PHILIPPINE VISAS-FOR-JEWS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE UNANSWERED LETTERS OF 1939 TO PRESIDENT QUEZON

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SUMMARY. More than twenty letters of European Jews to the President of the Philippines Manuel Quezon, sent to apply for entry visas for over four dozen people, were recently found in the Rare Books and Manuscripts Department of the National Library of the Philippines in Manila. The letters written in English, German, and Spanish are dated Spring-Summer 1939, when escape from Europe was still possible. Though several hundreds of Jewish refugees came to Manila via various ways during 1937–1941, the letters in question remained unanswered. All of them provide the exact time of the short-lived Mindanao plan, which proposed to establish an agricultural colony of European Jews in the Philippines, but got stuck in the very beginning. The databases of the Yad Vashem World Holocaust Remembrance Center in Jerusalem and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington reveal the tragedy, which many Jews anticipated: all of the Philippine visa-seekers, except for one person, found their death in various concentration camps, ghettos, and labour battalions. The article is dedicated to the memory of Jewish refugees, who were seeking in vain an asylum from the Nazis and their collaborators in the Philippines and other parts of the world.

KEYWORDS: Holocaust, Yad Vashem, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, European Jewry, migration, colonization, refugees, President Manuel Quezon, Paul McNutt, Mindanao island, WW2, Kaunas Ninth Fort, Japanese internment camps, UN International Refugees Organization, Shanghai Russians.

According1 to Gedenkbuch (Book of Memory) of the German Bundesarchiv, on November 25, 1941, four members of the Foerder family – Martin (51), Margot (nee Wolff, 43), Henny (18), and Lilly (16) – were deported from their home city of Breslau, Germany (today Wrocław, Poland), to Kaunas, Lithuania. Four days later, on November 29, all of them were killed beside other Jewish captives of the notorious prison and murder site, the Kaunas Ninth Fort.2 The very fact of

1 I wish to thank the generous staff of the National Library of the Philippines Rare Books and Manuscripts Department, the National Historical Commission of the Philippines, the University of the Philippines Jorge B. Vargas Library and Archives in Quezon City, and the University of Santo Tomas Museum in Manila for helping me to find the materials needed for this article. My special thanks to my friend and colleague, Prof. Jonathan Goldstein of Georgia State University, for his significant expertise.

2 See the computerized database of Yad Vashem <http://yvng.yadvashem.org/index.html?language= en&s_ lastName=Foerder&s_firstName=&s_place=Breslau> [2016 10 27].
this massacre could disappear amid many similar Holocaust crimes, if not a short letter written in German. The father of a family, Martin Foerder, a simple shoemaker, wrote to the Philippine president Manuel Quezon (Manuel Luis Quezon y Molina, 1878–1944) two years before the family’s tragic death. The letter was found by the author of these lines in the Rare Books and Manuscripts Department of the National Library of the Philippines in Manila amid a bunch of letters of European Jews dated Spring-Summer 1939, when escape from Europe was still possible. Today, the Foerder letter (see Fig. 1), the last commemoration of this unhappy family, is evidence of the cruel situation where a modest effort could have save innocent people:

Figure 1. Martin Foerder from Breslau, Germany, to President Quezon (April 3, 1939). Martin, Margot, Henny, and Lilly Foerder were murdered in 1941 in the Kaunas Ninth Fort. Courtesy of the Rare Books and Manuscripts Department of the National Library of the Philippines
Martin Foerder  
Breslau 13  
Ortsstr. 6  

Mr Manuel L. Quezon  
Manila,  
The Philippines

As I have learned, there is a possibility that some immigrants can still find accommodation in your country. Because of that, I let myself the polite inquiry whether I can be given the possibility to immigrate to your country with my family.

I am 48 years old, married. My wife is 40 years old and my two daughters are 16 and 14. I am a trained shoemaker and I am also good at laying tiles. My wife is an excellent housewife and has also worked with cosmetics in her free time. My oldest daughter is also fully trained in housework. Actually, we are willing to do any work that is offered to us.

I have to leave Germany with my family as soon as possible. Please, therefore, let me know the conditions under which the entry may be granted. Please not do make me wait too long for an answer because I would like to know my departure date as soon as possible. I hope that you will assist us in this case.

Waiting for your favourable response

Sincerely yours,  
Martin Foerder

I am at your disposal and can send you testimonies about my wife and me.3

This optimistic letter and two dozen similar letters written in English, German, and even Spanish are collected together with related documents, such as the Manila Jewish Refugee Committee’s correspondence, affidavits of immigrants, and photos.4 The Foerders were not the only family among countless World War II Jewish visa seekers who were murdered in the Kaunas Ninth Fort. According to the Austrian Victims of the Holocaust Index, on November 23 a Viennese Jew Siegmund (Sigmund) Tauber was deported there by Transport 11, Train Da 29, from Vienna

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3 The translation from German is mine – B. K.
and murdered in the Ninth Fort on the same day as the Foerders. More than two years before his death Siegmund (Sigmund) Tauber wrote from Vienna to President Quezon in English (the original style is preserved):

Siegmund Tauber
Vienna 11th April 1939
Wien, XX.,
Webergasse Nr. 19

To the President Mr Manuel Quezon,
Manila
Philippine Island<s>6

Dear Sir,

Undersigned, a Viennese Jew begs for himself and his family (consisting of 10 persons) for permission of entering the Philippine Island<s>. We are 4 men and 6 women in <at> the age of 12–55 years, 3 of us were partaking of <i.e. took part in> the Great War <i.e. veterans of WW1>. We are all healthy and busy <hard-working>. In Vienna we were cutters and sewers of body linen for ladies and gentlemen; yet we know <how> to do the agricultural work too, because we had once a small farm and were breeding fowls <sic>.

I suppose, that the fate of the German Jews is not unknown to you, Excellence, (we must emigrate) and so I am convinced that you will fulfill my request. We have no money in the foreign country <i.e. we are not allowed to take with us money to your country>, but we shall take with us so many agricultural implements as we are allowed by the office of our country. We <will> ask for the delivery <i.e. waiver> of duty <responsibility> for the things and for our removal <personal> goods too.

If your generosity should go still farther and you would allow a greater number of Viennese Jewish families to immigrate and to found settlement of their own to find <to settle on their own in> a new home, I should <would> take pains to put together a society of healthy and industrious families.


6 All the additional information in square brackets is the interpretation and comments of the author of this article.
Thanking you in advance

I remain yours,

Sigmund Tauber

Enclosed the dates of i.e. I enclose personal details relating to my family

Mr. Tauber of Vienna waited for two months for an answer from Manila, but no answer came. On June 19, 1939, two and a half months before the beginning of the World War II, he dared to remind President Quezon about the urgency of his plea:

Vienna, June 19, 1939

To the President Mr. Manuel Quezon

Manila
Philippine Island<s>

Dear Sir,

At On the 15<th> of April a. c. <sic> I took the liberty <advantage of the possibility> to send <to> you personally a petition begging you for a card of permission to enter the Philippines and to remain there with my family. I am convinced you have already decided in my favour, but the discharge reply could not yet come to reach my hands in consequence as a result of the formalities of in your offices i.e. we have not received a response.

Sir! You certainly know perfectly well the sad situation of the German, the Vienna Jews. I appeal once more at your heart and your humanity to accelerate the process of granting permission (for me and my family) to enter your dominions.

I and my family are accustomed to work i.e. used to working hard. We are well known in producing for the production of the finest Vienna body linen for ladies and gentlemen. I am sure, I can employ many native people.

Repeating once more my prayer to hasten the settlement decision to allow us to come.

I am, dear Sir,

Your obedient servant

Zsigmond Tauber7

Vienna XX.
Webergasse 19.
Germany

According to the sources mentioned above, Siegmund Tauber who perished in Kaunas was born in the Moravian town of Bzenec (Bisenz), while another Siegmund Tauber, who perished in Auschwitz, was born in Barel, Lower Saxony, northwestern Germany. It seems the personal name Zsigmond as a Hungarian form for Siegmund fits more likely the Moravian born Tauber.
Apparently, this letter went unanswered, as did similar petitions, preserved in the Quezon Collection. These letters provide the exact time of the short-lived Mindanao plan, which proposed to establish an agricultural colony of European Jews in the Philippines. The first information about this plan reached Europe in December 1938 – January 1939. A letter of January 10, 1939 (see Fig. 2) refers to an article in the Berlin Jewish newspaper *Jüdisches Nachrichtenblatt* about the Philippine President’s readiness to facilitate the Jewish immigration to his country. The article called “The Planned Emigration: Outlooks” lists several settlement programs: in Australia; in French and British overseas territories such as Kenya,

![Figure 2. Oskar Hess from Hagen, Germany, to President Quezon (January 10, 1939). Oskar, Pauline, and Margit Hess were murdered in Auschwitz in 1943. Courtesy of the Rare Books and Manuscripts Department of the National Library of the Philippines](image-url)
Rhodesia or British Guiana; in the American territory of Alaska; and in the Philippine’s Mindanao province as proposed by President Quezon in December 1938.8

More details reached Europe shortly after February 15, 1939, when a special statement regarding the Jewish matter was released to the press in Manila on behalf of President Quezon. This statement followed an unprecedented mass protest rally in Manila against the Kristallnacht (November 9–10, 1938 pogrom against Jews throughout Nazi Germany).9 It was one of the very rare state-supported pro-Jewish steps in the context of Holocaust. Although the Philippines were still a United States protectorate, the territory was self-governed since November 1935 and, according to Henry Feingold, could decide for itself whether to admit refugees.10 The project seemed more likely to succeed because of Quezon’s positive attitude to the Jewish cause as described in scholarly literature.11 Indeed, the text of the official statement, preserved in the University of the Philippines Jorge Vargas archives, shows President’s full awareness of the danger for Jews who chose to stay in Germany and neighboring countries:

The recent occurrences in Europe have forced upon the world the problem of providing an asylum for political refugees. These refugees have been estimated at over 500,000, mostly Jews. <…>

The interest shown by many governments in the solution of the refugee problem is predicated upon broad humanitarian grounds. These political refugees, regardless of race or religious belief, allege that they have not been free to think their own thoughts, to express their own feelings, or to worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences. <…> The Commonwealth Government <of the Philippines>, upon invitation of the United States, could not turn a deaf ear to the sufferings of these unfortunate people. The Philippine Commonwealth, founded as it is upon justice and righteousness and the preservation of essential human liberties, could not but view with sympathy the opportunity to do its share in meeting the situation.12

9 This “Indignation rally” on November 19, 1938 involved over 1,000 participants, including representatives of the state, the city authorities, and even the leader of the Philippine Catholic Church. See Ephraim F. *Escape to Manila: From Nazi Tyranny to Japanese Terror*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2003, 38–39.
Right after that, however, President Quezon found it necessary to caution his compatriots. The official statement continues:

In line with these sentiments, His Excellency, the President, with the cooperation of the State Department of the United States, authorized the admission of the political refugees on a selective basis. Only those whose professional qualifications, particularly in science, could supply needed services in the Philippines, have been admitted. He emphasized the fact that the present immigration laws do not inhibit the immigration of such refugees into the Philippines, irrespective of their number or personal qualifications. With the cooperation of the <U.S.> Department of State, however, the President has succeeded in limiting the number of immigrants only to those who would be of advantage to the Commonwealth.13

The Philippine Government considered the proposed Jewish settlement in connection with their project to settle and develop the sparsely populated island of Mindanao. Mindanao is the second largest island with an area of almost 100,000 km², situated in the southeastern part of the Philippine archipelago, where the Muslim minority (the Moro population) lives. Since the 17th century, the island was subjected first to the Spanish and then to American and, finally, to Philippine Commonwealth colonization programs.14 The official statement continues:

The Government believed that here was an opportunity to cooperate with an international enterprise, inspired by a most laudable purpose, and that it could be accomplished in the interest of a national program, without in any way depriving the Filipino citizens of the opportunity of enjoying the benefits of that undertaking. There is, of course, a limit to the number of settlers that can be admitted under this plan. There is no plan to settle large numbers of immigrants in Mindanao or any other part of the Philippines. It is the policy of the Commonwealth Government to preserve the natural resources of the nation for the Filipinos and their descendants. The Philippines could gain positive advantages from the execution of this plan. The proposed settlement would provide Filipino settlers in neighboring areas with a practical example of modern farming methods practiced in the most advanced farming sections in Europe. Also, these refugees could develop new crops familiar to them and which might be profitably produced here. These settlers would have the advice of competent technical men, agriculturists, land chemists, irrigation experts, and such other technological assistants as are needed in project of this nature. There is, of course, a limit to the number of settlers that can be admitted under this plan.15

Beyond the rhetoric about justice, righteousness and the essential human liberties lays the reality that only a limited number of Jewish refugees would fit

13 Ibid.
Quezon’s visas-for-Jews plan. The background to this disappointing outcome is as follows. From the very beginning of his presidency in 1935 (and even earlier, when he was President of the Senate) Quezon actively promoted various plans for development of Mindanao, because of the Moro problem, the threat of its detachment from the rest of the Philippine archipelago, or even its occupation by Japan.16 In 1938, a detailed plan for the development of Mindanao was presented to the government by the Manila Institute of Pacific Relations. As Secretary of the Institute’s Department of Agriculture and Commerce stated, “with its resources it is estimated that the island alone can feed some 40,000,000 inhabitants <then about 2.2 million only – B.K.>. Its numerous rivers, virgin forests, vast land area, and mineral resources are at once a treasure and a problem.”17

The official statement was rapidly disseminated among the terrified Jewish citizens in Central and Eastern Europe by the general press, the Jewish papers and internal Jewish community channels. Despite the obvious reservations in the statement, Jews worldwide felt inspired by new hopes. Already on February 17, 1939 Quezon received the following cablegram from the New York-based Refugee Economic Corporation, a Jewish organization which promoted Jewish immigration from Nazi Germany:

> Your noble attitude toward <the> unfortunate refugees <that was> publicly announced in London will have <a> great influence throughout the world. We take this opportunity of expressing our deeply felt appreciation of your humane spirit and generous cooperation respectfully.18

It could seem that the Jewish refugees almost surely could have been incorporated into the national program of Mindanao development.19 However, the proposed Jewish settlement on Mindanao was quickly reduced to 10,000 settlers (from an initial number of 30,000) over the period of ten years. Frank Ephraim, a child refugee in Manila, describes in details the political obstacles in the way of the Mindanao project. From the very beginning, the Americans, some Philippine politicians, and some local inhabitants were against the project.20

The Philippines already had a certain experience with Jewish immigrants. According to Ephraim and other sources mentioned above, Jewish immigrants

20 Ephraim F. The Mindanao Plan. Also Feingold. Ibid., 117–120.
unexpectedly appeared in Manila on September 8, 1937. There were 28 Jews who came that day to Manila on board of the German liner *Gneisenau* from Shanghai fleeing the Sino-Japanese war that had just erupted. Ironically, the Nazi Consul General in Shanghai organized and paid for the evacuation of Jewish and non-Jewish German citizens.\(^2^1\) According to Jonathan Goldstein, the German government knew that the United States would not allow a refugee contingent composed only of ethnic Germans enter Manila.\(^2^2\) This is, actually, how the precedent was set for Jewish emigration to the Philippines.

The news about the Manila option reached Europe and its Jewish aid organizations, and several hundreds of other refugees came to Manila as well during 1938–1939. They had affidavits from their friends or relatives in the Philippines, as did Ephraim’s family, or were granted the special American visa for the Philippines, in cooperation with the Manila Jewish community. Since the United States State Department’s “negative views about Jewish emigration to the United States – and the Philippines – were a legend,” these Jewish refugees had to be chosen according to the list of useful professions: physicians, dentists, chemical engineers, nurses, auto mechanics, tobacco experts, dressmakers, barbers, accountants, film and photograph experts, farmers, and one rabbi. The list of the professions was approved by the State Department in January 1939.\(^2^3\) All this occurred before the Mindanao proposition.

Our best evidence indicates that after Statement on Jewish Settlement in Mindanao of February 15, 1939 the refugees continued to reach Manila via these same channels. The total number of the Jewish immigrants in the Philippines since the mid-1930s varies in different sources from 1,000 to 1,300 persons. Morton Netzorg, secretary of the Jewish Refugee Committee of the Manila Jewish community, estimated the number of the Jewish immigrants in the Philippines in September 1941 to be about 900, but only 736 were registered: 494 from Germany, 140 from Austria, 59 from other countries and 43 held the Nansen League of Nations passports.\(^2^4\) We do not know how many of them came after February 15, 1939.

The head of the Jewish Refugee Committee in Manila, Philip Frieder, an American Jew and co-owner of his family’s cigar company, and his brothers maintained friendly relations with President Quezon, as well as with the United States High Commissioner in the Philippines, Paul McNutt. The Frieder brothers used to play

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\(^2^1\) Ephraim F. *Escape to Manila*, 21–23. The passengers were welcomed by “Heil Hitler” of another Nazi Consul in Kobe, Japan, where the ship had a short stop.


\(^2^3\) Ephraim F. *Escape to Manila*, 23.

cards with these people in the Manila Hotel. As it was recently shown in the documentary movie entitled “An Open Door” – Jewish Rescue in the Philippines, it was during one of such card games that Philip Frieder raised the proposition to allow some European Jews to enter the country. According to that film, “the Philippines took the courage of providing shelter for the Jews at a time when the nation itself is struggling on its own economic and political issues…”

It seems, however, that probably the only real act of courage was the proposition of the controversial Mindanao plan, which got stuck at the very beginning. President Quezon confronted a strong internal opposition to this plan. In May 1940, the Philippine National Assembly voted 67 to 1 for an immigration law, which limited the number of “quota immigrants” permitted annually to enter the Philippines to 500. The law was clearly against the uncontrolled immigration of large numbers of aliens, who, from a Filipino viewpoint, as Aruna Gopinath explained, were primarily interested in the exploitation of the country’s national resources.

Nevertheless, a document found in Quezon’s secretary Jose Vargas’s archives shows the president as a man of principle. In August 1939, Quezon argued that Jewish physicians could take medical certification examinations and open their own practices in the Philippines in spite of the objections of the Philippine Medical Association. Secretary Vargas wrote to the head of the Association that Quezon’s decision was based on “broad humanitarian grounds” and proposed to bring the case to court if needed. Later, a judge turned down the German Jewish doctors’ request for medical practice. In addition, in 1940 Quezon donated seven and a half acres of his property not far from Manila to establish a small working farm for some 40 to 50 Jewish refugees. On April 23, 1940, during the ceremony dedicated to the prospective farm that took place at Marikina Hall, President Quezon said:

It is my hope and indeed my expectation, that the people of the Philippines will have in the future every reason to be glad that when the time of need came, their country was willing to extend a hand of welcome.

25 I am thankful to the Jewish Association of the Philippines in Makati City and personally its board member Mr Lee Blumenthal for granting me the possibility to see the documentary.
27 See: Letter Written for His Excellency Manuel L. Quezon, President of the Philippines, on Allowing Jewish Physicians to Take the Medical Examination in May. Messages of the President, 416. However, we cannot suspect President Quezon in supererogatory philo-semitism. On April 30, 1939, i.e., the same time when the Jewish refugees issue was discussed in the Philippines, he visited the town of Cabanatuan and, speaking to the local landowners, permitted himself a joke about “a custom among Jews to accumulate in a safe any sum of money which reaches their hands”. “I am not a Jew,” this is how Quezon finished his awkward joke. See: Speech of His Excellency Manuel L. Quezon, President of the Philippines, on Tenancy Relations between Landlords and Tenants. Ibid., 88.
28 Ephraim F. Escape to Manila, 63.
29 Ibid., 68.
More than a year had passed after the Mindanao proposition was first announced when the Jewish community of Manila still tried to find a formula of “furtherance of the humanitarian work of settling these unfortunate people on the land”30 (see Fig. 3).

30 See: The Jewish Refugee Committee’s President Alex Frieder’s Letter to President Quezon, March 9, 1940. The National Library of the Philippines, Pres. Manuel Luis Quezon’s Papers, Series VII, Box 171, Jews 1939–1940.
However, the Mindanao scheme became mired in red tape, in spite of the genuine efforts of many good willed people. The last recorded escape to Manila was that of the Kaunas born Abraham and Gusta Lipetz and their three sons, who reached the Philippines in early May 1941 via Belgium, France, Algeria, Morocco, Portugal, the US and the Panama Canal. This fantastic journey became possible without any connection to the rescue plans of the Philippine government, but just because Abraham Lipetz had a brother in Manila who sent him an affidavit, and another brother in New York City who helped the family to acquire the US transit visa.31

On June 22, 1941 Germany invaded the Soviet Union, closing all the ways to escape Europe-in-war. After the invasion all real hopes for rescue of substantial numbers of European Jews from the hands of the Nazis collapsed. Still, on July 24, 1941 Quezon wrote in a letter to the Jewish community leaders about the “humanitarian work” to settle Jewish refugees in Mindanao that “every effort will be made to accommodate <…> a number of Jewish refugees, not exceeding 10,000 over the period of ten years…”32

Until that time, some of the unlucky applicants who had failed to receive the Philippine visa were already dead, as we learn from the letters to President Quezon preserved in the Philippine National Library (see below the fate of Kurt Rosenthal in No. 12). As for today, we have 21 “Mindanao inspired” petitions from / on behalf of over four dozen European Jews. Since a few documents in the file bear traces of fire, we can assume that some letters could have been damaged or destroyed. It is quite possible that more such letters still can be found amid other collections.

The following chronological list of letters written in 1939 to President Quezon underlines the extreme importance of the visa issuance for European Jews on the eve of the Nazi “final solution”. The list does not include two collective applications from Hungary: from Budapest, on behalf of two groups of 5,000 persons (!) each; and from Szeged in the name of 40 youngsters; as well as four letters from the free-of-Nazis places: Shanghai, China; Oxford, UK; and two letters from the United States, one (of February 22, 1939) on behalf of a family living in Italy and second (of August 1, 1940) on behalf of two families who already escaped Germany for England and Vichy France. The remaining 15 requests were sent from Germany, Austria, and Hungary. A simple search in the Central Database of Shoah Victims’ Names of the Israeli Yad Vashem World Holocaust Remembrance Center

32 Ibid., 49.
in Jerusalem\textsuperscript{33} and the Holocaust Survivors and Victims Database of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington\textsuperscript{34} reveals the expected tragedy.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
No. & Date / Language & Place & Name / Occupation & Applicants & Fate \\
\hline
1 & Jan. 10 German & Hagen, Germany & Oskar Hess & He, his wife and little daughter & Oskar (b. 1898), Pauline (nee Cohen, b. 1896) and Margit (b. 1929) Hess were murdered in Auschwitz in 1943 \\
\hline
2 & March 23 German & Budapest, Hungary & Stefan Laufer, mechanic & idem & Stefan Laufer (b. 1914) was murdered in Auschwitz in 1944 \\
\hline
3 & March 29 English & Berlin, Germany & Elise Misch (nee Gericke, a non-Jewish Christian) & Her husband, a convert of Jewish origin & Since the couple ran a small business for over 30 years, the person in question should be in his 50s-60s, like Alfred Misch (b. 1878, perished in Ghetto Riga), Berthold Misch (b. 1881, perished in Sobibor), or Julius Misch (b. 1874, perished in Ghetto Lodz) \\
\hline
4 & March 29 English & Rhaunen, Rheinland-Pfalz, Germany & Josef Klein & No information & The list of 80 victims from Rhaunen mentions a Josef Klein’s widow, Emma Klein (b. 1877), who was deported to Ghetto Lodz in 1941 and later murdered \\
\hline
5 & March 29 English & Berlin, Germany & Isac Grossmann & Isac and Etti Grossmann & Isac (b. 1894) and Etti (b. 1901) Grossmann were murdered in Auschwitz in 1943 \\
\hline
6 & April 3 German & Breslau, Germany & Martin Foerder, shoemaker & He, his wife and two teenaged daughters & Martin (b. 1891), Margot (nee Wolff, b. 1898), Henny (b. 1923) and Lilly (b. 1925) Foerder were murdered in 1941 in Kaunas 9th Fort \\
\hline
7 & April 4 English & Vienna, Austria & Franz Thurman, photographer & He and his wife & Franz (b. 1875) and Helene (b. 1880) Thurman were deported to Izbica near Lublin, Poland, in 1942 and later murdered \\
\hline
8 & April 6 English & Berlin, Germany & Dr. Philipp Katz, historian & idem & Philipp Katz (b. 1886) was deported to Trawniki near Lublin, Poland, in 1942 and later murdered \\
\hline
9 & April 14 and June 19 English & Vienna, Austria & Siegmund Tauber, tailor & He and his relatives (10 persons) & Siegmund (Sigmund, Zsigmond) Tauber (b. 1884) was murdered in 1941 in Kaunas 9th Fort \\
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\end{tabular}
\end{table}

\textsuperscript{33} See: \url{http://yvng.yadvashem.org}.

\textsuperscript{34} See: \url{https://www.ushmm.org/online/hsv/person_advance_search.php}.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Applicant</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>April 15</td>
<td>Hennef, Germany</td>
<td>Ernst Schönenberg, handycraftsman</td>
<td>He, his wife, little daughter, and mother-in-law. Ernst (b. 1902) and Adele (b. 1904) Schönenberg were deported in 1942 to Ghetto Minsk and later murdered. His mother-in-law Lina Rosenbaum (b. 1877) was deported in 1942 to an unstated place. No information about the daughter.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>April 15</td>
<td>Berlin, Germany</td>
<td>Erich Friedlaender, translator</td>
<td>He, his wife, and daughter. Erich (b. 1880) and Alice (b. 1895) Friedlaender were deported in 1942 to Ghetto Riga and later murdered. The daughter Ilse Friedlaender was deported to Sachsenhausen Camp in the very beginning of 1945 and murdered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>April 19</td>
<td>Kobe, Japan</td>
<td>Helena Hochheimer</td>
<td>Her sisters and their families in Duesseldorf – Cerka and Kurt Rosenthal, mechanic; Frieda and Otto Schwartz, locksmith, with their 3 small kids. In 1940 Kurt Rosenthal (b. 1899) was murdered in Sachsenhausen Camp and two years later Cerka Rosenthal (nee Rosenberg, b. 1906) was murdered in Bernburg Saale Camp. In 1941 Otto, Frieda and their kids Ingeborg (10), Guenter (5) and Herbert (4) were deported to Ghetto Minsk and later murdered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>May 15</td>
<td>Budapest, Hungary</td>
<td>Alex Buchsbaum, electrotechnician, Aladar Erdős, ceramist, and John Lichtenstein, chemist</td>
<td>idem. Alex Buchsbaum (b. 1907) was arrested by the British in Mandatory Palestine on July 18, 1940 among the illegal emigrants on board of S.S. Libertad; Aladar Erdős (b. 1914) was drafted to the Hungarian labor battalions and sent to the Eastern front, where he died in 1942 in Novousenka near Voronezh, Russia; no information about John Lichtenstein (b. ca. 1918, Hungary).</td>
</tr>
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As we clearly see, none of the applicants asked for financial aid for travel expenses or accommodation in the new home. In some cases, even a deposit was proposed, such as the 100£ proposed by Helene Hochheimer from Japan\(^{35}\) for her sisters and their families in Duesseldorf (No. 12). Each applicant expressed his/her

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\(^{35}\) Helene Hochheimer (nee Rosenberg, 1913–2009) and her husband Werner left Berlin already in 1937 and fled to Japan, where Helena served as executive secretary of the Kobe Jewish Ashkenazi community. In 1947 they moved to San Francisco. See obituary in *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 2, 2009.
readiness to take up any kind of work, including work in agricultural sectors. A number of applicants fitted the list of “useful” professions approved by the United States State Department in January 1939, but for some reason these applications went unanswered as well.

Only one from over four dozen applicants, Alex Buchsbaum from Budapest, survived. In summer 1940 he managed to escape the fascist Hungary for Bulgaria, where he joined 380 passengers of the S.S. Libertad in Varna. On July 18, 1940 the ship reached the shores of Mandatory Palestine. The British Mandatory authorities arrested the illegal immigrants and sent them to the Atlit detention camp near Haifa where they spent a year. All the rest of the Philippine visa-seekers in our case, who stayed under the Nazi or pro-Nazi regime and did not emigrate, found their death in various concentration camps, ghettos and Hungarian labour battalions.

The Japanese attacked Manila on December 9, 1941 and entered the city on January 2, 1942. A new period in the Philippine history started. The Jewish immigrants soon found themselves under the Japanese rule. In the beginning of 1942, a demand to send all the Jews to Mindanao, where they should work as farmers, appeared in the local press, arguing that the Jews were admitted to the Philippines under this condition. Following this, some community leaders, such as Morton Netzorg and Stanton Youngberg, were investigated by the Japanese regarding the Mindanao question. It was probably the last mention of Mindanao in the Jewish context. Meanwhile, about one hundred of the Jews who owned the citizenship of the countries-in-war with Japan (USA, UK, Poland, etc., but, ironically, not those who held the German citizenship) were sent to internment camps, such as Santo Tomas Internment Camp on the grounds of Santo Tomas Catholic University in Manila. About six dozen Manila Jews died during the Japanese occupation or were killed in the street fighting, but the majority survived until the American liberation in February–March 1945.

40 For the list of casualties, see: JDC Archives, 1945–1954 New York Collection, Folder “Philippines, General, II-VIII.1945,” Item 706738.
On July 4, 1946 the United States granted full independence to the Philippine Islands. Other politicians succeeded President Quezon, who died in American exile in 1944. President Elpidio Quirino (Quirino y Rivera, 1890–1956), whose wife and three of his five children were massacred by the Japanese during the war, took office in 1948 and almost immediately was involved in another refugee case.41

Toward the end of 1948, when Mao troops in China were approaching Shanghai, the city’s large Russian community was seeking for every possible escape. It seems that the Soviet leadership hinted to its western allies that the Shanghai Russians were the internal issue of the Soviet Union. When the UN International Refugees Organization (IRO) asked for at least temporal shelter for that group of people, only the Philippines agreed to accept them. The evacuation began in January 1949. On May 20, a week before the Chinese Communists took over Shanghai, the last group of the total number of about 6,000 Russian, Ukrainian and other displaced persons, including also some Russian Jews,42 was evacuated to the Philippines by ships and American military planes. The Philippine Government under President Quirino directed the refugees to a small tropical island called Tubabao, connected by a bridge with the island of Samar, the third largest island in the country. A former American military base served as grounds for the refugee camp for more than two years.

There is little information about the decision making process carried out by the Philippine authorities in this case, but it was rather fast, judging by the chronology of the events and publications in North China Daily News, which monitored the so-called Samar refugees, as well as by some memoirs. The IRO submitted its request in autumn 1948 and acquired the Philippine agreement already in December. The first refugees reached Tubabao a month later, in January 1949. That is, no bureaucratic obstacles were created and no protests of the locals were reported. Moreover, no question about the refugees’ usefulness was raised. On October 28, 1949 the president personally visited the Tubabao camp and spoke about the duty to help political emigrants.43

Comparing the two plans, Mindanao and Tubabao, it looks as if President Quirino, who served under President Quezon as Secretary of the Interior and

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43 Moravskii N. Ostrov Tubabao, 30.
Finance, successfully compensated for the failure of Quezon’s plan. It was, of course, much easier in the conditions of the country’s full independence. Anyway, the rescue of the Shanghai refugees underlines the missed opportunity to help numerous European Jews, including the innocent people, the authors of the unanswered letters written in 1939 to President Quezon, who were seeking in vain an asylum from the Nazis somewhere on Earth.

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