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JEWISH REFUGEES AND ANTI-NAZIS AMONG THE PORTUGUESE DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

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As soon as Hitler rose to power, in 1933, persecutions against Jews, political opponents, and all those who the National Socialist government considered to be outside the "Arian" *Volksgemeinschaft* (People's Community) began. As the oppression and anti-Semitic laws toughened, the number of refugees seeking sanctuary in other European countries grew. In consequence, the latter closed their doors to the refugees.

Portugal was no exception and also began to restrict its border policy, namely to "emigrants" who could not return to their country of origin, as was the case of German Jews. Joining these were, following the "annexation" of Austria in 1938, the invasion of the Sudetes, and the occupation of Poland – which marked the beginning of the Second World War –, the Austrians, Czechoslovakian and Polish.

Since the beginning of the war and following the invasion of several European countries, particularly France by the *Wehrmacht*, those fleeing Hitler who had found refuge in other countries had to continue fleeing, ever more westwards. Portugal, a neutral country during the Second World War, became, for circumstantial reasons,

one of the few European places of refuge for a large number of refugees, fleeing from war and the persecution of the National Socialist regime.

But there were difficulties. In Portugal, the entry of refugees was hindered, particularly by the PVDE (Police of Vigilance and Defence of the State), their presence only tolerated as a temporary stay and their permanent exile was prohibited. Even so, Portugal was a place of passage for many: Jews from Germany and other occupied countries, communists, social-democrats, liberals, Christians, intellectuals, poor and rich, Germans, Austrians, Poles, Italians, Czechs, Belgians, Luxembourgers, Dutch, French and even Russians from the Baltic States. They waited for a visa in Lisbon, Oporto, Coimbra, Caldas da Rainha, Figueira da Foz or Ericeira, and a means of transport that would take them to Africa or South America, where the intake of refugees was limited, or to the United States, where there were entry quotas according to nationality.

Ironically, it was in an authoritarian and nationalistic dictatorship, with sympathies for the anti-communism and anti-liberalism of the German regime, where many of these refugees found temporary refuge. The fact that the Portuguese dictatorship, despite its similarities differentiated itself in key aspects from the German regime – namely, in the absence of racial anti-Semitism, in the salazarist ideology and Portuguese society, as well as in the circumstances of Portuguese neutrality – eventually made it possible for many of those persecuted by National Socialism to be saved through Portugal.

Portugal under the Salazarist dictatorship (1933-1938)

Despite the similarities between the regimes of Salazar and Hitler (both formed in the year of 1933), among which are included the various "antis", particularly anti-communism, the *Estado Novo* (or New State) differentiated itself from the totalitarian, expansionist, and racist Hitlerian regime. The civil dictatorship of Oliveira Salazar, institutionalised by the 1933 Constitution, refused liberalism and parliamentarianism as much as it did the totalitarianism that characterised the Hitlerian regime. Salazar himself made it clear (on paper) that the omnipotence

of a State to which everything was subject to the "idea of nation or race"[1] was incompatible with the Christian civilisation of which Portugal was part.

In 1933, aside from the creation of the Constitution that was the foundation of the regime, freedom of expression and association was suppressed, the previous censorship was reorganised through the creation of the Secretariat for National Propaganda, and the backbone of the regime was erected, the PVDE – Police of Vigilance and Defence of the State –, the political police who was also responsible for emigration and border control, and therefore refugees.

In practice, the *Estado Novo* was an authoritarian dictatorship with a head of government who controlled a National Assembly composed of a single party, the National Union, elected in non-competitive elections. As an ideology, the Salazarist regime combined the ideals of the radical right with traditional conservatism and corporatist, anti-liberal and anti-communist Catholicism. In its turn, regarding the functioning of the political system, the Salazar State had priority over the Party, without ever entering in contest with the latter, in contrast with Germany where the National Socialist Party merged with the State.

Finally, in its dealings with society, the *Estado Novo* did not dominate over all of society and allowed the institutions of family, army, and Church to have their own place. This happened even when, whilst becoming more fascist in 1935 and 1936, a paramilitary militia was created – the Portuguese Legion – and state organisations of women and youth – the Mothers League for National Education (*Obra das Mães pela Educação Nacional*), the Feminine Portuguese Youth League (*Mocidade Portuguesa Feminina*), and the Portuguese Youth League (*Mocidade Portuguesa*).

It was Salazar's wish to "bring the Portuguese to live as usual".[2] Therefore, except between 1936 and 1938, there was no constant popular political mobilisation, as happened in Germany where the state placed itself in the centre of family life, through the *Hitler Jugend*, and stifled the church by trying even to create a State Church.

1 Salazar 1946, 342-344.
2 The expression "as usual" meant in this case "with modesty", that is, to content oneself with what little life gives, and not involved in politics.

An essential difference between the two regimes is that the concept of biological racism – namely anti-Semitism – was not part of the Salazar ideology or State. Despite frequently using, in the 30s, the term "race", Salazar ideology applied this in the context of a national historic and cultural community. In other words, it existed in the context of political-cultural nationalism and not in a context of biological racism. Salazarist nationalism had a political basis, and therefore its enemies were political opponents. In Portugal, but not in the African colonies, the racial dimension was not part of the idea of belonging to the nation, and even when political rights were removed, the Portuguese were not driven out of the "nation" and retained their nationality.

The reason for the refugees' gratitude was that they did not feel discriminated against by the Portuguese because they were Jewish. Generally, the Portuguese did not understand why, for example, a German Jew stopped being German because he was Jewish. In practical terms, it was as if there were no Jews in Portugal, four centuries after the forced conversions and exiles of those persecuted by the Inquisition. The lack of visibility of the very small and integrated Portuguese Jewish community, with about 3,000 members, many of them on the upper echelons of society, practising liberal professions such as medicine and law, also meant that no one was classified as Jewish.

Portugal in the Second World War, a neutral country (1939-1945)

Another reason for the rescue of many refugees through Portugal was due to the Portuguese neutrality declared on the 1st of September 1939,[3] and the alliance with England, even if the neutrality was first from the two belligerent camps. Through a policy of exploitation of the differences between the two fighting sides,

3 "*Felizmente, os deveres da nossa aliança com a Inglaterra, que não queremos eximir-nos a confirmar em momento tão grave, não nos obrigam a abandonar nesta emergência a situação de neutralidade*" afirmava o documento, segundo o qual o Governo dizia estar a prestar "*o mais alto serviço ou a maior graça da Providência poder manter a paz para o povo português*", esperando "*que nem os interesses do país, nem a sua dignidade, nem as suas obrigações lhe imponham comprometê-la*" (Salazar 1951, 173-74).

Salazar was able to maintain neutrality, which eventually became "collaborative" with the Anglo-American side from the second half of 1942 onwards.

Portugal's neutrality was facilitated by the Allies as well as the Axis. For Great-Britain, it was important to maintain the neutrality of the Iberian Peninsula, and ensure the safety of the Atlantic and Mediterranean routes through the cooperation of Salazar in preventing Germany allying with Spain, country that had just come out of a civil war where the "nationalists" had won with the support of Germany and Italy.[4] On the other hand, the "equidistant" neutrality was also economically advantageous to Germany who imported, throughout the whole war, Portuguese and colonial products it required.[5]

In June 1940, the arrival of Germans at the Pyrenees, the declaration of "non-belligerence" by the Spanish, and the reinforcement of the Falangist's in the neighbouring country put the neutrality in peril when Hitler sought to occupy Gibraltar and the Iberian Peninsula through Operation Felix, planned for 12 November 1940.[6] In the end, Germany cancelled the operation and moved its troops to the Balkans and the Soviet Union, which was invaded in June 1941.[7]

Two fields where the neutrality remained "equidistant" until almost the end of the war were those of espionage and propaganda on the one hand, and commercial ties on the other. Portugal maintained its commercial ties with Germany through the exports and re-exports of products that were vital to the Russian campaign, especially tungsten, a fundamental component of the German armoury.

But, as the course of the war changed in favour of the Allies, when the salazarist wish for "a peace without winners or losers" became improbable, a fear that a victory for the Allies would mean the end of the *Estado Novo* became instilled in the heart of the regime. Portuguese neutrality went from "equidistant" to "collaborative" with western Allies. In August 1943, after extensive talks, Salazar gave in to the Anglo-American demands for the strategic use of a military base on the Azores, and in January 1944 declared an embargo on the sale of tungsten to Germany, at the request of England. In exchange, Salazar was able to maintain the regime and Empire after the war.

4 Telo 2004.
5 ANTT, Arquivo António Oliveira Salazar, AOS/PC-8D, pt. 2.
6 Rosas 1995, 271.
7 Telo 2004.

The difficulties posed to the entry of refugees from 1936 onwards

In 1936, after the beginning of the Spanish Civil War, the Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs was concerned to prevent the entry into the country of "red" Spaniards and Russians, having allowed it only to stateless people and Poles, by means of a 30-day visa.

It should be noted that until October 1941, Germany had a policy to incentivise the expulsion of Jews from the country by stealing their possessions and property and prohibiting their return.

Following the Austrian *Anschluss* (annexation), the creation of anti-Semitic laws in Italy, the "flood" into neighbouring countries of these "emigrants", who could not return to their country of origin, most of whom were Jewish, led to the conference of Evian, in July 1938, through which several countries "settled" the issue by limiting the entry and stay of refugees. Portugal followed the example of these countries, among which Norway and Sweden.[8] On 28 October 1938, Portugal stipulated that "Jewish emigrants" would henceforth require "tourist visas", valid for 30 days, to enter Portugal.[9]

This order encompassed, for the first time, a vast group of specific candidates for entry into the country which became especially visible from the moment Germany began, in that same year of 1938, to place the letter "J" on all Jewish passports. It was the word "emigrant", destined for those who were not allowed to return to their country of origin – in this case, Germany –, and not the word "Jewish" that scared the Portuguese authorities. Although it is not possible to state that it was anti-Semitism that motivated the Portuguese government, but instead the danger of mass emigration to the country, these two words became synonymous during this time. The outcome of the border policy seemed and became objectively anti-Semitic.

Afterwards, and throughout 1939, the PVDE promoted the image that Portugal was not a "country of refuge" as this would encourage the entry of

8 PRO, HW 12-303, fl. 443.
9 Schäfer 1992, 42.

extremists and of Jews "who are generally morally and politically undesirable". When the war had already begun, Agostinho Lourenço, director of the PVDE, sent a confidential letter to Salazar asking for a toughening of visa policy, and for visa requests, in particular for Jews, to be passed to the PVDE for prior consultation. According to these, visas should be refused to those who could not afford to stay in Portugal, could not return to their countries or invoke departure for America without showing a guarantee of being able to do so, or finally, to all those without an entry visa for the country of final destination.[10]

Salazar agreed with Agostinho Lourenço's proposal, since, on 11 November 1939, the Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Salazar himself, sent a circular to its diplomatic offices, according to which only career diplomats could henceforth grant visas and no longer honorary consuls. Diplomats should, however, consult the Ministry before targeting the passports of various groups of aliens, in particular those whose passports showed an obstacle to returning to their country of origin.[11]

In February 1940, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent a telegram to the legation in The Hague stating that visas could only be granted to "catholic refugees" who had a Brazilian visa and a ticket for travel.[12] On 23 April, Salazar sent a new confidential telegram, according to which the consuls in the Netherlands were to investigate "scrupulously" whether the visa applicants were Jewish. He explained that, given the growing influx of Jews into Portugal, the PVDE considered it inconvenient for them to be allowed to enter the country "regardless of the nationality of those concerned". In June, the PVDE prohibited the Amsterdam consulate from granting visas to "all" Jewish Germans, even to those that had destination visas.[13]

The policy of restricting entry into Portugal became even more acute. On 15 June 1940, the day after the occupation of Paris by the Germans, transit visas for 30 days would only be granted to refugees with tickets to leave Portugal and not to those with only a reservation, as well as an entry visa for a third country.

On 16 December 1940, the situation worsened again by making the granting of transit visas dependent on prior authorisation from the PVDE.[14]

10 AHDMNE, Carta confidencial da PVDE de 24 de Outubro de 1939, A43, M38B.
11 AHDMNE, "Determinações sobre vistos, em passaportes, desde 1937 até hoje".
12 AHDMNE, Telegramas enviados à Legação de Portugal na Haia.
13 AHDMNE, 2.º piso, A43, M80.
14 AHDMNE, Telegrama. Circular n.º 23 às missões diplomáticas, 14/6/1940.

This tightening of policy was probably introduced as a result of the action of the consul in Bordeaux, Aristides Sousa Mendes, who granted thousands of visas against Salazar's orders.

The vicious cycle of visas and work prohibitions

Most refugees only obtained the Portuguese transit visa after having already the visa of a destination country and an air or sea passage to continue their journey, and as such, only remained in Portugal between the period of arrival and departure. Yet, many stayed in the country for a longer period of time.[15] In this case, one of the main difficulties was surviving in a country where they were prohibited from working.

From July 1933, a law prohibited foreigners from working in the branches where Portuguese were unemployed, yet still allowed them the possibility to be self-employed.[16]

In April 1939, foreigners were no longer allowed to practice medicine, except in exceptional circumstances, and in October 1940, the impediment to work extended to theatre and, in March 1942, to engineering and architecture.

The refugees among the Portuguese

In June 1940, a large wave of refugees arrived at the Portuguese border of Vilar Formoso, most of them with visas granted by the consul in Bordeaux, Aristides de Sousa Mendes. According to an estimate by the Israeli Community of Lisbon (CIL) and the international Jewish organisation, American Joint Distribution Committee (or Joint), about 12,000 refugees entered Portugal by August 1940, a number that increased to 14,000 in November.[17] The same Joint highlighted that

15 Losa 1987, 26-30.
16 Schäfer 2002, 75.
17 YIVO, "Portugal and the Refugee Problem", no date [1944?], 245.4/Series XII: Portugal B 59.

between June 1940 and May 1941, about 40,000 people had entered Portugal, a figure close to the one given by COMASSIS, who stated that 42,000 refugees had been supported by this organisation.[18]

During those days in June, Captain Agostinho Lourenço, of the PVDE, went immediately from Lisbon to Vilar Formoso, where he decided to distribute the mass of refugees gathering there to resort areas where there were hotels and boarding houses. According to several reports, the division of the refugees by places of installation took place right at the Portuguese border in June 1940. For example, those that had "legal" visas for countries beyond the Atlantic were allowed to travel immediately to Lisbon while others, probably those with documents granted by Aristides Sousa Mendes, against official orders, remained at the border until they were sent to places of "fixed residence".[19]

Although they had freedom of movement within the so-called places of "fixed residence", where they could live in hotels, boarding houses and rented rooms (many of which supported by American aid organisations), refugees could not distance themselves more than 3 kilometres from the former.

One of the main difficulties experienced by refugees in these places was to find means of subsistence, and in order to obtain entry visas in a country of exile, they had to go to Lisbon or Oporto, sometimes without police authorisation, risking arrest. Although initially authorisations for residence were almost always renewed, from the end of 1940 the PVDE began to grant only extensions of very short duration.[20] Yet, almost all accounts from refugees, specifically those placed in areas of "fixed residence" show praise for the hospitality of the Portuguese, which contrasted with the habits of the foreigners.

"And so I saw myself on the way to the blazing Portugal, a world rich in colour, southern, peaceful . . . a wonderful country" – wrote the German writer Alfred Döblin.[21] For someone coming from a Europe at war, in poverty and darkened by the blackout, where, in addition to the fear of bombs, there was also persecution for political and racial reasons, it was only natural that the

18 JDCA, Resume of JDC's operations on behalf of Refugees in Portugal, Nov. 26. 1940, JDC: Portugal 896.
19 Matuzewitz 1977, 235-37; Franco et Fevereiro 2000, 20-21.
20 WJCC, H283/2, Portugal-Refugees, Figueira da Foz, 1941.
21 Döblin 1986, 212; Döblin 1996, 226-28; Heinrich 2000, 6.

Portuguese capital appeared as a heaven, with its brightly illuminated streets and bustling shops. However, if for many refugees Portugal was portrayed in this manner, the writer and aviator Antoine de Saint-Éxupéry described it in his book *Letter to a Hostage* as a "sad paradise" under the threat of "imminent invasion", and which held on to "the illusion of its happiness": "Lisbon, which put on the most impressive exhibition the world has ever seen, smiles with such a pale smile" – added Saint-Éxupéry –, saying that "Lisbon played at being happy so that God would truly believe her".[22]

Staying, between 28 November and 20 December 1940, at the Hotel Palácio, in Estoril, the author of *The Little Prince* felt an angst similar to that "which invades us in the zoo before the survivors of an endangered species", when he watched the suffering with which the richest refugees spent their fortunes in the casino roulette, "emptied of meaning" and with perhaps "expired currency", in a sad "puppet dance".[23] "Lisbon is sold out", was how the Czech journalist Eugen Tillinger described the Portuguese capital in October 1940 before being placed in "fixed residence" at Figueira da Foz.

According to him, "The cafes and restaurants are overflowing" – adding that – "there arrived in the country considerable sums of foreign currency which are circulated among the immigrants. But the Portuguese are aware of this and are very kind to foreigners".[24] As Tillinger himself pointed out, pension and hotel owners, those who rented rooms, store and coffee shop employees, as well as exporters who, breaking the blockade, sent products to countries occupied by the Axis, all these were the ones who profited most from the presence of refugees.

However, for most of the population, wage freezes, unemployment, the high cost of living, rationing and queues for purchasing basic necessities were a constant. And although overall economic difficulties were not attributed to the presence of foreigners, there were sometimes misunderstandings among the Portuguese about the forced idleness of refugees.

22 Viana 1995, 18-32.
23 Gurriarán 2001, 111-112.
24 Tillinger 1940.

The arrival of new customs to the Portuguese capital

During the day, in that time of forced idleness, the refugees only left their boarding houses and cafeterias to take part in the long ordeal of queuing at the Post Office, in the Praça do Comércio, and shipping companies, among which particularly the American Export Lines, on Rua Augusta; COMASSIS, on Rua do Monte Olivete, and the British and American Consulates. On the Avenida de Liberdade, a main walkway in the centre of Lisbon, they would sit in the Casa Veneza coffee house. Run by Bulgarians, this establishment then began to make yoghurts as did the Charcutaria Suiça, on the Rua do Ouro, a store near Rossio owned by a Jewish refugee.

The forced idleness brought out a mass of refugees into public spaces where their presence introduced new habits. Cafeteria esplanades, and the more liberated attitude of female refugees which sat there, were phenomena that marked the Portuguese during the war period. Although they already existed, the number of esplanades increased greatly. The Portuguese writer Alves Redol described the novelty:

> It was then, around 1939 that on the other side of the square and at the request of foreigners without sunshine to warm their lives, that tables were placed on the pavements . . . The manager had acceded, begrudgingly, afraid of losing a clientele who did not know the prices and did not bargain. And the foreign women sat there, reading and talking . . . there was a display of legs and thighs for all Lisbon without suppressed modesty . . . From the pavement of the cafes there began to arrive large queues of people with absentminded manners . . . The newspaper boys would come to repeat their capers; they would throw themselves on the floor, in planned fights, in order to take turns in the viewing of such unusual sights and . . . Ladies passed by and ran away disturbed by such a scandalous public embarrassment . . . Chatting of their abandoned cities, foreign women did not understand those male gatherings . . . When the manager, annoyed, approached one of the polish women and said 'the legs, *oui les jambes*', word spread from table to table, among smiles and a shrug of shoulders.[25]

Alexandre Babo also recalled the esplanades of the Avenida or Rossio, where one could see "French, Belgian, Dutch, Jews from far-flung places" and

25 Redol 1977, 77.

described particularly the café that stayed in the minds of the Portuguese, that of the refugees:

> The 'Suiça' in the Rossio, already nicknamed 'Bompernasse', where woman predominated . . . smoking in public . . . All this was a punch in the stomach of the national provincialism . . . Those people had other habits, were freer, more natural and open . . . without looking (the women) askance at the men, sitting at the cafés, bars, and public pavements, which was until then restricted to men and few women.[26]

The writer Ilse Losa, probably the first woman to visit a café, in Oporto, described the incomprehension of some Portuguese women in relation to the forced idleness of the refugees, through one of the female characters stating:

> So much is spoken of the misfortune of these refugees, yet at the end of the day, they pass their time sitting in cafés, gossiping . . . If the same happened to us, forced to leave our home, we would spend our time crying and not having fun like these people. [27]

But some Portuguese women began to be attracted to the "independent look of these women" and despite the scandal, there began to emerge among them a fascination for the new habits. The foreign women influenced fashion, with the introduction of the turban, the short haircut refugee-style, cork-wedged shoes and short dresses. Following their example, many young Portuguese women also started to sit in cafés, going alone to the cinema and leaving the house without stockings, gloves or a hat.

Also, the beaches of Estoril, Costa da Caparica, Foz do Arelho, Praia das Maças and Figueira da Foz started to fill with refugees from the summer of 1940 onwards. On the 11th September, the *Diário de Notícias* wrote about the new light--coloured swimwear fashions brought by the foreigners to the beaches. Although the article didn't specifically mention the refugees, the article rejoiced in the fact that Portugal had become "the most western beach of Europe where now a variety of languages are spoken and where women of all types of beauty can be found".

On 13 October 1941, however, another article in *O Século* announced new swimwear regulations, recently approved by the Ministry of the Interior. The

26 Babo 1993, 143.
27 Losa 1987, 55.

presence of the refugees was, in this way, also the cause of the introduction of new laws regulating habits, namely regarding the use of swimsuits, which had to include a petticoat, for women, and a shirt that covered the upper body for men.[28]

From 1942, the situation became easier for the few refugees who still arrived in Portugal and who, for the most part, were now made up of isolated individuals who were still able to enter the country, sometimes illegally. In this same period, both refugee aid organisations and the allied governments would intercede on behalf of refugees to obtain permits from the Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs for dislocation to and permanent stay in Portugal. Also, in 1942, following an agreement between these organisations and the police, incarcerated refugees, for being "social and political" prisoners, clandestine or without papers, were released and placed in "fixed residence" in Ericeira, Caldas da Rainha and Figueira da Foz. After 1943, when the Portuguese neutrality became collaborative with the allies, who were turning the tide of war, the Portuguese government became more susceptible to Anglo-American pressure to save those persecuted by Nazism.

On the 4th of February 1943, the Nazi Legation in Lisbon warned the Portuguese Government that, "in the interest of German military security", from the 1st April, all foreign Jews in German-occupied territories, including those of Portuguese nationality, would be subject to "the provisions in force concerning Jews, including their identification, internment and later expulsion". For "reasons of courtesy", Salazar's government was informed so that it could have "the opportunity to withdraw Jews of Portuguese nationality from those territories under German rule". Germany committed itself to supplying exit visas to those who claimed Portuguese nationality.[29]

Jews with Portuguese passports, residing in France, thus ended up arriving in Portugal in three groups. After the first group of 40 persons, the second one, with 43 to 45 Jews, arrived on the 16th of October,[30] and the third, with 52 to 54

28 ANTT, Arquivo Ministério do Interior, Gabinete do Ministro, "Algumas normas para o uso de fato de banho". 1941. Caixa 76, maço 518.

29 AHDMNE, Telegramas recebidos da Legação portuguesa em Berlim; PRO, HW 12-296 21 March/43 115886.

30 JDCA, Letter from Herbert Katzky to JDC, New York, 16/11/1943; JDCA, "Liste des ressortissants Portugais autorisés à franchir la frontière franco-espagnole par Hendaye à destination du Portugal, autorisation

individuals, on the 1st of November (a total of 135 to 139 Jews, depending from the sources). Even so, the director of the Police of Vigilance and Defence of the State (PVDE) stated that it was necessary to carry out a thorough recheck on their identity and proposed only entry into Portugal to those who brought money and could, in fact, prove to be Portuguese. He commented that in the 30s several honorary consuls representing Portugal had sold passports to some Jews, in exchange for money.

This time, however, the general director of the Portuguese Foreign Ministry, Eduardo Vieira Leitão, stated on the 11th of March 1944, that in cases where it was "impossible to immediately determine" who had Portuguese nationality, their entry into Portugal should be authorised, on the condition that if later proven not to be Portuguese, they ought to leave the country. Finally, on the 27th of June 1944, the last group of 47 left France and arrived in Portugal.[31] Portugal, however, repatriated the big majority of its Jewish nationals from France, even though not all could prove "correct" papers. Initially, in "fixed residence" in Curia, those considered of Portuguese nationality could later install themselves freely in Portugal where they wished.[32]

However, the "repatriation" campaign of Portuguese Jews involved a small number of those persecuted (none of the Jews from Holland and Greece) and who, for their survival in Portugal, relied on the support of allied countries and international aid organisations. Adding to this, Portugal did not allow a permanent stay even in these cases.

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collective n.º 19372 délivrée par l'Ambassade d'Allemagne en date du 14/10/43 – 52 individuals", JDC Archives, Portugal, 897.

31 Milgram 2010, 292.

32 JDCA, Letters from American Joint Distribution Committee in Lisbon, n.º 445, 21/9/43, and n.º 593, 16/1143, JDC Archives, Portugal.

Portugal and the "rescue" of those persecuted by Hitler

Knowing exactly how many refugees passed through Portugal during the Second World War is difficult due to the lack of sources. It seems that Jewish aid organisations exaggerated the number of refugees that passed through Portugal; for example, the American Jewish Joint Committee stated that between 1940 and the beginning of 1944 about 100,000 refugees came through Portugal.[33] If this number is inflated, then the one supplied to António Leite de Faria, a diplomat in London, by MI6, certainly is – according to whom 150,000 Jews found refuge in or passed through Portugal.[34]

In short, although it is difficult to obtain accurate estimates, due also to the existence of clandestine refugees, it is thought that during the Second World War between 50,000 and 80,000 refugees came to Portugal, with the highest number during the summer of 1940.[35] In Portugal, all was done to ensure the refugees did not integrate or settle, even though the government, who didn't directly assist the refugees, allowed aid organisations to do so. Salazar managed in a pragmatic and nationalistic manner the inevitable and unwanted influx of refugees, not allowing them to take up places in the workplace nor to contaminate, with their cultural and political opinions, the solitary life imposed on the Portuguese.

After the first major crisis of the regime had passed, in the post-war period, Salazar could breathe a sigh of relief, as he had managed, with no great pain, to make Portugal a temporary refuge where foreigners did not mingle dangerously with the Portuguese or introduce new political ideas. The following episode may explain Salazar's attitude.

Among the refugees remaining in France, after 24 June 1940 – when the consulate in Bayonne was closed following the granting of thousands of visas by the consul Aristides de Sousa Mendes, and Spanish authorities stopped accepting Portuguese documents –, there were 1,000 Poles. By passing on a request from the

33 YIVO, "Portugal and the Refugee Problem", [1944?], 245.4/Series XII: Portugal B 59.
34 Antunes 2002, 12.
35 Pimentel 2006, 355.

diplomatic representative in Poland, so that his compatriots would be authorised to continue their journey and enter Portugal, Armindo Monteiro, Portuguese ambassador in Great Britain, in London, interceded on their behalf using the argument that these were "people pure of race".[36]

Salazar refused their visas, stating that these refugees, non-Jewish, were "precisely" the most "undesirable":

> Refugees of a political and intellectual nature . . . are the least desirable due to the activities that they will want to carry out. Besides this, their sheer number would require pre-emptive security and an immediate departure to other countries, as there is no housing capacity. Visas granted in Bordeaux were done so against the specific instructions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by a consul that I have already removed from office.[37]

This is the only known explanation on that matter given by the head of government who was also the minister of Foreign Affairs. The argument reveals, however, that the Portuguese dictator was especially concerned not only with the arrival and settlement in mass of foreigners with no possibility of returning to their countries, but also the presence of other cultural values and political ideas that could influence the Portuguese people.

A farewell to Europe

And yet, what pain many of these refugees must have felt when leaving the last European port. With the refugees, Europe "came" to Portugal and, through them, the Portuguese could no longer ignore that they belonged to the European continent. At their hour of departure, Lisbon symbolised the farewell, perhaps forever, of that same Europe who, despite everything, they did not want to abandon.

In October 1940, Alfred Döblin's last sight was that of the Exhibition of the Portuguese World, the nationalistic event celebrating the African colonial empire, which curiously, was his last glimpse of Europe: "the exhibition glowed in

36 Ministério dos Negócios Estrangeiros 1964-1991 (ano de 1940).
37 AHDMNE, A. 49, M. 76; AHDMNE, Colecção telegramas recebidos da Embaixada em Londres, telegramas de 27 de Junho e 2 de Julho de 1940.

a remarkable way. Its magical light was the last one we saw of Europe, immersed in sadness."[38] At the same time, Heinrich Mann also said goodbye to Europe with a last image of Lisbon:

> Looking upon Lisbon I saw the port. It would be the image of Europe that remains. I thought it incredibly beautiful. A lost beloved one could not be more beautiful. All that was given to me, I lived it in Europe, joy, and sadness . . . How painful that farewell was.[39]

For Hans Natonek, when the ship left the Tagus barrier, in the early months of 1941, under the setting sun, the westernmost city of Europe epitomized, a whole life lived on that continent:

> Before me, in front of me, almost disappearing, were some of the most beautiful scenes of the European past, baroque and gothic . . . in the golden light of the setting sun I saw the towers of Prague, the gentle Austrian landscape, Luxemburg, Paris – a whole life lived in Europe . . . It was as if this last look made Europe disappear.[40]

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38 Döblin 1986, 236.
39 Mann 1973, 448.
40 Natonek 1941.

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