley, forging ahead in New York, reported in mid-June that he had placed two local refugees on NYA projects in Schenectady.<sup>61</sup>

Later in June, Winslow went to New York to confer with Taussig, McDonald, and Young. They decided Winslow would "work with Mr. [George] Warren, the Executive Secretary of the President's Committee on [Political] Refugees, getting the case histories of the youth who might be placed." The following Friday, Warren and McDonald sailed to France to attend the Evian Conference, Roosevelt's international initiative to address Europe's immigration crisis. Winslow reported to other NYA officials, "no definite arrangements can be made until he [Warren] returns at the end of July." Following Winslow's meeting with Taussig, McDonald, and Young in New York, he wrote Hesley and other NYA leaders

advising them not to place any more than a few additional refugees on NYA projects unless they first conferred with Taussig. Winslow noted, "we believe it advisable to await Mr. Warren's return before entering upon the caring of refugees on a large scale." Winslow considered Hesley's two refugee recruits as an experiment in implementing the program, "knowing that this will be of value to helpers in every community," but Winslow was not eager to expand refugee participation without Warren's involvement.<sup>62</sup>

While McDonald and Warren attended the Evian Conference, progress on the refugee project stalled, although Winslow continued to explore the reactions of state directors. From Oklahoma came "a rather welcome reaction to the program"; in Minnesota the director found good cooperation in only four of seven principal cities consulted, and he stated the "matter needs close supervision and must be handled cautiously." The report from Wisconsin also cautioned that "work must be done quietly to be most effective." Hesley updated Winslow with the news that thirty boys in the resident training center in Alfred, New York, expressed willingness to finance the room and board of one refugee boy at their facility. The faculty at Alfred University and townspeople offered money for extra expenses above room and board.<sup>63</sup>

In late June Winslow married and combined NYA business with a honeymoon. Winslow and his wife headed by train to Seattle where he made a speech to the National Conference of Social Work and ultimately visited NYA state directors in Oregon, Colorado, California, and Utah to discuss the proposed program. Winslow reported to Taussig that only the state director from Utah was "at all dubious about the possibility of handling these youth." Winslow asked the four state directors to "make soundings as to how many they might be able to handle [in the program] and to report to me." Soon after he returned, the state director of Georgia, Dillard Lasseter, visited Winslow in his office. Lasseter expressed enthusiasm: "he could take care of 100 in very short order and would probably be able to handle 200 within a few months."<sup>64</sup>

Near the end of July, Winslow had intended to write the NYA regional directors "asking them to inform the state directors in their respective territories of the proposed plan and to request them to make the required soundings as to the possibilities of placing refugee youth." He delayed that notification because someone leaked news of the May

meeting with state and regional directors to the *Milwaukee Journal*, and a brief story appeared on July 13 asserting that the NYA would bring hundreds of Jewish youths from Europe and “give them a new start in democratic America.” The article stated that Taussig had “recently conferred in New York with Aubrey Williams and NYA directors from six mid-western states on how the problem might be handled.” The article continued that Taussig reportedly offered to “transport about 4,000 Jewish youths” if immigration restrictions could be relaxed. In a letter to Taussig, Winslow commented on the newspaper piece “with so many misrepresentations.” In view of the article, Winslow decided to wait to send a letter to the regional directors until McDonald and Warren provided them with more definitive information.<sup>65</sup> The “misrepresentations” seemed to justify the May assessment to avoid publicity.

During the summer, either before leaving for the Evian Conference or soon after returning, McDonald connected Winslow with the National Coordinating Committee for Aid to Refugees and Migrants Coming from Germany (NCC), the predecessor of the National Refugee Service.<sup>66</sup> The NCC, a private committee, was organized in 1934 at the suggestion of the State Department and maintained close links with the Intergovernmental High Commission for Refugees established at the League of Nations in 1933 to deal with problems associated with Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi Germany. Numerous people were active in organizing the NCC, including James McDonald. Joseph Chamberlain, professor of public law at Columbia University, served as its chairman and Cecilia Razovsky as the executive director and secretary.<sup>67</sup> Many national Jewish refugee organizations, as well as several prominent Christian organizations, coordinated with the NCC, with financial support largely provided by the American Joint Distribution Committee. The NCC’s purpose was “to coordinate the activities of national agencies engaged in service to emigres and refugees, and to act as a national clearing agency for all activities undertaken on behalf of emigres coming to the United States.” McDonald served as its honorary chair, while Warren sat on the board of directors.<sup>68</sup>

On August 23, after McDonald’s return from Europe, he and Winslow met in the NCC offices in New York with Razovsky; Frank Ritchie, director of the American Committee for Refugees; Dr. S. C. Kohs, national field director of the NCC Fund; and Rev. Joseph O. Ostermann, director of the Committee for Catholic Refugees from Germany.

McDonald explained the background of the NYA's proposed program, and Winslow described how the NYA could be of assistance. A long discussion ensued "about what steps should first be taken to bring about a mutually helpful program of cooperation." Ultimately, the group decided that Winslow should draw up procedures for the program and submit them to the group for study.<sup>69</sup>

Winslow quickly drafted operating procedures. State directors would notify Winslow of openings; New York NCC officials would select case histories of candidates; an official designated by the NYA would interview the candidates; and the NCC would forward case histories and reports of the interviews to Winslow who would send them to state directors for selection. Winslow would notify the NCC of selections; the NCC would send state directors information about the scheduled arrival of each refugee youth; state directors would confirm arrivals and submit reports on the progress of the youth. The procedures would "apply first to those already in this country and next to those youth brought over directly from abroad." These initial talks apparently included discussions of bringing refugees directly from Europe and enrolling them in the NYA. According to the procedures, Warren would be involved at several points and serve as a middleman for communication with the NCC.<sup>70</sup>

Next, Aubrey Williams introduced the refugee program to the three quarters of state directors not included in the initial conversations and meetings at a state directors' conference beginning September 7, at the Hotel New Yorker. The day before the meeting, Winslow met with Razovsky, Kohs, and other NCC representatives who approved Winslow's working procedures with minor changes. The next day Razovsky and Kohs met at the hotel and spoke with the assembled directors.<sup>71</sup>

Winslow summarized the meeting: "About one hour and a half of the three-hour conference was devoted to the subject of assisting youth refugees, since a good three-fourths of the directors knew nothing about the proposed plan." Taussig explained the program; Winslow described how it might function; and Razovsky and Kohs explained NCC operations. The NCC promised to send Winslow a list of communities in which the NCC had active local committees so he could inform the state directors about them. Winslow observed, "It is apparently going to be possible for the NYA to assist a number of youth who have already been placed with relatives or sponsors but who are completely idle."<sup>72</sup>

After this point, no discussion exists in the records of the NYA or the NCC of bringing refugees directly from Europe with the intention of enrolling them in the NYA and, except for two refugees employed in Schenectady, the NYA did not employ refugee youth who had already been resettled in communities outside of New York City. Because of the high concentration of Jewish refugees in that city, fear existed that the influx of new refugees would spark increased antisemitism. The goal of the NCC, and later the NRS, was to move refugees out of New York City and distribute them to communities across the country.<sup>73</sup> Again the motivation mirrored that of the earlier Galveston Movement. The NCC Resettlement Division would work with the NYA and identify refugee youth in New York who were suitable for resettlement.<sup>74</sup> Winslow explained in a memo on February 4, 1939, "Theoretically, at least, every refugee coming from Germany is known and has been aided by this National Committee and its affiliated committees." He summarized the primary objectives of the program thusly:

Among these refugees are an undetermined number of single youth who, though coming to the United States under the sponsorship of a relative, are nevertheless at loose ends. The major purpose of the NYA's program is thus to assist in getting these youth out of New York City and send them to various parts of the country where they can be more readily assimilated and Americanized.<sup>75</sup>

During the discussions at the Hotel New Yorker, Dillard Lasseter, the state director from Georgia, disclosed that a Jewish group in Georgia had raised one hundred thousand dollars to start a farm training school for refugee youth. After Winslow had discussed the refugee program with him the previous summer, Lasseter met with a small group of Jewish leaders affiliated with the Georgia Farm School and Resettlement Bureau to discuss agricultural training and resettlement of refugee youth. He suggested they support refugees in existing NYA residential agricultural training units rather than implementing their project.

The meeting included Edward Kahn, the executive secretary of the Atlanta Jewish Welfare Fund and director of the Atlanta Federation for Jewish Social Service. Kahn became a primary contact for the project and eventually was named as the Georgia Farm School and Resettlement Bureau administrator. Harold Hirsch, president of the Atlanta Jewish

Welfare Fund and chairman of the Georgia Farm School and Resettlement Bureau, presided at a subsequent meeting where Lasseter and the group agreed to go forward with the NYA project. Kahn and Hirsch were arguably the most important individuals in the Atlanta Jewish community: Kahn as an attorney with a strong interest in social work who spent years leading the Atlanta Jewish Welfare Fund, and Hirsch as the vice president of Coca-Cola for legal affairs and the force behind a critical meeting in 1936 that brought the Jewish community together to reorganize its social service organizations and help aid those suffering from Hitler's antisemitic policies.<sup>76</sup> Their participation reflected the importance they placed on young refugees and the commitment of Atlanta's Jewish community. Although the group had raised money for a farm training school, Hirsch undertook a separate fundraising campaign to finance the maintenance of the youths recruited by the NYA. Kahn, Eugene Oberdorfer, a vice-chairman of the bureau, and O. R. "Oscar" Strauss, Jr., its secretary, began planning with the NYA and NRS. Lasseter estimated his NYA program could absorb about 150 refugees. The NCC and the NYA undertook this project as their initial experiment, their pilot project, in resettling and training refugee youths in NYA resident centers.<sup>77</sup> Georgia thus became the testing ground for the development of the program's procedures and selection criteria, serving as a national model.

During the meeting at the Hotel New Yorker, the state director from Virginia, Dr. W. S. Newman, mentioned a similar project in Virginia and suggested he go to the organizers and offer NYA assistance, but ultimately the Virginia NYA did not enroll refugees in the state.<sup>78</sup> The day after their meeting, the state directors, along with Williams, Taussig, and Winslow, traveled to Hyde Park, where they had been invited to have lunch with Eleanor Roosevelt at her cottage, Val-Kill. Williams anticipated that the president and first lady would attend the meeting. As it turned out, Mrs. Roosevelt was at her son's bedside at the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota, where he was hospitalized with a gastric ulcer, but the president drove over to Val-Kill for the luncheon. Mrs. Roosevelt had a very close relationship with the NYA, and Kellam of Texas wrote Williams expressing what was no doubt the sentiment of many of the directors: "The meeting at Hyde Park lacked only her presence to have been perfect."<sup>79</sup>

Eleanor Roosevelt had a deep concern for youth and the hardships the Great Depression created for them. When Aubrey Williams and Harry

Hopkins, a trusted adviser to FDR and administrator of New Deal public relief programs, came to her with the idea for an agency to address the needs of out-of-work and out-of-school youth, she agreed to present the idea to the president. The president felt his administration had the Civilian Conservation Corps to address problems of youth, but Mrs. Roosevelt convinced him of the need for the NYA. He reportedly asked her, "Do you think it is right to do this?" They talked about the political risks of instituting the program, and Mrs. Roosevelt said her husband told her, "If it is the right thing to do for young people, then it should be done. I guess we can stand the criticism." In the forward to the book *A New Deal for Youth: The Story of the National Youth Administration*, Taussig wrote, "I cannot fail to mention one outstanding personality who, though having no official connection with the NYA, is recognized by acclamation as its spiritual leader. I refer to Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt." She visited NYA projects, arranged meetings with the president for its leadership, and promoted its programs.<sup>80</sup>

After the New York meeting, progress on the refugee program slowed to a crawl. Historian Reiman suggests that during the meeting with President Roosevelt, he may have intervened and wanted refugee assistance limited to a handful of refugees per state. As Reiman acknowledges, no transcripts or memos describing the meeting with the president exist. The slowdown may not have originated with the president. In several letters, Winslow explained: "Because of the complexity of the situation, certain unavoidable delays in starting the program on a national basis have occurred."<sup>81</sup>

Indeed, numerous circumstances slowed implementation. First the program lacked structure. By September 8, when the meeting with the president took place, only the two refugees Hesley had brought into the resident center in Schenectady had been enrolled in the program. This was before selection procedures existed. Hesley subsequently discovered that both youths were citizens who were unaware of their citizenship, and he switched them to the NYA payroll. Born in the United States, their parents had taken them to Europe soon after birth. Even so, Winslow regarded their recruitment as "concrete progress." Once Winslow and the NCC established procedures, adapting and implementing them may have caused delays. The cumbersome procedures centralized communications with George Warren. Before long the procedures evolved, and the NYA was

“cooperating directly” with the NCC Resettlement Division without Warren’s intercession.<sup>82</sup>

The NCC wanted to ensure that the refugees who received support for resettlement were well-suited for their training. The NYA no doubt wanted candidates who were unlikely to cause public relations problems. The procedures Winslow established included interviewing each refugee to determine their suitability. Setting up the interview process provided yet another bureaucratic hurdle to overcome and may have initially delayed the program. Ultimately, the Vocational Service for Juniors, a private New York-based nonprofit organization, agreed to conduct the interviews. The former head of the service, Dr. Mary Hays, served as NYA director of vocational services, and the Vocational Service for Juniors was closely allied with the NYA.<sup>83</sup>

The vetting procedures slowed the selection and placement of candidates throughout the three years the program operated. Occasionally, state directors complained about the slow rate of placement. To one such complaint, Littlefield responded, “Since our group is fundamentally different in character from the Americans on N.Y.A., and since they face entirely different conditions and problems, we believe that extraordinary care must be exercised in selecting candidates and preparing them for N.Y.A. Center life.”<sup>84</sup>

Securing funding further complicated progress. When the NYA partnered with the NCC, that agency planned to work with local Jewish philanthropic organizations and committees in the states that would share the program’s costs. Nonetheless, most of the funding came from the NCC and later NRS.<sup>85</sup> In January 1939, Winslow wrote to Hesley:

The situation is now not so much a matter of selecting youth—the Vocational Service for Juniors is placing at least one person at our disposal for this purpose and the machinery for comparatively rapid selection has been set up—but we are now somewhat stumped on the matter of funds. Though Miss Razovsky and Mr. Salinger [head of the NCC Resettlement Division] have mentioned such funds as definite, there have been a number of delays in getting the money.<sup>86</sup>

Finally in February, Winslow reported that largely through the efforts of Edgar Salinger of the NCC Resettlement Division, the necessary operational funds had been secured. The NCC received a grant of three



thousand dollars from the Lavanburg Fund of New York to launch the program. Fred L. Lavanburg, a philanthropist who made his fortune in the dye and color industry, established the foundation in 1927 to provide low-income, nonprofit housing for families and children unable to find housing, but Lavanburg also funded service programs for underprivileged children, juvenile delinquency, racial discrimination, and poverty.<sup>87</sup>

Beyond these difficulties, the situation at the NCC's Resettlement Division, the unit coordinating with the NYA to recruit refugees, provided the most serious reason for delay. In 1938, the growing number of refugees entering New York caused the Resettlement Division to radically reorganize its working procedures, expand staff, and appoint a new director. In early 1939, the reorganized division was still adjusting to the changes. A breakthrough occurred in February 1939 when the Resettlement Division moved its staff member, Oscar Littlefield, to full-time responsibility for the NYA program with the title of vocational field secretary. He quickly made plans to visit NYA resident centers in New England to survey them and talk with local committees.<sup>88</sup> Littlefield became a key figure in the program.

In February 1939, the NCC commissioned an assessment of its overall operations. Because of the increased flow of refugees, the resulting report concluded that the NCC had outgrown its original design and recommended the creation of a new organization, the National Refugee Service (NRS), to centralize administration of services rather than coordinate services offered by other organizations. Incorporated in May 1939, the NRS began operations in June, taking over the work of the NCC and its affiliated agencies. Although formally nonsectarian, it had a more specific Jewish identity than the NCC.<sup>89</sup> In April, before incorporation, the NRS hired Dr. William Haber, a professor of economics at the University of Michigan, as its executive director. Haber previously served as a deputy administrator in Michigan with the WPA and as that state's NYA director. With NRS's incorporation, the NCC Resettlement Division became the NRS Resettlement Department.<sup>90</sup>

Although the overall reorganization was a positive development for the refugee program, the initial upheaval and reordering of priorities created by the reorganization further slowed refugee program progress. On a trip to the NRS offices in New York in January 1940, Winslow noted,

"For the past two months, because of the reorganization of the NRS and a sudden very large influx of refugees from Europe, placement activity was slowed down."<sup>91</sup> After the NRS reorganization, Littlefield continued full-time responsibility for recruiting and monitoring refugees for the NYA program.

### *Launching the Refugee Program*

In September 1938, as the NYA and NRS began to select refugee youth for the Georgia pilot project, the situation in Europe continued to deteriorate. That month Germany, Italy, Great Britain, and France signed the Munich Agreement, enabling Hitler to begin his takeover of Czechoslovakia. Soon the Nazis carried out the November pogrom, *Kristallnacht*, or the Night of Broken Glass, attacking Jewish communities, burning synagogues, and destroying Jewish businesses, schools, hospitals, and other buildings. With this the refugee crisis became even more acute. Despite these events, the American public stood firmly against expanding quotas and allowing increased numbers of European refugees to enter the country. In the week following the events of *Kristallnacht*, a Roper poll drew a response of 71 percent opposed to admission of "a larger number of Jewish exiles from Germany." The next month, December 1938, the same question drew a response of 83 percent opposed.<sup>92</sup> With the congressional elections of 1938, the Democratic Party maintained its majorities but lost seats in the House and Senate. As the presidential election approached in 1940, there was little chance Roosevelt or Congress would support increased immigration.

Against this backdrop Winslow reported to Taussig at the end of September 1938 on the number of refugees each state director determined his program could accommodate. Winslow based his figures on the letters written after the program was proposed in May and on conversations with state directors after their September meeting in New York. Twenty-six states reported a willingness to accept refugee youths with most indicating they could take five or more. Except for the Illinois director's estimate of one thousand, Georgia's estimate was the highest at 150. This no doubt reflected Lasseter's enthusiasm for the project and probably his knowledge that a group in Georgia had already accumulated a substantial fund to resettle and train refugees interested in agriculture. Winslow believed that Illinois's estimate of one thousand was "over-optimistic" but

thought the state could take one hundred. Some states gave no estimate but expressed a willingness to participate. California's estimate was for twenty to forty; Florida and Oklahoma came in on the high end at ten or fifteen and fifteen or more, respectively. Disagreement came from Illinois and California over the procedures worked out by the NCC. Both states wanted to enroll refugees already settled in their states and did not want the NCC in New York to recruit candidates for them. The NCC attempted to work with Illinois and California to establish procedures similar to those implemented for other states. Apparently, California and Illinois were the only states to resist the procedures developed by Winslow and the NRS and, in the end, the California NYA did not take any refugees and Illinois enrolled only five.<sup>93</sup> The records are not clear whether NYA leadership in California and Illinois wanted to recruit locally, or whether their local Jewish resettlement committees made the decision.

The NCC Resettlement Department and Winslow decided to limit the initial implementation of the program to one state as a pilot project. They selected Georgia since local Jewish communities had already raised money for a refugee project and expressed a willingness to participate in the NYA program. The Georgia Farm School and Resettlement Bureau led by Harold Hirsch raised thirty-five thousand dollars to support agricultural training for refugees in the NYA, but it stipulated that the money be used specifically for agricultural training. This stipulation caused further delay and tensions between the NCC and the Georgia Farm School when the NCC found it difficult to recruit youths interested in farming as a career.<sup>94</sup>

#### *The Georgia Pilot Project*

When the first seven German youths arrived in Georgia to attend agricultural programs in Monroe, Clarkesville, and Tifton, the NYA issued a press release announcing the project. The *Atlanta Constitution* published a story largely based on the press release stressing that the youths were privately funded and had entered the country legally under the immigration quotas. By late January, eight refugee youths were attending school in Monroe at the Georgia Vocational and Trades School, and a very favorable article about them by Ralph McGill appeared on the front page of the *Atlanta Constitution*.<sup>95</sup>

At the time of the article, McGill served as executive editor of the newspaper. As a teenager, he had developed what would be a lifelong friendship with a Jewish student, Rebecca Mathis, and her family. The family exerted a strong influence in McGill's life. He said in his autobiography they gave him, "an awareness of international events and of forces which were involved in them." In 1938, the year before the first NYA refugees came to Georgia, McGill had received a Rosenwald Fellowship, which funded six months of travel and study in Europe. During those months, he visited Berlin, where he saw Hitler speak, and Vienna where he met with two Jewish families. McGill said the fellowship "enabled me to travel in Europe, to broaden my perspective, to shake off the narrow provincialism which still holds so many captive." It was no wonder then that the year after returning, he wrote an article on the refugees arriving to enroll in Georgia's NYA. As an editor, McGill became well-known for his attacks on prejudice and bigotry. In 1964, when he was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Lyndon Johnson, he asked his friend Rebecca Mathis, by then Rebecca Gershon and a prominent and active member of the Atlanta Jewish community, to be one of his guests at the ceremony.<sup>96</sup>

McGill's article highlighted the refugees' arrival, stressed that they were well-liked and hard-working, and placed the emphasis on teaching them American ways and citizenship. He declared, "Already the spirit of America has caught them. They want to be very good Americans." The press release and subsequent publicity helped prepare the secular community for the presence of the refugees. At the time, the NYA Georgia state director, Dillard Lasseter, said, "If the experiment in agricultural training for the first group of youths is successful, the enterprise may be extended through additional private funds to accommodate about 75 additional young people on NYA projects in the state." Regardless of the Georgia Farm School's seriousness about its requirement that young men recruited for the program be trained in agriculture, the NRS found it difficult to find young men who wanted to be farmers. S. C. Kohs, the director of the Resettlement Department at the NRS, wrote to Edward Kahn: "in the process of canvassing the first 100 prospective students, we have found only one thus far who manifested a preference for specialized agriculture." He indicated that it would be impossible to meet a quota of twenty-five refugees with primary interest in agriculture. Because the

NRS continued to experience such a difficulty, the program failed to reach its full potential in Georgia.<sup>97</sup>

Four of the first seven refugees to go to the state, Theodor Advokat (age seventeen), Leo Erber (age twenty-four), Ernst Gertler (age twenty-four), and Stephen Loeb (age twenty-two), went to the Georgia Vocational and Trades School in Monroe. Stephen Loeb, from Germany, and the other three born in Vienna, each had at least ten years of formal schooling and some work experience. Before being barred from school in Germany, Theodor Advokat had intended to study medicine. Ernst Gertler served in the Austrian army and, when Germany took over Austria, the Nazis imprisoned him for “some weeks.” He arrived in New York in December 1938 where he lived with an elderly uncle. Leo Erber’s father was in a concentration camp, while his mother and sisters still lived in Vienna and a brother resided in Palestine. Erber was “without resources.” Stephen Loeb had experience in automobile repair and had worked with diesel engines. A cousin in New York showed willingness to assist him financially. Advokat expressed interest in “skilled trades,” while Gertler, Loeb, and Erber wanted to study auto mechanics.<sup>98</sup>

*Ernst Gertler, left, and Leo Erber receive instruction in poultry culling from J. C. Lane, vocational agriculture teacher at the Georgia Vocational and Trades School, Monroe, GA. Atlanta Constitution, January 22, 1939. (Reprinted with permission of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution.)*

After arriving in Monroe, the four refugees wrote to Ben Goldman at the NCC describing their warm welcome from NYA personnel in both Atlanta and Monroe but indicating that none of their Jewish sponsors appeared in either place to greet them. On arrival, they were surprised to find reporters on hand to take photos and ask questions. When the young men got to the resident center, they found that their meal expenses had not been covered; they needed to buy work clothes; and their training was not what they anticipated. Their letter contained the unspoken implication that communication problems existed that should be worked out between the local Georgia committee, the NCC, the NYA, and the refugees. The director of the Resettlement Department at the NCC, S. C. Kohs, responded to the students that the Jewish leaders in Atlanta were making arrangement to keep in touch with them and "be assured that they did not see you immediately upon your arrival only because of a misunderstanding as to the time you were to arrive."<sup>99</sup>

Three of the young men in the first group of seven, John Corser (age seventeen), Alexander Hirsch (seventeen), and Siegfried Hirsch (twenty), went to Habersham College in Clarksville, and a fourth, Martin Weiss (twenty), arrived in Georgia soon after the first seven to go to Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College in Tifton. Corser, born in Vienna, and Alexander Hirsch, from Germany, were both interested in radio transmission. Siegfried Hirsch, also from Germany, wanted to concentrate on carpentry. Martin Weiss had immigrated to Palestine from Germany as a teenager with his parents and a brother. He had experience in agriculture and in auto repair and hoped to work maintaining tractors and combines on a large farm.<sup>100</sup>

The NRS continued sending young men until the total reached twenty-eight in November 1939. In fall 1939, the NYA added openings at West Georgia College in Carrollton to the NYA refugee programs. Camp supervisors informed the NCC that most did well, but health problems and struggles with English plagued several. One supervisor observed, "Fred's English, like the peace of God, passeth all understanding." The pilot program illustrated the necessity for the young men selected for the program to speak English and that became a NRS selection criterion. Many of the enrollees had no interest in farming. The student evaluations submitted to the NYA for Henry Preis, another enrollee, observed, "Have

no idea that he will ever try to farm. His main ambition is to become a Ph.D." Also experiencing health problems, Preis returned to New York.<sup>101</sup>

Tensions between the Georgia committee and the NRS over the recruitment of candidates continued over the lack of interest in farming. The NCC national organization, rather than the Georgia committee, paid the expenses and wages of the eighteen young men enrolled in nonagricultural studies in the state's resident centers. By May 1939, three of the young men, including Theodore Advokat and Martin Weiss from the original eight, had returned to New York. That month, the Georgia committee reviewed the young men's cases and found jobs for those uninterested in farming.<sup>102</sup>

The Georgia Farm School and Resettlement Bureau had an extensive network of committees composed of members of the Atlanta Jewish community who provided resources and assistance to Jewish refugees settling in the Atlanta area. Oscar Strauss, Jr., the grandson of one of the founders of Atlanta's Rich's Department Store, was the secretary and later a vice-president of the Farm School and Resettlement Bureau while also serving as chair of its Agricultural Projects Committee. The committee assumed responsibility for the adjustment and welfare of the NYA youths. The Farm School organization also had a Committee on Placement and Economic Adjustment and a Committee of Placement Advisors to help refugees find jobs. By mid-June, seven NYA youths were in commercial or industrial jobs in Atlanta and Athens, with one going to Abbeville, South Carolina, to work in a shirt factory.<sup>103</sup>

Several of the youths continued to receive Farm School and NCC help after leaving the NYA. Charles Hamburger, who arrived in January after the initial group, had health problems and lost twenty-five pounds. He was unable to do farm work, and the Farm School found a foster home for him in Elberton, Georgia. He continued to receive a stipend from the NCC, graduated from high school, and went to work in his foster family's department store. One student, Amos Vogelbaum, continued to receive Farm School support after leaving the NYA while he took additional courses in poultry farming at the University of Georgia. He returned to New York and in April 1941 was considering an offer to manage a farm in New Jersey.<sup>104</sup>

Henry Lindenbaum was another of the Georgia NYA youths to receive continued support from the Farm School. Lindenbaum, a refugee

from Vienna who had come to New York with his family, stood out among the Georgia enrollees. Henry went to the NYA resident center at West Georgia College for courses in agricultural chemistry, and he became a lab assistant for his teacher. The teacher wrote to the Farm School recommending Henry as "having unusual knowledge and skill in chemistry for a young man his age." The teacher went on to say, "Henry has grown so attached to the subject that I doubt that he will be happy in any other line of work." The NYA Project Coordinator at West Georgia College commented, "Henry's record is to be commended. He has proved himself very ambitious." Henry transferred to the Georgia Institute of Technology, where he changed his major to chemical engineering and graduated at the top of his class in 1944. He completed a master's degree in chemical engineering at Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn and in 1952 earned a doctorate at the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT). He served as the director of the Institute of Gas Technology in Illinois, becoming its president and a trustee in 1974. He was a world-renowned expert on energy. At some point along the way, he dropped the last four letters of his last name, changing it to Henry Linden.<sup>105</sup>

John Corser, one of the first to arrive in Georgia, so impressed his teachers and the Farm School that he received funding from the Rosenwald Fund to study electrical engineering at Georgia Tech. Unfortunately, his story had a tragic ending. Corser was unable to overcome the unhappiness that had accompanied him from his home in Austria, and he died by his own hand while a student at Georgia Tech.<sup>106</sup>

The Farm School records do not contain complete information on the youths after they left the NYA program. A report of January 1941 appears in the Farm School files and states that ten of the students "adjusted to other occupations" outside of agriculture. Twelve returned to their families in New York. One took a position in poultry farm management, and four remained in training. This count probably omits Josef Rappaport, who returned to New York after just a few days because his mother arrived in New York. By January 1941, several of the youths had plans to attend college and had scholarships or found relatives or others to support them. For those who returned to New York, the Farm School explained that they failed to adjust, experienced health problems, or just wanted to rejoin their families.<sup>107</sup>



TABLE 1. Status of NYA Refugee Enrollees in the Months after Leaving the NYA Programs

Name	Dates in Program	NYA Project	Course	Report Date and Status	Address on Report Date
Theodore Advokat (Advocat)	1/39-4/39	Monroe	Auto Mechanics	6/39 Unable to adjust. Returned to NYC.	NYC
William Blatt	1/39-6/39	Monroe	Auto Mechanics	7/40 Works in office of department store.	Athens
Ludwig Bodem	2/39-6/39	Monroe	Auto Mechanics	6/39 Left project to take poultry course at U. of Ga. until 1/40. 1/40 Secured position with chicken hatchery.	6/39 Atlanta; 1/40 Atlanta
Leo Erber	1/39-6/40	Monroe	Auto Mechanics	7/40 Since leaving school, worked as stock clerk with wholesale shoe concern.	Atlanta
Werner Feibelman	6/39-11/39	Clarksville	Agriculture	11/39 Left voluntarily to rejoin family. Decided not to pursue agricultural work.	NYC
Fred Frankl	1/39-6/39	Monroe	Auto Mechanics	6/39 Worked for freight company as general assistant. 11/39 Obtained position as mechanic in garment factory.	6/39 Atlanta; 11/39 Atlanta
Ernest Gertler	1/39-6/39	Monroe	Auto Mechanics	7/40 Until recently worked for overall factory in Athens, Ga. Left to join relatives.	Athens, then NYC
Karl (Charles) Hamburger	1/39-6/39	Monroe	Auto Mechanics	7/40 Left school because of poor health; placed with private family in Elberton, Ga. Graduated high school June 1940. Will work for foster parents in Elberton (dept. store).	Elberton, GA
Alexander Hirsch	1/39-7/39	Clarksville	Radio	7/39 State Radio Transmission Dept (NYA project). 8/39 Obtained position in battery dept. at auto service station. 11/39 Position with auto parts factory also attends U. of Ga. Extension Evening School.	7/39 Atlanta; 8/39 Atlanta; 11/39 Atlanta
Siegfried Hirsch (Fred)	1/39-8/39	Clarksville	Woodwork	7/40 Since leaving school, working in office of furniture mfg. company.	Rome, GA

TABLE 1, continued.

Name	Dates in Program	NYA Project	Course	Report Date and Status	Address on Report Date
Jerry Kahn *	11/39-6/40	Clarksville	Agriculture	7/40 Farm near Atlanta; working during summer in Dalton, Ga. in bedspread factory; 8/40 he accepted job as a shipping clerk.	Near Atlanta
Jacob Katz	6/39-10/39	Tifton	Agriculture	10/39 Left voluntarily to continue study of agriculture at U. of Southern California.	Los Angeles
Walter Kornfeld	11/39-6/40	Carrollton	Agriculture	7/40 Further study-poultry course, U of Ga. 3/41 Working at commercial hatchery in Atlanta (Ga. State Hatchery).	7/40 Athens; 3/41 Atlanta
Hans Korsower (John Corser)	1/39-6/39	Clarksville	Radio	7/40 After leaving Habershham, continued studies at Ga. School of Technology.	Died on May 26, 1940
Lindenbaum	11/39-7/40	Carrollton	Agriculture	7/40 Interested in agricultural chemistry. Trying to find position with fertilizer company.	Atlanta
Stephen Loeb	1/39-6/39	Monroe	Auto Mechanics	7/40 Since leaving project works for garage.	Athens
Walter Mai	6/40-6/40	Carrollton	Agriculture	7/40 Unable to adjust; returned to parents	NYC
Walter Medak	1/39-6/39	Monroe	Auto Mechanics	6/39 Left project to take poultry course at U of Ga. until 1/40; 1/40 Worked in hatchery. 4/40 Obtained position as shipping clerk with furniture company.	6/39 Athens; 1/40 Atlanta; 4/40 Columbia, SC
Henry Preis	6/39-12/39	Tifton	Agriculture	1/40 Left school because of health problem. Returned to relatives.	NYC
Josef Rappaport **	2/39	Clarksville	Agriculture	2/39 When he received word that his mother was arriving in New York City from Europe, he left the NYA project. His sister had obtained a job for him in NYC.	NYC
Manfred Rubinstein	1/39-6/39	Monroe	Auto Mechanics	6/39 Clerk in retail store. 4/40 Traveling for beauty supply house.	6/39 and 4/40 Anderson, SC

TABLE 1, continued.

Name	Dates in Program	NYA Project	Course	Report Date and Status	Address on Report Date
Max Schwarz	6/39-12/39	Tifton	Agriculture	1/40 Left school: did not wish to continue in agriculture; health problems also; obtained position as worker in pants factory. 4/40 Returned to parents.	1/40 Atlanta; 4/40 NYC
Wolfgang Sonntag	6/39-8/39	Clarkesville	Agriculture	8/39 Left school; unable to adjust.	NYC
Frank Spiegel	1/39-7/39	Monroe	Auto Mechanics	7/39 Worked as attendant in gas station. 10/39 Obtained position with auto electric concern; works in factory as salesman.	7/39 Atlanta; 10/39 Atlanta
Helmut Strauss	1/39-6/39	Monroe	General High School Courses	6/39 Worker in shirt factory. 7/40 Recently returned to relatives who are giving him college education.	3/39 Abbeville, SC; 7/40 NYC
Joseph Tobias	11/39-6/40	Carrollton	Agriculture	7/40 Returned to NYC to join relatives for summer; plans to return to study agriculture at U of Ga. in fall; 9/40 has been attending U of Ga. taking agriculture course.	6/40 NYC; 9/40 Athens
Amos Vogelbaum ***	9/39-6/40	Clarkesville	Agriculture	7/40 Further study: poultry course U of Ga.; 3/41 Finished work at U of Ga. Returned to the home of his parents.	7/40 Athens; 3/41 NYC
Martin Weiss	1/39-5/39	Tifton	Agriculture	5/39 Left voluntarily to return to East.	NYC

SOURCE: "Citizenship Records of Refugee Youth", "Agricultural Project-NYA, Citizenship Record," Georgia Farm School Records.

LEGEND: Monroe: Georgia Vocational and Trades School; Clarkesville: Habersham College; Tifton: Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College; Carrollton: West Georgia College.

\* Jerry Kahn couldn't find an adequate wage as a farm worker and accepted a job as a shipping clerk. Report of B. Rich, Secretary, "Agricultural Projects Committee Meeting," August 14, 1940, "Agricultural Training, 1938-1941."

\*\* Joseph Rappaport left the program after a few days. Kahn to Kolb, February 22, 1939, "Agricultural Training, 1938-1941."

\*\*\* Amos Vogelbaum finished his work at the University of Georgia and returned to NYC. He was offered a position as manager of a farm in Woodbine, New Jersey. Mrs. P. H. Philips to Littlefield, April 8, 1941, "Agricultural Training, 1938-1941."

Toward the end of the program, the Farm School experienced trouble placing those trained in agriculture in decent paying jobs. One of the last to leave the NYA program, Joseph Tobias, had help from the Farm School taking extra agricultural courses at the University of Georgia after leaving the NYA. When he finished his coursework, the Farm School committee could not find him a suitable job. The report of the Agricultural Projects Committee on the status of young men still "Under Care" stated: "We made several contacts for him in the truck farming line in which he was interested, but the opportunities for conditions above that of a share-cropper are scarce." Tobias decided, with the help of his family, to continue his education at the University of Georgia.<sup>108</sup>

About the same time, another student, Jerry Kahn, completed his NYA training and needed a job quickly to help support his parents in New York. The job in farming that the committee found for him paid only three dollars a week, and the living conditions were poor. The committee then found a job paying fifteen dollars a week as a shipping clerk, and Kahn took that position. The Agricultural Projects Committee report concluded: "an evaluation should be made by the Committee of the real outlook for self-sustaining positions in agriculture. If, in the Committee's opinion, such positions are not obtainable for young boys, it is the recommendation of the Secretary that the question of diversion of Farm School funds be taken under consideration by the Committee." One of the secretary's suggestions was to consider farm family resettlement. At a meeting of the Agricultural Projects Committee on August 14, 1940, members discussed the difficulties of placing the young men in farm positions when they had opportunities for better pay and an easier life in urban jobs. Many also felt pressures from their families for money. The committee agreed that farm family resettlement appeared to be the next practical step in helping refugees.<sup>109</sup>

After the meeting of the Agricultural Projects Committee in August 1940, only four additional young men came to Georgia to participate in the NYA. In June 1941, the president of the Farm School and Resettlement Bureau, Eugene Oberdorfer, wrote in his annual report:

The number of youths qualified and willing to come to Georgia for agricultural training dwindled almost to the vanishing point. At the same time the "backlog" of unsettled refugees concentrated

in New York, where they had landed in America, became more formidable each passing day. It soon became apparent that in order to shoulder our fair share of the general responsibility that it would be necessary for Georgia, like other States, to accept a reasonable monthly quota of refugees for general resettlement.<sup>110</sup>

Thus the mission of the organization shifted. Even so, the only state to enroll more refugees in the NYA than Georgia was New Jersey, which had at least thirty-three. Florida matched Georgia's total with twenty-eight. Four additional southern states participated: Oklahoma with nineteen enrollees, Alabama with thirteen, Texas with twelve, and North Carolina, which joined the program in 1941, with two.<sup>111</sup>

The Georgia experience seemed to prove the value of starting the program with a pilot project, and the pilot no doubt led to improved procedures and communication. An NRS program evaluation observed:

From the needs and the experiences of this group, procedures and principles were gradually evolved which became the basis for later practices. The Georgia experiment demonstrated to all concerned that the project was both constructive and practical, and that it was worth expanding into other areas.<sup>112</sup>

The evaluation is curious since the project was plagued by problems and, in several respects, appeared to be a failure. Few of the students used their agricultural training, and many left the program to return to New York. Many of the problems traced back to the Farm School's insistence on agricultural training and on the failure of the national organization to listen to the Farm School's demands. Although the pilot program did not have the benefits the Georgia Jewish community hoped to see, it did provide a safe environment for the participants to adjust to their new homeland.

Under the guidance of Winslow and Littlefield, the refugee program moved forward. Two youths moved to the Nepaug Village resident center in Connecticut. A youth sent to Connecticut left because he was strictly Orthodox and, although warned ahead of time that the food would not be kosher, he was not happy. Two refugees went to a resident center at Kingston, Rhode Island, and five traveled to Massachusetts to resident centers in Holyoke and Upton.<sup>113</sup>

*Program Expansion*

The next state to enroll refugees was Florida. In early June 1939, the first female refugees to participate entered Camp Roosevelt, a resident center for women in Ocala. The NYA received inquiries from the two Florida senators, Charles Andrews and Claude Pepper, about the girls, and in an unsigned report on the refugee program, the author of the report (probably Winslow) attributed the senators' inquiries to the fact that the NYA did not issue a press release explicitly explaining the arrangement in the state. The report noted that other projects have been "quite openly and thoroughly publicized in most of the other States."<sup>114</sup>

Alabama next received refugees. By early September 1939, fifty-nine refugee youths had been placed in residential centers in ten states, including Alabama (four), Georgia (twenty-three), Florida (six), New Hampshire (five), Massachusetts (six), Connecticut (two), Rhode Island (two), New York (three), Missouri (five), and Michigan (three), and the plan soon added fourteen more refugees bringing the total to seventy-three. Plans were underway to expand the program to Ohio, Texas, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, and California. Other states expressed interest.<sup>115</sup>

In summer 1941, Littlefield wrote a lengthy report for the NRS Resettlement and Field Service Department covering the first twenty-six months of the program. He compiled statistics about the participants that remain the main source for information about the operation of the NRS side of the refugee program. According to Littlefield's report, at the end of the first twenty-six months, March 31, 1941, 235 refugees had participated in the program, 204 young men and 31 young women. At the time of Littlefield's report, 96 of the 235 refugees, or 40 percent, had been placed in five of the states in the NRS's southern district: Alabama (ten men), Florida (twelve men, fifteen women), Georgia (twenty-eight men), Oklahoma (eighteen men, one woman), and Texas (twelve men). Of the women, just under 50 percent were in Florida.<sup>116</sup> The NYA added more refugees after March 31, 1941, including two in North Carolina, a state in the NRS southern district that had no prior participants, another in Florida, and three in Alabama.<sup>117</sup>

Approximately 87 percent of the 235 refugees hailed from Germany and Austria with the rest from Czechoslovakia, Lithuania, Italy, and Yugoslavia. Approximately one quarter arrived in the United States one

month or less before enrolling in the NYA; another 40 percent had been in the country over a month but less than six months. The remaining refugees had resided in the country from six months to more than three years.<sup>118</sup>

The Resettlement Department selected program participants, choosing approximately one-third of those who applied. Referrals came from the NRS reception and case work departments, and, as the arrival of refugees in New York began to slow, the NRS recruited from the immigrant community already in New York. Littlefield reported, "Applications were periodically stimulated through announcements in the German and Jewish press, and through youth meetings sponsored by the NRS." In January 1941, Littlefield explained to Winslow, "We have been embarking upon some extensive local promotion to stimulate a larger number of applicants."<sup>119</sup>

The criteria for admission were based on the requirements of the NYA and individual resident centers, as well as conditions established by the NRS. The most basic requirement was for applicants to be between eighteen (seventeen in some states) and twenty-four years old. They had to possess a permanent immigration visa, be healthy, speak English well enough for everyday needs, be sufficiently outgoing to adjust to the communal environment of a resident center, and be willing to do manual labor, participate in group activities, and "adopt prevailing mores and attitudes of the new environment." Some of these requirements, such as the one that candidates speak English well, were no doubt reinforced by lessons learned in the Georgia pilot project. A physician examined each applicant to evaluate their health needs, and a trained case worker interviewed him or her considering "stability, flexibility of character, and capacity for adjustment." Whether NYA training would measurably enhance a youth's skills and employability provided the ultimate criterion.<sup>120</sup>

The NCC planned to include Christian refugees in the NYA program, and the American Committee for Christian-German Refugees selected Wolfgang Sonntag to go to Georgia. Sonntag, described as "a non-Aryan Christian," was eighteen years old. He returned to New York after two months in the Georgia program because he was "unable to adjust."<sup>121</sup>

Since the primary goal of the NYA program was resettlement, young men and women agreed as a condition of enrollment to permanently resettle in the specific community or area covered by the local sponsoring committee. A responsible family member or the person who sponsored

the young person's immigration to the United States had to approve the youth's participation in the NYA and, if possible, meet all or part of the costs. When accepted in the program, the refugee received transportation funds through the NRS and moved to an NYA resident center. If the young person had no one to provide support (and most did not), the NRS and/or local resettlement committees assumed the costs.<sup>122</sup>

When NYA administrators first contemplated the refugee program, they thought the youths could be aided on local nonresident and residential projects, but "because of difficulties in organization—particularly in the local communities—it was found easier to assist the youth through placement on resident projects." In May 1940 and in early 1941, Winslow wrote to some state directors asking about incorporating refugee youth into nonresident projects as an experiment. No evidence exists of this happening. The resident projects offered an economical way to care for the refugees since they operated on a cooperative basis where youth did "much of their own cooking, raising of vegetables, and other housekeeping tasks." The resident centers seemed the best and most expedient way to meet the NYA Americanization goals for these young people.<sup>123</sup>

By March 31, 1941, the NYA had utilized fifty-nine resident centers, and, with the addition of North Carolina after that date, the total came to sixty. The centers enrolling refugees provide a sample of their variety. Located in rural and urban settings, some were rustic camps; others were rehabilitated institutional buildings; and many were dormitories connected to colleges or vocational schools.

For example, Fort Roosevelt, a resident center for girls in Ocala, a small farming community in North Central Florida, had been a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers facility used to house laborers and engineers working on the Cross Florida Barge Canal project. The facilities, situated in a grove of live oaks and pines on 130 acres of land, included a dining hall, a large, fully equipped kitchen, extensive recreational features, and more than fifty modern cabins with stoves and refrigerators, electric hot water heaters, and bathrooms with showers. About two hundred students attended classes four hours a day, Monday through Friday, and worked in the afternoon, many sewing garments, to earn twenty-four dollars per month. Part of the twenty-four dollars went to the NYA for participants' room and board. Many of the courses offered to the young women had a fixed term. For example, the beautician course lasted fifty weeks whereas other



*Buildings at Camp Roosevelt, Ocala, FL, c. 1936. (State Archives of Florida.)*

courses required only five months. In 1941, after the NYA's shift to training for defense industries, Camp Roosevelt enlarged, enrolled young men, and began offering courses that included auto mechanics, woodworking, and aviation repair, courses not open to the women.<sup>124</sup>

In contrast were very rural resident centers such as the 101 Ranch in Ponca City, Oklahoma, which hosted at least three refugees. The NYA site was an old ranch on an eighty-acre tract. The NYA youth tore down many of the fifty buildings on the tract and used the lumber to renovate others. The barn was refitted as a dormitory for fifty young men who raised cattle, swine, and chickens. The site also had a foundry, blacksmith shop, and workshops for woodworking and auto repair. Although many of the resident centers were in rural locations, some were established in urban settings close to industrial sites where young men could easily find jobs after being trained. South Houston, about twenty miles from the center of Houston, Texas, served the hub of

*Beautician training at the NYA's Camp Roosevelt, Ocala, FL, c. 1940.*  
(State Archives of Florida.)

the Gulf Coast shipbuilding industry where students could “learn by doing.”<sup>125</sup>

Habersham College in Clarkesville, Georgia, part of the NYA pilot, provided a different example of the program. A no-frills institution located in a small town in the mountains of northeast Georgia, the college served 250 men and women enrollees. The 325-acre campus belonged to the Ninth District School of Agricultural Arts (the A&M) but was unused. NYA students renovated dilapidated buildings on the property into dormitories and made the furnishings, including beds, tables, chairs, and cabinets. The college offered subjects including farming, radio service, metal work, and ceramics. Girls were required to study home economics, although the boys helped them cook meals. In addition, students took academic subjects like practical math, English, history, and citizenship. The facilities included a chicken hatchery, mill, workshop to repair farm implements, and woodshop, enabling students to have actual “work

experience." American NYA students at the college earned thirty dollars, paid twenty dollars for tuition, and kept ten dollars, but Lasseter arranged for the refugee students to pay a discounted tuition. For their work, the refugee students earned \$27.20 a month, of which \$17.20 went to the school for "subsistence, instruction, and supervision," with the student keeping ten dollars but saving the NRS or the Farm School \$2.80 a month on each student.<sup>126</sup>

In many cases the NYA established resident centers at existing colleges and trade schools. In Gadsden, Alabama, participants attended the Alabama School of Trades and lived in the school's dormitories. In 1939, the school had a student body of 225, which included full-time registered students who paid \$250 a year for tuition, board, and other expenses; part-time work students who received aid from the school; and 118 NYA youth. NYA students earned twenty-four dollars per month on construction jobs, maintaining the school's buildings and grounds, or working in the vegetable gardens and caring for farm animals that provided food for the school. Of this, students paid the school nineteen dollars per month, giving them five dollars for spending money. The school, under the control of the state Board of Education, offered industrial courses such as auto mechanics, welding, woodworking, mechanical drawing, and applied electricity, besides classes in industrial history, mathematics, science, and English.<sup>127</sup>

The resident centers were created to address youth unemployment and the general lack of preparation for working in industry, and most offered "work experience" training rather than rigorous academic instruction.<sup>128</sup> Often teachers were skilled craftsmen, such as an auto mechanic who worked with the students in a workshop rather than a classroom and offered instruction, supervision, and guidance while the students learned the trade. Some of these centers provided little classroom instruction. At the Inks Dam Resident Center in Burnet, Texas, students lived in a rural setting by the Colorado River in barracks built by NYA enrollees. The center offered work experience in a variety of trades including carpentry, auto mechanics, landscaping, drafting, food preparation, metalworking, and plumbing. The students also had study and supervised activities in citizenship, typing, shorthand, drafting, and other subjects related to business success. One of the center's projects included building a fish hatchery below Inks Dam on the Colorado River in Central

Texas, and many of the young people worked on projects cosponsored by the Lower Colorado River Authority and the U. S. Bureau of Fisheries. In 1940, the center accommodated 250 youths and had plans to expand.<sup>129</sup>

Although the requirements fluctuated over time, most refugee youths were expected to spend eighty-five to one hundred hours a month at assigned work tasks, often, but not always, related to the training program. Refugees in every case received the prevailing rate of wages from nongovernment sources. Because of the refugees' unofficial status, the NRS considered the payments to be scholarships rather than wages or compensation.<sup>130</sup> Littlefield's report on the program at twenty-six months of operation estimated the cost:

Each month of attendance by every one of the 235 refugee youths represents a cash outlay of approximately \$30 from some non-governmental source. Actually, the \$42,130 so expended between February 1, 1939, and March 31, 1941, represent contributions from the National Refugee Service (and the National Coordinating Committee), the Lavanburg Fund, in New York City, local resettlement committees, private social agencies, fraternal orders and philanthropic individuals, in the country at large, and, in two instances, from the staffs and American youth of the resident centers themselves. Besides these sources, relatives and sponsors of the refugee enrollees, when they possessed the means, contributed wholly or partially in a number of cases.<sup>131</sup>

Littlefield's report included a chart showing the following information:

TABLE 2. Division of Scholarship Costs with Respect to Source

Source of Funding	Amount	Percentage of Total
National Refugee Service	\$27,470.00	65%
Cooperating Committee, including all local sources	9,715.00	23%
Lavanburg Fund	3,000.00	7%
Reimbursed by relatives, affiants, etc.	1,145.00	3%
Provided or raised by NYA	800.00	2%
Total	\$42,130.00	100%

SOURCE: NRS, "Report of the First 26 Months," NYA Records.

The going wage for work participants usually ranged between twenty-six and thirty-five dollars a month. Of this, the refugees, as well as citizen students, turned over about twenty dollars to the resident center for food, lodging, and other expenses, retaining the balance in cash. For citizens in the NYA, the payment also included medical and dental expenses. At the Inks Dam Center in Texas, for example, NYA youth earned thirty dollars per month and paid eighteen dollars to the NYA.<sup>132</sup>

According to Littlefield, other expenses were met separately, including the costs of transportation from New York City to a resident center, work clothes, required equipment, tuition for certain related training courses, and health and accident insurance. Relatives and sponsors paid some of these expenses, but when they could not, the NRS provided transportation and work clothes. The NRS or local committees paid other expenses or worked out a shared arrangement. At the Georgia Farm School, Jewish doctors and dentists in the Atlanta area volunteered medical and dental services through the Farm School's health committees.<sup>133</sup>

The NRS placed refugees only in resident centers where a local resettlement committee participated and cosponsored the program. The resettlement committee designated a subcommittee or individual to deal directly with the NYA, thus acting as a liaison between the NRS and the local NYA officials. For example in Texas, Jim Novy acted as liaison, and in Georgia the Farm School worked through Edward Kahn. The committees usually contributed funding for the refugees, administered their scholarships, and assisted in monitoring them while they were with the NYA. When refugees left the program, the local committees helped them find jobs and resettle. Just as important, local committees assumed responsibility for aspects of the refugees' social, recreational, and religious life, including participation in celebrations of religious holidays. During the course of the program, twenty-seven sponsoring committees, assisted by more than thirty additional committees, cooperated with the NRS to place refugee youth across the nation.<sup>134</sup>

Skills considered more feminine dominated training for women. For example, at Camp Roosevelt, the women's resident center in Ocala, training focused on traditional female roles associated with marriage and family and included sewing, homemaking and housecleaning, waitressing, clerical and beautician employment, and nursing assistance.<sup>135</sup> Just as the young men did, the young women often expressed appreciation.

*Letter from Elizabeth  
Neuman, a resident at  
Camp Roosevelt, to Oscar  
Littlefield, July 5, 1939.  
(Courtesy of NYA Records,  
NARA.)*

One young woman, Daisy Schwarz, wrote from Camp Roosevelt, "the teachers and the girls are especially nice to us. We are like a big family and I am so glad to be one of them." Helen Bilber, also at Camp Roosevelt, wrote she "could not believe, that after this last year of troubles, there could be a place as good as this. . . . I am sorry for those refugees, who still believe, that the only place in U.S.A. is New York, and who do not try to go in different states."<sup>136</sup>

When the NRS selected a refugee, it made every effort to identify his or her interests and select a beneficial program. Even so, refugees frequently departed from the original training plan and changed to another course of training within the NYA. In other cases, with the help of local resettlement committees, the youths transferred to a non-NYA vocational school or college. For example, the Georgia Farm School assisted Henry Lindenbaum when he transferred from the NYA program to Georgia Tech. Few of the resident centers had formal terms with fixed termination dates. The average stay for a refugee youth as of March 31, 1941, was 5.7 months, but many stayed longer. In most cases, refugee youths remained

in the program until they were able to find a job. The final report of the NYA, written in 1943 when the agency shut down, notes that the refugees "all had far more educational background than the NYA youth with whom they lived and worked."<sup>137</sup> A few selected for the program were unable to adjust to their new circumstances and left the NYA soon after enrollment.<sup>138</sup>

Littlefield noted in his report that the great majority of enrollees were unemployed when they applied for the program and faced several handicaps:

Their European training and experience were frequently inapplicable to American industrial requirements; the differences in industrial practices and training methods were confusing and often demoralizing; language handicaps and lack of understanding of American mores and attitudes added to the confusion. The N.Y.A. refugee project was aimed as much toward orienting the youth in the conditions of American industry as it was toward equipping them with vocational skills.<sup>139</sup>

In July 1939, as part of a government reorganization, the NYA moved from the WPA's jurisdiction to that of the new Federal Security Agency, a sign it was "no longer a purely relief organization." The NYA functions now offered educational opportunities for skills needed for employment to needy unemployed young people. In September 1942, the NYA moved to the War Manpower Commission, reflecting the earlier transition to training programs for jobs in defense industries. By 1943, with the improving economic situation in the country, Congress felt the NYA was no longer needed and ordered its termination. Under the terms of the Labor-Federal Security Appropriations Act of 1944 and the Second Deficiency Appropriations Act of 1943, the agency was to be liquidated by January 1, 1944.<sup>140</sup> The refugee project had ended well before that.

*The NYA Refugee Program Comes to an End*

When the NYA ceased operations in 1943, its published final report contained a single page describing its refugee youth program, and it cited statistics on the program that were gathered in November 1939. The report leaves the impression that recruitment for the program ended in fall 1939, after eighty-five refugee youths had been placed in NYA resident centers. The information appears to come from a report prepared in early

December 1939 using the November statistics. However, the program lasted into 1942 and served 265 refugees.<sup>141</sup>

The NRS continued to place refugees in the NYA program until near the end of 1941. The numbers had dwindled, and it appears the last placement occurred in November 1941. However, young people already enrolled remained into 1942 and presumably finished their training. For example, reports in the NRS records from the local resettlement committee in Gadsden, Alabama, include references to two refugees who continued their training into 1942.<sup>142</sup>

In October 1941, Littlefield reported a total of thirty-four enrollees and expected to add three more at the end of October and in November. He explained to Winslow that "because of the draft, improved employment opportunities for youth in general, and because of the very small number of youth immigrating at the present time, we expect a continued diminution in the number of candidates available for our project."<sup>143</sup>

Littlefield accepted a position with the United Jewish Appeal in January 1942 and left the NRS. He wrote to Winslow, "I have enjoyed working cooperatively with you during the past three years. From the point of view of constructive accomplishment and personal satisfaction, these years have been my best so far." Winslow responded, "I am sorry to hear that you are leaving the National Refugee Service, as I know full well how you were the spark-plug for this whole refugee-NYA project and that you are responsible for its unusual success." The NRS named Robert Dolins, an assistant in charge of resettlement, to replace Littlefield, but it appears that recruiting for the program came to an end with Littlefield's departure and, more significantly, the bombing of Pearl Harbor and America's entry into war.<sup>144</sup>

#### *Evaluation of the Program*

No records outline the exact expectations Charles Taussig, Aubrey Williams, and Thacher Winslow had when they met with six state directors, two regional directors, and NYA deputy executive Brown in May 1938 to explore the program's feasibility. They apparently hoped to recruit refugee youth in Europe, help them immigrate to the United States, and then bring them into the NYA. The initial discussions included rescue as well as resettlement and must have included questions concerning the number of refugees the program could absorb.



As previously indicated, the *Milwaukee Journal* story of May 1938 alleged a Taussig goal of four thousand refugees. Although Winslow denounced the article's accuracy, that number appeared again in a memo about the Georgia Farm School training project, the NYA pilot. In September 1938, Edward Kahn wrote Harold Hirsch: "Mr. Lasseter stated that the N.Y.A. had in mind a group of 4000 refugees who are in and around New York City." The letter quotes Lasseter as thinking "that between 60 and 70 young men and women could be placed in N.Y.A. resident training projects in different sections of the State." These two documents may have referred to a pool of candidates rather than expected enrollees, but, even so, early expectations for enrollment appeared high. In February 1939, Winslow wrote to Taussig that he anticipated "openings for 278 refugee youth" in the coming six months, but by November 1939, the program had enrolled only eighty-five.<sup>145</sup> The program never achieved the numbers mentioned in the planning stages, nor did it provide a rescue program for European refugee youth.

Although failing to meet those early goals, the program evolved into a small but successful resettlement option helping many young people adapt to American life and become productively employed.<sup>146</sup> Antisemitism reached its peak in the United States in the years from 1938 to 1945. As previously indicated, for this reason resettlement outside of New York City became an important part of the NRS strategy.<sup>147</sup>

In an average month, 27,685 American citizens were actively enrolled in resident center programs. In a typical month like June 1940, when the NYA included eighty-nine refugees actively training in resident center programs, the refugees constituted only 0.32 percent, or less than one third of one percent, of the monthly average.<sup>148</sup> The NYA program was a much more significant element in the NRS resettlement operation, even though still a small portion of its overall numbers. Over the three years of the NYA refugee program, the NRS resettled 11,828 individuals, representing 6,572 units or families.<sup>149</sup> Of these, 265 were NYA placements, constituting approximately 4 percent of units and approximately 2.24 percent of all the individuals resettled. The program was sufficiently important to the NRS to employ a full-time administrator. However, those incorporated into the NYA surely represented a small portion of the immigrant youths of NYA age who entered the country between 1939 and 1941.

Upon leaving the program almost all the refugees for whom the NRS had data found suitable employment, although not necessarily related to their training. Oscar Littlefield offered the following observations in his report on the first twenty-six months of the program. Total enrollment up to March 31, 1941, was 235. Of those, nine dropped out before completing one month; thirteen went on to pursue educational plans; and seventy-four were active enrollees at the end of March 1941. The other "139 young men and women left the N.Y.A. centers, presumably ready for employment." Ninety-two found placements in occupational fields of their training, and twenty-three in unrelated fields. The remaining twenty-four included those who did not enter industry and those for whom the NRS failed to obtain data.<sup>150</sup>

Local resettlement committees did not always maintain contact with the participants, so the statistics concerning successful resettlement are incomplete. Where the NRS did have data, it appeared that approximately 70 percent of those who finished their training resettled near their resident center. Approximately 13 percent resettled in other areas, and approximately 17 percent returned to New York. If a refugee had parents joining him or her, the NRS would help the parents resettle with the youth.<sup>151</sup>

The NYA experience often shaped the refugee participants' view of the United States. In 1940, Winslow's office produced a manuscript, "Experiment in Americanization," which was intended to be reproduced as a pamphlet. It summarized the history of the program and highlighted the refugees' assimilation into American life, quoting from an editorial, "Good Americans," probably written by Ralph McGill, which appeared in the *Atlanta Constitution*: "Great teachers and sympathetic companions have taught these refugee youngsters in one short year the rich lessons of America. They will make good Americans, and by their example will make others better Americans."<sup>152</sup> While this document could be labeled propaganda, it did illustrate the program's focus on assimilation. Refugees often wrote about their experiences integrating into American life.

The program also affected American youth. The resident centers provided relief and job skills training to rural young people, many of whom had lived isolated lives and had limited educational backgrounds.<sup>153</sup> Meeting contemporaries raised in other countries and learning of their struggles must have had a broadening effect on Americans of the same generation at the resident centers. The final report on the NYA in 1943

declared, "According to reports from the resident project supervisors, American youth benefited from their daily association with the refugees from Fascism."<sup>154</sup>

Just as in Atlanta and Austin, Jewish communities across the country came together and organized committees to coordinate with the NRS to assist with every aspect of the resettlement of refugee families and individuals coming from Europe. These people likely felt they were doing at least a small part in helping those oppressed by Hitler. Many also must have linked the refugees to memories of their own or their family histories of immigration. Jim Novy of Austin and Edward Kahn of Atlanta, both Polish immigrants, likely felt a strong kinship with the refugees.

Finally, the NYA refugee program offers a full and persuasive explanation of Novy's brief and cryptic remarks at the synagogue dedication in 1963 about young refugees in the NYA. Even so, the tale of "Operation Texas" has been a persistent story reappearing regularly in the press, in scholarly works, and in Wikipedia. The story appeared again in March 2023 when Saul Singer, who serves as senior legal ethics counsel with the District of Columbia Bar, included the story in a column on Lyndon Johnson he wrote for the *Jewish Press*.<sup>155</sup>

In 2019, the Texas Holocaust, Genocide, and Antisemitism Advisory Commission (THGAAC) awarded a grant to the Ackerman Center for Holocaust Studies at the University of Texas at Dallas to investigate the "Operation Texas" story. The Ackerman Center was unable to find evidence that Lyndon Johnson participated in an illegal effort to aid refugees. At the conclusion of their study, Dr. Nils Roemer, the director of the Ackerman Center, moderated a workshop on "Operation Texas." The workshop participants included Roemer; Philip Barber, a graduate student and researcher at the Ackerman Center; Dr. David Bell of the University of Houston, who was on the founding Board of Directors of the Houston Holocaust Museum; and me.<sup>156</sup> The NYA refugee project is an interesting story in its own right, but the prevalence of the "Operation Texas" story lends it yet another interesting facet. Thus, this is the story of a small yet important program with impact on many levels at a time of limited American aid to refugees from Hitler's persecution.

## NOTES

My thanks to Mary Knill, an archivist and colleague in Maryland, who graciously volunteered to supplement my research by spending hours tracking down letters in the NYA Records at the National Archives. She found marvelous nuggets that enhance this article, and I am exceptionally grateful to her, Dr. Roemer, and the Ackerman Center.

<sup>1</sup> Claudia Wilson Anderson, "Congressman Lyndon B. Johnson, Operation Texas, and Jewish Immigration," *Southern Jewish History* 15 (2012): 81–118.

<sup>2</sup> "Synagogue Dedicated By Johnson," *Austin American*, December 31, 1963; "President of the United of States Lyndon B. Johnson Dedicates Congregation Agudas Achim, Austin, Texas," LP Recording, Austin Custom Records, Austin, Texas, Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library (hereafter cited as LBJPL); U.S. Federal Security Agency and War Manpower Commission, *Final Report of the National Youth Administration, Fiscal Years 1936–1943* (Washington, DC, 1944), iii–vi.

<sup>3</sup> E. I. Treiman, "The Life of Jim Novy," *Texas Jewish Press* (San Antonio, TX), January 17 and May 2, 1941; "Memorandum on Texas for State Meeting in San Antonio on October 20, 1940," n.d., "Texas, n.d., 1940," box 3, National Refugee Service Records, Collection I-92, American Jewish Historical Society, Center for Jewish History, New York (hereafter cited as NRS Records, AJHS, and CJH).

<sup>4</sup> The history of the ups and downs of immigrant restrictions into the United States has been well documented. See David S. Wyman, *Paper Walls: America and the Refugee Crisis, 1938–1941* (Amherst, MA, 1968); Richard Breitman and Alan M. Kraut, *American Refugee Policy and European Jewry, 1933–1945* (Bloomington, IN, 1987); and Saul S. Friedman, *No Haven for the Oppressed: United States Policy Toward Jewish Refugees, 1938–1945* (Detroit, 1973). Robert N. Rosen, *Saving the Jews: Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Holocaust* (New York, 2006) provides a somewhat more positive account of Roosevelt's position.

<sup>5</sup> National Refugee Service, Inc., Resettlement and Field Service Department, "Report of the First 26 Months of the NRS Youth Retraining Experiment Conducted Jointly with the National Youth Administration," August 4, 1941, 24, "Miscellaneous Corres," E-3, box 2, National Youth Administration Records, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD (hereafter cited as NYA Records); "Composite Table Showing Amount of Resettlement Work Done from January, 1941 through April, 1942," File 1001 and Spreadsheets, "Resettlement in 1941 by Community and District," File 1003 and Tables, January through December 1941, and "Resettlements by Community," File 1005, microfilm 48, National Refugee Service Records, RG 248, YIVO Institute, CJH (hereafter cited as NRS Records, YIVO). Oscar Littlefield's NRS report with statistics up to March 31, 1941, showed that 235 refugees participated in the program. The table in NRS Records, YIVO showing participation after March shows thirty additional students were added in April through November 1941 for a total of 265. A detailed study of spreadsheets in NRS File 1003 shows that nine refugees went to NRS's Southern Region in 1941: North Carolina (two), Alabama (four), Florida (one), and Oklahoma (two). An analysis of the monthly charts "January through December 1941, Resettlements by Community" shows three of the nine who were sent to the South came

before April and would have been included in Littlefield's total of 235; six are in the thirty added between April and December.

<sup>6</sup> NRS, "Report of the First 26 Months," Table XIII, 20–21, NYA Records; Spreadsheets, "Resettlement in 1941 by Community and District," 9D, File 1003, microfilm 48, NRS Records, YIVO; Oscar Littlefield to Thacher Winslow, January 16, 1941, "Refugee Youth—Inactive," E-3, box 3, NYA Records; NRS, "Report of the First 26 Months," 24, NYA Records; Littlefield to Winslow, October 24, 1941, "Refugee Youth—Inactive," NYA Records; "National Refugee Service, Inc., Resettlements by Districts, December, 1940, and Cumulative Totals, January–December, 1940," File 1004, microfilm 48, NRS Records, YIVO. The tables list the districts as defined by the NRS. In a letter to Winslow, January 16, 1941, Littlefield indicated that North Carolina would soon join the program, and the 1941 spreadsheet indicates North Carolina took two refugees. North Carolina is not included in Littlefield's statistics ending March 31, 1941 as it joined after that date. Thus, twenty-two states participated rather than twenty-one as reported by Littlefield in his report ending March 31.

<sup>7</sup> Treiman, "Life of Jim Novy," *Texas Jewish Press*, February 7, February 21, April 18, May 2, May 23, May 30, and June 6, 1941; Bernard Marinbach, *Galveston: Ellis Island of the West* (Albany, NY 1983), xiii–xiv, 1–5.

<sup>8</sup> Much has been written about the IRO and the Galveston Movement. See Marinbach, *Galveston: Ellis Island of the West*; Ronald A. Axelrod, "Rabbi Henry Cohen and the Galveston Immigration Movement, 1907–1914," *East Texas Historical Journal* 15 (March 1977): 24–37; Gary Dean Best, "Jacob H. Schiff's Galveston Movement: An Experiment in Immigration Deflection, 1907–1914," *American Jewish Archives* (April 1978): 43–79; Joshua J. Furman, "'A Good Place to Emigrate to Now': Recruiting Eastern European Jews for the Galveston Movement in 1907," *Southern Jewish History* 25 (2022): 99–137; Jane Manaster, "Galveston Movement," *TSHA Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed April 12, 2023, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/galveston-movement>; Bryan Edward Stone, "The Galveston Diaspora: A Statistical View of Jewish Immigration Through Texas, 1907–1913," *Southern Jewish History* 21 (2018): 121–76; and Hollace Ava Weiner, "Removal Approval: The Industrial Removal Office Experience in Fort Worth, Texas," *Southern Jewish History* 4 (2001): 1–44.

<sup>9</sup> Wyman, *Paper Walls*, 26; NRS, "Report of the First 26 Months," 4–5, 12, NYA Records; "Guide to the Records of the National Refugee Service, 1934–1952, 5–6, NRS Records, YIVO, accessed January 15, 2023, <https://archives.cjh.org/repositories/7/resources/3595>; Thacher Winslow to Charles Taussig, February 4, 1939, "Reports, Miscellaneous Youth, 1935–1941," box 14, Charles Taussig Papers, Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library, Hyde Park, NY (hereafter cited as Taussig Papers); David de Sola Pool to Charles Taussig, May 5, 1938, "Refugees 1938," box 14, Taussig Papers; Littlefield to Oscar Strauss, Jr., May 16, 1939, "Refugee Youth—Inactive," NYA Records; Littlefield to P.A. Wales, December 24, 1940, "Refugee Youth—Inactive," NYA Records; Henry Cohen II, *Kindler of Souls: Rabbi Henry Cohen of Texas* (Austin, 2007), 59, 121; Axelrod, "Henry Cohen," 33; Best, "Jacob H. Schiff's Galveston Movement," 49, 68–69, 71, 79.

<sup>10</sup> Richard A. Reiman, *The New Deal and American Youth: Ideas and Ideals in a Depression Decade* (Athens, GA, 1992), 157–72; Dan J. Puckett, *In the Shadow of Hitler: Alabama's Jews, the Second World War, and the Holocaust* (Tuscaloosa, 2014), 53, 61–62.

<sup>11</sup> William Rosenwald to Dear Friend, September 25, 1940, "Texas, n.d., 1940," box 3, NRS Records, AJHS; "Texas Refugee Service Formed at Conference in San Antonio," *Texas Jewish Press*, October 25, 1940.

<sup>12</sup> "Memorandum, October 20, 1940," NRS Records, AJHS; Treiman, "Life of Jim Novy," *Texas Jewish Press*, January 23, 1942.

<sup>13</sup> Betty and Ernest K. Lindley, *A New Deal for Youth: The Story of the National Youth Administration* (New York, 1972 [1938]), 86–87; "Digest of Proceedings at National Advisory Committee Meeting, Lowrey Hotel, St. Paul, Minnesota, October 31 and November 1, 1938," "Resident Centers," 3, "National Advisory Committee Meeting, September 6 and 7, 1939—New York" E-1, box 2, NYA Records.

<sup>14</sup> "Memorandum, October 20, 1940," NRS Records, AJHS.

<sup>15</sup> NRS, "Resettlements in the State of Texas, January 1, 1937–September 30, 1940, by Cities and Types of Resettlement," "Texas, 1940," box 3, NRS Records, AJHS.

<sup>16</sup> Littlefield to Jack La Zar, October 25, 1940; Littlefield to Winslow, January 16, 1941, "Refugee Youth—Inactive," NYA Records.

<sup>17</sup> NRS, "Report of the First 26 Months," "Table IX," 4, 22–23, NYA Records.

<sup>18</sup> O.R. Strauss, Jr., to D.B. Lasseter, November 24, 1939, and Lasseter to Mrs. Philip Phillips, June 23, 1939, "Agricultural Training, 1938–1941," box 1, file 5, Georgia Farm School and Resettlement Bureau Records, Cuba Family Archives for Southern Jewish History at the William Breman Jewish Heritage Museum, Atlanta (hereafter cited as Georgia Farm School Records). Georgia Farm School and Resettlement Bureau Records can be found online through the Breman Museum, accessed May 20, 2023, <https://archivesspace.thebreman.org/repositories/2/resources/59>.

<sup>19</sup> See "Refugee Youth—Inactive," NYA Records.

<sup>20</sup> American youth at the resident centers welcomed the refugees and made them feel accepted. One young man, Ernst Liffgens, wrote from Gadsden, Alabama, "The boys here and everyone is very nice and friendly and I get more and more acquainted with the habits of this country." At the camp in Shakopee, Minnesota, a young refugee, Hans Quittner, became seriously ill, and, according to Littlefield, "the camp almost as a body, natives and refugees alike, volunteered as blood donors." Liffgens to Littlefield, August 21, 1939; Littlefield to Winslow, June 25, 1941, "Refugee Youth—Inactive," NYA Records.

<sup>21</sup> Peter Hilden wrote from the center in Gadsden, Alabama, "We have a very large room, and the food is delicious." Yet another young man wrote from Camp de Soto in Florida, "The food is really very good and you can always have as much as you want." Another detail often mentioned was access to a radio. Peter Hilden to Littlefield, August 21, 1939; Bernard Horn, Peter Berman, and Raoul Hassberg to Littlefield, March 5, 1940; Harry Rosenberg to Littlefield, May 12, 1940; Egon Goldmann to Littlefield, June 8, 1940, "Refugee Youth—Inactive," NYA Records.

<sup>22</sup> Carol A. Weisenberger, *Dollars and Dreams: The National Youth Administration in Texas* (New York, 1994), 93–94.

<sup>23</sup> Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940, Harris County, Texas, Ancestry.com.

<sup>24</sup> Fredric Rieders to Littlefield, February 4, 1940, "Refugee Youth—Inactive," NYA Records. Here and throughout, quotations from primary documents are rendered as they appear in the original, errors included.

<sup>25</sup> Kenneth Burley, Declaration of Intention to Become Citizen, May 13, 1940, Ancestry.com; Kenneth Burley (Kurt Berlstein) to Littlefield, n.d., "Refugee Youth—Inactive," NYA Records.

<sup>26</sup> "Resettlements in Texas in Cities Other than Dallas, Houston, San Antonio, January 1–November 30, 1940," December 26, 1940, File 1002, microfilm 48, NRS Records, YIVO; Biographic Statements: Herman Lille (c. March 20, 1940), William Freundel (March 21, 1940), Joseph Rosenkranz (March 20, 1940), "Refugee Youth—Inactive," NYA Records; Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940, Eastland County, Texas, Ancestry.com; Deborah Lynn Self, "The National Youth Administration in Texas" (master's thesis, Texas Tech University, 1974); Weisenberger, *Dollars and Dreams*, 87–88.

<sup>27</sup> "Resettlements in Texas," NRS Records, YIVO; Weisenberger, *Dollars and Dreams*, 88. A table in "Resettlements" shows Fritz Horowitz scheduled to go to the Texas NYA with Stern and Ackerman in April 1940. Horton's letter and US Census data list Horton at the camp, leading to the conclusion that he Americanized his name.

<sup>28</sup> Fred Horton to Littlefield, May 12, 1940, "Refugee Youth—Inactive," NYA Records.

<sup>29</sup> Horton to Littlefield, June 4, 1940, "Refugee Youth—Inactive," NYA Records.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Egon Goldmann to Littlefield, June 8, 1940, "Refugee Youth—Inactive," NYA Records.

<sup>32</sup> Biographic Information, Allen Frank, August 30, 1940, "Refugee Youth—Inactive," NYA Records. Although the biographic statement spells his name "Allen," records in Ancestry.com, such as Frank's draft card, indicate he spelled his name "Allan Frank."

<sup>33</sup> Wyman, *Paper Walls*, 168–72.

<sup>34</sup> J. B. Lightman to Ephraim Gomberg, April 30, 1940, "Texas, n.d., 1940," box 3, NRS Records, AJHS.

<sup>35</sup> Friedman, *No Haven for the Oppressed*, 105–107, 117–19; Wyman, *Paper Walls*, 152.

<sup>36</sup> Littlefield to Winslow, January 16, 1941, May 23, 1941, and October 24, 1941, "Refugee Youth—Inactive," NYA Records; "Composite Table Showing Amount of Resettlement Work Done from January, 1941 through April, 1942," File 1001, microfilm 48, NRS Records, YIVO; "National Refugee Service, Inc., December, 1940 Resettlements and Cumulative Totals January–December, 1940 by Type Resettlement," File 1001, microfilm 48, NRS Records, YIVO. The total number recruited declined from 117 in 1940 to 48 in 1941.

<sup>37</sup> Rieders to Littlefield, February 4, 1940, "Refugee Youth—Inactive," NYA Records.

<sup>38</sup> NRS, "Report of the First 26 Months," Table IX, 19, 22–23, NYA Records. The table indicates the twelve refugees spent a total of sixty-two months in the Texas programs with twelve refugees for an average stay of 5.2 months each.

<sup>39</sup> NRS, "Report of the First 26 Months," 3–7, 9, 19, 21, NYA Records; Weisenberger, *Dollars and Dreams*, 75–79, 88; "Final Report, National Youth Administration for the State of Texas [June 1935–July 1943]," 7–9, 39–45, E-329, box 6, NYA Records; *Final Report of the NYA*, 113–14.

<sup>40</sup> J.B. Lightman to Ephraim Gomberg, April 30, 1940, "Texas, n.d., 1940," box 3, NRS Records, AJHS.

<sup>41</sup> Joseph Rosenkranz WWII Draft Registration Card, July 1, 1941, Ancestry.com; "Austin, Texas," ISJL Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities, accessed April 22, 2023, <https://www.isjl.org/texas-austin-encyclopedia.html>; Herman Lille WWII Draft

Registration Card, October 16, 1940, Ancestry.com; John Hurwitz WWII Draft Registration Card, October 17, 1940, Ancestry.com; Austin City Directory, 1941, 332, Ancestry.com; Congregation Agudas Achim, "Past Presidents," accessed April 22, 2023, <https://theaustinsynagogue.org/past-presidents/>.

<sup>42</sup> Herman Lille, Petition for Naturalization, November 8, 1944, Ancestry.com; Seventeenth Census of the United States, 1950, Hartford County, Connecticut, Ancestry.com; University of Texas at Austin, *Annual Commencement 1942-1950*, "The Sixty-First Annual June Commencement, June 26, 1944," Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin; "Austin Student Placed First on UT Pharmacy Honor Roll," *Austin Statesman*, July 13, 1944; "Rosenkranz, Joseph," *White Plains (NY) Journal News*, December 7, 2006; Frederic Rieders WWII Draft Registration Card, June 30, 1942, Ancestry.com; Sally A. Downey, "Fredric Rieders, 83, toxicologist," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, December 6, 2005.

<sup>43</sup> Allan Frank WWII Draft Registration Card, March 19, 1942, Ancestry.com; Allan Frank WWII Army Enlistment Record, October 7, 1942, Ancestry.com; Seventeenth Census of the United States, 1950, New York County, New York, Ancestry.com; Allan Frank, Find a Grave Index, Ancestry.com; Kenneth Burley WWII Draft Registration Card, October 16, 1940, Ancestry.com; Kenneth Burley, Cook County, IL, Marriage Index, 1930-1960, Ancestry.com; Kenneth Burley WWII Army Enlistment Records, 1938-1946, Ancestry.com; Seventeenth Census of the United States, 1950, DuPage County, Illinois, Ancestry.com; William Freundel WWII Draft Registration Card, February 16, 1942, Ancestry.com; William Freundel Naturalization Record, May 23, 1943, Ancestry.com; Seventeenth Census of the United States, 1950, Bronx County, New York, Ancestry.com; New York City Directory, 1959, Ancestry.com; "Lawyers of the United States (Kansas through North Carolina)," Martindale-Hubbell Law Directory, 1959, 1804.

<sup>44</sup> Egon Goldmann, U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs BIRLS Death File, 1985, Ancestry.com; Seventeenth Census of the United States, 1950, Hudson County, New Jersey, Ancestry.com; Egon Goldmann, California Marriage Index, February 23, 1962, Ancestry.com; Egon Goldmann, Find a Grave Index, Ancestry.com; Harry Westheimer WWII Draft Registration Card, February 15, 1942, Ancestry.com; Seventeenth Census of the United States, 1950, Queens County, New York, Ancestry.com. Although Veterans Affairs BIRLS File show a break in service, the 1950 census shows Goldmann in the armed services. The last three refugees, Fred Horton, Bernard Stern, and Harry Goldman, have names which are common and not easily traced through Ancestry.com.

<sup>45</sup> "How many refugees came to the United States from 1933-1945," United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, accessed May 12, 2023, <https://exhibitions.ushmm.org/americans-and-the-holocaust/how-many-refugees-came-to-the-united-states-from-1933-1945>; NRS, "Refugees . . . 1941: The Annual Report of the NRS, Inc.," c. May 1942, "Jewish Refugee Immigration to the U.S., July, 1932-June, 1941," 15, File 265, microfilm 12, NRS Records, YIVO; "National Refugee Service, Inc., Resettlements by Districts, December, 1940 and Cumulative Totals, January-December, 1940," File 1004, microfilm 48, NRS Records, YIVO; *Final Report of the NYA*, 254.

<sup>46</sup> No tallies exist for the number of participants in each state after March 31, 1941. The March 31 figures can be found in the NRS, "Report of the First 26 Months" 20-21, NYA Records. To arrive at totals for the southern states and estimates for other states for the entire



program, I analyzed the material cited in endnote 5. New Jersey had at least thirty-three enrollees and probably more.

<sup>47</sup> Searches in Newspapers.com identified no stories in Texas about the NYA refugee project during 1940.

<sup>48</sup> Louis Stanislaus Gomolak, "Prologue: LBJ's Foreign Affairs Background 1908-1948," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 1989), 48-51.

<sup>49</sup> "President of the United States Lyndon B. Johnson Dedicates Congregation Agudas Achim, Austin, Texas," LP Recording, Austin Custom Records, Austin, Texas, LBJPL; Arthur Greenleigh to Jim Novy, February 9, 1940, "Texas, 1942," box 3, NRS Records, AJHS.

<sup>50</sup> NRS, "Report of the First 26 Months," 1, 24, NYA Records; Winslow to Taussig, July 3, 1940, with attached undated report "Experiment in Americanization," 2-3, "Winslow, Thacher 1940-1941," box 20, Taussig Papers; "C.W. Taussig Dead; Roosevelt Deputy," *New York Times*, May 11, 1948; "Report on Refugee Youth," "Proceedings of Meeting of the National Advisory Committee of the Federal Security Agency, National Youth Administration, September 6 and 7, 1939," 54, E-1, box 2, NYA Records; "Pontifical Mass for Msgr. Moore," *The Tablet: A Catholic Weekly* (Brooklyn, NY), June 7, 1952; "Owen D. Young, 87, Industrialist, Dies," *New York Times*, July 12, 1962; "Rev. Dr. David de Sola Pool Dies at 85," *New York Times*, December 2, 1970; Taussig to Pool, May 14, 1938, "Refugees 1938," Taussig Papers; Pool to Taussig, May 5, 1938, "Refugees 1938," Taussig Papers.

<sup>51</sup> McDonald later served as the first U.S. ambassador to Israel.

<sup>52</sup> "Report on Refugee Youth," "Proceedings of Meeting," 54, NYA Records; Taussig to Pool, May 14, 1938, "Refugees 1938," Taussig Papers.

<sup>53</sup> Wyman, *Paper Walls*, 48; Winslow to Taussig, August 6, 1938, "Winslow, Thacher, 1937-1939," box 20, Taussig Papers.

<sup>54</sup> Taussig to Pool, May 14, 1938, "Refugees 1938," Taussig Papers; Thelma McKelvey to Taussig, May 19, 1938, "McKelvey, Thelma, 1938," box 5, Taussig Papers; "Report on Refugee Youth," "Proceedings of Meeting," 58, NYA Records; Frida Burling, *Finally Frida* (Chevy Chase, MD, 2004), 88-89.

<sup>55</sup> "Report on Refugee Youth," "Proceedings of Meeting," 55, NYA Records.

<sup>56</sup> "National Youth Administration National Advisory Board [Report]," June 17, 1939, 4, "McKelvey, Thelma, 1939," box 5, Taussig Papers; "Report on Refugee Youth," "Proceedings of Meeting," 58, NYA Records; James McDonald to Aubrey Williams, May 27, 1938, E-40, box 1, NYA Records.

<sup>57</sup> Cybelle Fox, *Three Worlds of Relief: Race, Immigration, and the American Welfare State, from the Progressive Era to the New Deal* (Princeton, 2012), 215-19, 227-32, 238-39. Chapter 9 contains an excellent description of the evolution of the provisions barring noncitizens from work-relief programs and the effects on various minorities.

<sup>58</sup> Wyman, *Paper Walls*, 75-98. Wyman's book contains an excellent analysis of congressional consideration of the bill and its failure to pass.

<sup>59</sup> *Final Report of the NYA*, 131; Winslow to Taussig, February 4, 1939, "Reports, Miscellaneous Youth, 1935-1941," Taussig Papers.

<sup>60</sup> Karl Hesley to Richard Brown, May 26, 1938, "Refugees 1938," Taussig Papers; William Campbell to Brown, June 3, 1938, "Refugees 1938," Taussig Papers; John Bryan to Brown, June 7, 1938; S. Burns Weston to Brown, June 3, 1938, "Refugees 1938," Taussig Papers. For

information on the Alabama Jewish community and their aid to Jewish refugees, see Puckett, *In the Shadow of Hitler*, 40–75.

<sup>61</sup> Winslow to Taussig, June 13, 1938, “Refugees 1938,” Taussig Papers; Winslow to Hesley, June 23, 1938, “Karl D. Hesley, April–June ‘38,” E-39, box 12, NYA Records.

<sup>62</sup> Winslow to John Lasher, June 23, 1938, “Refugee Youth—Inactive,” NYA Records; Winslow to C.B. Lund, June 23, 1938, “Refugee Youth—Inactive,” NYA Records; Winslow to Taussig, September 1, 1939, “Winslow, Thacher, 1937–1939,” box 20, Taussig Papers; Winslow to Hesley, June 23, 1938, “Karl D. Hesley, April–June ‘38,” E-39, box 12, NYA Records.

<sup>63</sup> “Report on Refugee Youth,” “Proceedings of Meeting,” 55, NYA Records; Winslow to Taussig, August 6, 1938, “Winslow, Thacher, 1937–1939,” box 20, Taussig Papers; Hesley to Orren Lull, July 29, 1938, “State Directors—NYA 1938–1939,” box 15, Taussig Papers.

<sup>64</sup> Burling, *Finally Frida*, 91, 93; Winslow to Taussig, July 23, 1938, “Winslow, Thacher, 1937–1939,” box 20, Taussig Papers.

<sup>65</sup> Winslow to Taussig, July 23, 1938, “Winslow, Thacher, 1937–1939,” box 20, Taussig Papers; “Seek to Assist Jewish Youth,” *Milwaukee Journal*, July 13, 1938.

<sup>66</sup> NRS, “Report of the First 26 Months,” 1, NYA Records. It is difficult to tell when the NYA initiated contact with the NCC. A memo from Winslow to Taussig on September 29, 1938, in box 14, “Refugees 1938,” Taussig Papers, summarizes progress on the refugee program and mentions the meeting at NCC New York offices on August 23, 1938. Winslow regularly informed Taussig of his work on the project and makes no mention of contacts with the NCC in reports to Taussig as late as July 23, 1938, well after McDonald had left for the Evian Conference. At the meeting in June which included Winslow, McDonald, and Young, the three decided Winslow would work through George Warren getting case histories of youth who might be placed. Likely they planned for Warren and Winslow to get the case histories from the NCC, but no evidence exists of NCC’s direct contact with Winslow or other NYA officials until the meeting on August 23, 1938, at the NCC.

<sup>67</sup> Cecilia Razovsky, an extraordinary, tireless, and dedicated activist working on behalf of Jewish refugees, began working on immigration issues for the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW), served as the executive director of the National Coordinating Committee for Aid to Refugees and Immigrants from Germany (NCC), and served as assistant to the executive director of the National Refugee Service. For more information see: “Cecilia Razovsky,” *The Shalvi/Hyman Encyclopedia of Jewish Women*, Jewish Women’s Archive, accessed April 28, 2023, <https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/razovsky-cecilia>.

<sup>68</sup> “National Coordinating Committee for Aid to Refugees and Emigrants Coming from Germany,” January 21, 1939, File 118, microfilm 6, NRS Records, YIVO; Board of Directors of the National Coordinating Committee,” File 118, microfilm 6, NRS Records, YIVO; YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, Guide to the YIVO Archives, “National Coordinating Committee for Aid to Refugees,” accessed April 28, 2023, <http://www.yivoarchives.org/index.php?p=collections/controlcard&id=33738>.

<sup>69</sup> Winslow to Taussig, September 29, 1938, “Refugees 1938,” Taussig Papers.

<sup>70</sup> “Working Procedures for Handling of Youth Refugees,” September 7, 1938, “Refugees 1938,” Taussig Papers.

<sup>71</sup> Winslow to Taussig, September 29, 1938, “Refugees 1938,” Taussig Papers.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> Wyman, *Paper Walls*, 26.

<sup>74</sup> Winslow to Taussig, February 4, 1939, "Reports, Miscellaneous Youth, 1935-1941," Taussig Papers.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> "Harold Hirsch, 57, Atlanta Attorney," *New York Times*, September 26, 1939.

<sup>77</sup> Edward Kahn to Harold Hirsch, September 13, 1938; Kahn to Eugene Oberdorfer, October 17, 1938; Kahn to S.C. Kohs, January 5, 1939, "Correspondence and Related Material, 1938-1942," box 1, file 15, Georgia Farm School Records; Benjamin Goldman to Kahn, December 29, 1938; Lasseter to Hirsch, January 10, 1939; Kohs to Oberdorfer, February 2, 1939; Oberdorfer to Richard Rich, March 27, 1940, "Agricultural Training, 1938-1941," Georgia Farm School Records; Hirsch to Subscriber, May 15, 1939, "Agricultural Project—Farm School Pledge, 1939-1942," box 1, file 2, Georgia Farm School Records; Winslow to Taussig, September 29, 1938, "Refugees 1938," Taussig Papers. Richard Rich headed Rich's department stores.

<sup>78</sup> Winslow to Taussig, September 29, 1938, "Refugees 1938," Taussig Papers; NRS, "Report of the First 26 Months," 20-21, NYA Records.

<sup>79</sup> Winslow and Orren Lull phone conversation, August 22, 1938, E-39, box 123, "Thacher Winslow," NYA Records; "President Going to Son's Bedside Before Operation at the Mayo Clinic," *New York Times*, September 9, 1938; "Cummings Tells FDR of Success," *Democrat and Chronicle* (Rochester, NY), September 9, 1938; Jesse Kellam to Aubrey Williams, September 24, 1938, E-40, box 52, NYA Records.

<sup>80</sup> Mildred W. Abramowitz, "Eleanor Roosevelt and the National Youth Administration, 1935-1943: An Extension of the Presidency," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 14 (Fall 1984): 569-80; Joseph P. Lash, *Eleanor and Franklin: The Story of Their Relationship* (New York, 1971), 539-40; Charles Taussig, "Forward," in Lindley, *A New Deal for Youth*, xiii-xiv.

<sup>81</sup> Reiman, *New Deal and American Youth*, 168-69; Winslow to Glenn Callaghan, December 29, 1938, "Refugee Youth—Inactive," NYA Records. See also National Youth Administration, "Report on Refugee Youth," c. December 1939, "Refugees (1939-1941)," box 14, Taussig Papers.

<sup>82</sup> Winslow to Taussig, September 29, 1938, "Refugees 1938," Taussig Papers; "Report on Refugee Youth," "Proceedings of Meeting," 59, NYA Records.

<sup>83</sup> Winslow to Taussig, September 1, 1938, "Winslow, Thacher, 1937-1939," box 20, Taussig Papers; "Report on Refugee Youth," "Proceedings of Meeting," 59, NYA Records; Eleanor Roosevelt, "My Day," *Atlanta Constitution*, April 30, 1938; "NYA Officials Confer Here on Florida Program," *Tampa Times*, April 17, 1940.

<sup>84</sup> Littlefield to Jack La Zar, October 25, 1940, "Refugee Youth—Inactive," NYA Records.

<sup>85</sup> NRS, "Report of the First 26 Months," 22-23, NYA Records.

<sup>86</sup> Winslow to Hesley, January 10, 1939, E-39, box 11, "Karl D. Hesley, Jan 1937-March 1939," NYA Records.

<sup>87</sup> Winslow to Taussig, February 4, 1939, "Reports, Miscellaneous Youth, 1935-1941," Taussig Papers; "They Learn the Lessons of America," *Jewish Exponent* (Philadelphia, PA), December 27, 1940; "Lavanburg-Corner House Fund Records," American Jewish Historical Society, Center for Jewish History, accessed January 4, 2023, <https://archives.cjh.org>

/repositories/3/resources/15596; "Lavanburg Foundation Records," New York Public Library, accessed April 28, 2023, <https://archives.nypl.org/mss/18389>.

<sup>88</sup> NCC Report, "Resettlement Division Report to Mr. Harry Greenstein," February 13, 1939, 75, 76–85, File 68, microfilm 4, NRS Records, YIVO; Winslow to Taussig, February 4, 1939, 1, "Reports, Miscellaneous Youth, 1935–1941," Taussig Papers; NRS, "Report of the First 26 Months," 2–3, 59, NYA Records.

<sup>89</sup> NRS, "Refugees . . . 1939: The Annual Report of the NRS, Inc.," May 1940, "Report of the President," 3, File 265, microfilm 12, NRS Records, YIVO; "Guide to the Records of the National Refugee Service, 1934–1952, NRS Records, YIVO, accessed January 15, 2023, <https://archives.cjh.org/repositories/7/resources/3595>.

<sup>90</sup> "Report on Refugee Youth," "Proceedings of Meeting," 59, NYA Records; "Dr. William Haber to Direct German Refugee Aid in U.S., *Chicago Tribune*, April 29, 1939; "Biographical Statement [for William Haber]," n.d., File 75, microfilm 4, NRS Records, YIVO; William Haber, "National Refugee Service, Inc: Report of the Executive Director on Activities During the Month of July 1939," 6, File 36, microfilm 2, NRS Records, YIVO.

<sup>91</sup> Winslow to Herbert Little, January 30, 1940, "Mr. Winslow," E-84, box 8, NYA Records.

<sup>92</sup> Wyman, *Paper Walls*, 210.

<sup>93</sup> Winslow to Taussig, September 29, 1938, "Refugees 1938," Taussig Papers; Winslow to Taussig, February 4, 1939, "Reports, Miscellaneous Youth, 1935–1941," Taussig Papers; NRS, "Report of the First 26 Months," 20–21, NYA Records.

<sup>94</sup> NRS, "Report of the First 26 Months," 2, NYA Records; "Report on Refugee Youth," "Proceedings of Meeting," 61, NYA Records; Lasseter to Winslow, January 11, 1939, "Winslow, Thacher, 1937–1939," box 20, Taussig Papers; Winslow to Lasseter, January 7, 1939, and S.C. Kohs to Edward M. Kahn, January 4, 1939, "Correspondence and Related Material, 1938–1942," Georgia Farm School Records.

<sup>95</sup> NYA Press Release, January 22, 1939, "Agricultural Training, 1938–1941," Georgia Farm School Records; "7 German Youths Get Start in Georgia," *Atlanta Constitution*, January 22, 1939; Ralph McGill, "Refugees Learn How America Lives," *Atlanta Constitution*, February 3, 1939.

<sup>96</sup> Harold H. Martin, *Ralph McGill, Reporter* (Boston, 1973), 14–15, 56–57, 60–64, 213–14; Ralph McGill, *The South and the Southerner* (Boston, 1959), 54–55.

<sup>97</sup> Ralph McGill, "Refugees Learn How America Lives"; NYA Press Release, January 22, 1939, "Correspondence and Related Material 1938–1942," Georgia Farm School Records; "7 German Youths Get Start in Georgia"; Kohs to Kahn, January 4, 1939, "Correspondence and Related Material 1938–1942," Georgia Farm School Records; Georgia Farm School and Resettlement Bureau, Inc., "Georgia Progress: Community Service in the Resettlement of Newcomers," September 1941, vol. 2, 11, "Bulletins, Newsletters and Pamphlet, 1940–1941," box 1, file 12, Georgia Farm School Records.

<sup>98</sup> Biographic information on Theodore Advokat, December 28, 1938, and Leo Erber, Ernest Gertler, and Stephen Loeb, n.d., "Correspondence and Related Material 1938–1942, Georgia Farm School Records; Kohs to Lasseter, January 14, 1939, "Agricultural Training, 1938–1941," Georgia Farm School Records.

<sup>99</sup> Ernest Gertler, Stephen Loeb, Leo Erber, and Theodore Advokat to Ben Goldman, January 22, 1939, "Refugees (1939–1941)," box 14, Taussig Papers; Kohs to Ernst, Steve, Leo, and Teddy, February 6, 1939, "Agricultural Training, 1938–1941," Georgia Farm School Records.

<sup>100</sup> Kohs to Alexander, Hans, and Siegfried, February 6, 1939, and Benjamin Goldman to Lasseter, January 23, 1939, "Agricultural Training, 1938–1941," Georgia Farm School Records; Fred Max Hirsch Draft Registration Card, October 16, 1940, Ancestry.com; Alexander Hans Hirsch Declaration of Intention to Become Citizen, December 11, 1939, Ancestry.com; "'Blitz' Refugee Hangs Self Here, 'Unhappy, No Hope,' Note Says," *Atlanta Constitution*, May 27, 1940; "Citizenship Record of Refugee Youth," Hans Korsower, June 1939, and "Citizenship Record of Refugee Youth," Alexander Hirsch, July 1939, "Agricultural Project—National Youth Administration, Citizenship Record of Refugee Youth, 1939–1940," box 1, file 3, Georgia Farm School Records; Biographic information on Martin Weiss, c. December 1938, "Correspondence and Related Material 1938–1942," Georgia Farm School Records.

<sup>101</sup> Lasseter to Kahn, October 26, 1939, "Agricultural Training, 1938–1941," Georgia Farm School Records; Evaluation of Fred Frankl, April 15, 1939, "Refugee Youth—Inactive," NYA Records; Evaluation of Frank Spiegel, June 15, 1939, "Refugee Youth—Inactive," NYA Records; NRS, "Report of the First 26 Months," 12, NYA Records; Henry Preis Evaluation Form, November 27, 1939, "Refugee Youth—Inactive," NYA Records; "Citizenship Record of Refugee Youth, Henry Preis, December 1939," Agricultural Project—NYA, Citizenship Record," Georgia Farm School Records.

<sup>102</sup> "Report on Refugee Youth," "Proceedings of Meeting," 61–62, NYA Records.

<sup>103</sup> "Georgia Progress," September 1941, "1941–1942 Standing Committees and Their Functions," 4, and "Agricultural Projects [Report]," 18, Georgia Farm School Records; "Oscar Strauss, Jr. Family Papers Finding Aid," Breman Museum, accessed May 5, 2023, <https://archivesspace.thebreman.org/repositories/2/resources/92>; Oberdorfer to Littlefield, June 22, 1939, "Agricultural Training, 1938–1941," Georgia Farm School Records; Citizenship Forms, "Agricultural Project—NYA, Citizenship Record," Georgia Farm School Records.

<sup>104</sup> Citizenship Forms, "Agricultural Project—NYA, Citizenship Record," Georgia Farm School Records; "Citizenship Record of Refugee Youth, Karl Hamburger," July 1940, "Agricultural Project—NYA, Citizenship Record," Georgia Farm School Records; Mrs. P.H. Philips to Littlefield, April 8, 1941, "Agricultural Training, 1938–1941," Georgia Farm School Records.

<sup>105</sup> Report on NYA projects attached to Agenda—Executive Council and Agricultural Committee, Georgia Farm School and Resettlement Bureau, May 15, 1940, "Executive Council—Minutes and Related Material, 1939–1942," box 2, file 5, Georgia Farm School Records; Robert S. Linden and Margaret M. Murphy, "Henry R. Linden," *Memorial Tributes, National Academy of Engineering, National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine* (Washington, DC, 2011), 15:276, accessed May 5, 2023 <https://nap.nationalacademies.org/read/13160/chapter/46>.

<sup>106</sup> "Minutes of Executive Council Meeting," May 15, 1940, "Executive Council—Minutes and Related Material, 1939–1942," Georgia Farm School Records; "'Blitz' Refugee Hangs Self Here," *Atlanta Constitution*, May 27, 1940."

<sup>107</sup> Georgia Farm School and Resettlement Bureau, Inc, "Work of Committee on Employment and Economic Adjustment—June 1939 to January 1941," "Placement Committee—

Minutes and Related Material, 1939–1941,” box 4, file 3, Georgia Farm School Records; Kahn to Kohs, February 22, 1939, “Agricultural Training, 1938–1941,” Georgia Farm School Records; “Citizenship Records of Refugee Youth,” “Agricultural Project—NYA, Citizenship Record,” Georgia Farm School Records.

<sup>108</sup> Report of B. Rich, Minutes of the Agricultural Projects Committee Meeting, August 14, 1940, “Agricultural Training, 1938–1941,” Georgia Farm School Records.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>110</sup> “Georgia Progress,” September 1941, Georgia Farm School Records. See “Report of the President: Eugene Oberdorfer,” 11, Georgia Farm School Records. On Oberdorfer’s role in the Atlanta Jewish community, see Mark K. Bauman, *The Hebrew Benevolent Congregation: Living Up to the Name and the Legacy, The Temple and its People to 2018* (Atlanta, 2023).

<sup>111</sup> See sources in endnote 5.

<sup>112</sup> NRS, “Report of the First 26 Months,” 2, NYA Records.

<sup>113</sup> “Report on Refugee Youth,” “Proceedings of Meeting,” 61–63, NYA Records.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 63–64.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 60–61, 65.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 20–21.

<sup>117</sup> Littlefield to Winslow, January 16, 1941, “Refugee Youth—Inactive,” NYA Records; Spreadsheets, “Resettlement in 1941 by Community and District,” File 1003, microfilm 48, NRS Records, YIVO.

<sup>118</sup> NRS, “Report of the First 26 Months,” 14, NYA Records.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 12; Littlefield to Winslow, January 16, 1941, “Refugee Youth—Inactive,” NYA Records.

<sup>120</sup> NRS, “Report of the First 26 Months,” 12, 13, NYA Records.

<sup>121</sup> Winslow to Taussig, February 4, 1939, “Reports, Miscellaneous Youth, 1935–1941,” Taussig Papers; Pool to Taussig, May 5, 1938, “Refugees 1938,” Taussig Papers; Excerpt from letter to Oscar Strauss, Jr., May 16, 1939, “Refugee Youth—Inactive,” NYA Records; “Citizenship Record of Refugee Youth,” Wolfgang Sonntag, August 1939, “Agricultural Project—NYA, Citizenship Record,” Georgia Farm School Records.

<sup>122</sup> NRS, “Report of the First 26 Months,” 13, 20, NYA Records.

<sup>123</sup> Winslow to Ivan Munro, May 8, 1940, “Refugee Youth—Inactive,” NYA Records; Winslow to C.B. Lund, February 13, 1941, “Refugee Youth—Inactive,” NYA Records; Winslow to Taussig, February 4, 1939, box 14, “Reports Miscellaneous Youth, 1935–1941,” Taussig Papers.

<sup>124</sup> Dave Nelson, “Camp Roosevelt: A Case Study of the NYA in Florida,” *Florida Historical Quarterly* 86 (2007): 178–82; Ormond Sexton, “Final Report National Youth Administration for the State of Florida, June 1935–July 1943,” E-329, box 1, NYA Records; “NYA to Enlarge Work in State,” *Tampa Bay Times*, July 10, 1941.

<sup>125</sup> Helmut Sommer to Littlefield, July 9, 1940, “Refugee Youth—Inactive,” NYA Records; “Final Report National Youth Administration for the State of Oklahoma,” June 26, 1935–July 3, 1943,” 23–24, E-329, box 5, NYA Records; “Final Report National Youth Administration for the State of Texas, [June 1935–July 1943],” 68–70, E-329, box 6, NYA Records; Weisenberger, *Dollars and Dreams*, 94, 163.

<sup>126</sup> Glenn Hogan to Kahn, November 16, 1939, "Agricultural Training, 1938-1941," Georgia Farm School Records; "NYA at Habersham Closes First Year," *Atlanta Constitution*, January 22, 1939; "NYA's Habersham College Teaches Students Trades," *Macon Telegraph*, August 7, 1939; Lasseter to Hirsch, January 10, 1939, "Agricultural Training, 1938-1941," Georgia Farm School Records. Today the site houses the Clarkesville campus of North Georgia Technical College. North Georgia Technical College, "About Us: Our History," accessed May 12, 2023, <https://northgatech.edu/about-us/>.

<sup>127</sup> "Boys Get Chance to Learn at Institution in Gadsden," *Birmingham News*, April 30, 1939.

<sup>128</sup> NRS, "Report of the First 26 Months," 3, NYA Records.

<sup>129</sup> Weisenberger, *Dollars and Dreams*, 88; "Dream of Fishing Paradise along Colorado Will Not Fade; Federal Fish Hatchery Plan, Now One-Half Complete, Will Assure Sport," *American-Statesman* (Austin, TX), September 22, 1940; "Four Inks Dam NYA Boys Completely Satisfied-Have Regular Jobs Now," *Taylor (TX) Daily Press*, May 23, 1940.

<sup>130</sup> NRS, "Report of the First 26 Months," 5-6, 21-22, NYA Records.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>132</sup> "NYA Activities, Dormant Since June 30, Pick Up," *Tyler (TX) Courier-Times*, August 11, 1940; NRS, "Report of the First 26 Months," 113-14, NYA Records.

<sup>133</sup> NRS, "Report of the First 26 Months," 21-22, NYA Records; "Reports of the Medical Advisory Committee and Dental Advisory Committee at the Farm School and Resettlement Bureau, Inc., Annual Meeting, June 24, 1941," "Annual Meeting - 1941," box 1, file 7, Georgia Farm School Records.

<sup>134</sup> "Reports of the Medical Advisory Committee and Dental Advisory Committee," 4; Winslow to Taussig, February 4, 1939, "Reports, Miscellaneous Youth, 1935-1941," Taussig Papers; NRS, "Report of the First 26 Months," 20, NYA Records.

<sup>135</sup> Nelson, "Camp Roosevelt," 178-79.

<sup>136</sup> Daisy Schwarz to Littlefield, August 12, 1939, "Refugee Youth - Inactive," NYA Records; Helen Bilber to Littlefield, July 23, 1939, "Refugee Youth - Inactive," NYA Records.

<sup>137</sup> NRS, "Report of the First 26 Months," 19-20, NYA Records; "Report on Refugee Youth," "Proceedings of Meeting," 60, NYA Records; *Final Report of the NYA*, 131.

<sup>138</sup> "They Learn the Lessons of America," January 3, 1941.

<sup>139</sup> NRS, "Report of the First 26 Months," 24, NYA Records.

<sup>140</sup> *Final Report of the NYA*, 27, 29, iii-iv.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 131; "Report on Refugee Youth," c. December 1939, "Refugees (1939-1941)," box 14, Taussig Papers; NRS, "Report of the First 26 Months," 12, NYA Records; "Composite Table Showing Amount of Resettlement Work Done from January, 1941 through April, 1942," File 1001, microfilm 48, NRS Records, YIVO.

<sup>142</sup> "Composite Table Showing Amount of Resettlement Work Done from January, 1941 through April, 1942," NRS Records, YIVO; Littlefield to Winslow, October 24, 1941, "Refugee Youth - Inactive," NYA Records; Puckett, *In the Shadow of Hitler*, 62; "Report of Monty Kandel, Gadsden, Ala.," c. December 29, 1941, File 1039, microfilm 50, NRS Records, YIVO.

<sup>143</sup> Littlefield to Winslow, October 24, 1941, "Refugee Youth - Inactive," NYA Records.

<sup>144</sup> Littlefield to Winslow, January 16, 1942, "Refugee Youth - Inactive," NYA Records; Winslow to Littlefield, January 31, 1942, "Refugee Youth - Inactive," NYA Records.

<sup>145</sup> "Seek to Assist Jewish Youth, *Milwaukee Journal*, July 13, 1938; Winslow to Taussig, July 23, 1938, "Winslow, Thacher, 1937-1939," box 20, Taussig Papers; Kahn to Hirsch, September 13, 1938, "Correspondence and Related Material, 1938-1942," Georgia Farm School Records; Winslow to Taussig, February 4, 1939, "Reports, Miscellaneous Youth, 1935-1941," Taussig Papers; "Report on Refugee Youth," c. December 1939, box 14, "Refugees (1939-1941)," Taussig Papers.

<sup>146</sup> As late as December 1940 and January 1941 the *Jewish Exponent* ran a series of three articles praising the program and pointing out that it offered refugee youths training in job skills, a period to adjust to living in America and learn English, and a chance to start feeling at home in a region of the United States. "They Learn the Lessons of America," *Jewish Exponent*, December 27, 1940, January 3, 1941, and January 10, 1941.

<sup>147</sup> Wyman, *Paper Walls*, 14, 24-26.

<sup>148</sup> *Final Report of the NYA*, 180; list attached to letter from Littlefield to Winslow, June 26, 1940, "Refugee Youth—Inactive," NYA Records.

<sup>149</sup> National Refugee Service, "Refugees. . . 1941: Annual Report of the NRS," "Number of Units and Individuals Resettled by District of Resettlement, January 1939-December 1941," 14, File 265, microfilm 12, NRS Records, YIVO.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 24-26; NRS, "Report of the First 26 Months," 24, NYA Records.

<sup>151</sup> NRS, "Report of the First 26 Months," 26, NYA Records.

<sup>152</sup> Winslow to Taussig, July 3, 1940, with attached undated report, "Experiment in Americanization," 16, "Winslow, Thacher 1940-1941," Box 20, Taussig Papers.

<sup>153</sup> Hubert Atherton and Robert Perin to Mary Hayes, September 29, 1939, E-40, box 1, NYA Records. In the letter Atherton, the state director, and Robert Perin, a camp director in New Mexico, described the isolated background of many youths in the camp and the effect of the isolation. This extreme example illustrates the limited life experience of many of the rural youth.

<sup>154</sup> *Final Report of the NYA*, 131.

<sup>155</sup> The story appears in books by Robert Dallek, Randall Woods, and Bryan Edward Stone and in an article by James Smallwood in the journal of the East Texas Historical Association that was reprinted in their fiftieth anniversary issue. Robert Dallek, *Lone Star Rising: Lyndon Johnson and His Times, 1908-1960* (New York, 1991), 170; Randall B. Woods: *LBJ: Architect of American Ambition* (New York, 2006), 139-40; Bryan Edward Stone, *The Chosen Folks: Jews on the Frontiers of Texas* (Austin, 2010), 175-76; James Smallwood, "Operation Texas: Lyndon B. Johnson, the Jewish Question and the Nazi Holocaust," *East Texas Historical Journal* 47 (Spring 2009): 3-17 and 50 (Fall 2012) 88-106; "Operation Texas," Wikipedia, accessed January 15, 2003, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation\\_Texas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Texas); Saul J. Singer, "LBJ: An Unheralded Holocaust Hero," *Jewish Press*, March 1, 2003, accessed April 29, 2023, <https://www.jewishpress.com/sections/features/features-on-jewish-world/lbj-an-unheralded-holocaust-hero/2023/03/01/>.

<sup>156</sup> The workshop, "'Operation Texas': LBJ and the Holocaust," took place via Zoom on December 7, 2021. Ackerman Center for Holocaust Studies, University of Texas at Dallas, "'Operation Texas': LBJ and the Holocaust," December 7, 2021, accessed May 30, 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eW9uLT-EWPU>. This paper is a result of research inspired by the workshop.



