

*Humble Heroes: How the American Friends Service Committee struggled to save Oswald
Kernberg and three hundred other Jewish children from Nazi Europe*

*A Senior Thesis Submitted to the
Haverford College History Department*

Laura Gumpert

April 15, 2002

“It is probably a matter of life and death for many of these children, and if this project is to be completed it must be done immediately. Changes in the situation here might make it too late at any time. I cannot too strongly emphasize the necessity for speed in accepting these 304 children.”

~Howard Kershner, February 14, 1941¹

“It looks often to the outside observer that AFSC affairs run so smoothly, that he has little comprehension of the stress and strain and the patience that are called for behind the scenes. But as a matter of fact every step is beset with difficulties, handicaps, difficulties, what Hegel called *Die Ohnmacht des Natur*—the innate cussedness of things. Nothing can be accomplished without endless journeys to Washington, New York.”

~Rufus Jones²

"Even from today's perspective, the real problem was one of choice. Who to save...there were so many children. How much time to spend on one case when you knew it meant sacrificing another."

~Allen Bonnell, undated interview³

¹ Letter to John Rich from Kershner in Marseilles, General Files 1941 Foreign Service (France Marseilles, Ltrs. from Oct.) to (Germany-Berlin Center), AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

² From a letter reflecting on the AFSC's work in Europe during World War I, Elizabeth Gray Vining, *Friend of Life: The Biography of Rufus M. Jones* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1958), 162.

³ From an undated Round Table interview, Judith Tydor Baumel, *Unfulfilled Promise: Rescue and Resettlement of Jewish Refugee Children in the United States, 1934-1945* (Alaska: The Denali Press, 1990), 85-86.

CONTENTS

• Acknowledgements	1
• Introduction	2
• A Jewish child's life in war-torn Europe	5
• AFSC limitations and expectations	7
• Challenges in organizing the transports	11
• A volatile national environment	15
• Difficult decisions and complicated arrangements	17
• The AFSC: An evolving organization	22
• AFSC leadership and vision: An unlikely participant in the child transports	25
• Visas: A tricky game of hits and misses	39
• Alliances and collaborations: Other aid organizations	41
• AFSC priorities shift, dedicated leadership remains constant	46
• The Refugee Section: A case study of shifting priorities	48
• Conclusion	57
• Appendices	60
• Bibliography	63

Acknowledgments

Emma Lapsansky has been an invaluable resource in this project. Her weekly meetings, comments, and questions made me continually rethink, rework, and rewrite. Carol Bernstein's interest in this project and suggestions for different angles and new sources brought greatly appreciated insight.

This project would not have been possible without the help and assistance of American Friends Service Committee Archivist Jack Sutters. He aided my research, giving suggestions for places to look and directions to take, and he granted me full access to the Archives.

Several individuals took the time to speak at length about their own memories and experiences with the transports. Arthur Kern, Joseph Findling, Herbert Kammer, and Walter Reed each recalled memories from his childhood. Stephen Cary served as an invaluable source of knowledge, recalling the personalities of many AFSC leaders in 1941.

Elisabeth Potts Brown, Quaker Bibliographer, and Diana Franzusoff Peterson, Manuscripts Cataloger & College Archivist, at the Haverford College Special Collections provided expert guidance and assistance in the early stages of research.

Iris Posner, President of One Thousand Children, Inc. helped me network with AFSC children and other researchers.

Regina Illman and Vera Friedlander in Berlin extended warm hospitality and generosity to me during my stay there last May. They were kind enough to share photographs and information they have compiled about several of the children.

Paul Jefferson of the Haverford History Department, Bob Kieft of Magill Library, and Lyle Roelofs, Associate Provost, made possible my presentation of this paper at the One Thousand Children, Inc. Reunion in Chicago in June 2002.

Lastly, my father, David Gumpert, first suggested this topic and patiently brainstormed with me throughout the year, and my mother, Jean Gumpert, gave me her constant support and encouragement.

Introduction

In September 1941, as the war raging across Europe entered its third year, Oswald Kernberg, a twelve-year-old Jewish boy from Vienna, Austria, arrived in New York City aboard the ship *SS Mouzinho*.⁴ He was among a group of forty-five Jewish refugee children from Austria and Germany on board the ship for the dangerous journey, and was among the last European Jewish refugees to reach the U.S. during the war. How had Kernberg (who has since changed his name to Arthur Kern), managed to escape at a time when nearly all countries of the world, including the U.S., had closed their doors to European Jewish refugees?

This paper seeks to answer that question. Most basically, the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) had arranged to transport Kern and the other children on his ship out of Europe. The AFSC was working as an agent for the United States Committee for the Care of European Children (USC), a non-sectarian committee founded in 1940 with the original goal of bringing British children endangered by German bombing raids of London to the U.S. until the end of the war.⁵ Its formation “resulted from the interest of a number of individuals and agencies who were concerned with the welfare of European children, imperiled by war condition.”⁶ First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt

⁴ I interviewed Kernberg on November 24, 2001.

⁵ Kathryn Close, *Transplanted Children* (The United States Committee for the Care of European Children, 1953), xi. A memorandum from a January 17, 1941 conference with Eric Biddle of the USC and Rosanna Thorndike and Margaret Frawley of the AFSC states, "at the request of the United States Committee for the Care of European Children, the American Friends Service Committee is undertaking to explore the feasibility of the migration of children from unoccupied France," A September 9, 1941 AFSC Bulletin notes, "We wish to point out that the role of our Committee in sending these children to America is merely that of an agent, acting for the U.S. Committee for the Care of European Children." Both quotes from AFSC Foreign Service 1941, France-Relief, Children Transports folder, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

⁶ U.S. Committee for the Care of European Children, Inc., "Report of the Executive Director," 3, January 17, 1941, USCOM papers, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

convened the first meeting of concerned individuals and agencies on June 19, 1940.⁷ She became the USC's honorary president, and Marshall Field, grandson of the famous Chicago-based department store and media investor and philanthropist, became the president.⁸ It soon expanded its scope of work to include bringing continental European children, mostly Jewish, to the U.S.⁹ While various writers have recounted the escape experiences of children like Kern, little has been published about the behind-the-scenes drama necessary to allow them to leave—the organizational, political, social, and moral pressures confronted by all those who orchestrated these escape efforts.¹⁰

Beyond the factual circumstances of the rescue effort, the simple fact of the AFSC's involvement in Kern's rescue raised a number of fundamental questions for the organization. In arranging this dramatic rescue operation, the AFSC departed from its customary role of supplying aid to large numbers of refugees, and from its usual stance of defining its agenda and methods independently. Unlike most of its projects, this transport project also devoted a significant amount of resources to a small number of individuals. Was the AFSC putting at risk its carefully cultivated low-profile non-partisan role to become involved in this politicized rescue effort? In its involvement, was the AFSC straying too far from its characteristic large-scale relief work and acting out of a responsibility it saw to other relief organizations? Were its reasons for participating in

⁷ "U.S. Aid in the Evacuation of European Children from Great Britain," 1, USCOM Papers, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

⁸ John Tebbel, *The Marshall Fields: A Study in Wealth* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc, 1947).

⁹ Close, xi.

¹⁰ Judith Tydor Baumel documents many aspects of the children's trip to New York and their resettlement in *Unfulfilled Promise: Rescue and Resettlement of Jewish Refugee Children in the United States, 1934-1945* (Juneau: The Denali Press, 1990). Ernst Papanek recounts his own experiences working first in Europe as director of the OSE and later in the U.S. for the OSE in conjunction with other rescue and relief organizations trying to secure passage to the U.S. for European children in his homes, Ernst Papanek with Edward Linn, *Out of the Fire: A Poignant Account of How an Eminent Educator Helped Save Jewish Children from the Hitler Onslaught* (New York: William Morrow & Company, Inc., 1975).

this transport project justified in light of its many other programs? In other words, would collaboration with the USC result in permanent changes to the basis on which an organization like the AFSC, with a history of providing aid to victims of war, would make decisions on whom to aid and whom to ignore?

One way to begin answering these questions is to point out that the AFSC could never have succeeded in carrying out these children transports alone given its organizational limits, nor would it have undertaken such a project had not another organization approached it. It agreed to the undertaking because of the high priority it placed on its close relationships with other aid organizations involved in this type of rescue work such as the USC and the Joint Distribution Committee (JDC).¹¹ Indeed, in this particular situation, the AFSC's decision-making was largely driven much more by internal and external organizational and strategic pressures than a strong desire on the part of the AFSC to rescue children out of France.

The four transports that the AFSC facilitated of young Austrian and German children between 1941 and 1942 from war-torn France to the U.S. was a departure from its committed practice of bringing aid to large groups of people suffering from war, poverty, and other hardships. The transports highlight the lofty position these relationships occupied. The AFSC's reputation for integrity allowed relationships with other organizations to carry these unusual projects through to completion during a time when the country was filled with a general sentiment of tension and fear.

¹¹ The JDC was established on November 27, 1914 to distribute the funds raised by the American Jewish Committee, an organization of well-to-do German-American Jews, and the Central Committee for the Relief of Jews Suffering through the War, an organization dedicated to Eastern European relief comprised of Orthodox Jews mostly of East European origin.¹¹ The JDC soon expanded to more than just a distribution committee. It became involved in relief activities throughout Europe during World War I and World War II and collaborated with the AFSC in France in 1940 on its relief projects in Toulouse and

A Jewish child's life in war-torn Europe

Kern's story, set in italicized font, illustrates the difficult challenges facing both the organizers and the children during this period of war and holocaust. It also helps to frame the step-by-step process that the children and Committee members went through to see this particular project through to the end. It helps us fully appreciate the scope of the AFSC's responsibilities in the transports and the huge stakes involved in dealing with the German, Austrian, French, Spanish, Portuguese, and American governments to successfully bring about the transports. Most important, Arthur Kern's story of escape with the help of the AFSC frames the dilemma that the AFSC faced as an organization.

In many ways, Kern's experiences first living in a children's home in France away from his family, then as a USC child on an AFSC transport, and finally as a child living with a foster family in New York, was typical of many of the children on the transports. In 1941, as he began his journey from France, he had already experienced more than three years of trauma. First came the German-Austrian Anschluss in March 1938. A year later, his parents had seen enough of German anti-Semitism and racial laws to fear for their lives and be willing to take the risk of sending their young son off by himself to a free country.¹² In March 1939, at age 10, Kern's parents had sent him from Austria to Paris. Between 1939 and 1941, he lived in four different children's homes in France. Nearly all of the homes he stayed in were run by the OSE (Ouvre de Secours aux Enfants, The Children's Welfare Organization), an organization founded in 1912 by Jewish

Montauban, Yehuda Bauer, *American Jewry and the Holocaust: The American Joint Distribution Committee, 1939-1945* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1981), 156.

¹² The Anschluss was the German takeover of Austria without any resistance on March 12, 1939. Austrian Jews immediately felt the debilitating economic and violent effects of Nazi occupation through dislocation of Jewish businesses, mass arrests, and widespread public violence, David Wyman, *Paper Walls: America and the Refugee Crisis, 1938-1941* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), 29-30.

doctors in Saint Petersburg in France. He first spent a few days at a Rothschild hospital for physicals. He then went to Chateau Maubuisson , an abandoned cloister in the suburbs of Paris for several weeks, until he once again moved to Villa Helvetia in Montmorency, an OSE home, with several other children from Chateau Maubuisson. He only stayed at Helvetia a short time, until he moved to Villa Chesnaie, another OSE home in Eaubonne. Just before the Germans entered Paris, he was taken to Chateau Montintin, near Limosges where he stayed until he left for the U.S. in August 1941.¹³

The hardships the children faced in the children's homes ranged from a lack of skilled teachers to the uncertainties of where go after Nazi invasion of France.¹⁴ Life was difficult for the children; they were away from their parents and often completely out of contact with them.¹⁵ Most children arrived at the homes alone without knowing any of the other children. In addition, the constant threat of a German attack materialized in May 1940 with the Nazi invasion of Belgium, Holland, and Luxembourg, and the Great Bombing of Paris.¹⁶ The hundred children living in Montmorency outside of Paris fled to a chateau in Montintin, in southern France.

¹³ April 5, 2002 email from A. Kern detailing his stops during his journey through France between 1939 and 1941.

¹¹ Papanek, an educator and socialist, was director of the OSE. After he became director at the end of 1938, he immediately expanded it by setting up a home for German and Austrian refugee children at Villa Helvetia, a former vacation hotel. As the number of children needing a safe place to live grew, Papanek set up more homes throughout France. Papanek was a popular figure among the hundreds of children under his care. He was known for egalitarian methods (i.e. all adults went by first names) and fair approaches (he set up a government of committees for the children in order for them to participate in the decision-making process), Papanek, 87, 137-147. While the children benefited from his social system with the committees and student input, his education system to a large extent was not beneficial. The teachers were generally political refugees who needed jobs and refuge from the Nazi regime. The teachers usually had no training or experience, and though they cared about teaching, the education system set up in the homes ultimately did not cover an adequate number of subjects or levels, notes from interview with A. Kern, 11/24/01.

¹⁵ As an anecdote to the absence of parents in so many of the children's lives, Papanek writes about the importance of making each child's birthday special with an elaborate celebration. In extra special cases, the child might receive a package from his or her parents in addition to a cake, songs and cheering, and small gifts from the other children, counselors, and teachers, Papanek, 86.

¹⁶ Papanek, 167.

AFSC limitations and expectations

If the prospect of traveling to the U.S. and starting a new life in a safe place was a daunting one for Kern and the other children, it was also intimidating to the AFSC, which as an organization was more accustomed to bringing relief to those suffering rather than bringing those suffering to a safe place.¹⁷ The AFSC oversaw the complexities and risks that these transports presented. The pressure on the organization was immense. Planning for a large group of children is never an easy task. In addition to the normal logistical problems that would arise with a trip overseas, the AFSC had the challenge of securing visas and affidavits in the midst of war-torn Europe for several hundred Jewish children. There were also the time-consuming but necessary day-to-day requirements for regular updating and collaboration between the Philadelphia and Marseilles AFSC offices. The correspondence between the two AFSC offices reflect the urgency with which these activities were carried out, though they do not lay out specific attitudes towards the decision to undertake the transports. We must infer from financial reports and decisions about other ongoing programs the AFSC's attitude toward the child refugee projects. Perhaps the most important question that comes up is how the AFSC became involved in this kind of project in the first place. It did not happen easily or directly, but rather as part of a meandering process that speaks to the organizational pressures that contribute to decision-making at the AFSC.

Internal-Committee tensions and stressful logistical burdens afflicted the AFSC throughout the late 1930s and early 1940s as it sorted out its priorities and implemented

¹⁷ In addition to children from OSE homes, children came from other homes run by the Secours Suisse (Swiss Red Cross) and La Baronne Eduard de Rothschild, in addition to individual applicants from concentration camps, "List of USCOM Children Scheduled to sail from Lisbon on S.S. "Mouzinho" about June 10, 1941," AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

an action plan based on its ideals and mission. Executive Board meeting minutes reflected the range and scope of decisions it faced each month. In addition to its many relief programs in Europe and the U.S. in 1940, the AFSC was also devoting attention to its own domestic growth activities, such as expanding its Committee presence in the U.S. on the West Coast. A series of consecutive monthly minutes in 1940 referred to Committee expansion activities such as members traveling to states on the West Coast to assess interest in opening a Pacific Coast Branch of the Service Committee.¹⁸ Though the AFSC was involved in relief work in Europe starting at its formation in 1917, and it was specifically involved in France during and after the Spanish Civil war to aid Spanish refugees in the late 1930s, the May 29, 1941 minutes from a special meeting of the Executive Board made the first reference to relief work in Europe among the 1940 and 1941 minutes. The lack of other references either suggests that the Executive Board did not deal with most problems affecting European work or implies that the work in Europe was not presenting any challenges or urgencies for which the Board felt it should divert its attention prior to mid-1941. The May 1941 minutes described the overwhelming numbers of appeals for relief in Europe the Committee had received “as a result of the emergency situation in Europe.”¹⁹ The same meeting also devoted time to discussion of the situation in France:

After carefully considering the matter, the Board decided to expand its present work in France to take care of as many as possible of the new refugees in the war zone. It is understood that any work undertaken by the Service Committee will be done, as usual, on an impartial basis, irrespective of nationality, race, or creed.²⁰

¹⁸ The April 3, 1940 Executive Board minutes report that Clarence Pickett traveled to the West Coast to determine the sentiment about opening an AFSC branch, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

¹⁹ May 29, 1940 Executive Board special meeting minutes, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

²⁰ May 29, 1940 Executive Board special meeting minutes, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

With this decision, the AFSC revealed its attitude toward the urgency in bringing relief to those suffering in Europe. It also revealed something about the AFSC's limited financial and personnel resources. The AFSC nearly got in over its head with its decision to organize the transport of three hundred children in 1941 and 1942, due to its limited personnel and extensive involvement in other relief activities in Europe. Reports to the Philadelphia office regarding the child emigration projects told of securing last-minute visas and receiving desperate pleas from parents to include their children in the transports. It was evident that time was running out.²¹

Most significant of the AFSC's work with the children transports was the simple fact that there were hundreds of children depending on its successful negotiating, decision-making, and planning skills to reach safety in the U.S. The AFSC had broad experiences and contacts in European relief work. Since AFSC staff members were active in many relief programs in France in 1941, it was logical for the USC to approach them about organizing the child transports to the U.S. But AFSC members had to decide whether or not to undertake such a time-consuming project on top of its numerous other relief programs.²² The June 18, 1941 letter from Bonnell to Vail reflected disagreements among Committee members about the decision to spend large amounts of money on a relatively small number of people. Reflecting on the transport of the first hundred

²¹ An August 20 1941 letter from Lillian Traugott to Lindsley Noble in the Marseilles office reflects the importance of speedy work: "Let me congratulate you on the speed and efficiency with which your office got together the August group of Uscom children. Now it looks as though you will have a September group. I hope we have not given you gray hair over this job," AFSC Foreign Service France-Relief, Marseilles, Letters and cables to May-Aug. folder, General Files 1941 Foreign Services France-Individuals to Relief-Marseilles Letters box, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

²² AFSC publicity pamphlets regarding 1941 work in France describe many of the relief programs, including feeding in public schools, milk distribution, relief work in internment camps, village reconstruction, and food growing projects on farms, Howard Kershner, *American Friends Service Committee in France* (April 24, 1942, Marseilles, France), AFSC Archives, Philadelphia.

children, Bonnell wrote, “expenses for the emigration of these children were extremely high and there is considerable question in our minds whether or not the expenses were warranted, in view of the other uses to which equivalent funds could have been placed.”²³ Considering this hesitation among AFSC leadership about the validity of spending a disproportionately large sum of money on a small number of people, why did the AFSC continue with the operation? We will return to this question of individual opinion versus the direction of the organization, but first it is important to explore other factors that were at work, such as the strategic relationship between the AFSC and the USC, the advantages that the AFSC had over the USC as a non-political, Quaker organization in securing visas and organizing transports, and the humanitarian urgency to which the AFSC responded in rescuing children from dangerous situations.

*For Kern, many parts of the trip through southern France, Spain, Portugal, and across the Atlantic are still clear in his memory. He remembers leaving France and travelling through Spain to Portugal by train to board the SS Mouzinho and sail for the U.S. Kern was on the third of four transports that the AFSC organized.*²⁴

Kern’s arrival was the result of nearly a year of work and correspondence between members of the AFSC with other relief organizations in the U.S. and Europe, as

²³ Letter number 174-AB from Allen Bonnell to James Vail, June 18, 1941, 4, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

²⁴ Howard Kershner writes in an April 24, 1942 AFSC publicity pamphlet on activities in France of the child emigration projects: "As these lines are written the fourth convoy of children to the United States is being prepared. Under the sponsorship of the United States Committee for European Children about 250 children have already left France to find new homes in America. This work is unbelievably complicated," Howard Kershner, Director of Relief in Europe, *American Friends Service Committee in France*, Marseilles (France, April 24, 1942), AFSC Archives, Philadelphia. The first two transports left in June 1941, and the third left on September 3, 1941, *Current Information, Bulletin #5*, Folder: AFSC Foreign Service, 1941, France-Relief, Children Transports, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia. The fourth transport arrived in August 1942, Close, 27. In November 1941, the USC, together with the AFSC and the President's Advisory Committee on Political Refugees, arranged to bring 500 additional Jewish children to the U.S. who were living in France. A Portuguese ship left the U.S. for Lisbon on November 7, 1942, the

well as the U.S., French, Spanish, German, and Portuguese governments. The letter from Bonnell to Vail highlights the vigilance and perseverance necessary to secure the visas:

The authorisation for the Portuguese visas did not arrive in Marseille [*sic*] until Tuesday, May 27th. Mr. Pobers, after a three-hour conversation with the Portuguese Consul, finally got him to agree to visa five group passports which we were able to have printed for the children.²⁵

AFSC veteran leaders like Clarence Pickett had relationships with American politicians, and a track record in relief work gave it the political clout and reputation it needed to obtain permission from a normally reluctant State Department to bring these children into the U.S.

Challenges in organizing the transports

Arranging the transports presented a communication nightmare for the Philadelphia and Marseilles offices. Highly technical and precise information had to travel back and forth quickly via unreliably delivered cables and letters that were subject to misinterpretation. A letter from Allen Bonnell in the Marseilles office to James Vail in the Philadelphia office conveyed the challenges and frustrations of the communication process as well as the necessity of contact between the two offices. Dated June 18, 1941, Bonnell's letter mentioned that the first correspondence between the two offices regarding the child transport project had occurred six months earlier. Between December 1940 and June 1941, the two offices continued to exchange letters and cables, updating each other on the latest news about visa and affidavit requirements and information, the child selection process, and logistics and travel plans for the actual transport in June 1941. Misunderstandings about blanket visas for the entire group of children versus

same day that the Nazis occupied Vichy France. Only the 31 children already waiting in Lisbon were able to leave on the transport, Close, 27-28.

individual visas led to a series of cables between the two offices in March 1941, while another set of cables and letters dealt with sailing accommodations.²⁶

Kern recalls his trip out of France and through Spain and Portugal in much the same way that other primary and secondary sources written about the trip recount it.²⁷ He could not have known, however, the frantic behind-the-scenes work of the AFSC and other organizations in order to secure safe passages for him and the other forty-five children on his transport. The AFSC had to navigate its way through the numerous organizations working on both sides of the Atlantic to save these Jewish children in France. A letter dated January 24, 1941 from J.C. Wyman at the Joint Distribution Committee to Clarence Pickett at the AFSC was illustrative of the collaboration and frequent confusion between organizations. Wyman enclosed a cable from a JDC representative in France inquiring about the status of the children emigration projects, and Wyman asked Pickett if there was any connection between the emigration project mentioned in the cable and the AFSC's transport project. He also requested an update from Pickett on the status of the AFSC's emigration project.²⁸ There were numerous ongoing projects in Europe and the U.S. to aid European refugees and communication between them was erratic at best. But while collaboration between the several aid

²⁵ June 18, 1941 letter # 174-AB from Allen Bonnell to James Vail, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

²⁶ Letter number 174-AB from Allen Bonnell to James Vail, June 18, 1941, 1-2, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia PA. A May 15, 1941 cable from Kershner to the Philadelphia office reported that if the children did not receive visas in time, they would lose their spots on the ship and their chance to leave, General files 1941 Foreign Service (France Marseilles, Ltrs. from Oct) to (Germany-Berlin Center), AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

²⁷ Papanek's memoir and Baumel's book include anecdotes similar to those that Kern remembers, including the stop at Gurs, a French internment camp near the Spanish border where many parents of children on the transports were interned, during the train ride to Portugal; the wonderful treatment of Portuguese individuals towards the children; and the ups and downs of the reception and foster care processes in the U.S.

²⁸ General Files 1941, Foreign Service (Refugee Services-Portugal-Letters from October-December) to (Projects-Workshop, Community Arts, NY) Box. Foreign Service, 1941 France—Relief-Children Transports folder, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

organizations such as the AFSC, USC, and JDC was integral to successful refugee programs, the correspondence between the organizations reflects the involved and labor-intensive process required to coordinate a project such as this child transport.

Each organization operated under its own guidelines, and for successful coordination, these guidelines had to be meshed. The AFSC, for example, which was in charge of selecting children to transport to the U.S., was bound by the USC's charters which required all children to be younger than sixteen.²⁹ Children were also supposed to be in good health, and the AFSC was to select those children that it thought would most easily adjust to life in the U.S. Margaret Frawley of the AFSC wrote to Lindsley Noble in the Marseilles AFSC office on July 28, 1941 regarding the importance of selection:

If the selection is to be made on a basis which will bring the most able children, then your own responsibilities of selection are extremely heavy...It is never possible to anticipate all the difficulties of adjustment to American life, yet some study of the child prior to selection will prevent difficulties.³⁰

The children on the transports would not have known how they were selected over others or about the AFSC's last-minute scramble to secure the visas. As the AFSC was selecting the first group to leave France, it was also frantically working with the State Department to secure visas.³¹

²⁹ "The charter of the United States Committee limits its work to children under 16 years of age," Letter #319 from Margaret Frawley to Allen Bonnell, July 18, 1941, AFSC Foreign Service, France-Relief, Marseilles, Letters and cables to May-Aug. folder, General Files 1941, Foreign Service, France-Individuals to Relief-Marseilles, Letters box, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

³⁰ Letter #322 from Margaret Frawley to Lindsley Noble, July 28, 1941, AFSC Foreign Service, France-Relief, Marseilles, Letters and cables to May-Aug. folder, General Files 1941, Foreign Service, France-Individuals to Relief-Marseilles, Letters box, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

³¹ A series of cables between the Philadelphia and Marseilles offices in May 1941 reflect the intense interactions with the State Department needed to secure the visas. A May 8 cable gives special instructions for securing visas outside quotas for the children from the State Department. A May 15 cable reflects the same concern for arranging for visas from the State Department, stating that children cannot leave until the State Department either sends visas from quota numbers or issues them visas outside of the quotas. A May 13, cable from Philadelphia to Marseilles warns that U.S. visas will be delayed, causing the children

In June 1941, Kern left his OSE home at Chateau Mas Jambost with a group of other children and took a train to Marseilles, where he met up with children from other homes. Kern already knew some of the children from the other homes, and the one hundred children lived together in Marseilles for two weeks at Hotel de la Ven until they were split into two groups. Then Kern was among the first forty-five children to leave Marseilles on a train for Madrid.

Almost all of the children on the AFSC transports were Jewish, though the USC had hoped for a religiously-diverse group of children to the U.S.³² A letter dated July 18, 1941 from Margaret Frawley in the AFSC Philadelphia office to Allen Bonnell in Marseilles reflects the USC's interest in emphasizing its non-sectarian nature:

the presence of some non-Jewish children strengthens the United States Committee's position as a non-sectarian group and will enable it to make its financial appeals to a larger group. If you send only Jewish children, it is more than likely that the appeals for funds will meet response only from Jewish refugee agencies. The United States Committee is anxious to avoid this latter situation if possible.³³

An AFSC report written on September 9, 1941 also highlights its desire to select non-Jewish children despite the fact that Jewish children were almost exclusively the most

scheduled to leave on June 6 to miss their sailing date. The AFSC is trying to exercise influence through its diplomatic contacts at the State Department to move along the visa process. Cables on May 22 and May 25, 1941 deal with space on the *Mouzinho*. There is only enough space for fifty children, not the hundred originally scheduled to leave together. The AFSC is searching for space somewhere else for the second group of fifty children. Cables also discuss efforts to obtain a blanket visa for all the children on each transport (see July 18, 1941 cable), but they never came through. Cables from AFSC Foreign Service, France-Relief, Marseilles, Letters and Cables, May-Aug. folder General Files 1941 Foreign Service, France-Individuals to Relief-Marseilles Letters box, and General Files 1941 Foreign Service (France Marseilles, Ltrs from Oct) to (Germany-Berlin Center) box, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

³² Of the 100 USC children on the June 10, 1941 transport leaving Lisbon, there were two non-Jewish children, AFSC *List of 100 USCOM Children* "scheduled to sail from Lisbon on S.S. "Mouzinho" about June 10, 1941," AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

³³ Letter #319 from Margaret Frawley (USC) to Allen Bonnell (AFSC), July 18, 1941. Box: General Files 1941, Foreign Service, France-Individuals to relief-Marseilles Letters; File: AFSC Foreign Service, France-Relief Marseilles, Letters and cables to May-Aug., AFSC Archives. Philadelphia, PA.

endangered.³⁴ Their families were also the most willing to send them out of Europe "to allow them to go to the freedom of life in America."³⁵ The AFSC also hoped to bring one or two children from concentration camps. John Rich wrote to Howard Kershner that "for the purpose of making Americans aware of the needs of European children, the inclusion of one or two young people from concentration camps would be most desirable."³⁶ In the months before the U.S.'s official entrance into World War II, public opinion was not especially sympathetic to "Jewish issues" and refugee questions, and the AFSC hoped to bring some attention to the widespread innocent suffering in Europe. An unsigned letter from the Executive Secretary of the USC written to Howard Kershner, Director of AFSC French Programs, on June 18, 1941, reflected the desire of having a group of children of mixed religious backgrounds. Written just three days before the first group of children arrived on the *Mouzinho* in New York City, the letter requested that in future transports there be a mix of Jewish and non-Jewish children "from the point of view of public opinion on this side."³⁷

A volatile national environment

The USC representative's comments in the June 1941 letter and the instructions for non-Jewish children in AFSC documents reflect anti-Semitic and anti-refugee tensions and concerns in the U.S. among the general public as well as Congress and the

³⁴ In addition, a July 28, 1941 cable between the Marseilles and Philadelphia AFSC offices urges AFSC members in France to select a group of children with different religions if possible in order to emphasize the non-sectarian nature of the transports.

³⁵ *Current Information*, September 9, 1941, AFSC Foreign Service 1941, France-Relief, Children Transports Folder, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

³⁶ March 12, 1941 letter number 240 from John Rich to Howard Kershner, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

³⁷ 111 USC children arrived aboard the *Mouzinho* on June 20, 1941, Baumel, 85. According to A. Kern, 100 of the 111 children were sponsored by the AFSC. Letter from Executive Secretary, USC to Howard Kershner, AFSC, June 18, 1941 letter, Foreign Service 1941 France—Relief Child Transports Folder, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

Roosevelt Administration. In 1941, as the U.S. was on the verge of entering the war, most people trying to leave Germany were unable to do so, ever since Kristallnacht in November 1938. Though most Americans heard reports of the destruction, arrests, and looting of Kristallnacht, there was no groundswell of support for the desperate refugee situation in Germany.

The AFSC was well aware that it was operating in an unsympathetic climate. David Wyman summarized American sentiment toward refugees during the 1930s and 1940s: "Popular hostility toward enlarging the quotas was firmly rooted in social and economic conditions in the United States...anti-Semitism, hanging heavy in the atmosphere of the period, intensified resistance to admission of refugees."³⁸ Anti-Semitism was common throughout America, as was a general anxiety that refugees would bring back the unemployment of the Great Depression.³⁹ Various historians point to the fact that American Jews lived in fear of being the target of anti-Semitism themselves.⁴⁰ Congress and the general public were so sensitive to the restrictionists' arguments that most opposed the Wagner-Rogers Bill, legislation that would have allowed 20,000 German children to enter the U.S. in 1939 and 1940. In the late 1930's, many politicians argued that the burden that child refugees would place on the

³⁸ Wyman, 210-211.

³⁹ Anti-Semitic groups such as the Bund, the Silver Shirt legions, and Christian Front organizations, as well as leaders such as Father Charles E. Coughlin and William Dudley Pelley had large and devoted followings, Wyman 14-20.

⁴⁰ See for example, Henry Feingold, "Was There Communal Failure? Some Thoughts on the American Jewish Response to the Holocaust," Verne Newton, Editor, *FDR and the Holocaust* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 90, Henry Feingold, *Bearing Witness: How America and Its Jews Responded to the Holocaust* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1995), and John Morton Blum, *Was for Victory: Politics and American Culture During World War II* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976), 172-181.

government would reduce the care and services for poor American children.⁴¹ They also accused European countries of masterminding a plan to put the burden of refugees on the U.S.⁴²

President Roosevelt was hesitant to support refugees in the late 1930s and early 1940s. His solution was to convene the Evian Conference in July 1938, in order to establish an international organization to settle refugees in sparsely populated places. This would establish him as sympathetic to refugees, without having to advocate changing American immigration laws.⁴³ The recommendations that came out of the Evian Conference never made any real difference for refugees. Roosevelt stood firm about liberalizing immigration laws, even after Kristallnacht, saying, “this is not in contemplation; we have the quota system.”⁴⁴ A fear of German spies also gripped the American public in the late 1930s and early 1940s. Wyman writes that the media and government agencies exacerbated the fear by publishing stories about police arresting “refugees feared to be spies.”⁴⁵ The AFSC found itself in a difficult political environment to bring German and Austrian children into the country in 1941 and 1942.

Difficult decisions and complicated arrangements

In taking on this project, the AFSC didn't fully appreciate what it was getting itself into in terms of the intense emotional repercussions of transporting parent-less

⁴¹ A handbill published by the American Immigration Conference Board, Inc. for example, asserted that "American children have first claim to American charity." Patriotic organizations such as the American Legion and the Daughters of the American Revolution condemned any initiative to bring European children to the U.S. believing that it would neglect the “boys and girls, descendants of American pioneers, undernourished, ragged and ill,” John B. Trevor, head of the American Coalition of Patriotic Societies, taken from a circular against the Wagner-Rogers Bill, Wyman, 78-84.

⁴² Wyman, 86-87.

⁴³ Richard Breitman, "The Failure to Provide a Safe Haven for European Jewry," *FDR and the Holocaust*, Verne W. Newton, Editor (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 134.

⁴⁴ Wyman, 73.

⁴⁵ Wyman, 188.

young children to another continent. On the way to Madrid, Kern's train stopped at Gurs, an internment camp near the border of France and Spain where many parents of the children were interned. The parents were able to meet their children at the train platform for an emotional goodbye.⁴⁶ Many children saw their parents for the last time at this reunion in Gurs, and there were mixed feelings among AFSC members arranging the trip whether or not the reunion ought to have occurred. Some believed that if the parents were there, then the children deserved to see them. Others believed that it was too traumatic an experience for children who had already been through so many years of separation. Margaret Frawley wrote poignantly to Allen Bonnell in Marseilles after the first Gurs reunion:

We hope you will try to prevent the repetition of such a scene with a second group. Yes, we appreciate that it puts you in the position of seeming to be unfeeling, but we, seeing some of the emotional upsets developing from that meeting, believe it is kindest to spare the children such a heart breaking scene.⁴⁷

The AFSC members in France must have disagreed with Frawley, because Kern was in the second group to leave France, and his group also stopped in Gurs. Kern's parents were not interned in Gurs, but he clearly remembers the emotional reunion between many of the children and their parents. Children often found that their parents looked older, thinner, and more frail than when they had last seen them.

After the stop in Gurs, the train continued on to Peau, a stop near the French border, where the children changed trains for the difficult trip through Spain. The children traveled in third class compartments with wooden benches. In order to stretch

⁴⁶ Interview with A. Kern.

⁴⁷ Frawley to Bonnell, July 18, 1941, AFSC. Foreign Service. France-relief, Marseilles letters, May-August 1941, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

out to sleep, Kern climbed above the seats and slept in the netting meant to hold luggage. In Madrid, they stayed for two nights in a convent, before continuing on to Lisbon. There, Kern and the other children spent ten days at a children's vacation home in the countryside near Lisbon.⁴⁸ Conditions in Portugal were better than those that the children were accustomed to in France. Upon arriving in Lisbon, the children saw for the first time in years a city lighted up at night.⁴⁹ The home had a big garden full of fig trees. Kern ate so many figs that he became sick. It was the first time in many months that there was ample food, and for Kern, the seemingly endless supply of figs was intoxicating.

Between February and June 1941, Kershner sent a series of cables and letters to the Philadelphia office, updating members on the status of the transports and the interactions between the AFSC, the State Department, and the American Consul in France. The cables were most concerned with the State Department's status in granting visas to the children scheduled to leave on the SS Mouzinho in June in time for them to make it to Lisbon for the sailing. Successive cables reminded the AFSC's Philadelphia office that the State Department must give the American consul the list of children on the transport. By mid-May 1941, the cables expressed an urgent concern for securing the visas in time for the June sailing. In a May 12 cable from the Marseilles office, Kershner warned the Philadelphia office that until the American consul had granted the visas to the children, no action was possible. In another May 12 cable, Kershner asked the Philadelphia office if the State Department had instructed the American consul to grant

⁴⁸ Joa o Perieira da Rosa, publisher of *O Seculo*, a prominent Portuguese newspaper, and activist to save European children in need, secured food and lodging for the children, Baumel, 84. According to Papanek, da Rosa checked on the children daily to make sure they had all that they needed, including special food for the Orthodox children. Other Portuguese also came to bring gifts to the children, Papanek, 236.

visas to the fifty children scheduled to leave on the transport. He wrote that he had already presented the names of the children to the State Department, but the AFSC must wait to take any further action with the children until the State Department officially told the consul to issue the visas. A May 15 cable from Kershner summed up his concerns: “transportation cost and opportunity [to] go lost unless Washington send above instructions immediately.”⁵⁰

The process of arranging the voyage was far from simple, but the AFSC was successful in ultimately securing these visas in time for the sailing on June 10, 1941. The group sailed from Lisbon on June 10, but a May 20, 1941 letter from Kershner to Pickett, Vail, and Rich reflected the last-minute difficulties the Marseilles office faced: “the quota numbers and the instructions to the Consul here arrived just the day before yesterday and it is now all but impossible to prepare the elaborate visas for 100 children, to get the Portuguese and Spanish visas and to get the children off within the space of the eight remaining days. With the great good will of the Consulate and day and night work, we hope to succeed.”⁵¹ Kershner’s dedication to the transports and his desire to see them through to completion was evident in this letter. Allen Bonnell reported to James Vail in a June 18, 1941 letter the last-minute difficulties the AFSC faced to secure the visas in time. He gave an hour-by-hour account in which Committee members were racing back and forth between the Portuguese, Spanish, and American Consulates in Marseilles to get the necessary stamps and signatures for the visas.⁵²

⁴⁹ Interview with Joe Findling, an AFSC child, on December 31, 2001.

⁵⁰ May 15, 1941 from Howard Kershner in Marseilles office to Philadelphia office, General Files 1941 Foreign Service (France Marseilles, Ltrs. from Oct.) to (Germany-Berlin Center) box, AFSC archives, Philadelphia, PA.

⁵¹ General Files 1941 Foreign Service (France-Marseilles, Ltrs. from Oct.) to (Germany-Berlin Center) box, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

⁵² Letter #174-AB, June 18, 1941, Allen Bonnell to James Vail, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

The *Mouzinho's* two-week voyage across the Atlantic was uncomfortable for most passengers. There were two large holds for six hundred people. All the triple-bunked cots were out in the open of the hold, and the passengers slept, ate, and waited out the trip together without any privacy. The cramped quarters, together with the ship's roach-infested wood and the many seasick passengers only aggravated the discomfort. Baumel writes that on one of the transports, many of the children became seasick as a result of overeating chocolate and sweets right before the ship left.⁵³ Kern remembers that the food aboard the *Mouzinho* was good—during the end of their stay in France, food had become more scarce, and children often went to sleep hungry.⁵⁴ Finally, the day after Labor Day—September 2, 1941—the *Mouzinho* deposited its tired passengers in New York City.

Kern retains a clear memory of arriving in New York. There was an orderly scene at the ship's docking in. The USC had buses waiting to bring the children directly to various Jewish orphanages in New York City for temporary housing and care.⁵⁵ There, the first breakfast was puffed rice cereal with sugar, and they were allowed to have seconds. The notion of having enough to eat was a new one, and to this day, Kern's favorite cereal is puffed rice. Once Kern made it to the U.S., he struggled like many immigrants, working several jobs while going to school, but he eventually made a life for

⁵³ Many Portuguese officials and individuals gave the children gifts of sweets before they boarded the ship. The children had not had treats such as chocolate in months, Baumel, 85.

⁵⁴ Papanek includes excerpts from children's diaries and other written accounts describing the lack of sufficient food: "For some of us Montintin was a continual search for food. My friend Dorli and I spent our time devising schemes for getting more to eat than we were getting because what there was was also very good....I was going through a period of vary rapid growth at that time and was terribly underweight and I ate everybody's leftovers," Papanek, 229.

⁵⁵ During the first few days in New York, each child received a medical examination. Caregivers also made sure that each child had proper clothing. The reception care lasted from a few days to several weeks; it was often a hectic period that did not aid the child in adjusting to his or her new life, Baumel, 87-88 and interview with A. Kern.

himself. Today, Kern is a 73-year-old retired mechanical engineer living in California. Like many of the children on the transports, Kern has become active in the community of the children that have organized reunions in recent years.

For the AFSC's staff, the memories are equally strong. To accomplish the child transports, the organization was confronted with many difficult decisions within a short period of time. Each selection made, each ship reservation secured, and each stop at Gurs for one final goodbye was re-enacted with three hundred children. The trip from France to the U.S. was a long and difficult one for everyone involved, and the adjustment to a new life in the U.S. was often just as difficult. No one planning the trip, from Howard Kershner or Allen Bonnell in Marseilles to Clarence Pickett, James Vail, or Margaret Frawley in Philadelphia knew for sure if they would succeed in safely transporting the children to the U.S. Examining Kern's experience in the context of the tense and urgent decisions and negotiations occurring behind the scenes highlights the extent to which the AFSC was putting itself on the line in order to bring children to safety.

The AFSC: An evolving organization

A closer examination of the AFSC's development prior to the rescue of Kern and other children provides insights into why it undertook this project, and how it fit into the AFSC's larger mission. The AFSC formed in 1917 to represent the two Philadelphia Yearly Meetings and the Five Years Meeting in response to both the need for organized relief that Quaker leaders saw in Europe during World War I and the lack of alternative service for Quakers opposed to participating in a war.⁵⁶ It formed the Conscientious Objectors program in response to the second need, and the organization slowly began to

⁵⁶ Mary Hoxie Jones, *Swords into Ploughshares: An Account of the American Friends Service Committee, 1917-1937* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1937), 10.

grow. Rufus Jones, one of its founders, described the AFSC as “a corporate activity” from its inception: “Many of its undertakings originated in the inward insight of a single individual, and some of its most important concerns had their birth in a sensitive person’s soul, but all its decisions have been arrived at through corporate action.”⁵⁷ The Conscientious Objectors (CO) program in the U.S. grew out of a 1918 agreement with the American Red Cross to send Quaker Units to France to assist in relief ranging from construction, to transports, to more aid-related types of relief such as medical and agricultural.⁵⁸ In addition to France, the AFSC soon began providing aid to Russia and Poland, among other European countries.⁵⁹

The AFSC faced the challenge of creating a solid reputation for itself in a world where such anti-war activity was often equated with a lack of patriotism. William Frost writes that the AFSC faced the challenge of convincing Congress and Quakers at large that alternative service in the war was a necessary and comparable form of service to traditional military service and creating a positive reputation for its work.⁶⁰ Thanks to the encouragement of Herbert Hoover, prominent Quaker and future U.S. President (1929-1933), the AFSC decided to take on relief work in Germany in 1919 based on its success with similar types of relief work during its first two years. Hoover managed to secure funding for AFSC work in Germany from the Supreme Economic Council, an agency that distributed food, fuel, and vaccines to starving Europeans after World War I.⁶¹ He

⁵⁷ Rufus Jones, Introduction to *Swords into Ploughshares* by Mary Hoxie Jones, viii .

⁵⁸ Mary Hoxie Jones, 16-17.

⁵⁹ Between 1917 and 1921, the AFSC sent social workers, nurses, and doctors to Russian and Polish villages to take the place of Russian health workers who had been sent to the Front, Mary Hoxie Jones, 42-47.

⁶⁰ William Frost, “Our Deeds Carry Our Message: The Early History of the AFSC,” *Quaker History* 81, no. 1 (Spring 1992): 3.

⁶¹ Herbert Hoover was head of the Supreme Economic Council after World War I and was Chairman of the American Relief Administration (ARA) and the European Children’s Fund, organizations that had used

had established the American Relief Administration (ARA) in 1918 to manage the U.S. government's relief work in Europe, but by 1919 decided that an organization such as the AFSC was better suited to manage the program and eventually raise the funds for it.⁶² He approached Rufus Jones about using funding that the ARA had leftover from the Supreme Economic Council for AFSC relief work in Germany. He wrote to him,

I suggest that your society undertake this work for Germany for obvious reasons. The first is the experience you have gained in initiating this work. The second is the fact that this effort in sheer humanity should not be allowed to develop into political propaganda in either the United States or Germany and it seems to me, therefore, that some society such as the American Quakers, which is beyond all question of political interest, should become the filter through which such an effort should pass.⁶³

Its aid to starving children in Germany, Austria, and the Soviet Union after World War I fed up to a million children each day during the peak of the program in June 1921.⁶⁴ Hoover's encouragement and funding aid helped the AFSC get off the ground with its European relief programs.

As the AFSC expanded in size, it also expanded the scope of its work. It began to take on more education and outreach-based programs to address deeply rooted domestic problems such as racism. It established an Interracial Section, as it viewed interracial relations as an area that demanded attention and discussion throughout the U.S. In 1926, it also established a Peace Section to educate young people about peaceful alternatives to war.⁶⁵ The AFSC became a skilled organization at reaching a large number of people

funds from the Supreme Economic Council for food relief to European children. At the end of 1919, the Supreme Economic Council had remaining funds, Mary Hoxie Jones, 78-79.

⁶² Elizabeth Gray Vining, *Friend of Life: The Biography of Rufus M. Jones* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1958), 169-171.

⁶³ Vining, 172.

⁶⁴ Mary Hoxie Jones, 81, Frost, 2.

⁶⁵ Mary Hoxie Jones, 168-170.

through its programs, whether they were vitamin distribution programs or education programs. The child transport cases that we are examining differ from the AFSC's early programs. Unlike the early aid programs, the AFSC was removing the children from the dangerous situation in the transports rather than bringing aid to them. The transport project's subjects were a relatively small number of needy children rather than a wide cross-section of the population. The project involved making discrete choices about rescuing specific individuals rather than simply responding to relief needs on site in Europe.

The AFSC would continue undertaking relief programs similar to its food, medical, clothing, and housing programs of the early years during World War II. It focused on children, implementing feeding programs in schools and canteens where they were most undernourished. Its *relief* work differed from what we are terming *refugee* work. Refugee work refers to the AFSC's assistance to refugees emigrating and resettling in the U.S. Whereas relief work brought the aid to those in need, refugee work brought those in need to a safer place. As previously noted, its refugee work was more time-consuming and costly per-person than its relief programs, and in 1941 it was a departure from the majority of the AFSC war-related work.

AFSC leadership and vision: An unlikely participant in the child transports

Who were the people determining AFSC priorities in 1941? By examining the strategic approaches and visions of key AFSC leaders together with some of their past work, interactions with one another, and relationships with leaders of other organizations, we can better appreciate the factors that shaped AFSC decisions in these transports. In all of its decisions and undertakings, AFSC leaders faced the task of maintaining the

organization's vision and mission while simultaneously managing the immediate challenges that it faced, such as funding, personnel, and reputation.

AFSC visionaries such as Rufus Jones were instrumental in steering the AFSC ideologically and strategically toward realizing successful and manageable projects, while maximizing the diverse styles and strengths each leader brought to the organization. Rufus Jones's commitment as a life-long Quaker working in a Quaker organization to maintaining a spiritual grounding in all of its decisions and activities influenced the development of the AFSC, from the organization's first projects in organizing and training units of Conscientious Objectors at Haverford College during the summer of 1917 to its larger food relief programs in Germany, Austria, and France during World War II. Jones oversaw the training of the first group of Conscientious Objectors at Haverford College, guiding their spiritual development with talks about the spirit of Quaker service.⁶⁶ He continued to remind the conscientious objectors during their service in France of their purpose there. In January 1918, he wrote to them,

Our reconstruction work must be a spiritual service as well as a manly effort to rebuild and repair what has been devastated and laid waste. You cannot do your full service to France unless you can help restore and refresh the spirit of those who have unspeakably suffered, and exhibit in your lives and in your words and in your work an underlying faith in eternal realities.⁶⁷

Biographer Elizabeth Gray Vining writes that Jones's constant recognition of the individual behind the statistics of destruction in Europe and his "vision of spiritual revitalization" were significant factors in shaping the AFSC in its development from a

⁶⁶ Vining, 160.

⁶⁷ Vining, 164.

small, reasonably focused organization into a larger, broader relief organization.⁶⁸ Jones reflected in 1920 on the underlying purpose in all of the AFSC's activities even as it expanded: "Publicity has not been sought for its own sake, it has been welcomed only as a means to a larger end—the real advancement of the service itself."⁶⁹ From the early, small-scale relief efforts in Germany, France, and Russia, to the later, large-scale feeding programs and medical relief projects, Jones insisted that the AFSC maintain its spiritual grounding in order to maintain its identity as a relief organization providing aid.

Rufus Jones was the leading force behind the AFSC, first as Chairman from its inception in 1917 until 1944, and then as Honorary Chairman after he resigned the Chairmanship.⁷⁰ Jones's solid and consistent leadership throughout his life, both at the AFSC and as a Quaker leader in general helped shape the AFSC into a peace-loving and non-judgmental organization devoted to providing relief to those most in need. In the summer of 1920, Jones presented a paper in London to an international gathering of Quakers on "the Character and Basis of our Testimony for Peace." Jones spoke of peace as "the central mission of the Society of Friends in the world, to make faith in the moral and spiritual forces somewhat more real."⁷¹ During World War I and the inter-war years, Jones's focus on bringing aid and relief to individuals suffering in Europe helped define the AFSC's purpose and mission.

Jones's skillful and patient diplomacy during his trip to the Gestapo in 1939 was characteristic of all his interactions. During the trip, he remained grounded and close to

⁶⁸ Vining, 168.

⁶⁹ Rufus Jones, *A Service of Love in Wartime: American Friends Relief Work in Europe, 1917-1919* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1920), 84.

⁷⁰ Elizabeth Gray Vining, *Friend of Life: The Biography of Rufus M. Jones* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1958), 295.

⁷¹ Vining, 186.

his values in the most stressful and important of moments. The circumstances surrounding the trip created a situation in which Jones had to rely on his instinct and Quaker roots to remember why he was there in the first place and what he hoped to accomplish. Together with Robert Yarnall and George Walton, Jones went to Germany with an open mind and little publicity. The group hoped to determine whether the AFSC needed to reinstate the feeding program in Germany that it had initiated there after World War I. The three men came away with major plans for refugee and emigration aid instead.

During their stay in Germany, Jones, Yarnall, and Walton held extensive meetings with Quakers, American government officials, and leaders from other churches and aid organizations. All of the individuals the AFSC leaders consulted urged them that the highest priority German Jews faced was quick emigration from Germany.⁷² Jones subsequently wrote to Pickett of his change in plan: “I therefore worked out an extensive plan for Quakers to take the lead as a neutral agency to secure from the chief authorities a fundamental arrangement for the migration of all Jews who are in a condition to go to other lands.”⁷³ Jones’s desire to bring an acceptance of different modes of beliefs and opinions to all of his encounters helped him remain open-minded when he and the other two leaders finally met with Gestapo leaders on December 19, 1939. They presented to the Gestapo their statement:

We have come now in the same spirit as in the past and we believe that all Germans who remember the past and who are familiar with our ways and method and spirit will know that we do not come to judge or criticize or to push ourselves in, but to inquire in the most friendly manner

⁷² Vining, 286.

⁷³ Vining, 287.

whether there is anything we can do to promote life and human welfare and to relieve suffering.⁷⁴

After they had returned to Philadelphia, Jones reflected on the importance of open-mindedness in situations such as his recent meeting with the Gestapo: “Matter is no doubt stubborn, but nothing in the universe is so utterly unconquerable as a mind possessed by a set of ideas that have become entrenched and sacred... Whether we can influence minds or soften hearts to make spiritual forces seem real—that remains to be seen.”⁷⁵ The three men would only find out the extent of Hitler’s destruction with the rest of the world during the course of World War II and in the months afterwards.

In 1942, in the midst of the war, Jones received the Theodore Roosevelt Distinguished Service Medal, an award "given annually to recognize achievements in fields of endeavor in which the former president had been interested."⁷⁶ The award was just one of many honors he received throughout his life. Though he was regularly recognized by politicians and leaders from other organizations as a distinguished leader, he always retained his humbleness, soft-spoken approach to problem-solving and collaboration, and sincere desire to stay true to his Quaker values through constant writing and work about the integrity and value of each individual. His return to the AFSC Chairmanship full-time after retiring from his teaching position at Haverford College in 1934 at age seventy is a testament to his dedication to the organization.

In addition to Jones’s spiritual leadership and capable guidance as Chairman, other leaders were also integral parts of the AFSC. Clarence Pickett’s prodigious ability to network and to persuade leadership turned idealistic hopes into realities. Howard

⁷⁴ Vining, 291.

⁷⁵ Vining, 282.

⁷⁶ Vining, 297.

Kershner and Hertha Kraus were two of many influential and dedicated AFSC leaders who understood European realities and helped shape program development and projects specifically related to children's aid. Kershner and Kraus both felt a sense of urgency with children's issues. Many other Committee members, such as James Vail, John Rich, and Allen Bonnell, contributed important work and leadership to the AFSC's child-related work during the 1930s and 1940s. By closely scrutinizing the work of a few individuals, we begin to understand how they dealt with the especially challenging decisions and dilemmas that they faced.

Clarence Pickett was an influential AFSC leader, acting as Executive Secretary of the AFSC from 1929-1950.⁷⁷ He had a keen sense of humor and calm approach to complex problems that enabled him to connect to all sorts of people, from elected officials and diplomats to Quaker volunteers at the AFSC.⁷⁸ Once in his new role as Executive Secretary in 1929, Pickett developed many strategic friendships with politicians, diplomats, and other leaders in Washington, D.C., and they often came to him for advice and counsel. He gained a reputation for listening attentively and giving out sound, non-judgmental advice. A November 9, 1940 letter to Eleanor Roosevelt reflected his skilled networking skills. In the letter, Pickett was following up on a conversation about relief in occupied territories. He subtly asked her to forward the memorandum to the President, adding that he is happy to visit him to talk more about relief.⁷⁹ The strategic relationships that Pickett helped foster motivated relief and rescue agencies such as the JDC and USC to approach the AFSC about collaborating on specific projects.

⁷⁷ *Dictionary of Quaker Biography*, typescript.

⁷⁸ 12/4/01 interview with Steve Cary.

⁷⁹ General Files 1940 Committees and organizations (Queen Wilhelmina Fund) to (Individuals) Box, Individuals, Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Foler, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

The AFSC and the JDC had already collaborated before Pickett joined the AFSC. The two organizations first worked together in 1921 to bring aid to famine victims in Russia and the Ukraine. The two organizations continued to collaborate on relief work in Europe throughout the 1930s with Pickett's full-fledged support.⁸⁰ An unpublished study written by the JDC in 1945 reflected on the importance of the close relationship between the AFSC and the JDC. It described how in 1921 the JDC "submerge[d] its identity in that of the AFSC and place[d] its money and personnel under Quaker administration" because the JDC would have had difficulty in bringing its services into Russia under the auspices of a Jewish organization.⁸¹ This "give and take" relationship enabled each organization to specialize in the types of aid it could most successfully provide with the financial and strategic support from the other organization.⁸² The AFSC's close relationship with the JDC continued through World War II.

Pickett wrote about the AFSC's close relationship with the JDC and the effects of the collaboration between the two organizations in his autobiography, For More than Bread. He attributed Rufus Jones' decision to go to Germany in 1939 to speak to members of the Gestapo leaders to conversations with leaders from the JDC.⁸³ The JDC intended for a portion of the contributions it received to go toward "nonsectarian American efforts to aid German children generally," so the AFSC was a logical place to contribute those funds.⁸⁴ According to AFSC financial reports, the JDC contributed \$50,000 to the AFSC's Refugee Section in 1939, but only \$10,000 to its relief services

⁸⁰ Unpublished study about the relationship between the AFSC and the JDC, AFSC Refugee Program, Historical Material folder, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

⁸¹ AFSC Refugee Program, Historical Material folder, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

⁸² AFSC Refugee Program, Historical Material folder, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

⁸³ Clarence Pickett, *For More Than Bread: An autobiographical account of twenty-two years' work with the American Friends Service Committee* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1953), 143.

⁸⁴ Bauer, *My Brother's Keeper*, 16.

section of the Refugee and Relief Committee in 1940.⁸⁵ According to Yehuda Bauer, however, the JDC also gave the AFSC \$100,000 to spend on German Jews in 1939, "provided that no publicity whatsoever should be given to this grant, and with the provision that there should be taken into account the reluctance on the part of the contributors to JDC to have American dollars go into Germany."⁸⁶ This contribution was not listed in the 1939 Financial Report, suggesting that either the \$50,000 listed is part of the contribution or it was kept off the record books. Considering the AFSC's desire for publicity for its refugee-related activities in 1939, it is possible that the AFSC used the JDC grant for refugee activities of a more private nature.

Pickett appeared to have found the AFSC's relationships with Jewish organizations gratifying, though he sensed fundamental differences in religious fervor between the AFSC and Jewish organizations. He reflected on the relationships, writing,

I have almost consistently happy memories of the very frequent association of Jewish and Quaker groups. While there was a worldly quality of exuberance that was more expressive in Jewish groups than among Quakers, there was also a most profound dedication, the willingness to give generously, an emotional commitment to help their brethren, and many times a significant yearning for a deeper quality of religious life that was most significant for me.⁸⁷

The AFSC's ongoing collaboration with Jewish organizations such as the JDC and nonsectarian refugee organizations such as the USC can be contributed in large part to the priority that Pickett gave to them.

Pickett was deeply devoted to his Quaker faith. He came from a large Quaker family in Kansas, where he was the only one of his siblings to attend college. After

⁸⁵ 1939 and 1940 Financial Reports, Yearly Reports, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

⁸⁶ Bauer, 259.

college, he studied in a theological seminary and worked as a minister for several years in Toronto and Iowa and as a professor of biblical literature at Earlham College before starting at the AFSC in 1929.⁸⁸ He brought the values of his faith with him to the AFSC; most significantly, he always showed compassion to those in distress.⁸⁹ He had an optimistic view of human nature, writing in an autobiographical article about his disagreement with the view that World War II had planted the seeds for a third world war, just as the first world war had produced seeds for the second: “I do not feel that way. Central to the problem of existence is the way in which the cycle of evil can be broken.”⁹⁰

Though his outgoing personality helped him establish contacts with officials and leaders from diverse backgrounds, the high-wheeling individuals with whom he associated never caused him to lose sight of what he was representing. Pickett wrote in his autobiography of the honor he felt when he was asked to be Executive Secretary of the AFSC because of the highest regard he had for the organization: “I had been acquainted with the Committee’s work, and thought of it as the great growing edge where the conscience of American Quakers applied to the social order in which we lived.”⁹¹

As a result of his numerous relationships with influential politicians, Pickett joined the prestigious Kosmos Club, a group of distinguished Washingtonians, where he was able to establish even more connections.⁹² He also planned conflict resolution seminars and other conferences where policy makers and politicians could have a

⁸⁷ Pickett, 144-145.

⁸⁸ Louis Finkelstein, Editor, *Thirteen Americans: Their Spiritual Autobiographies*, by Clarence Pickett (New York: The Institute for Religious and Social Studies, 1953), 5-11.

⁸⁹ Finkelstein, 11.

⁹⁰ Finkelstein, 14.

⁹¹ Pickett, x.

⁹² 12/4/01 interview with Steve Cary.

dialogue and exchange ideas.⁹³ Politicians would attend his seminars to engage in discussions of alternative methods of resolution to war and other violent means. Though they did not always choose the alternative options Pickett presented, they valued his opinions and ideas.

Pickett's primary interest was in international issues, and he established varied relationships with American leaders throughout the 1930s and 1940s that enabled the AFSC to negotiate with high-level decision-makers. The AFSC's congenial relationships with the U.S. governments likely contributed to the ease and relative speed with which it was able to obtain visas for the children on its 1941 and 1942 transports. In addition, its track record and know-how in dealing with governments from its work during World War I in Europe contributed to its success in gaining permission to transport the three hundred children to the U.S. In sum, the picture that AFSC leaders drew of the organization and the actual work it accomplished perpetuated the cycle of collaboration with aid organizations and continued ease in dealing with bureaucracies.

Clarence Pickett and Rufus Jones shaped the AFSC into the Quaker-based relief organization that it became largely through their abundant writings and public speeches about the AFSC's concerns and programs. Their guidance with the day-to-day decisions were also influential in shaping the organization. The Executive Committee meeting minutes from 1940 and 1941 give us a general idea of the issues Jones and other Committee members viewed as priorities, and it is clear from the minutes that relief work in Europe was high on the list. Although the minutes do not specify who raised which concerns, we can take the minutes as an example of Jones's leadership due to his position at the AFSC. As the Chairman, he was present at most of the meetings, and he was

⁹³ 12/4/01 interview with Steve Cary.

influential in running the meetings and facilitating the decision-making process. The April 7, 1941 minutes, for example, included discussion about relief work in France. Howard Kershner suggested distributing food and financial relief to French children each month in their homes. The Committee ultimately decided not to make this change to the relief programs in France. The decision possibly reflected the desire of the Executive Committee with Jones's guidance to keep the AFSC focused on relief and rescue work without taking on too many peripheral responsibilities.

Pickett's many strategic relationships with leaders from other organizations and high-level officials also helped give the AFSC a certain degree of political clout while it maintained its status as a non-political organization. The networking roles that Clarence Pickett took upon himself in the years leading up to World War II had significant effects on the relative efficiency with which the AFSC was able to accomplish otherwise time-consuming and nearly impossible tasks during the war.⁹⁴

The correlation between the broad leadership that Pickett and Jones provided and Kershner and Kraus's work to implement specific projects, such as the child transports of 1941 and 1942, help us to better understand the relationship between the general ideals and mission of an organization and the tangible results that come out of the rhetoric.

While Pickett was the individual most publicly identified with the AFSC in political circles and Rufus Jones was a well-known national leader in Quaker circles, other individuals were busy during the pre-war and war years dealing with the behind-the-scenes operations that made the AFSC run smoothly. Rufus Jones had a constant presence at the AFSC, but his "standing rested in part on a broader, scholarly base, while

Clarence was almost wholly identified with the AFSC. He, more than anyone else, brought the AFSC national recognition."⁹⁵ Recalling Pickett's administrative and organizational approach, Steve Cary writes that "Clarence's administrative style was to identify fresh and creative individuals and give them a high degree of independence in developing their programs."⁹⁶ Jones and Pickett kept the mission and vision of the AFSC alive through their leadership, but other Committee leaders made many of the day-to-day decisions about the AFSC's direction, involvement, and scope of work in specific programs. Pickett relied on experienced Committee leaders such as Hertha Kraus, a frequent consultant to the AFSC, and Howard Kershner to identify where there was the greatest need for aid and to then help implement programs.

Hertha Kraus frequently contributed to problem solving and program strategizing and implementation efforts as a consultant to the AFSC. Cary remembers her as a difficult and imposing woman who usually believed that her way was the only way to go about solving a problem.⁹⁷ She was active with refugee work before the AFSC officially established its refugee section in late 1938. As a German, she had been involved with AFSC child feeding in Germany after World War I, and as a result, she received many pleas for help from refugees in the years leading up to World War II. She subsequently turned to the AFSC for help with the many appeals she received.⁹⁸ According to Cary, she was a visionary with a deep understanding of German culture. During World War II, she believed that Germany was in need of fundamental economic and political changes

⁹⁴ Its success in securing visas for the three hundred German and Austrian children on the transports is an example of a task that would have been nearly impossible without its reputation among government officials and agencies.

⁹⁵ Cary, "Remembering Clarence Pickett," 8.

⁹⁶ Cary, "Remembering Clarence Pickett," 8.

⁹⁷ 12/4/01 interview with Steve Cary.

⁹⁸ Pickett, 138.

that the AFSC and other organizations should be careful not to overlook after they had provided material aid.⁹⁹

Howard Kershner was another AFSC leader primarily dedicated to children's aid during his tenure as Director of Relief in Europe for the AFSC from 1939-1942.¹⁰⁰ He believed that the AFSC should devote most of its refugee-related resources to bringing aid to refugees in Europe rather than aiding them in coming to the U.S. Though he viewed the child emigration projects as worthwhile and necessary, he questioned the value of them compared to immediate relief programs aiding large numbers of children in France. In a February 20, 1941 letter to Pickett, Rich, and Vail, Kershner expressed his concern about spending a large quantity of money on a few children. In this case, it was with regard to the possibility of return trips. He wrote, "For the cost of taking one child to America and back we could take care of twenty or more children here. I am therefore opposed to sending over children who expect to return here. The lists which we have sent and will send apply only to the children who are going as permanent immigrants."¹⁰¹ Kershner was constantly aware of funding shortages due to his day-to-day dealings with budgeting limitations as Director of Relief.

In 1943, Kershner wrote One Humanity: A Plea for our Friends and Allies in Europe, in which he focused on the plight of starving children in France and the moral dilemma of deciding how and where to distribute the food.¹⁰² He elaborated on the specifics of the programs he initiated, explaining how AFSC workers managed to

⁹⁹ 12/4/01 interview with Steve Cary.

¹⁰⁰ Howard Kershner, *One Humanity: A Plea for our Friends and Allies in Europe* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1943), xi.

¹⁰¹ Letter No. 119, Marseille, 20th February 1941, General Files 1941 Foreign Service (France Marseilles, Ltrs. from Oct) to (Germany-Berlin Center) box, AFSC archives, Philadelphia, PA.

¹⁰² Kershner, *One Humanity*, 3.

successfully implement the feeding programs, assuming that the food reached the those most in need in the first place.¹⁰³ Kershner emphasized his belief that the AFSC should consider aid to starving European children as its top European priority. He also urged Americans to help the thousands of suffering children by writing to their congressmen voicing concern that the U.S. government act immediately to aid those suffering in Europe. Though written from a Quaker perspective of non-violence, Kershner's book is aimed at a general American audience. Chapter titles such as "How it can be done without aiding the Enemy" and "The Children are Dying" focus on the emotional nature of wartime enemies and human suffering with the intention of winning over a wider cross-section of the American public. His book highlighted his belief that the crisis facing European children deserved the attention of the American public.

Without skilled leadership, the AFSC might easily have become an over-extended and ineffective organization, considering its personnel and financial limitations. The AFSC took on multiple aid and relief responsibilities throughout the world during World War II. At the end of 1938, it established a Refugee Section to work specifically on aiding European refugees in coming to the U.S. and settling here. Its varied and numerous programs during World War II created a situation in which the AFSC pushed its financial and personnel resources to the limit. Its decision to devote time and energy to these transports, a project that it had not initially planned for in its agenda and budget, meant that it had to decide whether or not to delay other projects such as child-feeding programs and refugee camp relief in France that it deemed equally important, or else spread itself thin among all of its projects. In an atmosphere of international turmoil and

¹⁰³ Kershner, *One Humanity*, 15-18.

suffering during the late 1930s and early 1940s, AFSC leaders had many possible directions it could take to provide aid.

Visas: A tricky game of hits and misses

Having examined the styles and priorities of some of the influential voices at the AFSC, we can now return to the organizational challenges that the transports presented in 1941 to better evaluate how the AFSC handled the difficult tasks at hand. Between 1938 and 1941, the demand for visas far exceeded the supply.¹⁰⁴ The State Department also was reluctant to grant many visas. Though the White House expressed an interest in liberalizing the visa process for Europeans trying to emigrate in 1938, the individual consuls had the final veto power.¹⁰⁵ Roosevelt had slightly loosened his stand on distributing visas after the Austrian Anschluss in March 1938 with the hopes that as many Austrian Jews as possible would be able to enter the country.¹⁰⁶ The process of obtaining a visa remained difficult, however, because the State Department did not increase quotas. The Roosevelt Administration attempted to support certain groups of refugees trying to obtain visas by creating the President's Advisory Commission on Political Refugees, which supposedly gave special consideration to certain visa applications.¹⁰⁷ Agencies such as the AFSC would submit its recommendations, and the Commission was supposed to give priority to these applicants. Historian Henry Feingold writes that the State Department did not support of this liberalization of visa distribution. It worked hard to prevent the Commission from seeing any of the lists meant for its evaluation in 1940. Though the U.S. witnessed a slight liberalization of visa procedures and immigration

¹⁰⁴ Henry Feingold, *Bearing Witness: How America and Its Jews Responded to the Holocaust* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1995), 78.

¹⁰⁵ Feingold, 78.

¹⁰⁶ Breitman, 132.

policy after 1938, immigration remained tightly controlled, making it difficult for any Europeans, children or adults, to reach the U.S.

England's response to the European child refugee crisis sharply contrasted to that of the U.S. After Kristallnacht in November 1938, the English government and refugee organizations hastily worked to bring German children to England. Ten thousand unaccompanied German children ultimately escaped to England in contrast to one thousand who came to the U.S. The British government's decision to bring Jewish children over from the Continent was partly an act of goodwill and partly an effort to motivate the U.S. to reconsider its restrictionist stand and allow in greater numbers of refugee children.¹⁰⁸ Quaker groups in England served roles similar to those served by the AFSC, accompanying the children and collaborating with other refugee organizations to plan for the transports.¹⁰⁹ This simultaneous work among English Quakers invites more research into whether the English Quakers and the AFSC had different approaches, challenges, and priorities. The English government was, for example, much more supportive, demonstrating that it cared about the crisis of the child refugee situation when the Home Secretary, Noel Baker, told the House of Commons, "here is a chance of taking the young generation of a great people, here is a chance of mitigating to some extent the terrible sufferings of their parents and their friends."¹¹⁰ Kershner, Kraus, and other leaders saw this chance as well, while they recognized the limitations of their organization in saving only a few children.

¹⁰⁷ Feingold, 78.

¹⁰⁸ Mark Jonathan Harris and Deborah Oppenheimer, *Into the Arms of Strangers: Stories of the Kindertransport*, Introduction by David Cesarani (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2000), 10.

¹⁰⁹ Amy Zahl Gottlieb, *Men of Vision: Anglo-Jewry's Aid to Victims of the Nazi Regime 1933-1945* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1998), 100-107.

¹¹⁰ Gottlieb, 107.

Many Europeans who wanted visas to the U.S. in 1941 were never able to obtain them, yet the AFSC succeeded in securing three hundred visas for the children they transported. Though the process was still long, difficult, and nerve-wracking for AFSC members working to obtain the visas, as well as for the children and their parents waiting for them, it was much more successful than most visa application processes of the period. We can draw a connection between the strategic relationships that Pickett formed with government officials and the relatively quick process through which the Howard Kershner was able to secure the children's visas.

AFSC leaders interned at a hotel in 1945 in Baden-Baden, France reflected on the role that the AFSC's name often played in helping refugees to emigrate. They created the *Baden-Baden Report*, an update on AFSC activities and views, which commented on AFSC leverage in aiding refugees: "The existence of a Quaker emigration service did help a considerable number of refugees in France; while the decision on a visa still rested in the hands of the consulates, it was fair to say that the recommendation of a case worker counted for something."¹¹¹ In addition to the AFSC's name and reputation, the able work of Committee members in Europe on behalf of the children was also central to the success in securing visas and making other travel plans.

Alliances and collaborations: Other aid organizations

Pickett's visibility and reputation as a Quaker grounded in his religious beliefs and a skilled problem solver helped the AFSC shape its image into one of reputable skill and resourcefulness which remained free from any political entanglements or loyalties.

Pickett's dedication to fostering networks and alliances with officials undoubtedly

¹¹¹ "Baden-Baden Report: American Friends Service Committee Activities in France, 1940 to November, 1942," 25, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA, 11/15/01 visit.

facilitated easier access to other aid organizations such as the JDC, which were integral to maintaining coordination of refugee work.¹¹² In 1941, Pickett served on the executive boards of the USC, the National Refugee Service, and the American Christian Committee for German Refugees.¹¹³ Pickett also excelled in maintaining close relationships with leaders from political agencies such as the State Department. Such relationships nurtured in meetings and lunches with politicians enabled AFSC leaders in offices throughout Europe to go about difficult tasks such as procuring visas for the children on the transports.

The AFSC's collective work with other refugee organizations and its subsequent decision to organize the transports may have obscured the more important fact that the AFSC's annual expenditures on refugee services between 1939 and 1941 fell dramatically. AFSC decision-makers disagreed over how best to spend its resources in Europe. Some, such as Howard Kershner, believed that its relief services in Europe were needed more urgently than less direct services such as advocacy for a liberalization of immigration laws.¹¹⁴ The urgency of finding ways to help refugees leave Europe compared to the immediate food and medicine needs in refugee camps created a difficult situation in which the AFSC had to decide where its resources were most needed.

¹¹² Pickett, *For More Than Bread*, 152.

¹¹³ Pickett, *For More Than Bread*, 152.

¹¹⁴ In 1940 and 1941 letters and reports, Kershner often advocated for relief programs over refugee rescue programs. In contrast to Kershner, Pickett published "Difficulties in the Placement of Refugees" in the May 1939 edition *The Annals of The American Academy of Political Science*. In it, he wrote that one way the U.S. can help support refugee work was through the passage of the Wagner-Rogers Bill, legislation that would allow 20,000 German children into the U.S. over a period of two years. Pickett outlined why refugees are an asset to the U.S. economy and how Jewish and Christian relief organizations would coordinate the settlement of the child refugees, Refugee Services Publicity 1939 folder, General Files 1939 Refugee Services (Projects-Finco Paso Seco) to (Wagner-Rogers Bill) box, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA, 1/29/02 visit.

Just as the AFSC was interested in maintaining relationships with other organizations, those organizations had their own interests at stake in deciding to collaborate with the AFSC. The USC is one example. It approached the AFSC in 1941, soon after its formation at the end of 1940, about undertaking the transport projects with USC funding. By asking another organization to carry out one of its priorities, the USC was demonstrating its respect for the AFSC's reputation and experience. The USC had to yield to the ways of the AFSC, which had control over child selection, decision-making, and strategizing. After the June 1941 group of children made it to the U.S. safely, Margaret Frawley in the Philadelphia AFSC office wrote to Allen Bonnell in Marseilles about the specific responsibilities of the relationship. The USC was the sponsoring agency, covering the financial costs of the transports, while the AFSC was the collaborating agency, taking responsibility for selection and transportation of the children. Margaret Frawley explained the AFSC's relationship to the USC as one of representation: the USC "is the responsible agency determining policy and American Friends delegates in Marseille and in Lisbon represent the United States Committee for this work. All communications on the subject are cleared through the Philadelphia office."¹¹⁵ What made the USC decide to hand off a job so central to its mission to a larger, more general relief organization? We can start to answer that question by considering the factors that contributed to the USC's decision to bring the AFSC, an organization with a different approach and wider focus, into the picture. We must also consider in greater depth the AFSC's virtues that provoked organizations such as the USC to approach it for aid.

¹¹⁵ July 18, 1941 letter from Margaret Frawley to Allen Bonnell, General Files 1941 Foreign Service, France-Individuals to Relief-Marseilles Letters Box, AFSC Foreign Service France-Relief Marseilles,

Eleanor Roosevelt and Marshall Field, among others, formed the USC in June 1940 expressly for the cause of bringing children who were in danger in Europe to the U.S. By naming two high-profile individuals to lead its organization, the founding members hoped for name recognition and awareness, and hopefully more success with its rescue efforts as a result. The USC took a different approach with its high-profile board and fundraising efforts throughout the country than the AFSC had at its inception. As an example, the USC hired experienced fundraiser Carl Kersting of Temblyn & Brown, Inc. to direct its fundraising strategies in New York and throughout the U.S.¹¹⁶ In contrast, the AFSC had started out with small relief programs in Russia and Germany without much publicity or fundraising appeals. By the time the USC approached the AFSC, it had already changed its focus, highlighting its flexibility as an organization. It had originally intended to bring English children who were in danger in England of German attacks to the U.S. temporarily until the war was over. It soon shifted its focus from England to the rest of the continent once it realized how great the need was for children in France, Germany, and Austria to leave. When it became apparent that many parents would not be alive to receive their children when the war ended, it quickly changed that section of its plans as well.

In contrast to the AFSC, which was more than two decades old in 1941 and had more of a general approach in responding to crises, the USC formed in 1940 with the express goal of responding to the children's crisis in Europe. Its mission was focused and straightforward—save as many European refugee children in danger as possible by bringing them to the U.S. and finding foster families or arranging to unite them with their

Letters and Cables to May-Aug, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia PA.

relatives. In its proposal to the Attorney General dated July 20, 1940, it stated its mission:

To use all means and measures permitted by applicable law to obtain and provide lawful refuge in the United States or elsewhere for children desiring to depart from European countries because of war, political or social conditions, racial or religious intolerance, or the opinions held by them or by their parents or relatives; to furnish financial aid and assistance to individuals, groups, corporations, organizations, religious bodies, governments and governmental agencies of all kinds, domestic and foreign, in obtaining or providing such asylum and refuge, and in selecting, caring for, and supporting said children; and to see that such children should not become public charges in the United States.¹¹⁷

It is significant that the statement affirms that the children will not become public charges, as the USC was sensitive to public sentiment. Later in the proposal, it reiterates its intention to prevent any child from becoming a public charge: “the Committee will in each case tender its assurance that the child will not become a public charge and that arrangements have been or will be made for the reception, placement and care of the child in accordance with the standards of the Children’s Bureau of the Department of Labor.”¹¹⁸

The AFSC, unlike the USC, was heavily involved in relief programs throughout Europe in 1941, focusing largely on food, clothing, and medical relief to refugees in war-torn European villages and others who were barely surviving in internment camps in southern France. Beginning in 1940, the AFSC worked together with the JDC and other

¹¹⁶ The USC, “Report of the Executive Director,” U.S. Committee for the Care of European Children, Inc,” 28, USCOM Papers, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

¹¹⁷ USCOM Papers, Letter to the Attorney General of the United States, 2, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

¹¹⁸ USCOM Papers, Letter to the Attorney General of the United States, 6, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

foreign welfare offices to bring food, clothing, and medical relief rations to Gurs, Vernet, and St. Cyprienne.¹¹⁹ In deciding to help the USC with its child transport project, the AFSC diverted energy from its ongoing relief projects in Europe, re-focusing it on the child rescue project, which had not been one of the AFSC's top priorities in 1941. The USC was undoubtedly drawn to the AFSC's demonstrated ability to execute relief projects in times of war, as well as its non-political, Quaker status, for help during such a tense period.

The USC relied on the AFSC. The USC approached it fully aware of the AFSC's well-developed connections to the State Department and its non-political reputation. The USC needed the State Department's cooperation in petitioning to bring children into the country outside of quota numbers. Though the AFSC did not involve itself in political activities, Pickett's networking had made it well-connected to decision-makers. During an anti-refugee and anti-Semitic period, the AFSC was one of the few organizations with any clout among politicians and the public. The USC was identified with a Jewish cause, hindering any likely success of working with the State Department in such a project, whereas the ecumenical stance of the AFSC made for an advantageous alliance.

AFSC priorities shift, dedicated leadership remains constant

Given the AFSC's relief-oriented focus in 1941, its involvement in transporting three hundred children to the U.S. in 1941 and 1942 suggests a strong bond and sense of responsibility between the AFSC and other refugee organizations. Between 1939 and 1941, the AFSC had virtually shifted all of its efforts to from refugee aid to relief work in Europe. The case of these children points to the significant ties that the AFSC had with

¹¹⁹ Unpublished study of the relationship between the JDC and AFSC, 10, AFSC Refugee Program Historical Material Folder, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

organizations such as the JDC and USC, since it was willing to devote time and personnel to an endeavor that it had abandoned the prior year. These child transports reflect the degree to which refugee, religious, and other types of non-governmental organizations relied on each other to help them achieve their overall goals.

AFSC leaders disagreed over the AFSC's involvement in the transports, reflecting the departure the AFSC was taking with this project from its normal agenda of European relief work. Kershner and Bonnell worked in the Marseilles branch office of the AFSC and helped oversee the transports even though they both expressed opposition to them. While both appear to have been dedicated to seeing the transports through to completion, each expressed doubts that the AFSC should be devoting such a large portion of its time and resources to a relatively small number of children when there were thousands more needy children in Europe who could benefit from AFSC relief services for the same cost. Bonnell wrote to James Vail on June 18, 1941 explaining the extensive process involved in arranging the first transport. After describing the sequence of events, from sending out questionnaires to applicants, to making the sailing reservations, to securing individual visas, he expressed his concerns about the unequal distribution of funds: "Expenses for the emigration of these children were extremely high and there is considerable question in our minds whether or not the expenses were warranted, in view of the other uses to which equivalent funds could have been placed."¹²⁰ Kershner made reference to his concern about the costs of bringing one child to the U.S. in the context of discussion

¹²⁰ Letter number 174-AB, June 18, 1941 from Allen Bonnell to James Vail, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

about not bringing children who planned on returning after the war.¹²¹ Kershner and Bonnell worked hard to implement the AFSC's decision to undertake the transport responsibilities, but both clearly wondered if AFSC time and resources might be better spent in other programs. This difference of opinion raises important questions about how an organization dedicated to goodwill rather than profit should operate. Kershner and Bonnell made the case for using the money and time spent on three hundred children in other ways that would reach many more children. Yet both men chose to stick with the AFSC, demonstrating a loyalty to AFSC decisions and leadership.

It is not always easy to draw a connection between idealistic hopes and on-the-ground realities. Sometimes it is difficult to ascertain the right connection between hopes and realities, as was the case to an extent with Kershner. AFSC leaders were able to bring the two notions together through their involvement in another organization's activities. Pickett's leadership strategies, such as delegating responsibilities to able and experienced leaders and collaborating extensively with other organizations, contributed to the AFSC's ultimate success in the case of the child transports. Though each individual brought a different opinion and background, the AFSC was ultimately able to overcome these differences by relying on the organization's strong leadership and structure.

The Refugee Section: A case study of shifting priorities

The AFSC established the Refugee Section, a special section of the Foreign Service Section, in 1939 in order "to help these [Jewish and part-Jewish] homeless people

¹²¹ Letter number 119, February 20, 1941 from Howard Kershner to Pickett, Vail, and Rich, General Files 1941 Foreign Service (France Marseilles, Ltrs from Oct) to (Germany-Berlin Center) box, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

find security in more friendly lands."¹²² Though the AFSC had been involved in refugee work since its formative years beginning in 1917, it officially formed the Refugee Section on November 16, 1938, six days after Kristallnacht, as the result of a meeting of AFSC leaders with Rufus Jones.¹²³ The Refugee Section defined its mission as helping "to ease the tensions and combat the prejudices that grow out of the present world situation."¹²⁴ Other than its support of the Wagner-Rogers Bill, the AFSC's refugee work in 1939 and 1941 did not center solely on children. It fielded requests from adults, families, and parents requesting aid for their children. It did not undertake its own massive child refugee resettlement programs such as those of 1941 and 1942 until the USC approached it in 1940. Though it would continue to see its defined mission through in the coming years, its approach shifted to ease what it saw as the most debilitating hardships. Most significantly, it shifted its focus from European refugee emigration aid in 1939 to relief work in Europe in 1941.

The Refugee Section was overwhelmed with requests for aid even before it formed. There were already 770 filed requests from individuals, either for help in coming to the U.S. or for help resettling once in the U.S when it established the Refugee Section.¹²⁵ By January 1940, there were 2,109 requests from "pre-entry" Europeans

¹²² "Refugee Appeal," General Files 1939 Foreign Service box, AFSC Foreign Service 1939, Refugees (General) file, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

¹²³ The AFSC aided with refugee appeals after World War I and in the years leading up to World War II. After the Austrian Anschluss on March 12, 1938, the AFSC became more heavily involved in refugee aid, helping to secure affidavits for refugees hoping to reach the U.S. and collaborating with other Christian and Jewish refugee organizations to provide aid, Pickett, 138-139.

¹²⁴ "Scope of the American Friends Service Committee," General Files 1939 Foreign Service box, AFSC Foreign Service 1939, Refugees (General) file, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

¹²⁵ "Report for Committee Meeting, January 26," by Edith Glenn, Refugee Services Statistics, 1939 Folder, General Files 1939 Refugee Services (Projects-Fina Paso Seco) to (Wagner-Rogers Bill) Box, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

seeking affidavits and aid in immigrating to the U.S.¹²⁶ Did the requests continue to increase in number each year? Considering the international situation, we can assume that they did, but the Refugee Section's budgets and accounts of programs between 1939 and 1941 suggest that it shifted its priorities from refugee work to relief work. The time and energy that the AFSC devoted to the child transport projects in 1941 and 1942 reflects the priority it placed on its relationships with partner organizations such as the USC and JDC, because it represents an otherwise reversal in its projects.

Budgets and financial reports point to the fact that fewer funds were directed toward refugee activities in 1941 compared to 1939. In 1939, the AFSC had devoted approximately 20% of its total income (from contributions) to refugee immigration aid when it initially formed the Refugee Section.¹²⁷ In December 1938, a month after the Refugee Section officially formed, the AFSC Refugee Section expenses were \$6,245.¹²⁸ The following year, the Refugee Section's expenses were \$137,430.50.¹²⁹ Beginning in 1940, the AFSC expanded the Refugee Section to include relief. The Refugee and Relief Committee's 1940 total expenditures were \$578,750.48, but only \$230,135.37 went to refugee services.¹³⁰ Refugee expenses included the hostel programs, funds given to individual refugees, and services such as counseling, aid in job searches, resettlement

¹²⁶ "Report for Committee Meeting, January 26," by Edith Glenn, Refugee Services Statistics, 1939 Folder, General Files 1939 Refugee Services (Projects-Fina Paso Seco) to (Wagner-Rogers Bill) Box, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

¹²⁷ "1939 Financial Report," Yearly Report, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA. By 1941, however, only 11% of its expenditures went towards refugee work, "1941 Financial Report," Yearly Report, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

¹²⁸ "Statement of Expenses," Financial Report, 1938 Yearly Report, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA, 35.

¹²⁹ "Statement of Income and Expenses, Period Ending December 31, 1939," Refugee Section of the American Friends Service Committee, Financial Report, 1939 Yearly Report, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA, 40.

¹³⁰ "Refugee and Relief Committee of the American Friends Service Committee Statement of Expenses, Period Ending December 31, 1940," Financial Report, 1940 Yearly Report, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA, 55.

assistance, summer camps for children, and student scholarships.¹³¹ In 1941, the Foreign Service Section's expenditures for refugee and relief activities had become even more uneven. Relief expenditures totaled \$839,747.21 while refugee expenditures totaled only \$178,721.38.¹³² The difference in refugee versus relief spending continued its unequal trend in 1942, with relief expenditures totaling \$961,308.14 and refugee expenditures totaling \$124,449.83.¹³³ These amounts may be deceptive. We do not know the total number of individuals aided each year. The numbers likely fluctuated, and what may appear to only reflect changes in priorities may also reflect changes in funding sources and personnel capabilities.

One way to evaluate the Refugee Section's priorities in 1939 and 1941 is by looking at the refugee/Committee member ratio. In 1939, there were two associate directors, eight associate secretaries, and two consultants (including Hertha Kraus) working on refugee services in the Philadelphia office, and twenty five Committee members working throughout the country in hostels and in the New York office.¹³⁴ They handled 3,737 requests from European refugees, either for aid in coming to the U.S. or for assistance in resettling in the U.S.¹³⁵ The total ratio between Committee members devoting their time to refugee-related work and refugees requesting aid was 101 refugees

¹³¹ "Foreign Service Section," Refugee Committee Expenditures, 62. 1941 Yearly Report, and "Report for Committee Meeting, January 26," by Edith Glenn, Refugee Services Statistics, 1939 Folder, General Files 1939 Refugee Services (Projects-Fina Paso Seco) to (Wagner-Rogers Bill) Box, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

¹³² "1941 Financial Report, Statement of Income and Expenditures," 57. 1941 Yearly Report, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA, 57.

¹³³ "Summary of Income and Expenditures—Current Fund—For the year ended December 31, 1942," 1942 Yearly Report, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

¹³⁴ "Refugee Services Staff and Volunteers, 1939," Refugee Services Staff and Volunteers, 1939 Folder, General Files 1939 Refugee Services (Projects-Finca Paso Seco) to (Wagner Rogers Bill) Box, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

¹³⁵ "Refugee Section Report on Requests Received Including New York and Philadelphia," Refugee Services Statistics 1939 Folder, General Files 1939 Refugee Services (Projects-Finca Paso Seco) to (Wagner Rogers Bill) Box, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

to each Committee member. Again, this number may be off because the Refugee Section likely did not decide to undertake all of the requests it received. When we consider a similar calculation in 1941 between the children on the transports and the AFSC members involved in the project, we cannot make a comparable estimate for two reasons—many Committee members only devoted part of their time to the transports, unlike the full-time positions in the Refugee Section in 1939, and the second calculation does not reflect the whole Refugee Section as does the first one. We can estimate the number of staff members who were significantly involved with planning the transports, however. Hertha Kraus, Howard Kershner, Clarence Pickett, John Rich, James Vail, Allen Bonnell, and Lindsley Noble were the members most active in the planning stages. Several more members assisted during the actual transports, chaperoning the children. There was thus a ratio of thirty children to one adult, estimating ten adults and three hundred children. We can extrapolate from this rough estimation and from other sources such as letters, cables, and accounts that Committee members dedicated a significant amount of time and energy to planning and executing the transports.

The AFSC was particularly effective in providing emigration aid in 1939 in Germany because it was "an impartial and non-Jewish agency in a violently partisan and anti-Semitic country."¹³⁶ This reputation and solid record also explains why the USC and JDC were eager to collaborate with it. As an example of the AFSC's sometimes unsuccessful efforts to aid Europeans in immigrating to the U.S., Pickett spearheaded an attempt to provide additional paid personnel to understaffed European consular offices in 1939 to help handle the overflowing number of visa applications. The State Department

denied Pickett's proposal, arguing that it "could run its own affairs, and that if it desired to add to its consular staffs, it could and would go to Congress and ask for an appropriation to do so."¹³⁷ By 1941, the need for refugee aid was still great, but by then the AFSC had shifted much of its resources to refugee assistance in Europe, setting up school canteen feeding programs, vitamin and milk distribution programs, and various other basic relief programs on top of its emigration assistance programs.¹³⁸ As a result, the AFSC had less time and money to spend on refugee aid for emigration in 1941 than it had in 1939.

The low-profile arrivals in 1941 of the first three transports, in contrast to the high-profile approach the AFSC took in its support of the Wagner-Rogers Bill in 1939, reflected another manifestation of the AFSC's changing approaches. Hertha Kraus was among the most vocal Committee members in support of the bill.¹³⁹ The bill would have allowed 20,000 refugee children into the U.S. outside of quota numbers if it had passed.¹⁴⁰ Senator Robert Wagner (D) of New York and Representative Edith Nourse Rogers (R) of Massachusetts wrote and presented the identical bills to the Senate and House of Representatives respectively in February 1939. They tried to tap into sympathetic sentiments from reports of the destruction and suffering from Kristallnacht

¹³⁶ Unpublished study of the relationship between the AFSC and the Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1945, 9, AFSC Refugee Program Historical Material folder, General Files 1940(Queen Wilhelmina Fund) to (Individuals) box, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

¹³⁷ Pickett, 141.

¹³⁸ Kershner wrote about the AFSC's 1941 feeding, milk distribution, and vitamin programs in French public school canteens, *One Humanity*, 7-9. In 1940, the AFSC and JDC collaborated to bring greatly needed supplies to Jews interned in Gurs, Vernet, and St. Cyprienne, camps in southern France, Unpublished study of the relationship between the AFSC and the Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1945, 10, AFSC Refugee Program Historical Material folder, General Files 1940(Queen Wilhelmina Fund) to (Individuals) box, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

¹³⁹ She included its support as an AFSC priority in 1939, "German Delegation: Some Next Steps," suggested by Hertha Kraus, 1, General Files 1939 Foreign Service box, AFSC Foreign Service 1939, Refugees (General) file, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

to win passage of the bill.¹⁴¹ It ultimately failed to pass due to an overwhelmingly strong anti-refugee lobbying force and an ambiguous response from the White House.¹⁴²

The Refugee Section was forthcoming and outspoken in its support of the Wagner-Rogers Bill. It distributed press releases and published articles in academic journals explaining its support of refugee aid and encouraging other Americans to support refugees.¹⁴³ The AFSC also acted as a leading supporter of the bill among Christian organizations by gathering public endorsement from Christian leaders across the country. On January 9, 1939, forty seven leaders presented a petition to the White House, stating, “we conceive it to be our duty to urge the people by its congress and executive to express sympathy through special treatment of the young robbed of country, homes and parents.”¹⁴⁴ The AFSC was responsible for organizing the petition and creating a unified voice among Christian leaders.

An AFSC Refugee Appeal in 1939 is another example of the AFSC’s public support of refugee immigration and resettlement programs. It stresses the importance of helping refugees in the U.S. move out of crowded cities such as New York and giving them the aid necessary to help them to “be of the type to enrich our national life and become citizens in whom we may take pride. Help must be given them to settle in communities where their skills and professions are needed. Thus they can make a

¹⁴⁰ "German Delegation: Some Next Steps," suggested by Hertha Kraus, 2, General Files 1939 Foreign Service box, AFSC Foreign Service 1939, Refugees (General) file, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

¹⁴¹ Wyman, 75.

¹⁴² Roosevelt refused to comment on the Bill. If he had supported it, public opinion would have likely been more strongly in favor of it. Without presidential support, two thirds of Americans rejected the bill according to a poll, Breitman, 130-131.

¹⁴³ A June 8, 1939 AFSC press release announcing the release of "Refugee Facts," an AFSC publication, is titled "Quakers Refute Propaganda Against Refugees: Agency that Fed German Children after World War Cites Figures to Show that Refugee Capital and Consumer Needs Add to U.S. Employment." The pamphlet reports that the U.S. is not admitting as many immigrants as it can under its quota laws. It also argues that

valuable contribution to America."¹⁴⁵ The AFSC was eager to voice its support of the Wagner-Rogers Bill in 1939.¹⁴⁶

Clarence Pickett was also supportive of the bill. He wrote in a May 16, 1939 letter to Malcom Fowler about some of the reasons he believed the bill was important: "we need consumers. My own feeling is that the children are most satisfactory because they bring promise of making long-time use of their opportunities here, whereas older people can only be consumers."¹⁴⁷ Pickett strongly believed that the U.S. economy and society could benefit from a substantial influx of child refugees. By June 1939, however, it was clear that the children's bill was not going to pass in Congress, and AFSC members were considering alternative ways to rescue European children. A July 11, 1939 letter from Eleanor Slater outlined an alternative plan. Under the plan, "these children will not need to receive an affidavit before leaving, but may pick it up here on landing, so this also will speed up the process. The consulates already have some 400 or more such children in their files, and the State Department is favoring this plan."¹⁴⁸ The AFSC never implemented this plan, but the fact that it considered it as a viable alternative suggests that refugee aid was a top priority in 1939.

The AFSC was sensitive to the tense national sentiments, and unlike its high-profile approach in 1939, it tried to prevent its projects from being widely publicized in

immigrants are an asset to American life, Refugee Services Publicity 1939 folder, General Files 1939 (Projects-Fina Paso Seco) to (Wagner-Rogers Bill) box, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

¹⁴⁴ AFSC Foreign Services, Refugees, Children, 1939 folder, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

¹⁴⁵ "Refugee Appeal," General Files 1939 Foreign Service box, AFSC Foreign Service 1939, Refugees (General) file, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

¹⁴⁶ AFSC Foreign Service France-Relief Marseilles, Letters and cables to May-Aug. folder, General Files 1941, Foreign Service, France-Individuals to relief-Marseilles letters box, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

¹⁴⁷ May 16, 1939 letter from Clarence Pickett to Malcom Fowler, General Files 1939 Foreign Service box, AFSC Foreign Service 1939, Refugees (General) file, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

1941. Correspondence between Committee members reflected their concern about taking any bold or public stands in support of refugees due to strong anti-refugee sentiments among the U.S. general public and Congress. A May 15, 1941 letter from John Rich, AFSC Associate Secretary to Howard Kershner reflected the AFSC's concern about not publicizing its refugee-related projects. Rich wrote, "You must appreciate that, under the present circumstances, it is not advisable to publicize our activities too widely... We are very restricted in our ability to send money to France."¹⁴⁹ This statement was in sharp contrast to the nation-wide petition the AFSC had organized two years earlier in support of refugees and its press releases publicizing the necessity of its aid projects to European refugees.

Public opinion was already opposed to refugees in 1939, but as the military and political situation worsened in Europe, American anti-refugee and anti-Semitic sentiments strengthened, making the AFSC more cautious with its approaches to refugee aid and relief work. Jewish politicians were hesitant to push for legislation to aid Jewish refugees out of fear that they would be labeled as only interested in Jewish causes. Jewish organizations faced the resulting lack of interest from politicians, in addition to anti-Semitism from the general public. In a July 1938 *Fortune* poll, 66% of those questioned believed that "we should try to keep them [refugees] out."¹⁵⁰ Given the national and political sentiment against refugees by 1941, the AFSC seemed content to shift its focus away from refugees and over to relief work in Europe. Restrictionists such

¹⁴⁸ July 11, 1939 letter from Eleanor Slater to Friend, General Files 1939 Foreign Service box, AFSC Foreign Service 1939, Refugees (General) file, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

¹⁴⁹ AFSC Foreign Service France-Relief Marseilles, Letters and cables to May-Aug. folder, General Files 1941, Foreign Service, France-Individuals to relief-Marseilles letters box, AFSC Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

¹⁵⁰ Wyman, 47.

as Breckinridge Long, the head of the Special Problems Division of the State Department were working to halt all flow of refugees into the U.S. in 1941.¹⁵¹ Extra challenges from the State Department combined with an increasing need for relief in Europe helped the AFSC decide to shift its priorities from refugee aid to relief aid.

Conclusion

Given the AFSC's relief-oriented focus in 1941, its involvement in transporting three hundred children to the U.S. in 1941 and 1942 is remarkable for several reasons. First, it suggests a strong bond and sense of responsibility between the AFSC and other refugee organizations. Between 1939 and 1941, the AFSC had shifted virtually all of its efforts from refugee aid to relief work in Europe. The case of these children points to the significant ties that the AFSC had with organizations such as the JDC and USC. It was willing to devote time and personnel to an endeavor that it had abandoned in the prior year. These child transports reflect the degree to which refugee, religious, and other types of non-governmental organizations relied on each other to help them achieve their overall goals.

Second, it shows how critically important AFSC's stature had become among the refugee organizations. Because of the rise in anti-refugee and anti-Semitic sentiment, there really were few organizations in 1941 with the credibility and structure capable of carrying out such a rescue. Restrictionist government officials such as Breckinridge Long, and organizations such as the American Coalition of Patriotic Societies and the American Legion, helped shape the national anti-refugee sentiments and policies in the early 1940s. In a sense the burden fell to the AFSC almost by default. How much of a choice did the AFSC really have in deciding to organize the transports? Had it been

¹⁵¹ Feingold, 78-79.

unwilling to act, there were few if any fallback options. The AFSC then would have faced the inevitable moral question of why it abandoned innocent refugee children in their hour of greatest need.

Third, and perhaps most significant, these transport cases indicate how deeply ingrained in AFSC's leadership was its commitment to helping save lives, regardless of the dangers or its own priorities. Even though the AFSC had adjusted its mission in 1941 to providing on-site aid rather than transporting refugees, it still approached the 1941 and 1942 rescue efforts with commitment and dedication. AFSC leaders could not ignore organizations and individuals in dire need, because they understood that they were the organization of final hope.

In the end, the AFSC succeeded in saving three hundred children from almost certain death. Although it ultimately had to leave thousands of children behind as the Holocaust descended on Europe in full force, the benefits of what it did accomplish are visible even today. Most of the children that the AFSC brought to the U.S. created meaningful lives for themselves. Kern points out with pride the AFSC children's success rate in the U.S.; most have become prominent professionals in their fields. As Kern notes in hindsight, "we were completely contrary to the reason the USA wouldn't allow refugees in. They said we'd become a burden to the US."¹⁵² The question of how the children fared from their traumatic experiences, first of separation from their parents in war-torn Europe, then of escape from war-torn France and travel to the U.S., and finally

¹⁵² Interview with A. Kern.

resettlement with new families in the U.S., remains to be explored and is the subject of current research.¹⁵³

Other perspectives from this case study warrant further research as well. The U.S. government faced the difficult task of appeasing an anti-refugee American public while appearing sympathetic to the European crisis. A closer examination of the government's actions and its collaborations with the AFSC and other organizations is warranted, as is a closer look at the interactions between the AFSC and European governments.

This study of one moment in an organization's history perhaps raises more questions than it answers. We can confidently conclude, however, that the AFSC took significant risks in its decision to undertake these transports. It put itself on the line, not to mention the children and the collaborating organizations. These transports represent more than a strategic relationship between two organizations. Though AFSC leaders faced immense organizational challenges and internal conflicts, they ultimately remained loyal to the integrity of the AFSC's structure, mission, and history.

¹⁵³ Gerald Holton and Gerhard Sonnert, Professors of Physics at Harvard University, are currently undertaking a study entitled "The Second Wave: Young Refugees From Central Europe, and Their Contributions to American Culture, Science, and Society." They are studying how European children who came to the U.S. during World War II formed personal and national identities and how their experiences in pre-war Europe shaped their development and contributions as adults in the U.S.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Published materials

Chapman, Fern Schumer. Motherland: Beyond The Holocaust: A Daughter's Journey to Reclaim the Past. New York: Viking Penguin, 2000.

Close, Kathryn. Transplanted Children. New York: The United States Committee for the Care of European Children, Inc., 1953.

Curtis, Anna L. The Quakers Take Stock. United States: Island Workshop Press, 1944.

Holt, Sigrid. Foreign Relief and Rehabilitation—A Bibliography. Russell Sage Foundation, 1943.

Howard, Donald S., Editor. Recent Relief Programs of the American Friends in Spain and France. Administration of Relief Abroad: A Series of Occasional Papers. United States: Russell Sage Foundation, 1943.

Kershner, Howard. One Humanity: A Plea for our Friends and Allies in Europe. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1943.

_____. Quaker Service in Modern War: Spain and France, 1939-1940. New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1950.

Papanek, Ernst with Edward Linn. Out of the Fire: A Poignant Account of How an Eminent Educator Helped Save Jewish Children from the Hitler Onslaught. New York: William Morrow & Company, Inc., 1975.

AFSC Archival materials

Boxes

General Files 1939 Refugee Services (Projects-Finca Paso Seco) to (Wagner-Rogers Bill).

General Files 1940 Committees and Organizations (Queen Wilehlmina Fund) to (Individuals).

General Files 1941 Committees and Organizations (Spanish Refugee Relief Campaign) to (War Resisters League).

General Files 1941 Foreign Service (France Marseilles, Ltrs. from Oct.) to (Germany-Berlin Center).

General Files 1941 Foreign Service (France-Individuals to Relief-Marseilles Letters).

General Files 1941 Foreign Service (Refugee Services-Portugal-Letters from Oct. to Dec.) to (Projs-Workshop, Community Arts, NY).

Other AFSC Archival Sources

AFSC Refugee Program Historical Material folder.

Annual Reports and Financial Reports, 1939, 1940, 1941, 1942.

“List of 100 USCOM Children Scheduled to sail from Lisbon on *SS Mouzinho* about June 19, 1941.”

USCOM Papers.

Baden-Baden Report: American Friends Service Committee in France 1940 to November 1942.

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, 1940, 1941.

Secondary Sources

AFSC and Quaker-related sources

Cary, Stephen G. “Remembering Clarence Pickett: The World Brightened When He Talked About It.” Friends Journal. October 15, 1994.

Frost, J. William. "Our Deeds Carry Our Message: The Early History of the American Friends Service Committee." Quaker History. Spring 1992, No. 1. Friends Historical Association, Volume 81, 1-51.

Jonas, Gerald. On Doing Good. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971.

- Jones, Mary Hoxie. Swords into Ploughshares: An Account of the American Friends Service Committee 1917-1937. New York: The MacMillan Company, 1937.
- Jones, Rufus M. A Service of Love in War Time. New York: The MacMillan Company, 1920.
- Kenworthy, Leonard S. An American Quaker Inside Nazi Germany: Another Dimension of the Holocaust. Kennett Square, PA: Quaker Publications, 1982.
- Kenworthy, Leonard S. Living in the Light: Some Quaker Pioneers of the Twentieth Century. Volume I. Kennett Square, Pennsylvania: Friends General Conference and Quaker Publications, 1984.
- Miller, Lawrence McK. Witness for Humanity: A Biography of Clarence E. Pickett. Wallingford, Pennsylvania: Pendle Hill Publications, 1999.
- Moore, John M., Editor. Friends in the Delaware Valley: Philadelphia Yearly Meeting 1681-1981. Haverford: Friends Historical Association, 1981.
- Pickett, Clarence. Autobiography. Louis Finkelstein, Editor. Thirteen Americans: Their Spiritual Autobiographies. New York: The Institute for Religious and Social Studies, 1953.
- Pickett, Clarence. For More Than Bread: An autobiographical account of twenty-two years' work with the American Friends Service Committee. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1953.
- Schmitt, Hans A. Quakers and Nazis: Inner Light in Outer Darkness. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1997.
- Vining, Elizabeth Gray. Friend of Life: The Biography of Rufus M. Jones. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincot Company, 1958.
- Refugee-related books
- Baumel, Judith Tydor. Unfulfilled Promise: Rescue and Resettlement of Jewish Refugee Children in the United States, 1934-1945. Juneau: The Denali Press, 1990.
- Breitman, Richard. Official Secrets: What the Nazis Planned, What the British and Americans Knew. New York: Hill and Wang, 1998.
- Blum, John Morton. V Was for Victory: Politics and American Culture During World War II. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976.
- Caron, Vicky, Uneasy Asylum : France and the Jewish Refugee Crisis, 1933-1942. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999.

- David, Kati. A Child's War: World War II Through the Eyes of Children. New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 1989.
- Feingold, Henry L. The Politics of Rescue: The Roosevelt Administration and the Holocaust, 1938-1945. New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 1970.
- _____. Bearing Witness: How America and Its Jews Responded to the Holocaust. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1995.
- Genizi, Haim. America's Fair Share: The Admission and Resettlement of Displaced Persons, 1945-1952. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1993.
- Gershon, Karen, Editor. We Came as Children: A Collective Autobiography. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1966.
- Gottlieb, Amy Zahl. Men of Vision: Anglo-Jewry's Aid to Victims of the Nazi Regime 1933-1945. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1998.
- Harris, Mark Jonathan, Deborah Oppenheimer. With an introduction by David Cesarani. Into the Arms of Strangers: Stories of the Kindertransport. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2000.
- Klarsfeld, Serge. French Children of the Holocaust: A Memorial. New York: New York University Press, 1996.
- Laqueur, Walter. Generation Exodus: The Fate of Young Jewish Refugees from Germany. Hanover: Brandeis University Press, 2001.
- London, Louise. Whitehall and the Jews, 1933-1948: British Immigration Policy and the Holocaust. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Newton, Verne W. FDR and the Holocaust. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996.
- Sanders, Ronald. Shores of Refuge: A Hundred Years of Jewish Emigration. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1988.
- Silberklang, David, Editor. Yad Vashem Studies XXVII. Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, The Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority, 1999.
- Tebbel, John. The Marshall Fields: A Study in Wealth. New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1947.
- Whiteman, Dorit Bader. The Uprooted: A Hitler Legacy. New York: Plenum Press, 1993.

Wyman, David S. The Abandonment of Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941-1945. New York: Pantheon Books, 1984.

Wyman, David S. Paper Walls: America and the Refugee Crisis, 1938-1941. New York: Pantheon Books, 1968.

Relief Organization Sources

Bauer, Yehuda. American Jewry and the Holocaust: The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1939-1945. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1981.

_____. My Brother's Keeper: A History of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1974.

Cohen, Naomi W. Not Free to Desist: The American Jewish Committee, 1906-1966. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1972.

Ginzberg, Eli. Report to American Jews on Overseas Relief, Palestine, and Refugees in the United States. New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1942.

Ross, Robert W. So It Was True: The American Protestant Press and the Nazi Persecution of the Jews. Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1980.

Seymour, Harold J. Design for Giving: The Story of the National War Fund, Inc. 1943-1947. New York: Harpers & Brothers, 1947.