

Excerpt from the report of the emigration advisor in *Leipzig*, Dr. A. *Wachtel*, dated 12. 3.1936

The Leipzig advisory office began its activities on 1.2.36. It was not possible to utilise an existing community office. The office had to be set up from scratch, the technological equipment first put in place, the furniture procured, etc. This hindered the actual advisory activity.

Although at first I had informed only the Leipzig community of my consulting hours, the rush on the office was not inconsiderable. Since the announcement in the Jewish newspapers people also come from outside Leipzig, but above all there are a lot of written inquiries. In February, 130 letters were dispatched, many of them however addressed to the aid organisation with several letters. The number coming to the office will certainly increase considerably once, as is now intended, the office hours are announced. There is undoubtedly a need for such an advisory office, all the more as many do not have the money to travel elsewhere.

*Composition of the inquirers.*

*a.) Nationality.*

A large contingent comes from the *eastern Jewish part of Leipzig's population*. The poor economic situation in Brühl [trading centre in Leipzig with a high proportion of Jewish traders] has left many destitute. Exacerbating the situation is that *a large number of pedlars have no longer been granted a trade licence, that others have had their work permit revoked, while others have had their residence permit withdrawn.*

A particularly *large number* are *stateless*, many of them because they failed to meet the requirements for military service in Romania and Poland. A not inconsiderable number were Polish nationals.

*A large number of them have literally nothing left; they could not save anything, now they are not permitted to trade; they are a burden on the Leipzig community, which will soon be a community in crisis. At the present time it is simply a mystery as to how these people, including the many young people, who have learnt nothing but trading, speak no other language other than German and Yiddish, are to be and can be helped. This greatly hinders the advisory activity.*

The sense of complete powerlessness often has a depressing effect.

*b.) Professions.*

Most of the inquirers are merchants and traders, commercial employees.

Amongst the craftsmen are shoemakers, tailors, furriers. There are many elder people amongst the shoemakers, tailors, who up to now were self-employed, but had Aryan customers and have lost them, but could not find sufficient alternatives in the Jewish community. Furriers and pelt workers are destitute due to the demise of the fur business. Unfortunately there is no chance of sending them to the new larger centres of the fur business like London, New York, although many of them are capable specialists.

Increasingly, trades people from the countryside are contacting the office, owners of smaller textile businesses, who are carving out a miserable existence, in particular from the Rhön region. These people are down and out. Staying in small towns is a torment, business-wise they face an almost complete boycott. Here is perhaps an area for redeployment into agriculture because these people often work in this field on the side; they could mobilize a small amount of money, but at times also have nothing spare.

*c.) Age composition.*

As far as I can see, people of all ages have inquired, up to 60 years of age and in some cases older, perhaps the larger number are younger because they have lost their job or this is imminent. The restricted immigration to Palestine also means that many who were already or still are on Hakhshara are looking around for other emigration destinations.

*Agriculture.*

In rural areas there are, IMHO, textile traders amongst the cattle dealers, butchers, a certain number suitable for family settlements. I estimate that there are, on the face of it, some 40-50 families from my district. I intend to pin down the number in the coming months by visiting the rural areas, but I do believe that above all many younger people can be found; I would tentatively put their number at 70-100.

*Assets.*

The majority of the inquirers were unfortunately penniless.

It is high time that all responsible authorities, in particular those abroad, realise that destitution is on the increase and any further hesitation magnifies the difficulty in mastering the situation, until in the end it is impossible to master, provoking, if nothing drastic is soon undertaken, enormous misery.

bis dat, qui cito dat. [He gives twice, who gives in a trice]

*translated by Paul Bowman*