

Special Collections, Hartley Library

Archives Information Sheet 2 – Refugees, twentieth century

1. Refugee archives collections at Southampton:

Manuscript collections

The Archives and Manuscripts at the University of Southampton holds a number of manuscript collections relating to refugees in the twentieth century. Whilst the bulk of this relates to the 1930s and 1940s, there is material within organisational archives such as MS173/1, the archives of the **Board of Guardians for the Relief of the Jewish Poor**, that relate to the immigration of Jews from Russian and Eastern Europe from the late nineteenth century into the early twentieth century.

The collections of archives relating to Jewish refugees in the 1930s and 1940s vary considerably in size and scope. Examples of smaller collections include MS65/1/1-2 minute books of the Board of Management of the Christian Council of Refugees, 1940-51; MS93 papers of Diana Silberstein, 1936-46, a native of Sarajevo, who came to Britain as a refugee; MS116/68 a typescript autobiography of Dr D.Fuerst, a refugee dentist from Nazi Austria; MS116/157 papers of Mrs Cissi Z.Rosenfelder as honorary secretary of the Golders Green Beth Hamedrash Refugee Aid Committee, 1938-9, which includes lists of children from Germany and correspondence with refugee committees; and MS293 papers of Cecil and Joan Stott, of Letchmore Heath, Hertfordshire, relating to Jewish refugees, 1932-95.

The more significant collections held by the Archives and Manuscripts are MS190 the papers of the **Polish Jewish Refugee Fund** and MS183 Section F, the section of Rabbi Solomon Schonfeld's archive on the work of the **Chief Rabbi's Religious Emergency Council**.

The Polish Jewish Refugee Fund archive is composed of case files relating to several hundred individuals. Included within these case files are details of individuals name, place of birth, family, address in Great Britain, date of arrival in the Great Britain and their place of origin, education and qualifications.

The Chief Rabbi's Religious Emergency Council was an organisation of and represented the work of the Orthodox Jewish community. The archive contains a great deal on the administration and organisation of its work in the field of both the rescue and support of refugees, particularly child refugees, 1938-49. Amongst the papers are numerous lists of refugees (from Central and Eastern Europe) compiled by the Council, working closely with other relief organisations. These include not just lists of refugees present in Central and Eastern Europe, but of those brought over to Great Britain by the Council, of those given accommodation and assistance by the Council, and of those given assistance to emigrate from Great Britain by the Council. These often quite detailed lists contain much more information besides the names of individuals, such as their date and place of birth, their address, family details and, in some cases, their occupation.

For refugees brought over to Great Britain by the Council, further information can be found in the form of photographs, biographical profiles, correspondence and refugee fund assistance cards. Landing cards and identity cards complement the block passport and other mass travel documents which exist for child refugees who travelled with the Council.

After the arrival of refugees in Great Britain, there are further Council papers relating to their support, such as

refugee fund assistance cards or a file of registration forms for the North London Refugee Home, 1938-40. Finally, there are lists, forms, photographs, travel documents and other relating to those who emigrated from Great Britain.

Testimonials

The Archives and Manuscripts also holds filmed and oral testimonies of refugees and Holocaust survivors. The **Fortunoff Video Collection** is a small collection of filmed testimonials of Holocaust survivors from the collection at Yale University. The **Association of Jewish Refugees *Refugee Voices*** contains 150 filmed interviews with Jewish survivors and refugees from Nazism who have settled in Great Britain. The Archives has recently acquired oral testimonials and interviews of **Los Niños**, the Basque evacuee children from the Spanish Civil War.

2. Some refugee archives at other record offices in Great Britain

Of particular significance is the archive of the Central British Fund for World Jewish Relief located at the London Metropolitan Archives. The Fund was formerly known as alternatively the Central British Fund for German Jewry, the Council for German Jewry and the Central Council for Jewish Refugees. The papers for the Central British Fund cover the period 1933 to 1965. They detail work of the Fund in shelters, hostels, internment camps, schools and foster homes. Included are committee and administrative papers, case files of children brought to Great Britain on the Kindertransport, 1938-9, and provincial committee papers. The Central British Fund's archive also contains material for the Central Committee for Refugees, the Jewish Refugees Committee (German Jewish Aid Committee) and the Refugee Children's Movement.

The National Archives has papers relating to people entering and leaving the country as well as those settling in Great Britain. Within the Aliens Department papers (HO 213) are collective passports of children brought to Great Britain as part of the Kindertransport, as well as nationalisation and nationality files, 1920-61. For those arriving in Great Britain from places outside Europe by sea between 1878 and 1960, there are passenger lists (BT 26). There are also passenger lists, arranged by year under the name of ports of departure, of those emigrating from Great Britain (BT 27).

Assistance Board papers (AST 1) contain material on assistance and grants given to Polish and Jewish refugees. Papers relating to the arrangements for the education of foreign refugee children are in the Education Department general files (ED 11). For Czechoslovakian refugees, there is material in HO 294, which is the records of Czechoslovakian Refugee Trust, 1938-1979, and T 210, which has correspondence of the Czechoslovak Financial Claims Office.

Further papers of assistance might be: general classes of Home Office papers (HO 45-HO 46), personal files of individuals interned during the Second World War (HO 214) and Immigration and Nationality Department papers (HO334).

For regional refugee committees, material can be found in Manchester and Leeds. The Local Studies Unit of Manchester Central Library has papers of the Manchester Branch of the German Jewish Aid and Jewish Refugee Committees and for the Manchester Branch of the Jewish Refugees Committee, Guarantee Sub-Committee. Amongst the material for the Guarantee Sub-Committee are case files of individual refugees. The Leeds Office of the West Yorkshire Archives Service holds the archive of the Leeds Jewish Refugee Committee.

The British Library of Political and Economic Science has papers of two of its organisations set up to assist refugees. For the Academic Assistance Council to Aid Displaced University Teachers, there is material on approaches for assistance by academic refugees from Germany and elsewhere, 1933-56, and papers for 1933 to 1957 for the Academic Freedom Committee which set up to support German emigrés. It also holds the archive of Stotley Rough School which contains papers of individual refugee children educated at the school and supported by a number of refugee organisations.

3. Useful addresses

The National Archives (formerly Public Record Office), Ruskin Avenue, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW3 4DU

London Metropolitan Archives, 40 Northampton Road, London EC1R OHB

Local Studies Unit, Manchester Central Library, St Peter's Square, Manchester M2 5PD

Leeds Office, West Yorkshire Archives Service, Chapeltown Road, Sheepscar, Leeds LS7 3AP

Archives Department, British Library of Political and Economic Science (London School of Economics), 10

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