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Grace: "From Day to Day and From Hour to Hour": The Ludwig Marx Family's
**"From Day to Day and From Hour to Hour":
The Ludwig Marx Family's Journey Out of Nazi
Germany**

Anna Grace

"Regretfully we must have the idea to go away and seek our future food else where [*sic*] in another land. We worry about us, and our and our childrens future [*sic*]." These were some of the first words written by Lissi Marx to the Goldsmiths in 1937 as they decided it was time to leave their homeland. When Adolf Hitler began his reign of Germany in 1933, many Jews contemplated leaving for a place where they could escape from the burdens put upon them by the Nazi regime, including Ludwig Marx and his family. For five years, the Marx family pondered emigrating from Germany but remained only because of their strong ties to their homeland. Ludwig, his wife Lissi, and two school age girls, Juge and Ellen lived comfortably in the southwestern German town of Bad Kreuznach where they owned a home and ran their own business. But June 1937, Marx determined that they could not stay because of all that had transpired in Germany under the new leadership. Lissi introduced herself and her family by letter and photo to their American cousins, the Goldsmiths. As the Marx family began their journey from Germany to the United States, they became acquainted with the difficulties of the immigration process. Between the ever-pressing Nazi control and the United States immigration laws and regulations, the Marx family took nearly twenty months before finally reaching the United States.¹

From well before the turn of the twentieth century, Germans generally viewed the Jews with a deep suspicion that made every day existence for Jews unpredictable. There were similarities between the German Conservative Party's statements

¹ Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection. University of Alabama in Huntsville Salmon Library Archives, Huntsville. Letter from Lissi Marx to Annie Goldsmith dated 30 June 1937; Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection. Correspondence between Lawrence and Annie Goldsmith and Ludwig Marx family 30 June 1937 through 8 December 1941.

of 1892 and the "Aryan paragraph" of a Nazi law in 1933. The 1892 statements declared, "We combat the widely obtrusive and subversive Jewish influence on our popular lives. We demand a Christian authority for the Christian people and Christian teachers for Christian pupils." The Nazis took this as a springboard to further curtail Jewish freedoms. Both statements presented a negative influence of Jewish culture on the everyday lives of Germans. They saw Jewish financial success as plunging Germany into a deep economic slump and opening them up to international weakness. A sense of "Judeophobia" proliferated throughout the schools and German literature reeked with hateful radicalism toward Jews. The German laws and regulations mirrored the country's anti Jewish sentiments and suspicions which soon grew into a sense of paranoia.²

The Nazi platform, established in 1920, echoed the perception of the growing anti-Semitism in Germany that pledged to strip the rights of the Jewish people. Jewish immigrants who entered Germany after 1914 were required to leave and the Nazi regime dismissed any Jews who were affiliated with newspapers and journalism. Jewish-owned large businesses were under attack as well. Ultimately, the goal was to expel "as many Jews as quickly as possible". They were, after all, "responsible" for the economic inflation of the previous decade which ruined many Germans. These laws were fully implemented by 1933 and it was about this time that Marx began thinking of leaving Germany.³

Before the rise of the Nazi party, Jews were generally hard working, self-sustaining, productive members of society.

² Pulzer, Peter. *The Rise of Political Anti-Semitism in Germany and Austria*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1988. 112; David Clay Large. *And the World Closed Its Doors*. New York: Basic Books, 2003.13; Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, 56. Ronald Sanders. *Shores of Refuge: A Hundred Years of Jewish Emigration*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1988. 420-421.

³ Yehuda Bauer. *Jews for Sale?: Nazi Jewish Negotiations, 1933-1945*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994. 4-5, 35; Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection. Letter from Lissi Marx to Goldsmith family dated 30 June 1937.

Grace: "From Day to Day and From Hour to Hour": The Ludwig Marx Family's

Most were employed in middle class positions that included retail work, private banking, textile trade, publishing, and trading on the stock exchange, with almost no role in mining or manufacturing. Nearly half were self-employed entrepreneurs and a large percentage, in relation to the whole population, worked in the medical field or practiced law. Approximately 1/3 were white-collar workers and only about 9 percent were blue-collar employees. Unfortunately, Jews became economic targets for the Nazis because of their own financial success. Marx was no exception with his wine and spirits business. In 1938, Jews were no longer legally allowed to be employed in the German economy. Marx, one of the few, was of the approximately twenty five percent of Jewish owned businesses that managed to remain in existence until *Kristallnacht*.⁴

German Jews adjusted and became somewhat accustomed to the waves of anti-Semitism that continued under Hitler's rule after 1933, including the implementation of the Nuremberg Laws of 1935. The Jewish population, or race, was further segregated under the new regulations. These laws defined a Jew, who they could marry, and took away their rights as full citizens. Under the new laws, anyone having at least three Jewish grandparents, or two Jewish grandparents and married to a Jew, or were of the Jewish religion, were considered Jewish. Mixed marriages were deemed illegal. The laws also declared the swastika flag as the national flag but forbade Jews to fly it. The laws regulated the employment of German citizens by Jewish businesses. According to Hitler, these laws were not designed to cause hatred of the Jews but were created to ease German and Jewish relations. Nazi rationalization said that the Laws gave "protection to the Jews. They [were] guaranteed the same rights as any other minority within Germany." Marx

⁴ Strauss, "Transplantation and Transformed: German-Jewish Immigrants Since 1933.", 247-249; Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Letter from Marx family to the Goldsmiths dated 19 February 1939; Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 24.

helplessly watched as his Jewish community was demoted to "alien status" based on the "racial criteria" of the Third Reich.⁵

The Nazi party added hundreds of amendments to the Nuremberg Laws which increased the pressure for Jews to leave Germany. Each one further minimized the social position of the Jews within German society and raised their economic dependency on the state and other welfare agencies, thus reviving the desire of many Jews to leave Germany. For example: A male Jew could be arrested or his business taken away because of an innocent public encounter with a non-Jewish female. Also, if a Jew wanted to take a vacation, they were to stay in the worst resort and not mix with the general population. They were encouraged to spend their money in Germany but were not welcome there. Segregation was the main goal before the passage of the Nuremberg Laws, but isolation was not effective enough for the regime. Marx undoubtedly felt the increased pressure to emigrate after the passage of the Nuremberg Laws in 1935 based on the frequency and urgency of the letters and requests to Goldsmith. Unfortunately, as the pressure increased, the difficulty in emigrating increased also.⁶

United States President Herbert Hoover raised immigration requirements so high in the 1930's that it was extremely difficult for immigrants to get into the United States. The Depression was in full swing and the fear of an influx of

⁵ Marion A. Kaplan. *Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998. 5; Saul Friedländer. *Nazi Germany and the Jews: Vol 1: The Years of Persecution, 1933-1939*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1997. 142; Nora Levin. *The Holocaust: The Destruction of European Jewry*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1968. 70. Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 42-43; Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, 142; Adolf Hitler. *Speeches and Proclamations 1932-1945*, ed. Max Domarus, trans. Chris Wilcox and Mary Fran Gilbert, vol. 2, pp. 706-707; Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, 34; S.R. Fuller. Excerpt of affidavit dated October 18, 1945 giving account of a conversation with Schacht on September 23, 1945, EC-450.

⁶ Levin, *The Holocaust*, 70-71; Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, 143-144; Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection.

Grace: "From Day to Day and From Hour to Hour": The Ludwig Marx Family's immigrants risked another detrimental hit to the economy because of additional people seeking jobs. He redefined the LPC clause, or the "likely to become a public charge clause," which was originally written to keep out the mentally unstable and the indigent, to keep nearly all immigrants out of the United States. The American consuls heavily scrutinized all visa applicants. Hoover also gave no leeway to the 1885 Alien Contract Labor Law, which restricted any immigrant from seeking employment in the United States prior to their arrival. Only potential immigrants with significant monetary resources, or those with relatives whose financial situation allowed for immigration assistance, were considered for visas.⁷

The quota system, passed by United States lawmakers in 1922, consisted of different tiers of immigrants and allowed for only a small percentage to enter the country each year. The system was set to law because of the potential problem of "new immigration coming in unprecedented numbers which created [the] postwar problem" after World War I. Through the quota system, Germany was allotted 25,957 slots per year for those seeking to enter the United States. Besides this quota, there were also preference quota immigrants reserved for close relatives. The Marx family likely fell in the regular quota numbers when immigrating because of the distance in relation to the Goldsmiths who were cousins rather than parents, siblings or children. The other category was non-quota immigrants which consisted of university professors and clergy who had received an invitation

⁷ Herbert A. Strauss. "Transplantation and Transformed: German-Jewish Immigrants Since 1933." In *America and the Germans: An Assessment of a Three-Hundred Year History*. Edited by Frank Trommler and Joseph McVeigh, 245-264. Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1983. 251; Alan M. Kraut, Richard Breitman and Thomas W. Imhoof. "The State Department, the Labor Department, and the German Jewish Immigration, 1930-1940." *Journal of American Ethnic History* 3, no. 2 (Spring 1984): 7; Sanders, *Shores of Refuge*, 429; Large, *And the World Closed Its Doors*. 56.

to a position of employment in the United States before immigrating.⁸

United States President Theodore Roosevelt retained the stringent immigration laws enforced by his predecessor and followed public opinion rather than leading it because of pressure from social and political groups within the United States. He felt that the persecution of the Jews was not as bad as he had previously been told based on his visit to Germany during the 1936 Olympic Games, when, unknowingly, Hitler had removed all signs of discrimination while the Games were happening. Early in his presidency, Roosevelt preferred not to make immigration a big political issue, but as the political atmosphere became more unsettled he changed his mind. After the horrific night of *Kristallnacht* in 1938, Roosevelt announced at a press conference that he would bend the immigration regulation by granting twelve to fifteen thousand visitors' visas for German refugees and would extend them for six months. He began to see the imminent danger for those wanting to leave Germany but preferred to let the Labor and State Department work out the immigration issues.⁹

The State Department strictly enforced the LPC clause and instructed their foreign consuls to implement it to the department's fullest capability. Roosevelt generally agreed with the State Department immigration policies. The German immigration quota of 25,967 was already small and, because of the extreme restrictions, was nowhere close to reaching its capacity. In 1933, only 1,445 German immigrants were allowed into the United States. The year 1934 was not much better for immigration with only 4,052 Germans allowed into the United States. The Labor Department, under the leadership of Frances

⁸ Sanders, *Shores of Refuge*, 386; Strauss. "Transplantation and Transformed," 249-250.

⁹ Kraut, "The State Department, the Labor Department, and the German Jewish Immigration, 1930-1940.", 22; Large. *And the World Closed Its Doors*, 104-105; Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, 180-181; Sanders, *Shores of Refuge*, 429; Kraut, "The State Department, the Labor Department, and the German Jewish Immigration, 1930-1940.", 28-29.

Grace: "From Day to Day and From Hour to Hour": The Ludwig Marx Family's Perkins, fought the State Department to relax the LPC clause and make immigration an option for those persecuted under the Nazi regime, but without presidential support, Perkins was unable to secure the changes in the interpretation of the law and things remained the same as before. It wasn't until 1937 that the clause was relaxed.¹⁰

The United States Labor Department was in a bureaucratic war with the State Department over who had the power of making immigration policy decisions. The State Department was solely "committed to the protection of the American interest and security" while the Labor Department wanted a more lenient, philanthropic immigration policy. Labor Secretary Perkins quietly persuaded the State Department to relax the restriction on immigration requirements such as the two affidavit system so not to raise American concerns over the Jewish issue. She also suggested that the State Department advise their consuls "not to be so strict." The State Department had the stronger stance. They had control over the distribution of visas and therefore determined the rate of immigration. In the five years that the Marx family considered emigrating, approximately 300,000 Germans applied for visas. Just under 75,000 were granted even though more than 150,000 were allowed under the quota system.¹¹

¹⁰ Kraut, "The State Department, the Labor Department, and the German Jewish Immigration, 1930-1940.", 7; Sanders, *Shores of Refuge*, 429; Kraut, "The State Department, the Labor Department, and the German Jewish Immigration, 1930-1940.", 14-15; Kraut, "The State Department, the Labor Department, and the German Jewish Immigration, 1930-1940.", 9; Kraut, "The State Department, the Labor Department, and the German Jewish Immigration, 1930-1940.", 19.

¹¹ Kraut, "The State Department, the Labor Department, and the German Jewish Immigration, 1930-1940.", 5; Kraut, "The State Department, the Labor Department, and the German Jewish Immigration, 1930-1940.", 27; Kraut, "The State Department, the Labor Department, and the German Jewish Immigration, 1930-1940.", 9; Kraut, "The State Department, the Labor Department, and the German Jewish Immigration, 1930-1940.", 21; Kraut, "The State Department, the Labor Department, and the German Jewish

By the end of June 1937, Marx and his family set their minds on leaving their homeland because of the increased economic and social pressure from the ruling Nazi party. Marx did not want to go but found it increasingly difficult to maintain a steady income in order to provide for his family in Germany. At this point, the Nazi regime had already made it illegal for Jews to serve in the armed forces, to swim in public swimming pools, and to teach in the universities under the Nuremberg Laws and subsequent rulings. The regime dismissed all Jewish doctors, lawyers, and state employees and Jewish voting rights were cancelled. Marx was concerned about his family's future. He saw the effects of the "Aryanization of the economy" and knew that remaining in their homeland was not going to be possible. Their "last hope...to stay dwindle[d] from day to day and from hour to hour." The opportunity of immigration opened to the Marx family to go to the United States after Lissi sent out a plea for assistance to their American relatives on June 30, 1937. The family needed their American relatives in order to secure affidavits that ensured their family's good character as well as promised monetary support once they arrived on American soil.¹²

Lawrence Goldsmith and his wife Annie were Huntsville Jews who proved to be sympathetic to the Jewish cause in Europe by providing the much needed affidavits for the Marx family to be able to obtain immigration visas. Annie was Ludwig's first cousin and, though they were not considered close relation by United States standards, she and Lawrence offered

Immigration, 1930-1940.", 5; Kraut, "The State Department, the Labor Department, and the German Jewish Immigration, 1930-1940.", 24.

¹² Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Letter from Ludwig Marx to Lawrence Goldsmith dated 1 Aug 1937; Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, 117-122; The Holocaust Timeline of Jewish Persecution (1932 - 1945). The Holocaust Memorial Museum.

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/chron.html#39;>

Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, 149; Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Letter from Ludwig Marx to Lawrence Goldsmith dated 9 March 1938; Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Letter from Lissi Marx to Lawrence and Annie Goldsmith dated 30 June 1937.

Grace: "From Day to Day and From Hour to Hour": The Ludwig Marx Family's their help through affidavits and monetary support. Lawrence corresponded with different Federal organizations and lawmakers such as the Hebrew Sheltering Immigrant and Aid Society of America, Alabama Representative John Sparkman, and the American Consul in Stuttgart, Germany, in order to provide a way for the Marx family to immigrate. From start to finish the affidavit process took approximately four months, from March 21 until July 13, 1938.¹³

The actual affidavit had many requirements of the American relative who swore to offer financial assistance and assurance of care to their German relatives. Annie Goldsmith had to provide proof of income, assets, investments, bank statements of debits and credits with loans and payoffs to the American Consul in Germany. She also had to provide a certified copy of paid income taxes and proof and the amount of insurance she carried. Since Annie was employed through the I. Schiffman & Co., her family business, she was easily able to give her occupation, salary, and general responsibilities there. Two "proof of relation" documents were requested to state the relationship of Goldsmith to the Marx family and had to be witnessed by a public notary. There were also two letters of recommendation required, one from a "prominent citizen" of which Lawrence Goldsmith called on Representative John Sparkman. The other letter was from Lawrence Goldsmith which stated why he was interested in bringing the Marx family to the United States and promised to provide for the family.¹⁴

¹³ Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Correspondence between Lawrence Goldsmith and Ludwig Marx dated July 1937- 8 December 1941. Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Correspondence between Lawrence Goldsmith and United States Immigration Agencies, Representative John Sparkman dated 24 March 1938 – 4 March 1939.

¹⁴ Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Correspondence from the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigration Aid Society to Lawrence Goldsmith entitled "Important Information Regarding Applicants For Immigration Visas" dated 25 March 1938; Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Notarized forms for Annie Goldsmith dated 4 May 1938; Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Correspondence from Lawrence Goldsmith to Representative John Sparkman dated 7 April 1938; Goldsmith Schiffman

The request for affidavits took a long time because there seemed to be little formal method to the system. Lawrence Goldsmith corresponded with his congressman and friend, John Sparkman, in April 1938 in order to seek his advice on the best way to go about bringing his wife's cousin and family to the United States. He contacted the State Department in Washington as well as the Labor Department through Sparkman for access to the necessary paperwork. Sparkman informed Goldsmith that there was no specific form to file with the immigration department during the affidavit process for a visa. It was not until May 4, 1938 that the affidavits were filed with the American Consul, Samuel Honaker, in Stuttgart, Germany. Unfortunately, affidavits often arrived in Germany incomplete because so much was required from the American citizen and the particular paperwork that was required depended on the particular Consul. This included the case of the Marx and Goldsmith families.¹⁵

The visa application process for the Marx family was even more tedious than obtaining affidavits from the Goldsmiths. The affidavit system and the visa application were in tandem for emigrants when attempting to leave Germany. The visa had to be applied for before the consul would accept any affidavits, but the visa would not be approved without the affidavits. The consulate had to receive written proof of good citizenship through police records from the local authorities in order to be

Holocaust Collection, Correspondence from the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigration Aid Society to Lawrence Goldsmith entitled "Important Information Regarding Applicants For Immigration Visas" dated 25 March 1938.

¹⁵ Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 130. Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Correspondence from Lawrence Goldsmith to Representative John Sparkman dated 7 April 1938; Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Correspondence from Representative John Sparkman to Lawrence Goldsmith dated 11 April 1938; Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Letter to Consulate General Samuel Honaker from Lawrence Goldsmith dated 4 May 1938; Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Correspondence from the American Consulate in Germany to Lawrence Goldsmith dated 23 May 1938.

Grace: "From Day to Day and From Hour to Hour": The Ludwig Marx Family's considered for a visa. A birth certificate and a valid passport were also among the list of necessities. Considering that many authorities despised Jews, the job was no easy task. There were dozens of papers along with many different bureaucratic offices that signed off on any one particular piece of the visa paperwork puzzle. One woman reported that she had "gathered a collection of twenty-three of the necessary documents" and had spent an enormous amount of time and effort traveling from one bureau to the next. The consul, ultimately, had the control to approve, dismiss, or even add to the required information needed for the visa application. The Marx family finally received their visas on November 16, 1938 and began seeking travel documentation.¹⁶

Anti-Semitism within the general population of the United States played a significant role in the difficult nature of the immigration process. Germany's views of the Jews as "Communist" took considerable hold on American society. Many Americans reportedly did not like the way the Nazis treated the Jews but they had reservations about bringing them on American soil. A Catholic priest named Father Charles E. Coughlin had a radio show each week that festered the anti-Semitic feelings of his listeners. According to Father Coughlin, the Jews were taking American jobs and creating division within the country. Jews aimed to push the United States to war, according to Coughlin, in order to reap the financial benefits. Destruction of "private property rights,...monogamous homes, and racial purity, and...belief in a spiritual Creator" were fears of some organized groups in the United States. If they let down their guard, the United States would be "exposed to the entry of

¹⁶ Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Letter from The Hebrew Sheltering and Immigration Aid Society of America to Lawrence Goldsmith dated 25 March 1938; Fromm, Bella. *Blood and Banquets: A Berlin Social Diary*. London, 1942; Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Letter from the office of Representative John Sparkman to Lawrence Goldsmith dated 29 April 1938; Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Western Union telegram from Ludwig Marx to Lawrence Goldsmith dated 16 November 1938.

undesirables whose communist affiliations [could] not be detected by cursory examination."¹⁷

The foreign United States consular offices presented a portrait of anti-Semitism that made obtaining visas particularly difficult for Jews. An American vice-consul in Berlin stated that they had to be especially careful with the Jewish applicants, being the vast majority of those applying for immigration visas, because the Jews had secretly found employment in the United States before immigrating there. The act of finding employment violated immigration laws. Marx was one of these individuals who asked for his American family's assistance to secure a place of employment in the United States in order to have the ability to settle and provide for his family as quickly as possible after their arrival. The disdain from the consulate was that the Jews were taking American jobs at a volatile economic time in the country's history.¹⁸

There were accusations that the State Department encouraged the German consuls and vice-consuls to compete to see who could issue the smallest number of visas. There is no evidence of written instruction but abundant evidence that supports oral direction from the State Department to limit the quota to less than ten percent of the allotted number of immigrants allowed by law. One Georgetown University professor, Edmund A. Walsh, who taught many of the State Department officials at the School of Foreign Service, taught his students that the Jews were the "entrepreneurs [of the Bolshevik Revolution] who recognized [their] main chance and seized it shrewdly and successfully." The ability for German Jews to obtain a visa to the United States was left to the discretion of the

¹⁷ Large, *And the World Closed Its Doors*, 64; Kraut, "The State Department, the Labor Department, and the German Jewish Immigration, 1930-1940.", 24; Large, *And the World Closed Its Doors*, 70; Large, *And the World Closed Its Doors*, 65.

¹⁸ Kraut, "The State Department, the Labor Department, and the German Jewish Immigration, 1930-1940.", 15; Large, *And the World Closed Its Doors*, 60; Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Letter from Marx to Goldsmith dated 4 July 1938; Large, *And the World Closed Its Doors*, 60.

Grace: "From Day to Day and From Hour to Hour": The Ludwig Marx Family's consulates, who were often prejudiced against Jews, because the immigration laws left many loopholes and were not well defined. In many cases, the affidavit system played no part in the decision for the consul to grant a visa; Money was the deciding factor. The decision was based on a case-by-case basis, not by any structured rules and regulations given to them by the United States State Department. Marx exhausted what was left of his fortune to purchase his family's passports and travel papers.¹⁹

There was a sense of urgency in the necessity to leave Germany which gave the visa division of the State Department and the consulates' offices an overwhelming task. After *Kristallnacht*, the pressure escalated for the refugees to leave Germany and the complexity to obtain visas and affidavits was amplified. The consulates' offices were increasingly understaffed relative to the "impossible amount of work" that was assigned to them. Correspondence with Americans trying to secure affidavits for potential immigrants were delayed or went unanswered altogether. Affidavits became more difficult to secure because of the possible liability of the legality of the document to hold the American citizen responsible for the actions of the immigrant once they arrived.²⁰

The United States feebly attempted to help on an international level by spear-heading the Evian Conference, an international meeting designed to alleviate the European refugee burden, in the summer of 1938. Thirty-two nations gathered in Evian, France in order to begin a dialogue about how the world, together, could handle all the refugees. In their invitation, the

¹⁹ Kraut, "The State Department, the Labor Department, and the German Jewish Immigration, 1930-1940.", 22; Szajkowski, Zosa. "The Consul and the Immigrant: A Case of Bureaucratic Bias." *Jewish Social Studies* 36, no. 1 (Jan 1974):4; Kraut, "The State Department, the Labor Department, and the German Jewish Immigration, 1930-1940.", 7; Howard M. Sachar. *A History of the Jews in America*. New York: Vintage Books, 1992. 476; Unidentified visitor to the US Consulate's office in Berlin letter to Max Kohler, 1 August 1933, Yivo, Exo-29, RG 347.1.29, Box 16, Folder 297; Szajkowski, "The Consul and the Immigrant", 4.

²⁰ Pickett, Clarence E. "Difficulties in the Placement of Refugees." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 203 (May 1939): 94.

United States State Department declared that attending countries would not be asked to change their immigration policy. Most took this literally and looked the other direction, refusing to open their political doors citing existing high population problems or potential racial issues.²¹

The attending nations to the Evian Conference determined that the creation of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees was necessary to keep any one nation from bearing the brunt of the immigration burden. This committee sought to place the refugees in semi permanent settlements around the world as well as to negotiate with the Nazi government to allow the Jews to retain more of their possessions when leaving Germany. Neither of these missions were successful because of the fear of Nazi retaliation against the Jews. The work load was too much for the committee and political uncertainty and instability threatened diplomacy.²²

Those who were willing to assume some responsibility for the persecuted, such as the Latin American countries, did not want the middle class business owners and professionals, they wanted laborers to work the land. The Dominican Republic was the only nation who made a proposal to help the emigrants. The Dominican Republic sought advice from the United States State Department about offering 100,000 immigrants a place in the country. The outcome was that only a few hundred were allowed to settle on government owned land on the island and an absorbent amount of money was invested by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee. The international attitude of rejection at the Conference was a reflection of the attitudes of the American population.²³

The Evian Conference was poorly prepared with a less than ideal outcome for all involved. In order to keep the peace between nations, the United States considered their foreign

²¹ Levin, *The Holocaust*, 76; Bauer, *Jews for Sale?*, 31.

²² Large, *And the World Closed Its Doors*, 61; Bauer, *Jews for Sale?*, 31; Large, *And the World Closed Its Doors*, 73; Levin, *The Holocaust*, 143.

²³ Bauer, *Jews for Sale?*, 31; Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 70; Bauer, *Jews for Sale?*, 31.

Grace: "From Day to Day and From Hour to Hour": The Ludwig Marx Family's relations with Nazi Germany to be more important than helping the refugees. One consular declared that their job was to keep good relations with Germany and was proven by their lack of compassion in the visa division. No country wanted to take immigrants who had nothing and were solely dependent on their host country for assistance. But, the conference gave the Jewish refugees a shimmer of hope for their future. The Intergovernmental Committee was set up to negotiate with the German government in an attempt to let the Jews take some of their possessions with them. President Roosevelt requested that the United States combined quota for Germany and Austria be met in full. This amounted to nearly 30,000 people per year that were guaranteed a space in the United States. This executive order was exactly what the Marx family needed to gain their visas later that same year.²⁴

Nazi Germany systematically took away Jewish rights that made the immigration process take too long. In April 1938, the Nazi regime gave an order for all Jews to register their property. In May of the same year, Germans boycotted Jewish businesses, such as that of Ludwig Marx, which made earning a living very difficult. By June, all Jewish businesses that were not already registered with the Reich were instructed to do so and wealthy business owners were added to a list of targets. The "June Action" included the arrest of 1,500 Jewish men who had police records for past minor legal offenses such as traffic violations. By July 1938, Jews could no longer utilize commercial services such as real estate brokerage or credit information and the Nazis began burning Jewish synagogues. By September, Jewish physicians could no longer legally practice medicine and landlords were allowed to terminate leases with Jews without any reason other than their tenants were Jewish. More rights and possessions were taken from the Jews as Germany's rearmament program gained momentum which made

²⁴ Sanders, *Shores of Refuge*, 443; Pickett, "Difficulties in the Placement of Refugees.", 97; Sanders, *Shores of Refuge*, 436-443.

immigration even more difficult as the Marx family tried to leave the country.²⁵

All Jews had to give up their passports at the beginning of 1938, while new ones were only given to those who were approved to emigrate. Germany issued identification cards and forced to be shown as law enforcement demanded. In September 1938, because border patrols in Switzerland saw a dramatic influx of immigrants and it had become a major problem, the Swiss suggested that German Jewish passports be marked in a way that let the receiving country know that the intended immigrants were Jewish. The Nazi regime loved the idea of further segregating the Jews and, in October, began to enforce a decree that stamped every German Jewish passport with a large red "J".²⁶

Kristallnacht, also known as the Night of Broken Glass, was a response to the building tension and a reaction to the assassination of a German diplomat in Paris by a young, distraught Jewish boy named Herschel Grynszpan. It began on November 10, 1938, and was the most severe action to date against the Jews during Hitler's reign. Nazi soldiers, under the leadership of Reinhard Heydrich, began the raid in the middle of the night in cities and towns all over Germany. Windows of Jewish homes, businesses, and establishments were smashed, property was stolen, looted and burned, and synagogues were torched. The destruction continued into the morning hours as the shops opened. Even school children joined in the vandalism. The insurance companies paid Jewish claims to the government and not to their policy holders while the Jews were forced to

²⁵ The Holocaust Timeline,

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/Holocaust/chron.html#39;> Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 120; Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Letter from the Marx family to the Goldsmith family dated 19 February 1939; Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, 258; Bauer, *Jews for Sale?*, 34-35; Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, 258; Levin, *The Holocaust*, 86.

²⁶ Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, 254; Levin, *The Holocaust*, 78.

Grace: "From Day to Day and From Hour to Hour": The Ludwig Marx Family's clean the mess and pay for the damage out of their own pockets.²⁷

The push for Jews to emigrate was primarily psychological before *Kristallnacht*, but after the pogrom, Jews felt that they and their families were in physical danger. Men were arrested and taken to concentration camps while women scrambled around trying to find a way to free them. The Marx's home and business were heavily damaged and many Jewish shop owners were arrested and taken away, including Marx. The Marx family no longer had "a window or a door, nor a cup to drink coffee." It was only by "great luck" of a letter from the Goldsmiths that Lissi had the ability to free Ludwig in order to go to the consulate in Stuttgart. The only way for imprisoned Jews to escape imprisonment was to have the proper paperwork to emigrate and to do so quickly. In the case of Ludwig Marx, "all goods of [his] business and house wer[e] broken" but his family was still intact.²⁸

Control of the banking system in Germany was of particular interest to the Nazi regime primarily because they felt that the Jews not only were successful at the expense of the Germans, but that Jews were the primary reason for the economic difficulties of the time. Hjalmar Schacht, the head of the Reichsbank and later the Minister of the Economy, did all that he could to stop the export of German assets through emigration. The capital flight tax, for amounts greater than RM 50,000, was implemented specifically to keep Jewish emigrants from taking all their savings out of Germany. In the minds of the

²⁷ Gilbert, Martin. *Kristallnacht*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2006. 24-25; Levin, Nora. *The Holocaust: The Destruction of European Jewry*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1968. 78-80; Marianne Geernaert letter to author Martin Gilbert dated 10 June 2005; Gilbert, *Kristallnacht*, 31; Laurence Milner Robinson letter dated 10 November 1938: Foreign Office Papers, FO 371/21637; Levin, *The Holocaust*, 88-89.

²⁸ Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 129; Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 119; Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Letter from Marx to Goldsmith dated 27 March 1939; Adina Koor, letter to author Martin Gilbert, 24 June 2005; Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Letter from Marx family to Goldsmiths dated 19 February 1939.

regime, Jewish capital belonged to the German people and Jews were not considered German. Both Schacht and George Rublee, an American lawyer nominated by Roosevelt to negotiate with the Germans, proposed that a significant percentage of all Jewish assets be combined into a trust fund that would ease resettlement and travel expenses for Jewish emigrants. High taxes on Jewish assets and blocked Jewish bank accounts were just a few other ways that, as Germany became more desperate, kept Jewish revenue within German borders. Germans also seized precious stones and metals, including dental work.²⁹

Marx managed to sell his house in February 1938 and keep his business under very difficult circumstances. The amount that Marx sold his house for is unknown but it is likely that he had to sell it for only a small fraction of its actual value simply because he was a Jew. The Economy and Finance Ministries of Germany sought to Aryanize the housing market and did so by depreciating the value of Jewish homes to the extreme of ten percent or even less of the home's actual value. Marx's wine and liqueur business was more difficult to sell. He was prepared to wait for an interested buyer willing to pay the right price. There is no reference to the sale of the business in Marx's correspondence with Goldsmith and he likely cut his losses and left what remained of it after *Kristallnacht* behind after he received word from the consulate about the issuing of their visas.³⁰

Without their own home to live and a business to earn an income, the Marx family likely became dependant on the many relief agencies that came into existence to help those persecuted by the Nazis, although there is not any mention of them in the correspondence letters. Agencies on both the American as well

²⁹ Levin, *The Holocaust*, 92; Barkai, Avraham. *Hakalkalah Hanatzit*, Sifriat Poalim, Tel Aviv, 1986, 142ff. and Table 3; Bauer, *Jews for Sale?*, 27-33; Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 131-132.

³⁰ Letters from Ludwig Marx to Lawrence Goldsmith dated 9 May 1938 and 1 June 1938; Levin, *The Holocaust*, 89; Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Letter from Ludwig Marx to Lawrence Goldsmith dated 9 May 1938.

Grace: "From Day to Day and From Hour to Hour": The Ludwig Marx Family's as the German side offered economic advise, religious hospitality, social services, and personal assistance to those in need. The Jewish communities organized courses to train ladies in trade jobs that they could then travel overseas and earn a modest income as useful immigrants. Lissi Marx learned to make leather gloves and continued in her trade once they reached New York. Many of these organizations had a very difficult time keeping up with the demand for help, especially later in the decade. Soon after the Marx family was able to leave Germany, the Nazis shut down all the relief agencies and arrested the Jews running them.³¹

When the Nazi regime began confiscating all valuables from those who sought to leave Germany, Marx had to smuggle his valuables in packing crates, or liftvan. As the Marx family packed their belongings in early 1939, they were forced to hide the only valuables the Nazis had not already found. They hid their silver and gold in the furniture along with other personal items. Their bank account was confiscated and they had no income to live on because they could not legally be employed, so they took these valuables to help sustain them when they reached the United States. Their personal belongings that were shipped separately held hidden objects such as golden rings, watches, spoons, needles, broaches, gold pencils, a spyglass and silver religious objects hidden between the kitchen dishes. Marx also hid gold things in the floor of his toolbox. This was his only opportunity to save a piece of his fortune. Much of their savings and personal belongings, the very things that would have allowed them to flee the country, were taken from them. As refugees, they were left with hardly anything.³²

³¹ Strauss, "Transplantation and Transformed: German-Jewish Immigrants Since 1933." 252; Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 29; Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection letter from Lissi Marx to the Goldsmiths dated 7 April 1939; Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 32; Levin, *The Holocaust*, 83.

³² Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Letters from Ludwig Marx to Lawrence Goldsmith dated 27 March 1939; Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Letter from Ludwig Marx to Lawrence Goldsmith dated 18 April

It was not until August 18, 1938, that the Marx family finally got the highly anticipated news from the consulate in Stuttgart that their visa applications were finally under review and were issued November 16, 1938. Marx exhausted what was left of his fortune to purchase his family's passports and travel papers. With great difficulty, Ludwig Marx, his wife and two daughters left Europe through Cherbourg, France on February 25, 1939 and arrived in New York Harbor on March 3. They stayed with Ludwig's sister in Forbach, just over the French border from Germany for a few weeks prior to leaving Europe. They sailed on the R.M.S. Aquitania with "only ten Marks... to wander out" of Germany and to start all over again in the United States.³³

Millions of people died by the hands of the Nazis during their twelve year reign partly because of the strict immigration laws and the delays of getting paperwork and issuing visas. The Marx family's immigration was a painstaking process which involved many people, documents, and agencies. It took months for the Goldsmith family to provide the necessary affidavits needed to start the immigration process and the plethora of German agencies delayed providing birth and marriage certificates and documentation of good behavior. The hurdles brought about by both the United States and Germany, on a national level, complicated the already rocky international relations. The United States feared bringing in immigrants and destabilizing the already fragile economic position of the country. They also wanted to avoid stirring the political groups that wanted to keep the Jews out. In contrast, Germany wanted to rid themselves of the Jewish population but keep their assets. Each step of the immigration process was meticulously

1939; Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Letter from Ludwig Marx to Lawrence Goldsmith dated 19 February 1939.

³³ Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Letter from Ludwig Marx to the Goldsmiths dated 18 August 1938; Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Western Union Telegram dated 16 November 1938; Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection, Letters from Ludwig Marx to Lawrence Goldsmith dated 19 February 1939.

Grace: "From Day to Day and From Hour to Hour": The Ludwig Marx Family's scrutinized and examined by both German and United States officials. From the first affidavits to the granting of the United States visas, the Marx family remained cautiously optimistic in their fight for their freedom.³⁴

³⁴ Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection. Correspondence between Lawrence and Annie Goldsmith and the Marx family 30 June 1937 through 8 December 1941; Levin, *The Holocaust*, 92; Goldsmith Schiffman Holocaust Collection. Correspondence between Lawrence and Annie Goldsmith and the Marx family 30 June 1937 through 8 December 1941.

