

‘DISPLACED SCHOLARS’

Refugees at the University of Manchester*

Bill Williams
Centre for Jewish Studies
University of Manchester

1.	<i>The Work of Rescue</i>	2
2.	<i>Manchester University and Displaced Academics</i>	3
3.	<i>A Summing-up</i>	10
4.	<i>The Anglo-German Exchange Scheme</i>	14
5.	<i>The International Student Service</i>	17
6.	<i>Refugee Students at the University</i>	23
7.	<i>Manchester University’s role : An Assessment</i>	25

The ‘cleansing’ of German universities of the decadent and oppositional elements which were seen to be undermining the mission of the nation was part of the cultural revolution wished upon the German people by their Nazi rulers. At risk were those whose racial inferiority rendered them unfit to share the Aryan future or ‘whose previous political activities [did] not offer the assurance that they will invariably and unreservedly support the National State.’ In refugee historiography this racially-charged cultural totalitarianism has typically been contrasted with the ‘spontaneous individualism’ which rendered Britain ‘the principal asylum’ for those who sought an escape.¹ The story of Britain’s reception of displaced German academics has thus been typically characterised as ‘a story to restore faith in humanity and in the fraternity of brains.’² Against a backcloth of Nazi obscurantism has been set ‘the spontaneous rising of our [British] universities and those who worked and lived there in defence of free learning.’ Britain responded ‘with deeds’ to the Nazi denial of ‘two great civilising principles ... free movement of the spirit in pursuit of truth ... [and] free movement of the spirit in the common worship of God.’³

While there can be no doubt of the impressive support offered by British universities to those displaced by the Nazi regime, the ‘liberalism’ of British academia embedded in such rhetoric requires the same degree of critical scrutiny as that applied by Louise London to the British state. This is not to say that the policies of the British state or the responses of British industrialists lacked a basis in the predominating liberalism of British society. It is to argue only that this liberalism did not exist in a

* The term ‘scholar’ is used here to embrace students as well as academic staff.

Acronyms commonly used throughout this paper are:

AAC	Academic Assistance Council
JCAFS	Joint Committee of Council and Senate on Assistance to Foreign Scholars
ISS	International Student Service
MG	Manchester Guardian
MUS	Minutes of the Senate of the University of Manchester
SPSL	Society for the Promotion of Science and Learning, the name adopted by the AAC in 1936)
VCA	Vice-Chancellor’s Archive, in the John Rylands Library.

¹ Norman Bentwich, *The Rescue and Achievement of Refugee Scholars. The Story of Displaced Scholars and Scientists, 1933-52* (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1953), xiii and 13.

² *Ibid.*, v.

³ Lord Beveridge, *A Defence of Free Learning* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), 12: the words are from a ‘sermon’ by Beveridge delivered in Carrs Lane Church in October 1935.

Bill Williams

utopian vacuum. It existed rather in a real world in which lofty idealism is inevitably diluted by the (often understandable) dictates of self-interest and by the more banal and earth-bound limitations of its proponents. In the case of the British response to displaced German (and other) academics, it might be argued that idealism was complicated both by the natural concern of British universities, 'and those who worked and lived in them', for their own academic futures, by the deeply embedded elitism of British academic institutions and by that same presumption of a latent anti-Semitism in British society which had inhibited the Home Office in the liberalisation of its immigration policies.

1. *The Work of Rescue*

Jewish and politically dissident academics were amongst the first to experience Nazi persecution and to seek refuge overseas. Since most universities and research institutes in Germany were state bodies, the series of Nazi ordinances which clarified and extended the provisions of the Basic Law of 7 April 1933 for the 'Reconstruction of the Civil Service' led to the dismissal of thousands of university teachers throughout the Reich. Those who, in Nazi terms, did not 'inspire the confidence or possess the ability necessary for the carrying on of his activity' — a category taken to include both 'non-Aryans' and political opponents of the regime — were also excluded from the new *Reichskammern* (guilds) which alone qualified them for the exercise of their cultural pursuits. Official discrimination was accompanied in the universities by the extra-legal harassment, physical abuse and peremptory dismissal of those deemed undesirable. Some Jewish academics did not require the personal experience of persecution to persuade them to depart. Others, already in posts outside Germany, decided not to return.⁴ There were non-Jewish scholars, few in number, who resigned in protest at the dismissal of their Jewish colleagues; of these, some felt sufficiently at risk to leave the country.

By early May the Vice-Chancellors⁵ of British universities had been fully alerted to the crisis in the German academy by a flood of applications for posts, many from established leaders in their academic fields. Some responded with immediate measures of support within their own universities. Their collective response, however, orchestrated by William Beveridge, Director of the London School of Economics, was the launch on 24 May 1933 of the Academic Assistance Council (AAC), the most influential of a series of bodies designed to assist the displaced academics in finding alternative work in Britain.⁶

Jewish and 'politically unreliable' students at German Universities, equally at risk of harassment and dismissal, found support chiefly from the International Student Service (ISS), a Geneva-based non-sectarian body which since the early 1920s had concerned itself with the welfare of students throughout the world. In mid-June 1933, with general approval, it decided to accept responsibility for students in Germany compelled by their race or politics to abandon their studies.⁷ At its summer conference in Luziensteig in Switzerland in August 1933 an 'autonomous executive committee' was set up, made up of representative from the national sections of the ISS in Britain, France and the United States, and under the chairmanship of the Anglican clergyman James Parkes, 'to

⁴ Of those German refugee scholars who later came to Manchester, Rudolf Peierls was in Cambridge in 1933, Hans Heilbronn in Bristol.

⁵ 'Vice-Chancellor' is the title given in England to a university's chief executive; the 'Chancellor' is a figurehead dignitary intended only to enhance the university's external relations.

⁶ Others included the Jewish Professional Committee, founded in May 1933 to find places for such professionals as doctors, lawyers, teachers and social workers and for those on the borderline between professional and academic careers. It also worked with the AAC by providing for the maintenance of some of those in academic posts (for this and others, see Bentwich, *supra* n.1, at 15-17). Lewis Namier characterised it as 'a general reserve and insurance fund for all Jewish professional refugees': VCA 7/144, Namier to the Vice-Chancellor, 21 December 1938. I am grateful to Dr. James Peters of the John Rylands Library for his help in gaining access to this archive and for his patience in guiding me through it.

⁷ *The Jewish Chronicle* (hereafter *JC*), 16 June 1933.

'Displaced Scholars'. Refugees at the University of Manchester

deal with work for student refugees from Germany.'⁸

While at once offering practical assistance to academics and students, the AAC and ISS both felt obliged to act with caution and within the framework of British immigration law. The ACC, and the constituent universities through which it operated, for the most part limited their assistance to the provision of temporary research posts which could not be seen to threaten established university teaching staff, and confined the appointments made with their financial assistance to outstanding scholars for whose expertise, it could be argued, there was no 'native' alternative. The ISS, too, bearing in mind, it was said, 'general unemployment' in Britain and the 'existing migration of Jews', at first limited its financial help to 200 or 300 students, 'selected from among the most brilliant and those who are in the last year of their studies'.⁹

Until the outbreak of war limited the possibilities of rescue, the AAC and the ISS thus struck a delicate balance between, on the one hand, responding with urgency to the increasing desperation of German students and academics and, on the other, keeping in mind both the restrictions imposed by the Home Office and the interests of the participating universities. There was also an element of self-interest. The ready availability of German (and subsequently Austrian, Czech, Spanish and Italian) refugee academics and students offered British universities a means of enhancing their status and, in particular, of strengthening further those elements of their academic life upon which their prestige was already based. The reception of refugee students and academics was as much about selection as it was about rescue.

2. Manchester University and Displaced Academics

This was certainly the case in Manchester, where, early in May 1933, the University Vice-Chancellor, the philosopher Walter (later Sir Walter) Moberly, organised a series of 'informal meetings' between members of the Senate and prominent Manchester citizens 'regarding the possible opening of a fund with the object of offering hospitality and facilities for prosecuting their work in Manchester to Professors displaced for political reasons from posts in European Universities'.¹⁰ Evidence does not exist to identify the source of the Vice-Chancellor's initiative. One of those refugees who later benefited from it believed that 'an important part' was played by Lewis Namier, the Polish-born Professor of History, a man of international reputation, Jewish origin and strong Zionist affiliations.¹¹ Certainly Namier was to become both a key figure in the University's subsequent support of refugees and one of the two members of Senate who took on the specific and thankless task of seeking out financial support from the community at large. Active in local Zionist formations, including the Manchester Friends of the Hebrew University and the Manchester Commission of the Jewish National Fund, he was alive to the possibility of using Manchester as a stepping stone which might carry welcome European talent to the Jewish-State-to-be.¹² But other members of the Senate were, from the beginning, equally active in the refugee cause, not least W.L. Bragg, the enterprising Langworthy Professor of Physics, who, as the successor of Ernest Rutherford, grasped the opportunity of attracting to his department some of the able young German scientists then at the forefront of international research in the field of theoretical and experimental physics.¹³

⁸ *JC*, 18 August 1933. It included Dr. Teich, as the representative of the World Union of Jewish Students, and Dr. Tatlow, chairman of the ISS's British section.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *MUS*, 18 May 1933.

¹¹ Sir Rudolf Peierls, *Bird of Passage: Recollections of a Physicist* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 107. For Namier, see Julia Namier, *Louis Namier: A Biography* (London, Oxford University Press, 1971).

¹² Kurt Heilbronn, a young German refugee who in 1939 sought Namier's help in finding a place on the university's course in dentistry was advised to instead seek entry to Palestine (Interview of Kurt Heilbronn by Bill Williams). Heilbronn, who, in his own words, 'sat on the steps of the Medical Department' until he was granted a place, went on to share a university prize in dental prosthetics ('University News', *The Serpent*, Vol. XXIV No.2 (1940)) and to become a dental practitioner in Manchester.

¹³ Peierls, *supra* n.11, at 96. In 1933 he encouraged Rudolf Peierls, a young German physicist, then a Rockefeller Fellow in Cambridge, to apply for an assistant lectureship in Manchester. Bragg succeeded Rutherford in 1919.

Bill Williams

Nor is it clear exactly how widely the Vice-Chancellor reached out for advice and support. One of the Manchester citizens involved was certainly the Liberal City Councillor, Sarah Laski, who went on to persuade her husband, Nathan, a textile merchant and the acknowledged lay leader of Manchester Jewry, to promise £1,000 to the Vice-Chancellor's fund from moneys collected in Manchester for the Central British Fund for German Jewry.¹⁴ Although the Vice-Chancellor had laid emphasis on supporting those displaced for *political* reasons, Nathan Laski's contribution, made in the name of the Manchester Jewish Representative Council, turned out to be exactly half the total raised initially towards a Local University Appeal Fund for the maintenance of German academics.¹⁵ It seems likely that most of the other Manchester citizens consulted at this stage were those who were later to identify themselves with the project and who were already amongst the University's major (and wealthy) patrons: Sir Thomas Barlow, Sir Christopher Needham, Sir Ernest Simon, Dr. (later Sir) Kenneth Lee, the flour magnate Robert (later Sir Robert) McDougall, and the prominent Manchester industrialist Hans Renold of Renold's Chains.¹⁶

Of these, none had displayed any earlier interest in either refugee or Jewish causes. Robert McDougall, whose wealth was built on the production of self-raising flour patented by his father, was already well-known as a major benefactor of causes in the north-west of England which ranged from the National Trust and the Youth Hostel Association to the Manchester Royal Infirmary (MRI) and his alma mater, the University of Manchester. In May 1923, following a gift of £5,000 to the MRI for the extension of its radiological department, he became a member of the University's Court of Governors, and, in October 1931, its Deputy Treasurer. In 1933, as he was being drawn into the University's plans for displaced scholars, he made the first of what were to become nationally renowned purchases of land for charitable purposes: a substantial acreage in Derbyshire (the first of many) for the National Trust and land bought for £20,000 which enabled the Quakers to launch a scheme for the provision of allotments to the unemployed.¹⁷ Donations to the University included support for the construction of the 'differential analyser' (the forerunner of the analogue computer) then being developed by the Bryce Professor of Applied Mathematics, Douglas Hartree.¹⁸

Beyond Manchester, the Vice Chancellor sought advice from William (later Lord) Beveridge, the Director of the London School of Economics, who was then in the process of organising British support for 'displaced scholars', both within his own university and within the British academy as a whole.¹⁹ 'What is being done elsewhere?' Moberly wanted to know, and what action 'can be taken which would enable the university to provide hospitality for a short time to some of the dispossessed German professors?'²⁰ Beveridge responded by sending Moberly the first draft of what was to become, a few days later, 'a public Memorandum and Appeal for establishing an Academic Assistance Council' (AAC). Beveridge's plan was based on the assumption that, bearing in mind the prior claims on their resources 'for their normal development', British universities would be able to support from their own reserves only 'a small fraction' of those 'likely to be condemned to want and idleness'.²¹ What was required, he believed, was a body which would raise funds specifically for this purpose and

¹⁴ Archives of the Manchester Jewish Refugees Committee, in Manchester Central Library Archive Department, Minutes of a Special Meeting, 25 May 1933.

¹⁵ VCA Minutes of an Advisory Conference of Representatives of the Senate on Distressed Foreign Scholars, 20 June 1933. The Vice-Chancellor reported that £2,000 was then available to the Senate for the support of displaced academics.

¹⁶ Hans Renold died in May 1943 leaving £472,000 gross.

¹⁷ For a fuller account of his benefactions, see the tribute in *Stockport Advertiser*, 23 December 1938. A Liberal in politics, he contested the High Peak constituency (without success) in 1923, 1924 and 1929. Other donations to the University included the Burlington Street Drill Hall for use by students as a centre for physical education. His donations to the National Trust for the purposes of purchasing land in Derbyshire continued during his involvement with displaced academics, over which they apparently took precedence. Beeston Tor in the Dovedale area was bought by the National Trust in 1937 from funds promised by McDougall: MG, 28 September 1937. He was knighted in the Coronation Honours List and awarded an Honorary LL.D. by the university, both in that same year.

¹⁸ In 1937 McDougall received from the university an honorary LL.D.

¹⁹ For an account of these efforts and their results, see Lord Beveridge, *supra* n.3, at ch.1; Bentwich, *supra* n.1, at ch.2.

²⁰ VCA/7/144/3, Vice-Chancellor to William Beveridge, 8 May 1933.

²¹ The press announcement of the formation of the AAC, 22 May 1933, in Beveridge, *supra* n.3, at 4-5.

'Displaced Scholars'. Refugees at the University of Manchester

which at the same time would serve as a 'clearing house', collecting information on appropriate university vacancies in Britain and elsewhere and putting potential academic refugees 'into touch with the institutions that can best help them.' The objects of the Council's attentions would be those 'who, on grounds of religion, political opinion or race are unable to carry on their work in their own country.' The intention, the Memorandum noted, was 'to prevent the waste of exceptional abilities exceptionally trained'.²²

The Memorandum made it clear that 'the issue raised at the moment' was 'not a Jewish one alone; many who have suffered or are threatened have no Jewish connection.'²³ In his earlier negotiations with the Royal Society, which subsequently lent the appeal its support and the Council its 'maximum of help' (including its accommodation), Beveridge had been dissuaded from his initial inclination to offer one of the two honorary secretaryships to 'a distinguished Jewish Professor.' Further than that, the Society had been 'strongly of the opinion that no signatory of the Appeal ... should be of Jewish origin.' In the event, Beveridge was later to reflect, only one of the forty-three signatories, all 'men of academic standing and interest', was 'definitely Jewish'; a second 'might have been treated as non-Aryan' on the basis of his name alone.²⁴ Neither the Royal Society nor Beveridge thought it necessary to explain these decisions. They appear to rest on the assumption that no public appeal on behalf of Jews alone, or which appeared to have strong Jewish support, was likely to succeed, although whether this was because Jews would be seen to possess adequate resources of their own, or because wide sections of a potentially donating public were judged anti-Semitic, is by no means clear.

What was clear, however, was that, with or without Jewish participation, Beveridge expected Jewish money to be put at the Council's disposal. In his letter to Moberly he wrote of 'the need to secure effective co-operation with people raising funds in the Jewish community ... clearly some of these resources ought to be available for academic purposes.'²⁵

The signatories to the Memorandum fought shy of politics. The AAC was not conceived, at least in public, as an anti-fascist organisation: 'our action', the Memorandum ended, 'implies no unfriendly feelings to the people of any country; it implies no judgement of forms of government or on any political issue between countries. Our only aims are the relief of suffering and the defence of learning and science.'²⁶

In this, as in other respects, Moberly followed Beveridge's lead. There was to be no diversion of the University's existing resources, no displacement of existing staff, no specific reference to 'Jews', a word which nowhere occurs in the subsequent minutes of the Senate or of its sub-committees, no politics. The academics soon to be provided by Manchester with one route of escape were simply 'foreign', 'displaced' or 'distressed'; in fact, most were also of Jewish origin, and all were fleeing regimes in which the 'forms of government' were central to their decisions to depart.

On 18 May 1933, the Senate gave a 'cordial welcome' to 'the inauguration of some scheme to alleviate the distress of foreign scholars by affording them hospitality in Manchester and at the University'; the Vice-Chancellor was empowered to put together an advisory sub-committee of six members of the Senate to formulate a plan of action.²⁷

In the meantime, in mid-June 1933 the Council of the University took the quite extraordinary step of inviting Michael Polanyi, a man of Hungarian Jewish origins, who in May had resigned his Professorship at the Kaiser-Wilhelm Institute of the University of Berlin as a protest at the treatment of

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.* The AAC came into official existence on 24 May 1933.

²⁴ Beveridge, *supra* n.3, at 9. The Jewish signatory was Samuel Alexander, the 'possible non-Aryan' Arthur Schuster.

²⁵ VCA/7/144/3, William Beveridge to the Vice-Chancellor, 9 May 1933. For this reason, he went on, 'we probably ought to add a couple of good Jewish names to the appeal'. It was apparently the advice of the Royal Society which changed his mind.

²⁶ The press announcement, *ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*, and VCA Minutes of a Meeting of the University Senate, 22 June 1933.

Bill Williams

his liberal and Jewish colleagues²⁸, to accept the Chair of Physical Chemistry, created for him in Manchester. Seen as 'one of the most prominent physical chemists of the present time'²⁹, in Germany Polanyi was in the middle of a distinguished academic career. While his own move was clearly highly-principled and it is tempting to interpret the University's action as evidence of its exceptionally liberal outlook, it seems probable that the university authorities were moved at least equally by the prospect of further enhancing a department already made famous by the pioneering work of Ernest (by then, Sir Ernest) Rutherford twenty years earlier. Polanyi rapidly made his mark, not only as a researcher and teacher, but as a magnet for external funding and as a visiting lecturer sought after by prestigious universities throughout the world. At all events the 'violent attack' on the University in the national press for its preference of a 'foreigner' over highly qualified native candidates³⁰ almost certainly dampened whatever liberal enthusiasm it had displayed in Polanyi's case or, at all events, forced it back upon a more cautious response to displaced academics. The German physicist Rudolf Peierls attributed the rejection of his own application for an assistant lectureship in Manchester in 1933, in spite of the powerful support it received from Manchester's Professor of Physics, W.L. Bragg, to the Polanyi affair.³¹ Peierls' fellow physicist, Hans Bethe, dismissed from the University of Tübingen in 1933 on account of his Jewish ancestry, in the same year was found a temporary lectureship in Manchester, apparently through the mediation of Arnold Sommerfeld, his former colleague at the University of Munich.³²

By the end of June, the Vice-Chancellor's sub-committee was in a position to make concrete recommendations to the Senate. Central to them was the creation for displaced academics of 'Honorary Research Fellowships', each worth £250 a year and tenable in the first instance for two years, 'it being clearly understood that men and women elected to Fellowships were not displacing members of the University regular teaching staff.' The Fellows would thus be 'mainly confined to research', although 'some assistance might be given by them in seminar work.' They would be people who would fit without difficulty into the University's existing pattern of research: heads of university departments were invited to make 'suggestions for openings and proposals for the type of scholar who would be most acceptable'. These suggestions would be submitted to a new standing committee of the Senate — subsequently known as the Joint Committee of Council and Senate on Assistance to Foreign Scholars (JCAFS) — which would have the power 'to consider applications and recommend candidates.' The question of whether these candidates should be academics 'already widely known' or 'junior scholars' was left for further consideration (and in reality never again debated). A letter would be sent out inviting subscriptions to supplement the £2,000 'already provided'.³³

Approving these proposals, the Senate appointed six of its senior professors — W.L. Bragg, G.W. Daniels, C.H. Dodd, Barker Fairly, Lewis Namier, J.L. Stocks and John Sebastian Bach Stopford — to serve on the Joint Committee. These were no light-weights. J.S.B. Stopford (later Baron Stopford of Fallowfield), then Professor of Anatomy, was in 1934 to succeed Moberly as Vice-Chancellor, a post in which he was to guide the university successfully through a period of major expansion. W.L. Bragg, the Professor of Physics, was the son of Sir Lawrence Bragg, himself famous

²⁸ A biographical note attached to the abstract of his papers at the University of Chicago renders this (p.5) 'prompted by repeated attacks on Jewish intellectuals'.

²⁹ MG, 20 June 1933. After studying medicine at the University of Budapest and chemistry at the Technical University in Karlsruhe, Polanyi was awarded his doctorate by Budapest in 1917. In 1920 he was appointed to assist Professor Herzog at the Kaiser-Wilhelm Institute of Textile Chemistry, later transferring to the Kaiser-Wilhelm Institute for Physical and Electrical Chemistry. In 1926 he was appointed to the professorship at the Technical University in Berlin, from which he resigned in May 1933.

³⁰ Peierls, *supra* n.11, at 96.

³¹ *Ibid.*; VCA/7/144m W.L. Bragg to the Vice-Chancellor, 21 June and 25 July 1933. On 21 June Bragg wrote to the Vice-Chancellor: 'I want to make sure that we leave no stone unturned in an effort to get Peierls here'.

³² Obituary of Bethe, who had a Jewish mother and a Protestant father, by Jeremy Bernstein in *Physics World*, Vol.18, No.4 (April 2005), 12. In 1934 Bethe was offered a permanent post at Cornell University, where he remained in post for the rest of his life.

³³ MUS, 22 June, 12 October 1933.

‘Displaced Scholars’. Refugees at the University of Manchester

as the pioneer of X-ray crystallography, work for which he was to receive a Nobel Prize.³⁴ By 1933 Lewis (later Sir Lewis) Namier had already made his mark as a leading trail-blazer in the field of British constitutional historiography. J.L. Stocks, the Aristotelian scholar who had succeeded Samuel Alexander to the prestigious Sir Samuel Hall Professorship in Philosophy, and who was also a highly respected supporter of humanitarian causes in the city — ‘a great figure in the public life of Manchester’ and ‘a leader in all progressive causes’, according to one commentator³⁵ — and an influential figure in the University Senate, went on in 1937 to become Vice-Chancellor of Liverpool University.³⁶ The three Senate members³⁷ who in 1938 replaced those committeemen who had by then left their Manchester posts included Douglas Hartree, the Bryce Professor of Applied Mathematics and a theoretical physicist whose ‘differential analyser’, built at the University (with some assistance from the JCAFS) and unveiled there in 1938, was the forerunner of the analogue computer.³⁸ But although these figures suggest the importance accorded to the Joint Committee by the Senate, its most consistently active members (and most regular attenders) were Namier, Bragg and Stocks. A handful of Manchester industrialists co-opted onto the committee attended only sporadically and without any evident effect on its strategies; their substantive contribution was to serve as links with potential donors in the Manchester business community.

An (undated) press release issued by the committee, and a public appeal launched on 27 July 1933, give a rather different twist to this course of events.³⁹ In this version, ‘simultaneously’ with the formation of the AAC in London ‘a group of Manchester citizens raised a fund with the object of enabling Manchester University to offer a temporary home to some of these [displaced] scholars.’ The money raised, amounting to £2,000, was then placed ‘unconditionally at the service of the University’ which duly ‘accepted its administration.’ The JCAFS was set up to ‘control its application.’ This seems unlikely. The letters passed between Moberly and Beveridge in May 1933 all point to an initiative from above rather than to the pre-existence of any ‘group of Manchester citizens’. On the whole, it seems likely that the narrative of the project’s origin had been carefully ‘adjusted’, perhaps to secure for it the maximum public (and financial) support. What the two versions have in common is that the proposed fellowships offered to their holders only ‘a temporary resting place’, that ‘the field of employment open to British graduates [would] not be narrowed in any sense by their presence’ and that their funding would ‘involve no burden on the general funds of the University.’⁴⁰ The fate of displaced academics in Manchester was thus dependent, in part, on the selectivity of the AAC, through whom most were introduced to the university, and on the availability of external funds. It depended equally on the university’s perception of its own needs.

Although noting the desirability of these plans, whatever their remote origins, being implemented ‘as soon as possible’⁴¹, the Senate fell somewhat short of delivering the level of response which measured up to the severity of the German emergency. A cumbersome process of selection clearly subordinated the urgent needs of German scholars to the long-term interests of the University. Nothing was to be done which would disturb the academic equilibrium of the University or the career prospects of its staff. Nothing happened quickly: it took four months for the first Honorary Fellows to be appointed. After toying with the idea of giving preference to ‘junior scholars who might find it more difficult to obtain University appointments outside Germany’, the Joint Committee hedged its bets, selecting, over the next nine years, a mixture of relative newcomers to German academia (although all with international reputations) and established scholars of world renown who would

³⁴ W.L. Bragg left Manchester in the autumn of 1937 to take up a post as Director of the National Physics Laboratory at Teddington (MG, 6 May 1937)

³⁵ MG, 8 June 1937, reporting the comments of A.D. Lindsay, the Master of Balliol.

³⁶ For details of Stocks’ activities in Manchester, see the Obituary in the MG, 14 June 1937.

³⁷ Professors Atkinson (Dean of Arts), Hartree (Professor of Applied Mathematics) and Webster (MUS, 3 February 1938).

³⁸ Peierls, *supra* n.11, at 104-105. According to Peierls, Hartree’s machine was based on an invention made earlier at M.I.T. by Vannevar Bush.

³⁹ VCA/7/144: Typewritten, but undated, press release; notes of the Joint Committee, 27 July 1933.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Advisory Conference, *ibid.*

Bill Williams

more evidently enhance the quality of the University's research and its academic reputation. Young academics without existing posts at German Universities were ruled out of contention.⁴² The stipends attached to the Fellowships were meagre, half or less of the salaries of junior academics.⁴³ Some found their positions humiliating; one foreign scholar who spent two years at the University relished the opportunity of then moving on to a post (in Cambridge) which was 'an appointment and not a gift from charity' and which immediately doubled his income.⁴⁴ The Fellowships offered little sense of security to those already uprooted; although tenable for two years, the second year depended both on cash being available and on favourable reports being received of the first year's work. Extensions were by no means a foregone conclusion.⁴⁵ Foreign scholars were not assured of their continuance at the University once their Fellowships had ended. Nor did the Senate's appeal letter meet with a ready response from within the University: by mid-October only £200 had been added to the original £2,000.⁴⁶

The Manchester JCAFS, like the AAC nationally, felt it necessary to construct procedures which lay within the framework of government's immigration policies. The committee possessed neither the power, nor perhaps the inclination, to challenge official attitudes towards foreign scholars based typically — and even in the face of an elite whose entry was likely to prove advantageous — on perceptions of Britain's self-interest. Applicants for permanent posts, seen as a potential source of competition with equally well-qualified British scholars, were generally not welcomed; those most likely to gain entry were applicants for temporary research positions who, on the completion of their tenure, were expected to re-emigrate. Rank-and-file academics, seen as the major source of competition, were less likely to gain a foothold than scholars who led their fields. All of this dovetailed neatly with the University of Manchester's contemporaneous perception of its own self-interest and with the procedures put in place in 1933 to achieve it. Nor did the University wish to be disadvantaged by British institutions which might hold out to refugee academics more attractive terms of employment: amongst the recommendations which the advisory sub-committee had put to the Senate, and which the Senate accepted, was that an attempt should be made to bring a degree of uniformity to the responses of British universities to German refugee academics, a uniformity achieved in the event by government edict.

While providing 'research facilities' in terms of laboratories, equipment and libraries for the Fellows, the University showed no inclination to dip into its own financial reserves; its decided preference was to supplement money raised locally for the University Fund with subventions from the Rockefeller Foundation⁴⁷, the Academic Assistance Council and the Professional Committee for German-Jewish Refugees (also founded in May 1933), all national bodies centred in London.⁴⁸ Offers of Fellowships were often conditional on support being received from other sources. Individual philanthropists, like McDougall, such local bodies as the Manchester Committee on Cancer Research, and local Jewish agencies with access to the Central British Fund were drawn in to help in particular cases.

The link with the AAC, which body took on an official existence on 24 May 1933, proved particularly useful. Rapidly establishing itself as the official medium through which German academics made contact with British universities, and as the major source of small grants which tided them over as they sought posts, the AAC supplied Manchester with most of its applicants. In October 1933, after correspondence with the Vice-Chancellor, the Council declared itself ready, in some cases

⁴² VCA, JCAFS, 18 October 1933.

⁴³ They were based on the levels of support offered by the AAC.

⁴⁴ Peierls, *supra* n.11, at 114.

⁴⁵ E.g., Vice-Chancellor to Professor Edward Robertson, 18 May 1936 (VCA/7/144).

⁴⁶ MUS, 12 October 1933.

⁴⁷ VCA/7/144/3, Rockefeller Foundation, New York, to the Vice-Chancellor, 2 August 1933. The Foundation would be able to supplement Manchester's funds in 'particular cases' although not for engineers, applied scientists or classicists.

⁴⁸ JCAFS, 20 September 1933. The Vice-Chancellor reported that he had written to Mr. Van Sickle of the Rockefeller Foundation about the possibility of help. Professor Stocks was said to be in correspondence with the AAC on the allocation to the University of persons receiving grants from the Council.

‘Displaced Scholars’. Refugees at the University of Manchester

to bear part of a Fellow’s stipend, in others to accept full financial responsibility for scholars accommodated by the University and drawing upon its facilities.⁴⁹ At the same time, in keeping with the Senate’s self-interested caution, it undertook not to ‘allocate’ scholars to the University from its growing pool of applicants without first seeking the Joint Committee’s consent.⁵⁰ For Manchester, as for other British universities, the AAC became a kind of clearing-house, receiving applications in its rooms at Burlington House, selecting those it judged to have a reasonable chance of obtaining an academic post in Britain, putting them in touch with appropriate institutions, offering universities help in negotiating their entry and work permits with the Home Office, providing them with temporary financial support on their arrival and, once they had found posts, supplementing, and sometimes paying, their University salaries and the maintenance costs of their families.⁵¹ Manchester made rather more sporadic use of the Rockefeller Foundation, the Medical Research Council and the Professional Committee for German-Jewish refugees⁵², negotiating grants or supplements for particular scholars only when other sources of finance ran dry.

By such devices, Manchester was able to draw in members of Fascist Europe’s academic elite — at least thirty-four in all between 1933 and 1939⁵³ — at relatively low cost and with a minimum of disruption. There was no place for the un-tenured or the mediocre, no scope for collective rescue, and, critically, no apparent attempt to prioritise the imperative of escape. The yardsticks were the AAC’s assessment of the absorbent powers of British academia as a whole, Manchester’s judgement of its own capacity to absorb émigrés without disadvantage to itself, and the availability of the necessary funds. Finance was a major problem. The eight Honorary Fellows appointed in 1933 absorbed all but a tiny fraction of the Joint Committee’s initial resources; only £250 was held back as an emergency reserve. Professors Stocks and Namier, deputed in 1935 to seek out private donations, met with limited success. Their major (perhaps their only) coup was to secure the offer, in October 1935, of £2100 covenanted over seven years by a consortium of Manchester businessmen of whom the leading figure was Sir Thomas Barlow.⁵⁴ This did not resolve the committee’s immediate cash-flow problems. Twice — in October 1935 and February 1937 — the Committee declined to recommend appointments in the light of its substantial deficits.⁵⁵ In February 1937 the Vice-Chancellor wrote to a colleague: ‘the money which the University has had to support Foreign Scholars is running out, and we are unable to give any further support in the future.’⁵⁶ In December 1938 Lewis Namier, in the forefront of those pressing for the entry of refugee scholars, informed the Vice-Chancellor that the JCAFS ‘was overwhelmed with requests from people in severe distress and even in danger, and have therefore to exercise the severest censorship of applications.’⁵⁷

The committee’s major external supporter, the AAC [its name changed in 1936 to the Society for the Promotion of Science and Learning (SPSL)], ‘always in financial difficulty’ according to Beveridge⁵⁸, was itself under particularly intense pressure following the Anschluss, Kristallnacht and the intensification of the Civil War in Spain. Its fourth report, issued in November 1938, noted that the ‘series of disasters’ which had overtaken Europe during 1937-38 had produced a rapid rise in the

⁴⁹ JCAFS, 20 September 1933 *et passim*.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Louise London, *Whitehall and the Jews 1933-1948: British immigration policy, Jewish refugees and the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 47-50.

⁵² The Professional Committee was described by Namier as ‘a general reserve and insurance fund for all the Jewish professional refugees’ (Lewis Namier to the Vice-Chancellor, 21 December 1938, in VCA/7/144).

⁵³ See list below. I have not included the three Czech clinicians, who may not have occupied academic posts. By mid-1935, 148 refugee academics had found temporary, and 60 permanent, posts in Britain. Britain provided the ‘first refuge’ for over a thousand scholars who had emigrated from Germany by 1938 (London, *supra* n.51, at 48).

⁵⁴ JCAFS, 9 October 1935: the consortium included ‘Barlow, £1,000, Barclay, £350, Renold £70, Turner, £250 over five years, Wolfson £20’ (JCAFS, 30 April 1936). The only other donation attributable to their efforts was £175 from Robert McDougall.

⁵⁵ JCAFS, 7 October 1935, when the deficit stood at £867, and 4 February 1937, when it was £200.

⁵⁶ VCA/7/144, Vice-Chancellor to Dr. E.M. Brockbank, 23 February 1937.

⁵⁷ VCA/7/144, Lewis Namier to the Vice-Chancellor, 21 December 1938.

⁵⁸ Beveridge, *supra* n.3, at 24.

Bill Williams

number of dismissals from German universities, the displacement of 418 academic workers from universities in Austria and the beginning of an exodus from Spain, Portugal, and from Italy, where Racial Laws on the German model had been introduced during the summer of 1938.⁵⁹ By November 1938 the total number of teachers and researchers 'displaced' in Germany alone had exceeded 14,000; some of those whose first refuge had been in Spain were now persuaded by events to move on to Britain. In Italy a little over 90 holders of professorial rank had been dismissed, together with a large number of junior lecturers.⁶⁰ In view of its 'limited funds' the SPSL was exercising 'extreme caution' in inviting even the Austrians to take refuge in Britain; the fate of refugees from Chinese universities destroyed by the advancing Japanese was placed in the hands of the ISS.⁶¹

In the circumstances academic staff at Manchester University were persuaded to join a SPSL fund-raising campaign organised on its behalf by David Clayhorn Thomson: it was important to impress upon the public, Thomason had argued, that British colleagues were 'playing their part' in the support and rescue of refugee academics.⁶² Stopford himself joined the National Appeals Committee.⁶³ On 8 February 1939 a Manchester a sub-committee of the Appeal Fund, of which Ross Waller, the new Director of Extra-Mural Studies, was a prominent member, and Patrick Blackett, who in the autumn of 1937 had succeeded Bragg as Professor of Physics, perhaps the chairman, organised a meeting in the university's Whitworth Hall, with a platform party which included the local president of the National Union of Teachers and the President of the Manchester and Salford Trades Council.⁶⁴ Although no record exists of the amounts raised for the SPSL at this and other meetings in Manchester, it was certainly insufficient, taken with its own bankruptcy, to convince the JCAFS that its operations remained viable. Even before the outbreak of war rendered the project obsolete, the committee had effectively ceased its work of rescue; between February and September 1939, as the European situation worsened, only two further scholars were added to the university's list of honorary fellows, one from Italy and one from Spain.

3. A Summing-up

From 1934 until the outbreak of war, as the outlook for German-Jewish academics became increasingly perilous, the Committee had been able to recommend only two or three appointments each year; of a total of sixteen appointees in this period, two were Spanish scholars endangered by the Franco regime following the Civil War in Spain, one a refugee from fascist Italy. The Senate was reluctant to divert to the work of rescue moneys from the University's own resources, which were seen as badly needed to upgrade some of its more 'inadequate and undignified makeshift premises', to provide new laboratories and lecture theatres' for its 2,600 full-time students, and so both 'consolidate' the University's international reputation for original research and scholarship and 'give better service' to the local hospitals, clinics and industries with which it had long been linked.⁶⁵ In the

⁵⁹ For the application of the racial laws in Italian universities, see Giorgio Israel and Pietro Nastasi, *Scienza e razza nell'Italia fascista* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1998), 252-256.

⁶⁰ Of the two 'displaced' Italians taken on by the University of Manchester, Bruno Rossi (1905-1993) was an experimental physicist and one of the pioneers of research on cosmic rays. Before coming to Manchester, he had held a full professorship at the University of Padua from 1932 to 1938 (Israel and Nastasi, *supra* n.59, at 160f., 173, 254, 316, 358). Beniamino Segre (1903-1977) had been Professor of Analytical Geometry at the University of Bologna since 1931 (*op. cit.*, at 159, 252, 302, 325-6).

⁶¹ Bentwich, *supra* n.1, at 23. VCA/7/369/1, 4th Report of the SPSL. By 1939, the ISS had evolved separate sections for Austrian and Chinese Relief.

⁶² VCA/7/369/1, SPSL to the Vice-Chancellor, 10 January 1939; R.M. Cooper, ed., *Refugee Scholars: Conversations with Tess Simpson* (Leeds: Moorland Books, 1992), 93.

⁶³ VCA/7/369/6, SPSL to the Vice-Chancellor, 7 November 1938.

⁶⁴ VCA/7/369/1, David Clayhorn Thomson to the Vice-Chancellor, 26 January 1939; Ross Waller to the Vice-Chancellor, 8 December 1938; P.M.S. Blackett to the Vice-Chancellor, 8 December 1938.

⁶⁵ 'The University of Manchester' by 'a Manchester Graduate' in the *Manchester and Salford Women Citizen* No.225, May 1937, pp.5-6. As examples of the University's growing international repute, the article cites its Department of Organic Chemistry as the first to study public health and preventive diseases and the 'pioneer work' of its Department

'Displaced Scholars'. Refugees at the University of Manchester

spring of 1937, at a public meeting attended by 'friends of the University' and 'civic heads of the region', the University launched a new appeal for £300,000 for 'a comprehensive scheme of development' which would replace 'inadequate and undignified makeshift premises' with new laboratories and lecture theatres; in such circumstances, the funding of displaced scholars was not a priority.⁶⁶

Anti-Semitism played no part in such a decision. Nor, with Namier so central to its operations, and in the light of the University's long-standing relationship with the Jewish community, does it seem likely that the Committee exercised any particular caution in the case of Jewish applicants. At the same time, the word 'Jew' is not to be found in the minutes either of the Senate or of the Joint Committee. It may well be that, at least in public, and in line with the decisions of the AAC's founders, the Committee felt it to be diplomatic to stress that those it was rescuing were the victims of political rather than racial persecution.

However, a sinister note pervades the Committee's attempts, beginning in May 1935, to persuade the German émigré pianist Dr. Artur Schnabel to give a concert in aid of its funds.⁶⁷ While much of the long delays to which the negotiations were then subject might be put down to the logistics of a popular musician's busy schedule, Schnabel also made it clear from the beginning that he had personal objections to being publicly identified with the raising of funds for displaced German scholars. 'It has been, so far and for many reasons, my attitude', he wrote in April 1935 to J.L. Stocks, to whom he had initially expressed a willingness to appear in Manchester, 'not to participate directly in any public activity linked with present German conditions, thus I have not yet accepted one of the invitations to play for victims of the Nazi regime.'⁶⁸ He wished in the case of the present invitation, he continued, neither to deviate from this position nor to set a precedent which might encourage others to invite him to play for a similar purpose. On 17 October, 1937, as negotiations neared a successful conclusion, he noted, 'My dislike to appear publicly in any connection with political matters or politically originated [sic] organisations has not become weaker since I wrote in 1935'. While it was acceptable 'to have some general reference to strengthen some funds instituted to help distressed conditions in the academic district [sic]', no mention was to be made 'as to the places where those Scholars had their activities before getting in want of help'.⁶⁹ In the event, in what might appear rather less than a complete deference to his wishes, the printed programme for Schnabel's recital, given in the Whitworth Hall of the University on 8 December 1937, read that it was 'in aid of the Fund for Distressed Foreign Scholars'.⁷⁰ Of the profit of £118 made by the event, half was added to the JCAFS fund, half to the International Students Service 'for the benefit of refugee students from Germany'.⁷¹

Schnabel's stance is not readily explicable, especially since he himself chose not to explain it, even in private correspondence. It may have been part of a general desire to keep music out of politics; perhaps he was understandably concerned for the fate of fellow musicians still performing in Nazi Germany; perhaps he feared the effect on his potential audience of supporting German exiles. He does not appear either to condone the activities of the Nazi regime or to lack sympathy for its victims:

for the Education of the Deaf. Apart from the full-time students, the University's Extra Mural Department organised classes for over 2000 people.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* The university's student body is said to have doubled since 1913. Amongst the innovations of which the university was proud, but which required further funding, was the first Chair in organic chemistry, the first department to study public health and preventive medicine and a 'pioneering' department for the education of the deaf.

⁶⁷ The correspondence is in the University of Manchester Archives, VCA/8/162. Schnabel had been given an Honorary Doctorate in Music by the University in October 1937 (MG, 13 October 1937).

⁶⁸ Schnabel to Professor J.L. Stocks, 15 April 1935.

⁶⁹ Schnabel to the Vice-Chancellor, University of Manchester, 17 and 26 October, 1937.

⁷⁰ Copy of the Programme in VCA/8/162; Vice-Chancellor of the University of Manchester to Schnabel, 3 June 1935, 12 October and 2 November 1937. The situation is summarised in JCAFS, 16 May 1935, and MUS, 20 January 1938.

⁷¹ H.P. Turner to the Vice-Chancellor, University of Manchester, 12 January 1938: MUS, 20 January 1938. Turner's recommendation that 'organising expenses' of £22.8.6 be paid out of university's ordinary funds rather than those of the JCAFS was apparently rejected (Statement of the Foreign Scholars Fund, 11 January 1938, in VCA/8/162).

Bill Williams

on one occasion he refers explicitly to ‘the miserable fate of the exiles from Germany.’⁷² On the other hand, it is difficult to rule out self-interest in a man who spent part of every year in his villa on Lake Como in Fascist Italy⁷³; it may be that he did not wish at this stage to rule out the possibility of appearing in Germany.

Rather less baffling is the rampant Germanophobia and unabashed nativism of Humphrey Procter-Gregg, the Senior Lecturer [and later Professor] in the University’s School of Music, whom the Vice-Chancellor had invited, along with HP Turner, the University’s Director of Extra-Mural Studies, to make the arrangements necessary for Schnabel’s recital. While declaring his ultimate concern to back the Vice-Chancellor to the best of his ability, Procter-Gregg found himself ‘unable to share the Schnabel-worship of a big public in Manchester’. ‘I have never been in sympathy with him or his aims’, he wrote, ‘my whole sympathies are with the furtherance of English scholars and English music and I feel he stands for the cause of his oriental [sic] compatriots really, which is no doubt admirable both for him and for them, but English music has had a lot of that to endure. *Our* unplaced scholars and unplaced concert hall [sic] can find no Schnabel to give a recital either to raise funds or bring credit and first-rate music into our English sphere; and such a content as he proposes [a programme of pieces by Bach, Beethoven and Webber] will make a big noise in Manchester and is bound to react on any efforts, enterprises and causes *of our own*. In Manchester music particularly there are many people to whom charity always begins abroad, and I don’t blame them for feeling that way. But I don’t feel that way myself’.⁷⁴

Procter-Gregg had other reservations. It was his firm belief that music, which rightfully belonged only to the spheres of art and education, should not be ‘utilised for political, national or even charitable purposes’. He found it difficult to accept responsibility for going along with Schnabel in not informing the public of the true purpose of the recital; the result, he believed, would be ‘public speculation as to what it was really for’.⁷⁵ Nor would he accept responsibility for Schnabel’s chosen programme; the 53-minute piece composed by Beethoven in his youth had subsequently been rejected (so Procter-Gregg claimed) by the composer himself.⁷⁶ It is difficult to escape the conclusion that what Procter-Gregg really objected to was what he chose to see as the un-English music used to promote an un-English cause.⁷⁷ For his part, the Vice-Chancellor used Procter-Gregg’s obsequiousness to politely brush his objections aside.

Whatever the public face of the Senate, however, and whatever the meaning of Schnabel’s caution and Procter-Gregg’s critique, in 1933 alone the Committee found temporary places of safety for at least eleven besieged German-Jewish academics, all of whom were later able to establish successful academic careers in Britain or the United States, some on at least the partial basis of their work in Manchester. It was in his first year in Manchester that Rudolf Peierls, later to join the Manhattan Project, wrote his first published papers in the field of nuclear physics.⁷⁸ The Fellowships provided the time and space for the displaced to reassess their academic prospects and to seek out more prestigious, more appropriate or more permanent openings. Some did not remain long in Manchester. Peierls himself, one of the first Fellows, left in October 1935 to take up a research post at the Royal Society’s Mond Laboratory in Cambridge.⁷⁹ Hans Heilbronn, appointed to a Fellowship in the Department of Mathematics in 1933 also departed in October 1935, to a Bevan Fellowship at Trinity College, Cambridge.⁸⁰ In 1935 the psychologist David Katz, after two years in Manchester,

⁷² Schnabel to Professor J.L. Stocks, 15 April 1935.

⁷³ His letters to Manchester in July and October 1936 come from Tremezzo, Lago di Como, Villa Ginetta.

⁷⁴ Humphrey Procter-Gregg to the Vice-Chancellor, University of Manchester, 18 August 1937 [Procter-Gregg’s own emphasis, by underlining].

⁷⁵ Humphrey Procter-Gregg to Sydney Moss (the Vice-Chancellor’s secretary), 11 October 1937.

⁷⁶ Humphrey Procter-Gregg to Sydney Moss, 22 September 1937.

⁷⁷ Procter-Gregg became a passionate follower of the ‘new Halle’, the Halle Orchestra as it was ‘reconstituted’ by John Barbirolli (Letter from Procter-Gregg in MG, 13 July 1943).

⁷⁸ Peierls, *supra* n.11, at 102-3.

⁷⁹ JCAFS, 9 October 1935.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

‘Displaced Scholars’. Refugees at the University of Manchester

accepted ‘the hospitality of Professor Cyril Burt in the psychological laboratory of University College, London’ and ‘facilities for research on animal behaviour at the Royal Zoological Society’s Gardens’ provided by Julian Huxley.⁸¹

While never veering from its strategies of self-interest and caution, the committee proved more flexible than its original remit appeared to demand. Most scholars who requested them received extensions to their two-year tenures, if only with the partial aid of AAC or some other external body. The tenure of the historian Martin Weinbaum who arrived in 1933, was extended until 1938, when he departed for the United States with the help a small grant from the committee towards the cost of transporting his furniture and library.⁸² From the beginning of 1935 the Fellows became eligible to study for the university’s higher degrees and received occasional help with their fees.⁸³ In practice, most Heads of Department felt only partly bound by the official restrictions on teaching placed on the Fellows, often drawing them not only into ‘seminar work’ but into the regular lecturing, demonstrating and supervision programmes of their departments.⁸⁴ Only two, however — the physiologist Walter Deutsch and the economist Adolf Lowe — secured permanent posts in Manchester, both with the aid of external funding.⁸⁵ Most made the exits expected of them by the government and increasingly encouraged by the AAC.⁸⁶

This was not always easy in the case of the less eminent of the University’s refugee scholars. On occasion the JCAFS clearly felt obliged to secure the future of a Fellow the renewal of whose contract it had recommended more than once, but who was unable to find a post elsewhere. This was the case, for example, with Dr. Arthur Lasnitzki, a displaced Jewish scholar from the University of Berlin, whose Research Fellowship in the Cancer Research Department of the Manchester University Medical School, originally assigned to him at the end of 1934, was renewed annually (with the help of the AAC, the Professional Committee for Jewish Refugees, the Manchester branch of the CBF and the Manchester Committee for Cancer Research) until November 1938, when, with the University lacking funds to further extend his stay, and other sources of support exhausted, an increasingly ‘desperate’ Lasnitzki himself had failed to find a permanent post.⁸⁷ His cause was taken up not only by Namier and Raper, as members of the JCAFS, but by a ‘terribly troubled’ Vice-Chancellor, who wrote personally to Nathan Laski to seek his help in finding a post for Lasnitzki at the Jewish Hospital.⁸⁸ Raper wrote to a series of pharmaceutical chains, including Boots, Burroughs Welcome and British Drug Houses, seeking work for Lasnitzki ‘even at a few pounds a week ... to keep the wolf from the door.’⁸⁹ Namier left no stone unturned: those he approached on Lasnitzki’s behalf included the A.D. Lindsay, Master of Balliol; Walter Adams, secretary of the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning; ‘a millionaire academic’ with whom he was working on a new edition of the letters of Horace Walpole; and, as a ‘distant chance’, ‘an [anonymous] old Duke’.⁹⁰ Laski, unable to find Lasnitzki a post at the Jewish Hospital, where the financial situation was ‘very bad’, suggested to the Vice-Chancellor a lunchtime meeting with a ‘gentleman’ who ‘with nice handling and a bit of flattery’

⁸¹ Report attached to JCAFS, 9 October 1935. The same report notes that the mathematician Dr. Mahler had left in 1934 after one year for the University of Groningen; Dr. Rudolf Baer, another mathematician, in 1935, after two years, for the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton; the physicist Erich Herlinger, in 1933, after only a few months in Manchester, for a post in Palestine.

⁸² MUS, 3 November 1938.

⁸³ MUS, 17 January and 7 March 1935; JCAFS, 13 February 1935.

⁸⁴ Report attached to JCAFS, 9 October 1935 *passim*.

⁸⁵ MUS. For Lowe 30 April 1936, see entries of 20 January 1938 and 3 November 1938, when he was granted £600 a year (paid in part by the Rockefeller Foundation) to remain at the University until 1941 as Lecturer in Modern Political Philosophy. For Otto Deutsch, see JCAFS, 8 June 1936 and 5 November 1936, when he was able to supplement a part-time lectureship at the University with part-time work as a biochemist at Christie’s Hospital and the Radium Institute. £600 of his University salary during 1936-38 was paid from funds made available by Nathan Laski.

⁸⁶ London, *supra* n.51, at 49-50.

⁸⁷ Lasnitzki to the Vice-Chancellor, 6 October 1938 (VCA/7/144).

⁸⁸ The Vice-Chancellor to Nathan Laski, 14 October 1938 (VCA/7/144).

⁸⁹ H.S. Raper to the Vice-Chancellor, 7 October 1938 (VCA/7/144).

⁹⁰ Namier to the Vice-Chancellor, 19 February and 29 June 1937; the Master of Balliol to Namier, 22 June 1937; Namier to Walter Adams, 8 July 1937 (VCA/7/144).

Bill Williams

might produce 'a fair sum'.⁹¹ Meantime, Lasnitzki himself, having come to believe that funds were now available only for 'fresh refugees', became increasingly 'desperate'.⁹² On the brink of impoverishment, and possible deportation, he was finally saved by the offer of a post at the University of Bristol.

While the efforts on Lasnitzki's behalf suggest a degree of altruism in the affairs of the JCAFS, his failure to secure tenure in Manchester re-emphasises the priority accorded to the University's own best interests. In this the University's private patrons, each naturally seeking a visible return for his money, were inevitably complicit. Approached by a University Professor in 1934 to support a pure mathematician whose work was unlikely to further the production of the differential analyser, McDougall replied that he was not prepared to give £175 'just to aid a particular scholar'; he would give support for one year only if he had an assurance that 'the coming here of a German scholar is of real service and importance', and for a second only if 'adequate results' had accrued from the first.⁹³

Given the criteria of selection, it is hardly surprising that Heads of Departments who received 'Foreign Scholars' through the JCAFS had little doubt of their worth. The only report on their work to survive, presented by the Joint Committee to the Senate in October 1935, is effusive in its praise of the earliest recruits. All had conducted experiments or investigations and published papers in academic journals which were seen as 'valuable contributions' to their fields of study. Their research had been original, their attitudes co-operative, their work-rates impressive. Building on their work in Germany and elsewhere, they had enhanced areas of research in which the University already had a special interest: the pathology of anaemia and scurvy (Deutsch), respiratory dust diseases in the cotton industry (Prausnitz), cancer research (Lasnitzki), child psychology (Katz)⁹⁴, the mathematical treatment of nuclear physics (Peierls and Bethe), crystallography (Berg) and English constitutional history (Weintaub). One way of seeing the arrival of displaced academics in Manchester is as the temporary intensification of the long-standing international communion of scholars about to be shattered by the same Nazi policies and German conquests which had generated the refugees. From Manchester, displaced scholars continued to attend conferences in European centres of learning which lay outside the German Pale.⁹⁵

*'Foreign Scholars' selected by the Joint Standing Committee on Assistance to Foreign Scholars for appointments at the University of Manchester, 1933-1939*⁹⁶

Dr. Reinhold Baer (Halle/Mathematics) HRF⁹⁷/1933

Dr. W.F. Berg (Physics) Research for Ph.D/1933

Dr. Hans Bethe (Physics) Temporary Assistant Lectureship/1933

Mr. Jacob J. Bickerman (Colloid Chemistry) HRF/1935

Dr. Walter Deutsch [later Dale?] (Düsseldorf/Medicine, Physiology) HRF/1933

⁹¹ Laski to the Vice-Chancellor, 14 October 1938 (VCA/7/144).

⁹² Lasnitzki to the Vice-Chancellor, 6 October 1938; Dr. Malka Lasnitzki to the Vice-Chancellor, 22 December 1938 (VCA/7/144).

⁹³ Professor Mordell to Robert McDougall, 14 December 1934; Mordell to the Vice-Chancellor, 17 December 1934; McDougall to the Vice-Chancellor, 14 December 1934 (VCA/7/144).

⁹⁴ See also correspondence about Katz between T.H. Pear, Professor of Psychology, and the Vice-Chancellor, filed under 'David Katz' in VCA/7/144.

⁹⁵ Peierls, *supra* n.11, at 109. In 1934 Peierls attended conferences of physicists in Leningrad and Geneva.

⁹⁶ Based chiefly on the minutes and reports to Senate of the JCAFS, 1933-39. The list may well be incomplete: the minutes of the JCAFS after February 1937 have apparently not survived. Entries in round brackets are taken from a poor reproduction of part of a list of refugee scholars prepared by Esther Simpson, secretary of the AAC, in Cooper, *supra* n.62, at 36. Other names are taken from the 'university intelligence' section of the student magazine, *The Serpent*.

⁹⁷ HRF: Honorary Research Fellowship tenable for two years at £250 a year. This was a post specifically created by the University at the suggestion of the Joint Committee.

'Displaced Scholars'. Refugees at the University of Manchester

Dr. Valliesia Arturo Duperier (Madrid/Physics) HRF/1939
Dr. Hans Heilbronn (Göttingen and Bristol⁹⁸/Mathematics) HRF 1935
Dr. Erich Herlinger (Tech Hochschule, Berlin/Physics) (Tech Hochschule, Berlin/Physics) HRF/1933
Dr. H.C. Hilman (Economics)
Dr. Kurt Jackel (Breslau/Philology) HRF/1934
Dr. Anni Jacob (Frankfurt-am-Main/Organic Chemistry) HRF/1938
Professor David Katz (Rostock, Mecklenberg/Psychology) HRF/1933
Dr. Arthur Lasnitzki (Berlin/Medicine, Cancer Research) HRF/1935
Dr. Ulrich Lauterbach (Breslau/German) Assistant in German, 1939
Professor Adolf Lowe (Frankfurt/Economics) HRF/1933
Dr. Juan Luis Madinaveitia (Madrid/Organic Chemistry) HRF/1938
Dr. Kurt Mahler (Germany/Mathematics) HRF/1933
Dr. Rudolf Peierls (Leipzig and Cambridge⁹⁹/Physics) HRF/1933
Dr. Eugen Pollak (Austria/Medicine) Neurologist, Manchester Royal Infirmary.
Dr. Karl Prausnitz (Medicine/Bacteriology and Preventive Medicine) HRF/1933
Dr. Erwin Rosenthal (Germany/Semitic Studies) HRF/1935
Dr. Bruno Rossi (Padua/Experimental Physics) HRF/1939
Miss Eva Sansome (Botany) HRF/1938
Dr. Beniamino Segre (Bologna/Analytical Geometry)
(Dr. [Hans?] Weiner Singer (Germany/Economics))
(Dr. Otto Skutsch (Germany/Classics) Assistant lectureship in Greek and Latin/1939)
[Dr] W.S. Sondhelm MacLaren Cotton Industry Research Fellow/1939
Dr. Martin Weinbaum (Berlin/History) HRF/1933
Three (unnamed) Czech doctors. To aid in clinical work/1938.

Refugee Scholars at the Manchester College of Technology [Manchester University's Faculty of Technology], 1933-39

Dr. Abraham Buraway (Germany/Chemistry)
Heinz [?] Raudnitz (Germany/Chemistry)

4. *The Anglo-German Exchange Scheme*

There were three ways in which students from Nazi Germany, whether or not they saw themselves as refugees, might gain entry to the University of Manchester. One was by direct application as individuals; once accepted their status as students entitled them, under British immigration law, to an extension of their period of legal residence in Britain, at least until the completion of their courses. This was the mechanism chosen by a handful of German students anxious, either as Jews or as Communists, and sometimes as both, to leave Germany after 1933. Amongst them were the mathematician Carl Bunemann, from Hamburg, and the Communist Berliner, Hermann Ehlert, who, after gaining entry to Britain as a visitor in the autumn of 1933, in October 1934 registered as a student in the Department of Economics. A second route was an Anglo-German student exchange scheme initiated by the German academic, Dr. Werner Picht, in the mid-1920s 'to aid in bringing about international friendship and good will in the academic world', and continued after 1933 for purposes rather more sinister. Finally, there was the International Student Service (ISS), a body based in Geneva, which in 1933 was called upon by the League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to accept responsibility for German students displaced by Nazi policies, and which did so

⁹⁸ At the time of his appointment to a Manchester Fellowship, Heilbronn, whose academic base was in Göttingen, was a visiting lecturer at the University of Bristol.

⁹⁹ At the time of his appointment, Peierls was on two years leave of absence from the University of Zurich as a Fellow at Cambridge funded by the Rockefeller Foundation. Born in Berlin, he was educated at the Universities of Berlin, Leipzig and Zurich. In 1933, he felt unable, on account of his Jewish origins, to return to Germany.

‘by common consent’.¹⁰⁰

The Anglo-German Exchange Scheme (*Akademischer Austauschdienst*) was the response of Picht, and the German ‘industrialists, financiers ... commercial magnates and university people’ who backed him, to ‘a political situation [in the 1920s] becoming increasingly favourable to the resumption of friendly relations between the universities of the countries which were adversaries in the last war.’ An ‘interchange of students’ was, in effect, a minor mechanism in the German strategies of rapprochement with Britain, the United States and other of their former enemies, which followed the war. In the case of Britain the stated intention was to revive the interest of ‘English students in German universities and vice versa’ which had fallen into abeyance. It was a scheme ‘strictly non-political and neutral in all other directions’, based only on ‘the principle of intellectual comradeship’ and calculated only ‘to gradually produce genuine amity.’ It was on this basis that Picht opened up the negotiations with ‘representatives of British universities’ which led to the commencement of the scheme in the summer of 1926. In each country, participating universities, which in Britain included Manchester, undertook to offer exchange students free tuition for one year, and to meet the cost of their maintenance in hostels or private lodgings. In this, they would receive a degree of support from a ‘central fund’, administered by a German-led Anglo-German Academic Board in London, to which the Rhodes Trustees agreed to donate £500 a year and which was to be augmented by ‘a continuous campaign’ of fund-raising.¹⁰¹ The Board, which included representatives from British Universities, including Manchester, effectively determined the policy, and the viability, of the Anglo-German Academic Bureau, which was the British branch of the *Akademischer Austauschdienst*¹⁰².

London and Oxbridge were at first the scheme’s major British beneficiaries. Of the 28 British students (23 for men and 5 for women) placed in Germany during the first four years of the scheme’s operation, most were from Oxford or Cambridge: Manchester received only one in 1928 and two in 1929. Of the 22 German students received in Britain in those same years, only five came to provincial universities, two of them to Manchester.¹⁰³

However, following a trial run judged by its German organisers to have been successful — ‘in many cases they [the English students] have acquired fresh point of view from which to regard the world’ — the withdrawal of the Rhodes grant in 1930, and the increasing difficulty experienced in raising adequate funds at a time of economic recession, faced the scheme with financial problems, aggravated, it was said, by the ‘costliness’ of Oxford and Cambridge, the universities to which German students were ‘naturally more attracted’.¹⁰⁴ The result was a pared down scheme in which four ‘city universities’, Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham and Bristol, each ‘generously’ agreed to offer one free place a year (with free maintenance) to a German student in return for the right to nominate one of their own graduates for a studentship financed by the *Akademischer Austauschdienst*.¹⁰⁵ In these circumstances, Manchester, which in 1932 received a student of economics from the University of Cologne, was regarded by the German organisers as a particularly ‘faithful supporter’ of the Exchange

¹⁰⁰ Bentwich, *supra* n.1, at 123.

¹⁰¹ VCA/7/166, Undated (1926/7) Memorandum on Anglo-German Student Exchange submitted [to British Universities] by the *Akademischer Austauschdienst* in Berlin; Undated [1933/34] Memorandum of the Anglo-German Academic Board. It would appear that from 1933 the Board in Britain had a British administrator, A.E. Twentymann.

¹⁰² This is my reading of the file of fragmentary correspondence in the VCA. Neither the Board nor the Bureau has left an archive sufficient to judge the precise relationship between its German and British partners.

¹⁰³ Sir Henry A. Miers to the Vice Chancellor, University of Manchester, 21 February 1930 (VCA/7/166). ‘Oxbridge’ is used here to denote the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, ‘provincial’ to denote universities outside London other than Oxford and Cambridge.

¹⁰⁴ VCA/7/166/1/4, Memorandum of the Anglo-German Academic Board, *supra* n.101; Letter from Sir Henry Miers, *supra* n.103.

¹⁰⁵ Undated Memorandum of the Anglo-German Board, *supra* n.101. In 1937, the Board’s acting-director, D.G. Krause, explored the possibility of arranging exchanges between German *Textil-fachschulen* and the Manchester College of Technology. This was turned down on the grounds that the German colleges ‘were little more than technical schools ... not of university standing’ (VCA/7/166/4, Dr. Krause to the Principal, College of Technology, 20 May 1937; Principal, College of Technology to the Vice-Chancellor, University of Manchester, 5 June 1937).

'Displaced Scholars'. Refugees at the University of Manchester

Scheme.¹⁰⁶ When, in January 1933, the Anglo-German Academic Board found itself unable to meet the full costs of the British studentships, Manchester was persuaded 'to share in meeting the financial provision for the continuance of the Board's activities'¹⁰⁷; it seems that Manchester was even willing, as time went on, to exceed its quota of one.¹⁰⁸

The scheme was thus able to proceed on a reduced basis into the Nazi era¹⁰⁹, during which, it may be assumed, Manchester found itself both accepting students selected by the Nazi regime, and despatching to German universities Manchester students open to indoctrination by the agents of the *Akademischer Austauschdienst*. The report of J.G. Bell, a Manchester student sent to the University of Leipzig in 1937, suggests the vulnerability of impressionable British students at universities from which the regime's racial enemies and political dissidents had already been dismissed. Bell found a regime 'anxious to avoid the political apathy of pre-1933 days' by encouraging schoolchildren 'to take [an] interest in political matters.' In Leipzig he called on members of the local branch of the National Socialist *Kultur Gemeinde* to act as interpreters for a visiting group of English puppeteers. Amongst his more 'pleasant and profitable experiences' were joint social evenings and rambles with Hitler Youth and visits to the camps of the *Arbeitsdienst*. At the time of writing his report, in June 1937, he was 'trying to attach himself' to a tour organised by the Nazi propagandist organisation, *Kraft durch Freude*.¹¹⁰ German students on exchange in Britain, meantime, were encouraged to lecture to branches of the League of Nations Union, Rotary Clubs and other local societies advocating Anglo-German friendship and praising the achievements of National Socialism.¹¹¹

It is not clear why it took so long for those in Manchester associated simultaneously with the appointment of displaced German academics to university fellowships to recognise the dangers (or, at any rate, the ambiguities) inherent in the exchange scheme. As early as June 1933 Dr. Deissmann, then the Bureau's German director, had spelled out in a long and detailed 'Statement' to a 'Committee of [British] Vice-Chancellors and Principals' the Nazi view (and presumably his own) of the damaging competition offered by Jews to those of 'Aryan race' in German industry, commerce, banking, politics and the professions.¹¹² And yet a meeting in September 1937 of the Anglo-German Academic Board, which now included Manchester's Vice Chancellor, JBS Stopford, it was decided to continue the scheme for a further year and to 're-examine' the position in the autumn of 1938.¹¹³

Although several other universities were said to be becoming 'hesitant'¹¹⁴, the only principled and powerful intervention came from Liverpool's Vice-Chancellor, Arnold McNair, on March 1939.¹¹⁵ While still willing to send one of his own students to Germany, 'if we can find one willing to go', McNair emphasised the risk of receiving German students who would almost inevitably be ... member[s] of the National Socialist Party, or at any rate persons gratisima [sic] to that party',

¹⁰⁶ VCA/7/166/1/4, Ernst Deissmann of the Anglo-German Academic Board to the Vice Chancellor, University of Manchester, 5 May 1932.

¹⁰⁷ VCA/7/166/1/4, A.E. Twentymen to the Vice Chancellor, University of Manchester, 18 February 1933.

¹⁰⁸ VCA/7/166/4/4 contains reports from three Manchester students on exchange in Germany during 1937.

¹⁰⁹ VCA/7/166/2/4, A.E. Twentymen to Sir Walter Moberly, 11 July 1934: the Board 'had every intention of carrying on the scheme and I think our students may look forward to quite a profitable year in Germany.'

¹¹⁰ VCA/7/166/4/4, Report of an Exchange Visit to the University of Leipzig by J.G. Bell.

¹¹¹ National Archive at Kew KV291, Item (undated) on the Anglo-German Academic Board and the National Socialist Teachers Union.

¹¹² VCA/7/369/1, in a series of statements, dated 12 June 1933 for consideration by the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals. Deissmann's statement is described by the committee secretary as 'a confidential statement regarding the Jewish Question in Germany'.

¹¹³ VCA/7/166/1/4, Minutes of a meeting of the Anglo-German Academic Bureau, 24 September 1937. The minutes record the resignation of the Bureau's treasurer, Sir William Beveridge. Through the Bureau, 5 German students visited the South Wales coalfield in September 1937, and five students from the University of Cardiff visited German mines (MG, 7 September 1937).

¹¹⁴ VCA/7/166/1/4, A.E. Twentymen to the Vice Chancellor, University of Manchester, 13 March 1939.

¹¹⁵ McNair, a lawyer, and a former president of the Cambridge Union, had succeeded J.J. Stocks as Vice-Chancellor in 1937. Like Stocks, he was noted for his humane instincts: it was said of him at the time of his appointment that 'for him the story of mankind is a matter not of Blue Books and statistics but of human contacts and personal friendships' (MG, 2 August 1937).

particularly to the refugee students from Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia who 'for two or three years' had been accepted by his university. 'We do not think it would be safe, in the interests of themselves and their families still in Germany', he wrote in an 'open letter' to the Board's secretary, A.E. Twentyman, 'that there should be in the same university a German student of the kind I have described above, because remarks made by the refugees will easily be transmitted to Germany and result in injury to the families of our refugee students.'¹¹⁶ In a further letter McNair made it clear that he was unwilling to accept any German student 'while the present situation continues in Germany ... the interests of the refugees who have been manufactured by the party at present in power in Germany must be paramount.'¹¹⁷

What brought the scheme to an end, however, was not so much a principled decision as the outbreak of war. While from Manchester Stopford had signalled on 10 May 1939 his personal view that exchanges should be suspended or abandoned,¹¹⁸ a week later the Anglo-German Academic Board, of which Stopford was still a member, agreed unanimously that 'it was in the national interest that the scheme should continue' in the academic year beginning that September.¹¹⁹ By that time the hope of promoting 'amity' between the exchanging countries was over; war between them had begun.

5. *The International Student Service*

The Anglo-German Exchange Scheme was clearly not a mechanism of value to students seeking to depart from Germany as refugees after 1933; nor is there any evidence that German students coming to Manchester on exchange studentships used them as surreptitious means of escape. McNair's response to the Anglo-German Academic Board makes it clear, however, that by 1939 refugees from Central Europe had begun to make their presence felt in Britain's 'city universities'. Some students already in Britain in March 1933 and potentially at risk as Jews or political dissidents, chose to remain. Some, particularly before 1938, made their own way without institutional backing. A majority, however, had almost certainly received a degree of support, advisory, if not financial, from the International Student Service, another of the international organisations which had arisen during the 1920s out of the ruins of the First World War.

James Parkes, the Anglican vicar who was one of its prime movers, had fought on the Western Front as an infantry subaltern and subsequently wrote in his autobiography of the conviction that he shared with 'so many' of his contemporaries 'that we had to discover the moral foundation of a way of life for the whole world which would make a repetition of the war impossible': his was a generation 'which had seen too much of war.'¹²⁰ Soon after going up to Oxford in 1919 he joined two organisations which he saw as committed to the ideal of peace — the League of Nations Union (LNU) and the Student Christian Movement (SCM)¹²¹. In the SCM, then in what Parkes saw as its 'great days ... at the height of its influence', were many Christians who had become acutely aware of the 'immense gaps in the Christian tradition in so far as the human community was concerned.' Membership of the LNU and the SCM overlapped. Both appealed to the liberal humanists and committed Christians who formed the constituencies of other organisations dedicated to the promotion of international fellowship. As secretary of the university section of the LNU, Parkes organised 'International Assemblies' which met for discussion three times a term and in which each nation within the student body was entitled to three representatives.¹²²

On leaving Oxford in 1923, Parkes joined the permanent staff of the SCM and became also its

¹¹⁶ VCA/7/166/1/4, Letter from Arnold McNair to the Vice Chancellor of the University of Manchester, 18 March 1939, enclosing his open letter to the bureau's administrator, A.E. Twentyman, of the same date.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.* Arnold McNair to A.E. Twentyman, 28 April 1939..

¹¹⁸ VCA/7/166/1/4, Letter from the Vice Chancellor of the University of Manchester to A.E. Twentyman, 10 May 1939.

¹¹⁹ VCA/7/166/1/4, Minutes of a meeting of the Anglo-German Academic Bureau, 18 May 1939.

¹²⁰ James Parkes, *Voyages of Discovery* (London: Gollancz, 1969), 59.

¹²¹ An 'Auxiliary Movement' of the SCM was created for former members who had ceased to be students. In time, the SCM Auxiliary developed 'a life and character of its own' (*ibid.*, p.144).

¹²² *Ibid.*, pp.59-60, 70.

‘Displaced Scholars’. Refugees at the University of Manchester

representative on the executive of the then new National Union of Students (NUS), itself a body brought into existence to combat the anti-German policies of the *Confédération Internationale des Etudiants*.

Another post-war organisation committed to international co-operation was the Committee of European Student Relief (ESR), founded in 1921 by the Student Christian Federation. With its headquarters in Geneva, its purpose was to provide material help to students in need throughout the world. A significant feature of its work was its insistence on the non-partisan character of the bodies through which it worked. The national branches through which it channelled aid were required to represent the whole of their student bodies, regardless of politics, nationality and religion. During 1923-24 the ESR raised substantial sums to support the victims of the Russian famine and the German inflation, as well as refugee Russian students outside the Soviet Union. In 1925, seeing its immediate relief work in Central and Eastern Europe as complete, there were moves within the organisation to close it down. However, a conference convened in that year by the ESR at Gex in Switzerland decided that its importance as the only viable focus for all-inclusive international co-operation was in itself sufficient grounds for its continuance.

Only the name changed — to the International Student Service — to reflect a widened brief which now came to embrace ‘cultural co-operation’.¹²³ In 1927, as these changes were confirmed by the General Assembly of the ISS, its general-secretary, the Austrian Dr. Walter Kotschnig, invited Parkes to supervise their implementation. For this purpose, in March 1928 he joined the staff of the ISS in Geneva. Basic to the new structure were summer conferences, held each year in a different country, which determined the ISS annual programme and which made plans for raising the necessary funds from the student bodies of the co-operating countries. The summer conference, Parkes was to remember, ‘was one of the big occasions in the student world, being a unique meeting of staff and students from many continents.’¹²⁴ Parkes himself initiated a series of ‘smaller conferences’, the intention of which was to address specific issues and to deal with conflict within the international student body.¹²⁵

On 3 May 1933 the International Assembly of the ISS decided in principle to undertake relief work on behalf of ‘professors or students’ at risk in Germany. However, after ‘a series of conversations’ later that month between the ISS’s Geneva Secretariat and ‘and other important organisations in the field ... to prevent overlapping and inefficiency’, the ISS agreed to confine its work of the rescue to students, for whom, by 22 May, and ‘by common consent’, it had accepted ‘sole responsibility’. This, it believed, with its intimate knowledge of university conditions throughout the world, its experience during the 1920s of helping refugee students from China and Russia¹²⁶, its ‘positive neutrality’ and non-sectarian character, the situation of its headquarters in a city central to international negotiations, its close contacts with the German academic world, and its efficient machinery of ‘permanent national committees’, it was well-equipped to undertake. At this stage, it did not rule out the possibility of those Jews to whom it gave support returning to a Germany shorn of Nazism to be ‘of service to the German Jewish community.’¹²⁷

A statement of aims drawn up in June 1933 spelled out its practical objectives. It would serve in the first place, like the AAC, as a clearing house of information, providing ‘individuals who ask for it’ with details of the conditions of entry to the universities of Europe and the United States, the cost of courses and ‘conditions for exercising professions after the completion of study.’ ‘Where the academic record of a student justifie[d] the demand for special favours on his behalf’, the ISS would negotiate, ‘through its national collaborators’, for his admission to a particular institution, for the remission of fees and for ‘other facilities’. Between 200 and 250 scholarships would be set up ‘for the benefit of the most gifted students ... who are without resources.’ For students of less than

¹²³ *Ibid.*, pp.85-87.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.93.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.99.

¹²⁶ Cf. Bentwich, *supra* n.1, at 124.

¹²⁷ VCA/7/369/3, One of a series of ‘statements’ — this one headed ‘International Student Service’ — presented for discussion in June 1933 to a ‘Committee of [British] Vice-Chancellors and Principals’, p.1.

Bill Williams

'exceptional ability', and in the final years of courses leading to professions judged by the ISS secretariat to be 'overcrowded', particularly law and medicine, vocational guidance and 'a programme of reorientation' would be available to re-direct students to 'technical and other branches of the academic field' or towards alternative careers. In the case of Jewish students in particular, the ISS would 'act in the closest collaboration with Jewish organisations to help those who wish to go to Palestine to do so', offer 'some of its scholarships' for study in 'the educational institutions of Palestine', 'arrange that a certain number of students be invited individually by Jewish families already settled who would assume complete or partial financial responsibility for them', and 'collaborate with the Chalutzim [Zionist Pioneers] or similar groups in encouraging reorientation with a view to settlement in Palestine'¹²⁸ In June 1933 Dr. Kotschnig calculated that the ISS might become involved in the 're-distribution' of between 1,500 and 2,000 German students and in 'securing employment in other ways' for a further 2,000.¹²⁹

Such a programme, impressive though it undoubtedly was in theory, and helpful though it became in practice to thousands of beleaguered students, was also shot through with a sense of the risks involved in the placing, particularly of Jewish refugee students, and therefore of the restrictions which needed to be imposed on the work of relief. The 'congestion' of Jewish students in particular institutions, or in countries where 'thousands' of Jewish students from 'Poland, Roumania, the United States and elsewhere' were already 'seeking a livelihood', could 'not only ... prejudice the opportunities of the students already in these centres, but ... start fresh waves of anti-Semitism where none previously existed.' Given such 'overcrowding', in the context of a 'difficult ... economic situation', the ISS felt the need to 'pay special attention to the problem of international distribution.' Lest the help it offered to Jewish students to settle in Palestine might be seen as showing particular favour to Zionism, or its help to Jewish students to settle elsewhere be seen as undermining the work of Jewish communal organisations, the ISS leadership felt it necessary to state explicitly that '[its] presence in the work [was] due only to the special need for reorientation in the student field.' Its favour of Palestine was an indication not of its support for the Zionist project, but of the imperative of distributing Jewish students beyond the dangerous points of congestion in Europe. As to Jewish communal agencies, the ISS would work 'in the closest collaboration with the central organisations for the help of German Jewry.'¹³⁰

What is most notable about such restrictive thinking is the degree to which it posited a latent anti-Semitism in the countries of reception which might readily be aroused by the arrival of refugees or by their preference for courses leading to particular professions. It was the kind of anxiety which, throughout Europe and the United States, in government circles and private institutions, within as well as outside Jewish communities, served effectively to limit the openings for the settlement of Jewish refugees. It is why in Manchester Nathan Laski was so reluctant to support, and then so anxious to control, refugee settlement in the city. Time and again it was used by the British government to justify its restrictive immigration policies and, during 1938-39, to limit the degree of their liberalisation. It may help to explain why, in Britain, voluntary organisations, Jewish and Christian, were reluctant to apply too great a pressure on the government to relax its immigration controls, and why, in the Jewish case, such pressure was placed on Jewish refugees rapidly to integrate into 'English' society. The ISS apparently shared the view of western governments and voluntary bodies that the 'latent' anti-Semite called for appeasement rather than education; internationally-minded though the ISS was, and concerned though it was to foster mutual respect within the international student body, it was no part of its programme to challenge such absurd presumptions of the anti-Semite — presumptions basic to German National Socialism — that, for example, in commerce, banking or the liberal professions there might be 'too many' people who happened, incidentally, to be Jewish. It was a presumption which formed part of the framework within which the ISS developed its programme of relief, with the help, it must be said, of funds from the CBF.

The extent of the ISS's international rescue operation in Britain before 1938 is uncertain. In

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.2-3.

¹²⁹ 'Notes on statements attached' preceding the series noted *supra* n.127.

¹³⁰ Series of statements, *supra* n.127, at 2-3.

‘Displaced Scholars’. Refugees at the University of Manchester

1928 the Women’s Union at the University, following donations to the international movement ‘for some years’, took the initiative in setting up a Manchester University branch, made up initially of the presidents and two representatives from each of the League of Nations Union, the Student Christian Movement and the Women’s Union.¹³¹ The first recorded activities of the branch, which date from 1935, had more to do with its general cultural out-reach than with refugee students. At some time in the mid-1930s, the British section of the ISS began to organise annual conferences at the university during the Lent Term, the contents of which are not known but which were said to be an ‘unvaried success.’¹³² Early in 1937 the journal of the Manchester men’s and women’s student unions, *The Serpent*, publicised an international conference arranged by the ISS in Geneva for ‘young journalists and would-be journalists’, at which the English language was to be used throughout and which had the support of a number of British sponsors, including Vernon Bartlett of the *News Chronicle*. Those Manchester students (if any) who travelled to Geneva for the conference in July 1937 would have been party to an event of which central themes were the influence and responsibilities of the press at a time of worsening relationships between the states of Europe.¹³³ *The Serpent* drew the attention of Manchester students to a second conference, with similar themes, to be held in Geneva in July 1938.¹³⁴ While certainly concerned to promote awareness of the dangers of totalitarian fascism, it does not appear that at this stage the ISS required any special agreement with the university authorities regarding the admission or funding of refugees. Nor does there appear to have been any pressure from within the student body before 1938 for the support, let alone the admission to the university, of refugees in flight from Europe. If any refugee students gained entry to the university through the mediation of the ISS — and there is no evidence that any did — it was through private negotiations of which the details are unrecorded.

During the second half of 1938, however, as the desperation of German students intensified, Austrian and Czech students added their weight to the pressure on the ISS, and there were calls for help to refugees from the student body, the work of the Manchester branch increased substantially.

Its grant from the Union for 1938-39 was increased, according to the secretary of the women’s union, Esther Greenberg, ‘because of the serious problems which that body is facing.’¹³⁵ Finally, on 20 January 1939, Anthony Scott, secretary of the British section of the ISS, conveyed his deepening concerns to the Vice-Chancellors of British Universities, including in his letter a questionnaire which invited them to define the way in which they might offer support. The ‘student refugee problem’ was, he wrote, ‘growing with increasing intensity.’ In the British context, in which Britain was defined by the government as ‘a country of transition’ in which students might stay only while they were seeking opportunities elsewhere, what the ISS now required for students ‘only partially equipped for a profession or other calling when uprooted from [their] homelands’ was ‘a comprehensive scheme’ which would provide facilities for the completion of existing courses, opportunities for retraining for ‘calling[s] with more immediate prospects’ or, at all events, the securing of qualifications which would equip them for careers in the countries to which they might seek to re-emigrate. Each university Vice-Chancellor was invited by Scott to state how his university might contribute to such a scheme: by the provision of free places, for example, or admitting students with scholarships funded and administered by the ISS. The success of a scheme which would secure the well-being of students ‘passing from their countries of origin to their new destination areas’ depended, Scott emphasised, on the decisions of British universities: amongst other matters, Vice-Chancellors were asked to state their preference for refugees of ‘any particular race or religion eg German, Czech or Hungarian, Jewish or

¹³¹ *The Daltonian*, Vol.12, No.6 (June 1928), p.178. During the early months of 1928 the Women’s Union had raised £36 for the ISS from carol singing and a flag day.

¹³² *The Serpent*, Vol.XX111 No.3 [probably January 1938], p.79. The Lent term conferences are said to have been held ‘for some years’. The conference on 10 February 1938 was to centre on ‘the parliamentary system: has it failed?’. It was to be held in the Women’s Drawing Room, with the chair occupied by P.M. Oliver and the discussion started by F.A. Voigt, the diplomatic correspondent of the Manchester Guardian.

¹³³ *The Serpent* [undated copy, probably May 1937], p.160.

¹³⁴ *The Serpent* [undated copy, probably May 1938], pp.127-128.

¹³⁵ Letter from Esther Greenberg in *The Serpent*, = Vol. 23 No.2 (December 1939), p.31.

Christian'.¹³⁶

There is no record of how Stopford completed such a questionnaire, if, in fact, he chose to do so at all. Delaying his response on the grounds that 'the whole question' was 'under consideration here', he finally replied on 10 February 1939 that 'under certain conditions' the university was prepared to accept six refugee students: he had opened negotiations with the university unions, he wrote, to explore the possibility of a remission of fees and to secure from students some financial help towards the purchase of books.¹³⁷ Whatever his initial hopes, Scott signalled that the university's decision to admit six refugee students was 'very good news to us.'¹³⁸ In a summary of responses which must have been produced very soon after Scott's general enquiries, Leeds was found to have offered four places to students who 'must be deserving and well-qualified', Liverpool to six, although not to 'faculties with quotas', Newcastle to ten and Reading to three, while Birmingham had done 'nothing so far' and Sheffield was 'waiting to hear what others are doing'. At every university, including Manchester, refugee students had their fees remitted but were expected to meet the costs of their maintenance in hostels or private homes,¹³⁹ costs which the ISS had thus, in most cases, to pick up.

By the July of 1939 Manchester had opened its doors further to offer free places to three refugee medical students and one dentist.¹⁴⁰ There were no further concessions, even after the internment of some of the German and Austrian students in June 1940, when the ISS sounded out the Vice-Chancellor about the possibility of their temporary replacement by war refugees from Czechoslovakia, Poland, France, Belgium or Holland. At most, in 1940 Stopford held open the places of those interned, while offering two places to students removed as aliens from universities in 'protected areas', one to a Polish student recommended by the Polish Research Council and an unspecified number of post-graduate places 'on special terms' to exiled Czechs.¹⁴¹

It is not that he underestimated the extent of refugee need. From late 1939 into 1942 he was bombarded with letters from refugees, some already in Britain, or from their friends and protectors, seeking places at the university or other forms of help.¹⁴² The most poignant, perhaps, was a letter from a twenty-four year old Polish medical student who, after training for two years in Italy, had been forced back to Poland by Mussolini's racial laws. Addressing Stopford, without irony, as 'Your Magnificence', she wrote in March 1939 that her parents were 'not so rich to send me to such a country where Jews can learn [sic]'. With no other hope, she now relied on Stopford's 'noble character' to find her a free place in Manchester.¹⁴³ There were refugees in British homes and colleges whose hosts wished them to move on to the university, sometimes for their own good, occasionally because the cost of their upkeep had become excessive. Others, particularly medical students, looked to Stopford to 'put right ... the merciless interruption' of their careers.¹⁴⁴

In the face of such requests, he felt both 'grieved' and powerless. 'The records of these poor unfortunate people' he wrote to a colleague who had taken up the case of a young German musician trapped in Italy, 'are terrible reading and one would like to help but I have been almost snowed under

¹³⁶ VCA/7/369/1, Letter from Anthony Scott to the Vice-Chancellor, University of Manchester, 24 January 1939.

¹³⁷ VCA/7/369/1, Vice-Chancellor, University of Manchester to Anthony Scott, 25 January, 10 February 1939.

¹³⁸ VCA/7/369/1, Anthony Scott to the Vice-Chancellor, University of Manchester, 14 February 1939.

¹³⁹ VCA/7/369/1, Undated list headed 'Refugee Students'.

¹⁴⁰ VCA/7/369/2, Vice-Chancellor to C.F.B. Rickards, 3 July 1939. In the case of the dentist, at least, the ISS had agreed to cover the cost of her fees (Refugee Committee of the Society of Friends for Manchester and District, 23 September 1941).

¹⁴¹ VCA/7/369/2, Vice-Chancellor, University of Manchester to C.F.B. Rickards, 5 July 1939; Jean Floud of the ISS to the Vice-Chancellor, 26 August 1940; the Vice-Chancellor to Jean Floud, 27 August 1940; the Vice-Chancellor to T.S. Ashton, 10 October 1940; VCA/7/369/3, A.D. Lindsay to the Vice-Chancellor, 27 January 1940.

¹⁴² To be found in VCA/7/369/1-5.

¹⁴³ VCA/7/369/4, Rayja Here from Chelm-Lub [?] to the 'Rector', University of Manchester, 27 March 1939. The Vice-Chancellor's reply (if there was one) does not appear in the files. Her use of 'Your Magnificence' probably reflects her Italian experience: the standard Italian style of addressing a university rector (the equivalent of a British Vice-Chancellor) is 'Magnifico Rettore'.

¹⁴⁴ VCA/7/369/2, Fred Deutscher to the Vice-Chancellor, University of Manchester, 3 July 1942.

'Displaced Scholars'. Refugees at the University of Manchester

during the past eighteen months. This will not, however, prevent me trying to do all I can'. When it turned out, in this case, as in most of the others, that there was 'no hope of getting him out', Stopford added: 'like you, I have a soft spot for these unfortunate people and regret the position'.¹⁴⁵ The constraints imposed on him by British immigration regulations and by his own and his colleagues' concern at the University's limited funds and facilities, were underwritten once war had broken out by the 'strictly enforced' ceilings imposed by the Ministries of Labour and Health on the numbers of certain categories of students. The number of women students was held to its 1938-39 level, a strict quota placed on admissions to the Medical School.¹⁴⁶ 'We have already taken as many refugees as I felt we could hold', the Vice-Chancellor was informed by the Dean of the Medical School in August 1940, who expected 'trouble to arise from the burdens he was placing on his staff', particularly at a time [following the fall of France] when 'these unfortunates are not very popular'.¹⁴⁷ Refugee student nurses at Manchester's University Hospitals were experiencing similar difficulties. At St.Mary's, where six refugees were working as probationers in June 1940 'there has been so much trouble with our nursing staff that the Board of Management had to terminate their appointments and I am quite certain they would not consider admitting any others.'¹⁴⁸

Stopford was rightly judged by those who approached him to be a man of liberal instincts, sympathetic to the cause of refugees, and well-disposed to the Jewish community (and to Zionism).¹⁴⁹ When, in June 1940, Austrian and German students and staff at Manchester, including Karl Prausnitz and Kurt Mahler, were interned as enemy aliens, he worked closely with the SPSL and with the tribunals set up under the government White Paper of July, not only to negotiate their release, but to work for the freedom of refugee academics from other universities. In August 1940, after the release of Prausnitz and Mahler had been secured, he wrote to S.H. Wood at the Board of Education: 'I am doing a good deal with regard to these unfortunate interned refugees ... The treatment of many of these distinguished people, some of whom are actually doing work of national importance, is most disturbing ... but I think we are now beginning to straighten the matter out a little and correcting some of the injustices.'¹⁵⁰ In October 1940 he intervened personally with the Home Office's Aliens Branch on behalf of an Austrian refugee who had been due to enter the third year of a B.Sc. in Engineering at Manchester before his internment at Huyton.¹⁵¹ For Stopford, internment was part of 'The Horrible Aliens Business'.¹⁵² Those of the pre-war applicants from overseas for whom he judged there to be any hope of entry to Britain he referred to the Relief Section of the ISS, through whom all applications for free places were to be channelled.

The tasks assumed by the Manchester University ISS committee, chaired by the philosopher, Dorothy Emmet¹⁵³, were to mount fund-raising events, to assist 'a limited number of carefully selected refugee students', who gained admission to the university, with or without free places, 'to complete their courses', and, after June 1940, to lend what support they could to student internees.¹⁵⁴ For all of

¹⁴⁵ VCA/7/369/2, Vice-Chancellor to W.R. Douglas, chairman of the Governors of the Manchester Royal College of Music, 17 January 1940, 24 January 1940.

¹⁴⁶ VCA/7/369/2, Vice-Chancellor to F.A. Hargreaves, Headmistress of Hunmanby Hall in Yorkshire, 4 July 1942 [Hargreaves was seeking entry to the university for a German refugee who was 'one of her girls']; Vice-Chancellor to Fred Deutscher, 3 July 1942.

¹⁴⁷ VCA/7/369/5, A.D. Macdonald to the Vice-Chancellor, 21 August 1940.

¹⁴⁸ VCA/7/369/3, Dr. William Fletcher Shaw to the Vice Chancellor, 21 June 1940.

¹⁴⁹ In 1943 he was elected to the chairmanship of the Manchester Friends of the Hebrew University. In this capacity, during 1944 he launched a public appeal for books on academic subjects for the Hebrew University (MG, 24 July 1944).

¹⁵⁰ VCA/7/152/1, Esther Simpson, Secretary of the SPSL, to the Vice-Chancellor, 3 September 1940; Vice-Chancellor to Ernor Kupferberg, 4 September 1940; Vice-Chancellor to Dr. Samuel Tuchner, 13 August 1940.

¹⁵¹ VCA/7/152/1, Vice-Chancellor to S.W. Drinkwater of the Paddington District Office of the Home Office Aliens Branch, 3 October 1940.

¹⁵² VCA/7/152/1, Vice-Chancellor to W.E. Morton, Textile Department, Manchester College of Technology, 5 August 1940.

¹⁵³ Dorothy Emmet's sister, Marjorie Wilson, 'a Quaker by conviction', was a key member of the Manchester Refugee Committee of the Society of Friends. Dorothy Emmet was later Professor of Philosophy at the University.

¹⁵⁴ MG, Letter to the Editor from Dorothy Emmet, 2 December 1941.

Bill Williams

this Emmet believed she had the Vice-Chancellor's 'sympathetic support.'¹⁵⁵ In November 1940 her committee organised a tea-time violin recital by Harry Holst at the university as part of a drive to raise £1,000 to cover 'the maintenance and tuition fees for students released from internment' and to provide 'pocket money' for those still interned; there was a call also for gifts of text books, test-tubes, musical instruments and scores, writing and artists materials 'to relieve the tedium of internment life' and to assist those professors and lecturers who 'were experimenting in forming 'camp universities'.¹⁵⁶ Released students, Emmet told the public, were likely to have lost their means of subsistence: financial help was necessary to enable them to revive their studies. In the absence of the branch's records, it is not possible to judge either the degree of the appeal's success or the number of refugee students it was able to support: the records of the Refugee Committee of the Society of Friends, of which Dorothy Emmet's sister, Marjorie Wilson, was a member, record that the ISS paid the fees for the medical course of its refugee protégé, Karoline Ascher.¹⁵⁷

During the following year, the committee widened its scope to include the provision of 'suitable' books (with the help of the British Red Cross) to British students in Prisoner of War (POW) camps in Germany and (with the help of the Young Men's Christian Association) to German student-prisoners in Britain. It was the aim of the committee, Emmet told the public, to give 'objective help to students without ideological discrimination.'¹⁵⁸ In December 1941 she organised a fund-raising meeting at Houldsworth Hall, under Stopford's chairmanship, at which Dr. Gustav Kullmann, the League of Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees, outlined the international operations of the ISS — which now included correspondence courses for British and French POWs in Germany — 'oases of the university as we conceive it within [a] totalitarian regime'- and praised the British government for providing facilities for the transfer of funds to Geneva.¹⁵⁹

News of the Nazi genocide evoked waves of sympathy for the Jewish people within Manchester's academia. In February 1943 a meeting of 'all sections of student opinion' was convened at the university under Stopford's chairmanship to condemn Nazi policies, to call on the 'governments of free nations' to aid the victims and to demand that the British government 'break down [the] barriers of immigration into Palestine'. Speakers from the Jewish community included Rabbis Kopul Rosen and Selvin Goldberg, and Jack White, a local resident who had won a Victoria Cross during the First World War.¹⁶⁰ A meeting of the University Convocation in the following month called on the British government to take immediate steps to rescue the survivors.¹⁶¹

Late in 1943, with the Vice-Chancellor's blessing, the University branch of the ISS threw itself into the raising of funds for what the international headquarters of the movement saw as 'the biggest task in its history': the reconstruction of university and student life after the war. It would be built, Emmet believed, on 'that tradition of practical work of university solidarity across frontiers of race and creed which [the] ISS started'.¹⁶² In November 1943 she launched an ambitious appeal which embraced the 'refugee universities' of China, Russian students in PoW camps in Germany, and 'student sufferers' from the famine in Bengal.¹⁶³ On International Students Day on 17 November

¹⁵⁵ MG, 8 November 1940, Letter to the editor from Dorothy Emmet, Joan Storey and A.B. Downing. Emmet described herself in November 1940 as 'Acting Chairman'. The secretary was Storey, the secretary of the 'refugee sub-committee' Downing. Gifts of goods and money were to be addressed to A.E. Teale at the Department of Philosophy.

¹⁵⁶ MG, 8 November 1940.

¹⁵⁷ Manchester Friends' Archive: Minutes of the Refugee Committee of the Society of Friends for the Manchester District, 23 September 1941. Other refugee students appealed for support to the Quakers, who, hard-pressed to meet the routine needs of refugees under their care, did not see it as lying within their remit. One, Irene Schlesinger, a student in Manchester University's School of Architecture, appealed to the refugee committees of both the Friends and the Jewish community, so apparently losing her chance of support by either (*ibid.*, 14 June, 23 September 1941).

¹⁵⁸ MG, 2 December 1941, Letter to the Editor from Dorothy Emmet.

¹⁵⁹ MG, 4 February 1942. During the war, the ISS in Geneva collaborated with the World Student Christian Fellowship and Pax Romana to establish a War Emergency Relief Council for students in exile (Bentwich, *supra* n.1, at 124).

¹⁶⁰ MG, 13 February 1943.

¹⁶¹ MG, 24 March 1943.

¹⁶² MG, 30 October 1943, 20 November 1943.

¹⁶³ Letter from Dorothy M. Emmet in MG, 20 November 1943.

‘Displaced Scholars’. Refugees at the University of Manchester

1944, the day on which Czech students were massacred and tortured in Prague in 1939, the Manchester branch declared its intention to raise £1,000 towards the rehabilitation of educational buildings in Prague, Kiev and Odessa.¹⁶⁴ Further appeals followed during the early months of 1945, as the focus of ISS work turned decisively from the support of refugees from Nazism to the reconstitution of higher education in territories in the course of liberation from German and Japanese occupation.¹⁶⁵

6. Refugee Students at the University

Apart from those who owed their rescue to academic fellowships or student bursaries at the University of Manchester, there were refugees who, once having found entry to Britain through other routes, arrived at the university through the normal processes of application. There was, after all, no bar to ‘aliens’ legally settled in Britain from entering British universities or seeking university posts. How many did so is incalculable: certainly not enough to generate any refugee organisations within the university itself or to draw attention to themselves, either hostile or sympathetic, as refugees.

Amongst those who joined the University staff, although by what route and in what capacity is uncertain, was the Austrian novelist, Stephan Pollatschek, who had arrived in Britain via Czechoslovakia in April 1938, apparently through the assistance of the Thomas Mann Society in Prague, and who was able to survive there on a small grant from the Czech Refugee Trust Fund.¹⁶⁶ After sharing a seaside cottage in Norfolk with the Austrian journalist Hanns Margulies, Pollatschek was interned as an enemy alien on the Isle of Man in July 1940. It was at some time after his release in October 1941 that Pollatschek was briefly an employee of the University of Manchester, perhaps through the personal support of Lewis Namier, by whom he was certainly befriended in Manchester.¹⁶⁷ It is said that on leaving Manchester, Pollatschek took with him to Bacton-on-Sea the works of the Jewish historians, Henirch Graetz and Simon Dubnow, which were to form the basis of his last (unfinished) novel, *Doktor Ascher und seine Vater*, in which the influence of Namier’s work is also detectable.¹⁶⁸ In it, in what might be seen as an anti-Nazi polemic, Pollatschek deploys different generations of a fictional Ascher family to suggest both the persistence of anti-Semitism and the resilience of the Jewish people between the fifteenth century expulsion of the Jews from Spain and (through the experiences of a Viennese lawyer, Dr. Robert Ascher) the attacks on Austrian Jewry after the Anschluss. In another reflection of his own experience, Britain appears throughout as the land in which the Jewish people might find freedom and respect. The novel remained incomplete at the time of his death in Epsom in November 1942.¹⁶⁹

In 1939 the university offered undergraduate bursaries to three German political refugees, all of whom had found entry to Britain through the Czech Refugee Trust Fund, to enable them to complete their studies: Herman Ehlert, Ernst Hoffman and Hugo Koeditz.¹⁷⁰ The bursaries, according to one account, enabled their holders to meet the cost of their studies, pay for their accommodation and food at Dalton Hall, and enjoy a ‘modest existence’.¹⁷¹ The studies of all three were interrupted by internment, but, in the case of Ehlert and Hoffman, continued with similar support after their release. Koeditz, a former chemistry student from Berlin, had made the mistake, at the time of his internment,

¹⁶⁴ MG, 18 November 1944.

¹⁶⁵ MG, 1 February 1945.

¹⁶⁶ J.M. Ritchie, ‘Who wants to be a millionaire? John Law, the first millionaire, and Stephan Pollatschek’s *Roman einer Banknote*’, in William J. Jones, William A. Kelly and Frank Shaw, eds., ‘*Vir ingenio mirandus*’: *Studies presented to John L. Flood* (Göppingen: Kümmerle Verlag, 2003), Vol.1, p.471.

¹⁶⁷ J.M. Ritchie, ‘Doktor Ascher und seine Vater: a novel from the Nachlass of Stephan Pollatschek’, typescript in the possession of the author, nd., pp.14-15. I am grateful to Professor Ritchie for this information and for access to his work.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹ This summary is based on J.M. Ritchie, ‘Doktor Ascher...’, *supra* n.167. One chapter of the novel was published in the British exile journal *Die Zeitung* (16 October-6 November 1942). Through the efforts of Pollatschek’s daughter, the whole novel has subsequently been published in Germany.

¹⁷⁰ Transcript of an unpublished autobiography by Hanna Behrend, pp.45-53.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p.45.

Bill Williams

of 'ceding' his bursary to a friend, Rosi Ilberg, wife of the writer Walter Ilberg. When he finally obtained his release under the terms set out in successive government White Papers, Rosi refused to return it, and, now lacking financial support, Koeditz was unable to return to the university.¹⁷²

Other young refugees at the university as undergraduates¹⁷³ during the war years included Kurt Heilbronn, a young German who had talked his way onto a course in dentistry in 1939, Irene Schlesinger, who in September 1941 sought help from the Manchester Quaker towards financing her course in the Department of Architecture¹⁷⁴, and Karl Wolfgang Plessner, a member of a Jewish family in Breslau, who arrived in Bury in January 1939 with a place at Bury Grammar School and a guarantee of support from a local Jewish doctor. After passing his Higher School Certificate at Bury Grammar in 1941, Plessner was awarded a school scholarship to study engineering at Manchester University, where he went on to study for his doctorate.¹⁷⁵ At the university, he remembers, he had no problem getting on with the staff or with his fellow students: only on one occasion did he receive a 'snide remark ... probably somewhat antisemitic' from one of his lecturers. His own German origins and those of his Communist fellow-students were apparently of no account, except, of course, to the government which interrupted their studies by interning them. Hanna Behrend saw the 'leading staff' at Manchester University as being anti-Fascist in outlook and if there was a degree of anti-Semitism at the university, as one student leader declared there to be during 1943¹⁷⁶, it was confined to an insignificant handful of academics and students. Hanna remembers attending 'refugee dances' put on by the university's Women's Union.¹⁷⁷

For some young refugees entry to university marked the point in their lives at which they began to see themselves as part of British life. Hanus Weisl, a Czech refugee of Jewish middle-class origin (both his parents were dental surgeons), arrived in Britain from Prague on a kindertransport at the age of fourteen in June 1939.¹⁷⁸ In October 1942 he found a fee-paying place in the Medical School at Manchester University through the good offices of John Major, the headmaster of his Grammar School in Leigh, in Lancashire, where his parents were working as 'house officers' in a local hospital. As chairman of the Refugee Committee of the Society of Friends in Manchester, Major was particularly sensitive to the needs of refugee families; it happened that he was also a personal friend of the Dean of the Medical School. 'Once I started as a medical student', Weisl remembers, 'I ceased to be a

¹⁷² This is my reading of the unpublished *Autobiography* of Dr. Hanna Behrend, pp.45-61. I am grateful to Dr. Behrend for permission to quote her autobiography.

¹⁷³ Amongst its postgraduates students were the 'M. Slonkova' who was the first secretary of the Manchester Masaryk Society, and Erna Mandel, who had arrived in Britain from Vienna in June 1938. Between January 1939 and June 1940 Mandel undertook research in organic chemistry at Liverpool University towards an MSc, which she was awarded in December 1940. In October 1940 she entered Manchester University as a doctoral student in physical chemistry, receiving her PhD in July 1943. She also worked as a demonstrator for the university's Chemistry Department. Following the award of her doctorate, she worked for a while as a researcher for the Manchester Oil Refinery Ltd., an industry set up by refugee entrepreneurs at Barton, near Manchester, before moving on to a similar post in London, and then to Oxford, where she met and married the political refugee, Walter Wodak (Curriculum Vitae drawn up by Mandel, perhaps in late 1943, in the possession of Bernhard Kusche, to whom I am grateful for bringing it to my attention).

¹⁷⁴ Minutes of the Refugee Committee of the Society of Friends for the Manchester District, 23 September 1941. The help she sought was payment for a cable to seek financial support from her fiancé in Australia.

¹⁷⁵ Plessner's background, arrival and experiences at school and university are described in his uncompleted autobiography, to which Dr. Plessner has given me access.

¹⁷⁶ MG, 13 February 1943: the anti-Semites at the university were 'not violent', he declared, but 'like the Germans ... they are anti-Semitic in spirit'.

¹⁷⁷ Behrend, *Autobiography*, *supra* n.172, at p.58.

¹⁷⁸ In Czechoslovakia, although the family identified as Jewish, Hanus and his parents attended synagogue only on the major festivals. In his home, the Sabbath was not observed and the family's observance of Kashruth was 'minimal'. He received no Jewish education beyond an hour's lesson once a week at his secondary school. In Britain, where he felt he would be better received as a Czech than a Jewish refugee, he became, in his own words, a 'covert Jew', which he remained during his university years. Entirely non-observant, he made no attempt to contact the local Jewish community (e-mail from Hanus Weisl to the author, 7 February 2006).

'Displaced Scholars'. Refugees at the University of Manchester

refugee.'¹⁷⁹ In his account of his studies, teachers and fellow-students at the university, and of his time as a resident at Dalton Hall,¹⁸⁰ he offers no hint of any prejudice towards him as a foreigner, a refugee or a Jew, or of any sense on his part that he was other than an accepted member of the student body. He participated unexceptionally in the academic and social life of the university, serving, for a time, as treasurer of the University Socialist Society. Although at Dalton Hall his 'particular friend' was the German (or Austrian) refugee and chemistry student, Otto Gellner, and although the Hall, under its Quaker principal, the Scot George Sutherland, was particularly welcoming to foreigners of every description¹⁸¹, there is no sense that Weisl formed part of any informal foreign or refugee grouping within the university, or, in fact, that any such grouping existed. He had a momentary sense of himself as an 'outsider' only when, as a refugee in the Student Training Corps, he was not trusted to do Home Guard duties, and when he felt pangs of guilt for finding no other way of 'repaying' those who were fighting to give 'people like himself' a normal life than by occasional fire-watching.¹⁸²

Less evidence exists of the reception and experiences of refugee students by other academic institutions in Manchester. At some time before the outbreak of war, the Lancashire Independent College in Whalley Range accepted for Hungarian students, two of whom left for the United States during 1940, while a third, Stephen Hirschmann, who was also a student at Manchester University's Faculty of Technology, sought Stopford's help in July 1941 towards the cost of a passage or flight across the Atlantic.¹⁸³ A passing reference in the Vice-Chancellor's correspondence indicates that by January 1940 there was at least one refugee student at the Royal College of Music.¹⁸⁴

7. Manchester University's role : An Assessment

In assessing the response of the University of Manchester to refugee scholars and students, it is difficult to avoid the benefit of hindsight. From that perspective, the offer of some thirty honorary fellowships between 1933 and 1939 and perhaps twenty free studentships during 1938-42¹⁸⁵ seems less than generous. This is not, however, as it appeared at the time, or to the beneficiaries. Manchester stood fourth to Oxford, Cambridge and the London School of Economics, although a rather distant fourth in the case of Oxbridge, in the league of British universities which received displaced scholars.¹⁸⁶ Manchester's first offer of six free studentships was 'very good news' to the ISS; of the 'city universities', only Newcastle offered more. Rudolf Peierls, one of Manchester's refugee

¹⁷⁹ Typescript Recollections of Hanus Weisl, a copy of which are in the library of the Centre for Jewish Studies at Manchester University: 'My experiences as a refugee from Czechoslovakia', p.8. I am grateful to Mr. Weisl for allowing me access to his writing and for responding to my questions about them.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*: 'Manchester Medical School 1942-1945'.

¹⁸¹ Sutherland's wife, Katharine, was a member of the Quaker Refugee Committee in Manchester and joint secretary until her death in 1941 of the Refugee Children's Movement for Region 10. Apart from Gellner, Weisl makes reference to two or three students from Iceland, a Turkish student and two other refugees who were at Dalton Hall during his time there. The refugees were Robert Markus, a Jewish convert to Christianity, who, at the university, with Gellner, edited a 'literary-philosophical-ethical' journal called *Humanitas*, and Walter Stein, a German refugee chemistry student, who in Manchester converted from Judaism to Christianity, and who was given free board and lodgings at Dalton Hall in exchange for stoking the boilers. Markus went on to join the Dominican Order and, after leaving it, to begin an academic career which culminated in a professorship in medieval history. Stein went on to obtain a degree in philosophy and to become a lecturer in the Workers Educational Association. Gellner died of polyneuritis in 1949 (Weisl, *supra* n.179: 'Manchester Medical School', pp.3-5).

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, p.5.

¹⁸³ VCA/7/369/2, Rev. Alex Grieve, Principal of the Lancashire Independent College, to the Vice-Chancellor, 17 July 1941; Vice-Chancellor to Rev. Alex Grieve, 29 July 1939, in which he wrote that he would 'try to help'.

¹⁸⁴ VCA/7/369/2, Vice-Chancellor to W.R. Douglas, Chairman of the Governors of the Royal College of Music, 17 January 1940.

¹⁸⁵ VCA/7/369/2, Letter from the Vice-Chancellor to G.A. Sutherland, 20 June 1941: 'in the past two years we have granted between 12 and 20 free places [to refugees]'.

¹⁸⁶ VCA/7/369/1, 4th Annual Report of the SPSL, November 1938: Manchester had then taken in 9 of the scholars placed by the society, Oxford 37, Cambridge 25, the London School of Economics 11, Birmingham 8, and Edinburgh 7.

Bill Williams

honorary fellows, concurs with Beveridge and Bentwich in their celebration of Britain's generosity to the displaced. It would have been 'very understandable', he believes, if, at a time of economic depression and a shortage of academic posts, 'the local scientists had resented the arrival of so many refugees who would compete with them for posts.' As it was, the refugees were treated 'with great kindness'. For Bentwich, the work of the SPSL in bringing a total of 2600 scholars to Britain constituted 'a story to restore faith in humanity and in the fraternity of brains'; as 'a spontaneous growth of British individualism' it was a 'precious grain of light' in a world darkened by totalitarianism, 'gratefully recognised' by those who were saved.¹⁸⁷ The ISS was 'the agent of deliverance' for refugee students.¹⁸⁸ For Beveridge 'the outstanding feature of the British experience was the spontaneous rising of our universities and those who worked and lived there in defence of free learning.' With the help of British universities, including Manchester, the SPSL had eased refugee scholars 'through the barriers of official delay.'¹⁸⁹

For this they were duly grateful. When Arthur Lasnitzki, after several renewals of his honorary fellowship in Manchester, was finally found a permanent post as a Research Fellow of the Birmingham branch of the British Empire Cancer Campaign, his wife Malka, who had also held a temporary post in cancer research at Manchester, thanked the Vice-Chancellor for having 'enabled us to carry out further research work which is one of the greatest parts of our life. We shall continue to do all in our power to be of benefit to the science of this country.'¹⁹⁰

While it might be judged that, in the circumstances as they were then known, Manchester co-operated as fully as its size and resources permitted to rescue projects which made Britain 'the principal asylum'¹⁹¹ for refugee scholars and students from Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia, it remains necessary to record reservations about the degree of its liberalism. In the same way as most other British institutions, voluntary and public, the University in Manchester failed to register a protest at the limitations imposed by British immigration law or, for that matter, the restrictions imposed on student numbers during the war years. In common with the whole of British academia, it lacked the liberal elasticity to circumvent restrictions imposed from above; although the JCAFS could occasionally, as in the case of Lasnitzki, leave no stone unturned to protect those to whom it had granted fellowships, a rigid respect for the law characterised its dealings with the 'unfortunates' who sought its help. Following the furore around Polanyi's appointment, there was no systematic attempt to persuade either the government or the academic body to accept refugee appointments that were more than honorary and temporary. There is no sense in which the University's dealings with refugees were coloured by prejudice against them, either as aliens or as Jews. At worst they were subject to an ingrained elitism in the selection of those considered worthy of help. It remains a strange anomaly, however, that a University so empathetic to the fate of Hitler's academic victims, should knowingly admit on exchange German students who were likely to be amongst his admirers or send its own members, apparently without due precautions, to Nazi Germany. A memorable moment in March 1933 was an attempt by Nazi students at the university to take over the nearby German Church as the headquarters of a local branch of the Nazi Party.¹⁹²

Inadequate evidence exists to assess the role of the University ISS committee. Certainly it attracted the Vice-Chancellor's support for the fund-raising which enabled it to supplement the waiving of tuition fees for the six students admitted to free places. It assisted student-victims of internment. In her letters to the press, Emmet quoted cases in which the ISS had enabled students to complete their courses in Manchester and move on to 'work of national importance.'¹⁹³

There can be no doubting the gains made (although, for the most part, at no cost to itself) by

¹⁸⁷ Bentwich, *supra* n.1, at v, xiii and 40-41.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p.32.

¹⁸⁹ Beveridge, *supra* n.3, at 7 and 42.

¹⁹⁰ VCA/7/144, Malka Lasnitzki to the Vice-Chancellor, 22 December 1939.

¹⁹¹ Bentwich, *supra* n.1, at 13.

¹⁹² Curt Friese, *Some Thoughts on the History of Germans and their Church Communities in Manchester, especially in the 19th century* (undated typescript), p.25.

¹⁹³ MG, 2 December 1941.

‘Displaced Scholars’. Refugees at the University of Manchester

Manchester’s programmes of rescue for the academic and business communities of Britain, Europe, the United States and Israel. According to a list of ‘Academic Refugees who have been at the University of Manchester’ compiled by the Vice-Chancellor’s office in February 1939¹⁹⁴, perhaps as a form of self-congratulation, five of the former refugee honorary fellows remained in Manchester, Deutsch as a biochemist at Christies Hospital, E.I.G. Rosenthal as a special lecturer in the Department of Semitic Languages and History, Mahler as a temporary assistant lecturer in Mathematics. Three held posts on American campuses, Baer at Illinois, Bethe at Cornell, Weinbaum at Kent State. The physicist, Erich Herlinger, was a Research Professor at the Daniel Sieff Institute (now the Weizmann Institute) in Rehoboth. David Katz was Professor of Psychology at the University of Stockholm. Peierls had become Professor of Applied Mathematics at the University of Birmingham, where, he boasted in his memoirs, his students included Fred Hoyle.¹⁹⁵ Three were engaged in research for major commercial concerns, Berg for Kodak, Buraway for Calico Printers of America, Bickerman, at Cambridge, for Metal Box.

Michael Polanyi, for whose appointment as Professor of Chemistry in 1933 the University had risked public disapproval, had already by 1939 begun to move from chemistry to the social sciences as an eminent critic of the ‘intellectual tyranny’ imposed by totalitarian regimes in Germany and the Soviet Union.¹⁹⁶ He was one of four former displaced scholars from the University of Manchester — the others were Heilbronn (then H.O. Wills Professor of Pure Mathematics at Bristol), Mahler (then Reader in Pure Mathematics at Manchester) and Peierls (still at Birmingham) — who during the later 1940s were elected to Fellowships of the Royal Society.¹⁹⁷ Otto Skutsch, who during the 1940s was Professor of Latin at University College, London, and a Fellow of the British Academy, went on after his retirement to a Visiting Professorship at Princeton.¹⁹⁸ Peierls went on to a knighthood and the Wykeham Professorship of Physics at Oxford, following his work towards the production of the atom bomb at the Los Alamos Laboratory in New Mexico; in later life he became a crusader against the use of nuclear weapons. His former colleague in Germany, Hans Bethe, who worked with him in New Mexico, became a Nobel Laureate.¹⁹⁹

Of the refugee students whose identities can be traced, the KPD activist Ernst Hoffmann, a student in the Department of Economics at Manchester, returned to Germany, where he eventually became Professor of History at the Humboldt University in East Berlin; Carl Bunemann, a student of mathematics, and once a resident at the refugee hostel in Sale, after leaving university was recruited towards the end of the war to the Manhattan Project.

¹⁹⁴ VCA/7/369/1. The list is undated, but the context suggests February 1939.

¹⁹⁵ Peierls, *supra* n.11, at 119.

¹⁹⁶ For Polanyi (1891-1976), see the biographical note attached to an abstract of the Michael Polanyi papers in the Department of Special Collections of the library of the University of Chicago. As a chemist in Manchester, he is said to have ‘attracted students and established scientists from all over the world’. His *USSR Economics: Fundamental Data System and Spirit* (1935) marked the beginning of his life-long defence of individual creativity against the inroads of state planning. He retired from Manchester University in 1958 to accept a position as Senior Research Fellow at Merton College, Oxford.

¹⁹⁷ Bentwich, *supra* n.1, at 99.

¹⁹⁸ Cooper, *supra* n.62, at 70.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, at 58-59, 102. Bethe was awarded a Nobel Prize for Physics in 1967. After witnessing the effects of the atomic bomb at its test on 16 July 1945, he spent the rest of his life trying to control the spread of nuclear weapons.