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Negotiating Forced Migration in the IRO's 'Care and Maintenance' (CM/1) Files

One Setting, Three Underlying Aims, (at Least) Four Actors, and Multiple Forms of Human Agency

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1. Introduction

During the final phase and after the end of the Second World War, the Allied Expeditionary Force (AEF) and three other organisations had overlapping and consecutive responsibility for the care of the victims of the Nazi regime and the solution of the European refugee problem.[1] First, in 1938 the Évian conference led to the founding of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees (IGCR) to address the problem of Jewish refugees in Europe.[2] Second, the Allies in November 1943 gave the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) responsibility for liberated DPs and non-German refugees[3] from the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF), and the charge to assist the military administration in repatriating them (see e.g. Woodbridge 1950, Reinisch 2008, Reinisch 2011, Reinisch 2017). In 1946/1947, a special organisation of the United Nations, the International Refugee Organization (IRO), replaced the IGCR and UNRRA. The primary task of the IRO was to resettle those DPs and refugees who did not want to be repatriated for fear of political, national, 'racial' or religious persecution. The IRO's mandate ended in 1951/1952. During the few years of its existence, the organisation resettled approximately one million DPs and refugees to locations all over the world (see e.g. Holborn 1956, Salomon 1991, Cohen 2011).

As part of their efforts to care for the DPs and refugees and to repatriate or resettle them, the AEF, the UNRRA and the IRO, as well as the earlier IGCR, all produced administrative files to register the DPs and refugees and collect information to decide whether an applicant was eligible for help and what kind of help. These documents included the AEF DP Registration Records (DP 2 cards), the AEF Assembly Center Registration Cards (DP 3 cards), and the IRO Application Forms for Assistance (CM/1,

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[1] In the late 1930s and the 1940s, social scientists, diplomats and politicians in the 'West' increasingly began to discuss the international 'refugee problem'. In this international perspective, refugees in other parts of the world, such as Asia, did not play such a prominent role as refugees in Europe. The international 'refugee problem' was rather located in Europe in the context of the two World Wars – especially the Second World War – and also the Spanish Civil War. See, for example, Rubinstein 1936, Simpson 1938, Brown 1939, Simpson 1939, Dean 1939, and Holborn 1939 for the 1930s and Dushnyck/Gibbons 1947, Wilson 1947 for the 1940s. For an overview of the genesis of refugee studies, see Black 2001, Gatrell 2016: 175-179.

[2] See, for example, Gatrell 2015: 76-78, Nasaw 2020: 183-184. The League of Nations had created the High Commission for Refugees in 1921, which in 1930 became the Nansen International Office. See Vernant 1953: 24-25.

[3] In the mid-1940s, several definitions of 'Displaced Persons' and 'Refugees' were circulating and the definitions adopted by SHAEF, UNRRA and the IRO were not identical, as the US Committee on Foreign Affairs, among others, recognised (see Fulton/Javits/Pfeifer 1947). The IRO constitution (as the organisation of primary interest in this paper) defined refugees as "(a) victims of the Nazi or fascist regimes or of regimes which took part on their side in the second world war, or of the quisling or similar regimes which assisted them against the United Nations, whether enjoying international status as refugees or not; (b) Spanish Republicans and other victims of the Falangist regime in Spain, whether enjoying international status as refugees or not; (c) persons who were considered refugees before the outbreak of the second world war, for reasons of race, religion, nationality or political opinion.' It defined Displaced Persons as: 'a person who, as a result of the actions of the authorities of the regimes mentioned in Part I, section A, paragraph 1 (a) of this Annex has been deported from, or has been obliged to leave his country of nationality or of former habitual residence, such as persons who were compelled to undertake forced labour or who were deported for racial, religious or political reasons" (Constitution of the International Refugee Organization, Annex 1: Definitions – General Principles, Section A: Definition of Refugees and Section B – Definition of Displaced Persons). For a general discussion of the categories and terms constructed by SHAEF, UNRRA and the IRO (among others), see Rass/Tames 2020.

or 'Care and Maintenance' forms).[4] These documents gathered personal information about the applicants, such as their name, birth date, marital status, religion, family members, 'claimed nationality', professions and skills and whether they would like to be repatriated or resettled. If they chose resettlement, the forms recorded where they would like to be resettled and why they refused repatriation. The more extensive CM/1 forms also collected information about the applicants' status as NS victims or Eastern European (or Spanish) refugees, where they had lived, the nature of their victimhood, the reasons for their desire to be resettled instead of being repatriated. The forms, which were the basis of personal interviews by IRO Eligibility Officers with the applicants, also included space for the evaluation of the Eligibility Officer and the reason for accepting or rejecting the application (see Appendix).

At the end of the IRO programme, some of these historical records were deliberately destroyed because they were no longer needed as administrative files. Other records were transferred to the International Tracing Service (ITS) in Arolsen, Germany. The Allies founded the ITS in 1943 to trace the whereabouts of Nazi victims. As a tracing service, the ITS did not focus on establishing a historical archive, and for several reasons, its holdings were not accessible for scholarly research. Not until 2007 did the international committee that oversees the ITS decided to make the documents accessible for research. The ITS re-invented itself as one of the world's largest historical archives about Nazi persecution and post-World War II migration and became the Arolsen Archives in 2019.[5]

Since the opening of the ITS archive in 2007, historians have debated the extent to which the CM/1 forms are a suitable source to supplement historical research on migration in Europe after the Second World War and the IRO and its resettlement programme. Historians immediately raised doubts about how objective or accurate the information provided in these forms was. Jan Erik Schulte (2007: 230) pointed out that "Since the applicants' self-reports are sometimes difficult to verify - with the aim of receiving IRO support - the reports do not always provide correct information" and observed, "[a]n approach to the course of individual lives understood in the classic sense of historiography only makes sense in exceptional cases - namely when other types of sources such as biographies are also available or can be obtained from other archives" (ibid.: 230-231).[6] Despite his doubts about the validity of the sources from a positivistic perspective, Schulte recognised the general value of these sources:

> *"The history of the International Refugee Organization, which has been neglected up to now, cannot be written from the ITS documents alone, but it will be possible to provide a micro-historical foundation for the daily work of the IRO on the basis of the case files and a large number of corresponding forms and correspondence" (ibid.: 231-232).[7]*

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[4] For a detailed description of the individual administrative documents that AEF, UNRRA and IRO produced to register DPs and refugees and clarify their claims for assistance, see Arolsen Archives: e-Guide. For an example of a CM/1 form see Appendix.

[5] For the history of the ITS, see, for example, Borggräfe 2020, Stone 2017, Stone 2020.

[6] Translation by the author. Original: „Da es sich um teilweise schwer nachprüfbare Selbstauskünfte der Antragsteller handelt – mit dem Ziel, IRO-Unterstützung zu erhalten –, werden nicht nur korrekte Angaben zu finden sein. [...] Eine im klassischen Sinn der Historiographie verstandene Annäherung an individuelle Lebensverläufe erscheint nur in Ausnahmefällen sinnvoll – nämlich dann, wenn auch andere Quellengattungen wie etwa Lebensbeschreibungen zur Verfügung stehen oder aus anderen Archiven beschafft werden können."

[7] Translation by the author. Original: „Die bislang vernachlässigte Geschichte der International Refugee Organization kann zwar nicht allein aus den ISD-Unterlagen geschrieben werden, doch wird es möglich sein, die

Schulte was right about the difficulties of 'verifying' the applicants' statements, but he did not consider other research questions, such as: How did applicants narrate their personal histories? What strategies did they use to get help? and How did the applicants negotiate with the IRO's Eligibility Officers over assistance? This paper argues that the CM/1 forms were never about an objective 'truth' and therefore should not be interpreted in that way.

In recent years, historians have raised those questions with the CM/1 forms to enrich the historiography about post-war migration, the resettlement programme of the IRO and migrants' human agency. From a scientific perspective, historians have not fully utilised the CM/1 forms and files, so the range of interpretations varies considerably. This paper, inspired by the reflexive turn in migration research (Nieswand/Drotbohm 2014), suggests a theory-guided approach to the interpretation of the CM/1 forms and files. Although there are many philosophical and sociological studies for every aspect of the following, the goal of this paper is pragmatic. It is to interpret the CM/1 forms as a historical source without falling into a positivistic over- or a constructivist under-interpretation of their contents. The CM/1 forms – as bureaucratic questionnaires – and the corresponding holdings of the Arolsen Archives, help to answer the question lately raised by Peter Gatrell and his colleagues: "how did [the refugees and DPs] explain the circumstances of their displacement – and were these narratives open-ended and fluid, or more formulaic and rigid in format? To what extent did refugees observe certain narrative conventions? Is it possible to establish whether and to what extent refugees learned how to engage with their interlocutors?" (Gatrell at al. 2021: 72-73).

This paper neither provides an analytical blueprint that could simply be applied to every CM/1 form nor claims to consider every aspect of these forms. Rather, it highlights and reflects critically on some issues that need to be kept in mind when analysing these sources. Many of the individual aspects have already been considered in studies based on the CM/1 forms, especially in recent years, while others have been neglected.

This study focuses on one specific aspect of the process: the negotiation of migration or resettlement. As part of a larger research project about the negotiation of the resettlement within the corresponding programme of the IRO after the end of the Second World War, I am particularly interested in the negotiations of eligibility in the IRO's European field offices as one of several levels of the negotiation of resettlement.[8] What was the negotiation in the IRO's European field offices? What should be considered about the actors involved? How should historians assess the norms on which these negotiations were based?

The next chapter sketches the two great narratives about the work of the IRO and the resettlement programme that existed in chronological order before the CM/1 forms were made available. It also analyses studies that have interpreted the CM/1 forms to explore the existing interpretations of the

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alltägliche Arbeit der IRO anhand der Fallakten sowie einer Vielzahl entsprechender Formblätter und Korrespondenzen mikrogeschichtlich zu fundieren."

[8] The purpose of the project is to investigate the IRO's resettlement program and the several levels of negotiation involved from both a micro-historical as well as a global perspective. Other levels of negotiation include the discussions of the actors politically involved in the creation and implementation of the IRO and its resettlement program, the negotiation of the IRO and its predecessors – the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees (IGCR) and the UNRRA – with the receiving countries and the negotiation of social acceptance and 'integration' of Displaced Persons (DPs) and refugees in the receiving countries, using Venezuela as an example.

negotiation processes that these sources reflect. Finally, it discusses theory-based analytical levels that must be considered when assessing the negotiation situation in the European field offices of the IRO by reading CM/1 forms.

This study requires two disclaimers: First, it uses the terms *applicant* and *DP* or *refugee* synonymously for the sake of simplicity. Strictly speaking, *Displaced Person* and *Refugee* were labels imposed on people by organisations but not uniformly, and they are not scientific categories (see Rass/Tames 2020). In addition, not every person who applied to the IRO and filled out a CM/1 form had or had to have the status of *DP* or *refugee*.

Second, this study refers to CM/1 forms and CM/1 files, which are not used synonymously. The IRO used the CM/1 form – a five-page questionnaire (see Appendix). The ITS kept those forms in envelopes together with all other information about the respective person in their holdings, to which this study refers as a CM/1 file. Some envelopes in the Arolsen Archives contain only the actual form, but others contain more documents, sometimes dozens, from other IRO departments, other organisations or the applicants themselves, including resumes, letters of motivation, objections, declarations, etc.

2. Trends in Writing about the IRO and the Resettlement Project in the Past…How It Started

Most early studies of the IRO and its work were written partly to address strategic and political interests in the context of the Cold War and partly from honest human interest, but they were often well-informed and crafted to the best of the authors' knowledge at the time. Since the publication of Michael Marrus' 'The Unwanted' and Wolfgang Jacobmeyer's 'Vom Zwangsarbeiter zum Heimatlosen Ausländer' – both published in 1985 – excellent research work has been published, especially in recent years. While the story of the IRO resettlement programme was initially told in very broad outline – especially in the 1950s – as a western heroic saga, today – especially since the 1990s – scholars have often focused on its apparent flaws, such as the supposed inalienability or 'dishonour' of the IRO project, and on 'cheating' and 'lying' DPs and loopholes in the resettlement project.

Telling and constructing one's own story was part of the 'project' to solve the 'European refugee crisis' from the start. The IRO employed a team of historians who were entrusted with the task of writing the IRO's official history.[9] George Woodbridge and the UNRRA history staff team prepared a three-volume official history of the UNRRA (Woodbridge 1950). IRO officials as well as agencies of the governments engaged in the project published works about their efforts to solve the 'European refugee problem'. Two examples illustrate the impetus of these publications.[10]

One dominant narrative was euphoria about their own performance. In 1948, for example, the UNRRA published a booklet with the title 'The Story of UNRRA'. The brochure's final chapter, titled 'Thank You, UNRRA', declared:

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[9] The IRO's official history was published in 1956 by Louise Holborn after a decade of political arguments about its tenor. See Huhn 2022.

[10] For an overview of the abundance of and impetus for the publications of the 1940s, see, for example, Special Subcommittee of the Committee on the Judiciary, House of Representatives 1950.

"This, then, is the story of the life and times of UNRRA, the first great international relief and rehabilitation organization. […] In the supplying countries UNRRA will soon be little more than a huge set of books, and pages and pages of technical reports and grey statistics. But UNRRA is far more than a tall column of figures in the lands which received its aid. A New York Times correspondent, returned from a trip across Europe in the long, cold, hard winter of 1946-47—the longest and coldest and hardest winter of a century—wrote: 'To the occupied countries UNRRA became a holy word, and often meant the difference between life and death." (UNRRA 1948: 46).

IRO officials, such as J. Donald Kingsley, the organisation's Director-General, also wrote texts about the organisation for a wider audience.[11] His book 'Migration from Europe: A Report of Experience' was published in 1951 in several languages, including German (International Refugee Organization 1951). Kingsley characterised the IRO's task in the following way:

"The International Refugee Organization was established by its member governments to solve that part of the world refugee problem represented by the 'displaced persons' who were uprooted by the second World War and by the political disturbances which followed in its wake. The objective of the governments joining together in the IRO was purely humanitarian. The nature of the problem, however, combined with the techniques developed to solve it, has resulted in the accumulation of practical experience which is applicable to the even larger problem of European over-population" (ibid.: v).

In retrospect, the tenor and intention of this official historiography are clear. However, despite all of the strategic interests of justifying commitment and financial expenses and of advertising for support, it would be cynical to deny the authors' euphoria and their belief in their own achievements, just because politics was also an impetus. Both the UNRRA and the IRO were important projects, and the euphoria of the people involved is understandable. Nonetheless – because historians only became interested in this topic from the mid-1980s – for a long time an image of the work of the relief organisations remained that viewed the DPs and refugees themselves as primarily passive, helpless and disoriented people. As Kingsley expressed it, the IRO experience could provide a blueprint for the further strategic movement of people on the international chessboard without considering their points of view and interests.

From the early 1950s to the 1990s, the topic of European DPs and refugees was not a major focus of historical research. In the 1990s, studies began to appear that explored the history and the work of the IRO from a historical perspective. As a result of general trends in the social sciences and migration research, these studies paid much more attention to the issue of the human agency of the refugees and DPs.

These works included Kim Salomon's critical examination of the IRO as a strategic player in the upcoming Cold War.[12] Without intending to downplay the achievements of the IRO, Salomon argued that the IRO project reflected not only humanitarian aid but also the strategic interests of the West, including achieving stability in Germany as a country on the border of the Iron Curtain as quickly as possible.

Salomon's book also included a chapter about the eligibility process – the most detailed reflection on this process thus far – that is central to the point of this study. Without having access to the CM/1 files

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[11] The IRO issued a few brief publications, such as IRO 1948, IRO 1949.

[12] Important books about the European DPs and the IRO include Wyman 1989, Cohen 2011 and Nasaw 2020. Cohen and Nasaw also recognised the Cold War as a crucial historical context for the IRO's work.

and based on sources from the National Archives in Washington and Paris as well as the UN Archives in New York and the Public Record Office in London, Salomon concluded that it was possible and even easy for DPs and refugees to 'lie' in the process of negotiating eligibility and that the DPs and refugees had learned to claim 'fear of persecution' to gain acceptance by the IRO: "[a]s the IRO said, the only refugees who were not judged to be eligible were those who were naïve enough to mention economic motives or who stated palpably false motives" (Salomon 1991: 91).

Other authors also argued that the DPs and refugees frequently made false statements in other areas. For example, against the background of the neither completely false nor completely truthful premise that the host countries of European refugees and DPs were primarily looking for single young men who could work in agriculture, it became common for people to present themselves to the IRO incorrectly as farmers. "Many displaced persons had wrongly described themselves as farmers in order to get a permit" (Holleuffer 2002: 147, see also Holleuffer 2005: 161-163), Henriette von Holleuffer wrote, for example, in an article published years before the opening of the ITS Archives, and "[t]he number of false statements of personal history, former occupation, religious creed or political belief given by the applicants could only be estimated" (ibid.: 155).

The sources for these conclusions were mostly correspondence between IRO staff and politically involved persons kept in archives, from which scholars derived generally valid judgements, the actual extent of which could not be measured at the time. In the minds of many researchers, however, refugees and DPs who were previously 'helpless' slowly became 'false farmers' and 'cheaters', and scholars adopted a 'victim or villain' binary in their analysis.[13] Historians began to assign this human agency to them in their contacts with the IRO.

Furthermore, this preliminary history of the refugees and DPs was – or had to be because of the inaccessibility of sources – a kind of 'making up people', not in terms of categorising them but in reconstructing their motives and strategies for action from 'hearsay' and not from their own statements (see also Gatrell 2016: 175-184).

This observation regards the direct negotiation process about help and resettlement with the IRO, and it should not be understood as a general criticism of these research results. The point is that, before access to the CM/1 files, historians had to make intelligent guesses, generalisations and speculations about the actions of the DPs and refugees in the IRO's local offices. The conclusions drawn from letters of complaint from IRO employees were certainly not wrong. The question remains, however, of the general validity of the observations that are expressed in these sources. Complaints about the faults in various procedures often attract more attention than the empirically more frequent lack of problems.

It has only been possible to investigate these questions based on the CM/1 files and other sources preserved in the Arolsen Archives since 2007. As Schulte stated in 2007, it is now "possible to provide a micro-historical foundation for the daily work of the IRO" (Schulte 2007: 231) and investigate the agency of DPs and refugees within the IRO's normative framework.

What must scholars keep in mind when using the CM/1 files and the other forms and registration cards produced by UNRRA and the IRO? The following sections explain aspects that must be kept in mind to interpret these files as a historical source. Some of those aspects have been considered in studies

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[13] For the general tendency to divide migrants into 'victims' or 'villains', see Anderson 2008.

based on those files, some have been mentioned in rather theoretical reflections about the CM/1 files and others have received far too little or no attention so far. Above all, the aspects must be considered in their entirety.

3. How the CM/1 Files are Read Today

Recent research has primarily underscored the narrative character of the CM/1 forms. As Nathaniel Parker Weston argued, single specific forms and files can under certain circumstances be read as "memoirs in miniature" (Weston 2021). In the case of Paula Brettauer, a Jewish survivor of Auschwitz, her CM/1 form "reveals [much] about her memories of surviving the Holocaust and her husband's murder in Auschwitz" (ibid.: 1). As a Holocaust survivor, Brettauer's right to help from the IRO was obvious, so she was able to reflect on the past when filling out the CM/1 form instead of primarily telling her story strategically.

Thomas Chopard also emphasised the narrative quality of CM/1 forms. Complementing Weston's characterisation of CM/1 forms as "memoirs in miniature", Chopard stressed that Jewish NS survivors did not have difficulty in justifying their claim to assistance by UNRRA or the IRO in general. However, they belonged to a disadvantaged group in the resettlement programme, because many countries were reluctant to accept Jewish refugees. Accordingly, with a view to resettlement, they had to decide tactically how and as whom to present themselves to the IRO in the CM/1 forms (Chopard 2020).

Several authors have recently described the character of the CM/1 forms as a basis for negotiations between the DPs and refugees on the one hand and the Eligibility Officers or the IRO on the other:[14] "the CM/1 forms have to be understood as two unequal partners negotiating a status," Henning Borggräfe stated, "[w]ithin this process, IRO officers tried to generate cases that met the different categories of eligible and ineligible applicants, while most applicants tried to present a description of their identities, pasts, and political beliefs that fitted into these categories" (Borggräfe 2020: 51).

Ildikó Barna explored the conventional assumption that DPs and refugees often gave false information to the IRO in an article about Hungarian-Jewish Holocaust victims (Barna 2020). Based on her analysis of CM/1 forms, she confirmed that DPs probably often did not tell the truth to the Eligibility Officers to achieve their goal of getting accepted as within the mandate of the organisation (ibid.: 175). To be able to give the 'right' answers, DPs and refugees informed each other about the 'correct' answers and the character of the CM/1 forms (ibid.: 171-172, 177). By comparing the CM/1 forms with other documents stored in the ITS archive in the same envelopes, Barna worked out the 'correctness' of the information provided and could thus reconstruct the human agency used by the DPs and refugees of learning the right answers and preparing for their interview in the local offices of the IRO. Some of the Hungarian-Jewish DPs in Italy she examined acted strategically to achieve their goals (ibid.: 171-172).

Jannis Panagiotidis found similar patterns in a study of the negotiation of Ethnic Germans with the IRO (Panagiotidis 2020). People from that group developed strategies of 'ethnic conversion' to present themselves as eligible to the IRO. They did not work together as a community or collective, as other groups of DPs and refugees did, but many of them learned over time how to re-invent their own identities to negotiate with the IRO based on the experiences of others. "Whether somebody fell into

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[14] For the general character of administrative communication between officials and citizens, see Becker 2011.

one or the other group was a matter of bureaucratic negotiation, rather than essential identity" (ibid.: 175), Panagiotidis concluded.

Elvira Churyumova and Edward Holland identified a collective form of agency by DPs and refugees in their study of Kalmyk DPs that relied on CM/1 forms and other documents. The group developed strategies to avoid repatriation by developing a shared story for the IRO (Churyumova/Holland 2021: 343). By comparing interviews conducted by the US Army in 1946 to CM/1 forms from 1948 and 1951, Churyumova and Holland demonstrated that the stories DPs and refugees told to the IRO became more and more similar (ibid.: 353). One of the strengths of the study is that it takes into account not only the DPs and refugees but also other actors who were important in the negotiation process. For example, the authors examined private relief organisations such as the Tolstoy Foundation and investigated whether there were Kalmyks among the Eligibility Officers (ibid.: 355). That there were raises additional questions about the process: did members of an ethnic group help each other or did these officers pose a problem for DPs and refugees because they could invalidate the invented stories? The authors also reflected on the chances of the Kalmyks as a group of Asian refugees to gain resettlement in the United States, based on its immigration policies. Among the articles based on the CM/1 forms, that by Churyumova and Holland was among those that considered the most variables in the negotiation process: DPs and refugees, the Eligibility Officers,[15] private relief organisations and the receiving countries.

Ruth Balint explored the question of learning the 'correct answers' by the DPs in a very thoughtful conceptual article about the CM/1 forms (Balint 2015). She viewed the CM/1 forms primarily as a source from which it is possible to work out how DPs and refugees interpreted, told and negotiated their experiences and perceived claims. "DPs used their storytelling skills", she stated, "[t]heir writings are a vivid reminder that refugees exercised agency in attempting to shape their own destinies towards a future beyond the DP camps. […] Given the contrived context of their creation, the records clearly have their limits for what they can tell an historian searching for factual details of wartime experience. The answers DPs gave to the authorities, and the testimonies and petitions they wrote, were crafted for a certain purpose and a specific audience. What people wrote was not necessarily what they thought, nor was it necessary the truth. They were not written for posterity, but with urgency and, often in desperation" (ibid.: 175-176). This interpretation of the CM/1 forms as a space in which to negotiate with strategies and purposes is crucial for how the forms should be understood as a historical source. In this understanding, they have enormous value as a historical source to reconstruct the negotiations and the "self-production" (ibid.: 186) of DPs and refugees after the war, beyond Schulte's doubts about their positivistic meaningfulness about what 'really' happened to people during the Second World War and its aftermath.

A recent article about the resettlement project adds another perspective to the CM/1 files by examining not a specific group of DPs or refugees but a sample of people who had in common that they were finally resettled in Venezuela. By looking at the success or failure of this group[16] of DPs and refugees, the article supports the assertion that scholars must place more emphasis on the applicants'

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[15] This article is one of very few that recognised Eligibility Officers as individuals with their own agency and not just as implementers of a fixed norm: "These comments convey positive evaluation, based mainly on intuition; in this context, truth is not a given, but rather is the product of the reaction and interpretation of the interviewer, who does not operate in a political vacuum but is always embedded in a geopolitical environment." (Ibid.: 361).

[16] As Dan Stone has emphasised, there is bias in this relative randomness.

ability to negotiate. Some DPs and refugees had a greater talent for negotiating and more social and cultural capital (in terms of Bourdieu) to navigate through the IRO system than others. In this context, the resettlement project is a "story of exceptions" (Huhn 2020: 222). The talent to negotiate even often outweighed the question of whether the applicants were legitimately in need of assistance and resettlement.

Dan Stone highlighted a methodological challenge to keep in mind when working with the CM/1 files in the Arolsen Archives. He calls this challenge the "survivorship bias", especially as regards Holocaust victims (Stone 2017: 81). This bias can also be applied more generally. In addition to the absence of those people murdered in the Holocaust, for example, the CM/1 files do not include people who never submitted an application or who set out to their old or new homes on their own after being liberated. The files represent a specific subset of people whose lives were disrupted by the war, an observation that is also important in studying the IRO's resettlement project.

Recent studies that have used the CM/1 forms and files have agreed that they present narrations, strategies, and learning processes that DPs and refugees developed – collectively or alone – to negotiate with the IRO. They evaluate the forms and functions of this agency differently. Analytically, historians seem to be in a kind of intermediate phase between initial work with the CM/1 forms and files and a full understanding of this source in its form, its power of assertion, its value and its scope.

4. What Must Be Kept in Mind…Moving Forward

Future work about the IRO, the resettlement project and the CM/1 files – and similar documents from the holdings of the Arolsen Archives – must pay more attention to four facets of these sources. Some have been considered in studies of the IRO and the resettlement project – at least the second and the third – but they are often more or less randomly discovered and partly overlooked in studies based on the CM/1 files.

First, scholars must understand better what the CM/1 forms were and were meant to be. Second, to evaluate the IRO Eligibility Officer's decisions, the DPs' and refugees' chances for success or failure, and consistencies and inconsistencies in the IRO's project, scholars must actively reflect on the three partly parallel, partly sequential general underlying aims: 1) helping NS victims, 2) making Western Cold War politics, and 3) receiving population. Third, they must think systematically about all persons involved in the IRO's care-and-maintenance project instead of focusing too exclusively on DPs and refugees. Fourth, scholars would profit from a more sociologically informed interpretation of the negotiation processes in the IRO's European field offices.

4.1. Administrative Files

The most basic question for researchers is a general understanding of the CM/1 forms. It is important to reflect on their initial purpose to avoid the trap of trying to read them as something they were never meant to be.

Generally, it is important to keep in mind what UNRRA and the IRO were and were not. Both institutions never were nor were meant to be 'truth commissions' as in later decades in Guatemala or South Africa, for example. They did not collect testimonies to learn about history or to record

memories. Therefore, it would be wrong in many cases to misinterpret the CM/1 forms as a kind of testimony to a truth commission and to assume that they could primarily serve as a source for reconstructing what happened during the war. However, as Weston argued, under certain conditions and with appropriate cautions, they can be used to address such questions.

When reading and interpreting the CM/1 forms, one must keep in mind their purpose. Those files – as well as the other documents produced by UNRRA and the IRO – were created and used to organise a specific institutional task and to get a job done.[17] UNRRA and the IRO surely hoped for a 'truthful' filling out by the applicants, but they also knew that applicants would answer strategically and not always "truthfully" (Salomon 1991: 91). They used the CM/1 forms as well as the registration cards to detect and eliminate those who were not eligible according to the IRO's constitution or the Allied basis for aid and to register those who were eligible.

The organisations used these files to bring order out of the chaos of "an almost unlimited variety of personal situations" (Afoumado 2014: 223), to act and to account for their actions. UNRRA and the IRO never saw themselves as courts. The officers checked the statements by the applicants for plausibility, followed up on the interviews and consulted third parties in cases of doubt, but one of the known difficulties for UNRRA and IRO was the fact that they had to rely to a certain extent on the applicants' statements because often no 'objective' evidence could be presented. The problem was that many of the applicants had lost papers and documents during the war (or claimed they had), had been deported forcefully or imprisoned in a camp or had never received certain documents. So, trust (or mistrust) had to be a part of the process to a certain degree; otherwise, the task of UNRRA and the IRO would have been impossible.

To achieve their goals, UNRRA and the IRO created forms and cards with categories that could not depict 'reality' but rather constructed it.[18] By asking people about certain attributes, UNRRA and the IRO constructed an 'identity' for them (Borggräfe 2020: 49). Diane Afoumado and Lynne Taylor pointed out that regardless of attempts to 'cheat' or 'lie', these categories were far less clear and understandable than one might assume (Afoumado 2014, Taylor 2010). Because of the often traumatic experiences the applicants endured during the NS terror, learned attributions and labels and the fact that the forms were not always immediately understandable to all applicants, the desired and 'adequate' answers were not always clear. People replied 'Jew' when asked for their nationality, for example, or had difficulty in identifying their 'current' national identity as states had disappeared and continued to disappear, borders shifted and sometimes applicants even adopted the 'nationality' imposed by the NS regime as their 'true' identities (Afoumado 2014: 224). According to one study, "the term 'Mischling' or half-Jewish were filed under Religion [...], Nationality [...], and even Ethnicity" (ibid.: 220). The applicants' statements regarding their religious affiliation were so varied that the IRO adapted the questionnaire and provided answer options in this category.[19]

The basic nature of the CM/1 forms as constructed administrative files must inform the interpretation of the files.

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[17] Hanne Leßau (2020) pointed to a comparable function of administrative files, based on the denazification files of the Allies from Germany and emphasised that such documents were a social practice.

[18] For the general character of administrative files as social constructs, see Bondzio 2021: 343-344.

[19] CM/1 files in the holdings of the Arolsen Archives.

4.2. The Simultaneity of Three Underlying Aims

The CM/1 forms were a means of solving three aims or addressing three ideas at once: helping victims of NS forced labour and concentration camps, creating order amid the Cold War by helping Eastern European refugees obtain resettlement, and enabling resettlement according to the ideas of the receiving states. Without the first aim, the IRO would never have been created. Helping the victims of NS terror was the first impetus. Without the second aim, however, there would probably have been no or less financial and political support, and the task of bringing stability to Western Europe would have failed. Without the third aim it would not have been possible to resettle one million European DPs and refugees all over the world. Each of the three dimensions is equally important.

Although the humanitarianism of the young United Nations, the UNRRA and the IRO remained in the foreground until research from the 1990s onwards suggested a bigger picture, it remains too easy and cynical to ignore completely this historical motivation. Gerald Daniel Cohen identified the former First Lady of the USA, Eleanor Roosevelt, as someone who had a humanitarian motivation for a solution to the 'European refugee problem', for example. In the mid-1940s, she became one of the most assertive voices in the United States for a humanitarian orientation within the future community of states and devoted great attention to the issue of European refugees (Cohen 2011: 17-19). The developing Cold War, however, played an equal or even superior role in the genesis of the IRO, which was reflected not least in the specific definition of 'Displaced Person' and 'refugee' in the constitution of the IRO.[20]

Both paradigms are reflected in the CM/1 files and studies based on these sources also take them into account. A general challenge for historians is to consider both paradigms simultaneously when interpreting the CM/1 files. This approach requires, for example, that researchers pay more attention to the development of the IRO project over time, as Barna, Churyumova and Holland and Panagiotidis did when exploring specific groups (Barna 2020, Churyumova/Holland 2021, Panagiotidis 2020). It is very important to recognise that the Cold War paradigm increasingly replaced that of aid for NS victims and that NS victims appeared less frequently in the sources, while refugees from Eastern Europe became more numerous over time (Salomon 1991). The five years of the IRO project thus reflect a process, not a moment. When it comes to the question of development over time and its influence on the negotiations within the IRO offices in Europe, scholars must recognise the growing pressure to succeed as the IRO project neared its end (Huhn/Rass 2018: 256-258).

Two examples from the files illustrate this point. On December 13, 1948, Sandor Baja filled out a CM/1 form to apply for help for himself, his wife Nina, and their daughters Janette and Diana from the Preparatory Commission of the International Refugee Organization (PCIRO) in Austria.[21] He claimed Hungarian as the whole family's nationality, although he had been born in Paris in 1903 and went to school in Berlin from 1910 to 1918. One month before applying for PCIRO assistance, he had fled from Budapest, where he was first a partner in a wood processing company, then a mechanic in a workshop. When asked if he wanted to be repatriated to Hungary, Baja replied "no". As a reason, filled out on the CM/1 form by the Eligibility Officer, Baja stated: "Because of the refusal to hand over his operating

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[20] See also Rass/Tames 2020. For the simultaneity of these two paradigms in the history of the formation of the IRO and more generally in the political discourse of the 1940s, see, for example, Salomon 1991, Cohen 2011, Nasaw 2020, Moyn 2010.

[21] PCIRO. Application for Assistance Form by Sandor Baja, Austria 13.12.1948, 3.2.1.3 / 80560681, ITS Digital Archive, Arolsen Archives, Bad Arolsen (hereafter ITS Digital Archive).

machines to another nationalized company, he was exposed to every possible pressure and regarded as an unreliable person. Because of this, a lawsuit was pending against him. After his cousin was interrogated on this occasion, Sandor fled from Hungary" (ibid.).[22] On February 7, 1949, the PCIRO rejected Baja's application with the explanation: "Not concern of IRO wants to emigrate for economic reasons" (ibid.).

Stefan Zonew, born in Bulgaria in 1922, applied for assistance in Austria in November 1950, two years after Baja. From 1940 to 1944, Zonew had studied engineering in Germany, and from 1945 to 1949, he studied architecture in Austria, after which he got a job. Unsatisfied with his situation, in 1950 Zonew applied for resettlement in Argentina, where he hoped for better employment. Mary Schoeffler, Welfare Consultant of the IRO Refugee Centre in Vienna approved Zonew's application, stating: "I found Mr. Zonew to be a pleasant quiet and intelligent young man with enough knowledge of [the] English language to carry on a normal conversation. His fiancée is Spanish and worked in Vienna for a time as tutor to the Spanish Consul's children. I think he should do well in the Argentine [sic] in his profession."[23]

Without going into further details[24], there is a big difference in the two cases mentioned. It is therefore necessary to examine systematically how the chances of successfully applying for help from the IRO changed between 1947 and 1951. Against what background did they take place, help for victims of National Socialism or the Cold War? The cases mentioned also indicate that researchers must also give much more attention to the attitudes and actions of the Eligibility Officers and other employees of the IRO.

The history of the IRO's resettlement project was written from the perspective of Europe and 'the West' as well as from the perspective of some receiving countries.[25] Thus far, however, studies that have used the CM/1 forms and other IRO files from the holdings of the Arolsen Archives, have not taken into account the perspective of the receiving countries. Since the willingness of the receiving states to accept certain DPs and refugees and to refuse others was a key factor in the success of the resettlement project, those constraints also played a central role in negotiations in the European field offices. Future research must consider how these limitations were reflected in the selection process in the IRO's European field offices.

Elvira Churyumova and Edward Holland indicated that DPs and refugees were aware of their chances of being resettled in certain countries because of their immigration policies. The Kalmyk group they investigated was aware that they were classified as Asian and that the United States tried to limit

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[22] Translation by the author. The CM/1 form reads in German: „Wegen der Weigerung seine Betriebsmaschinen an einen anderen verstaatl.[ichten] Betrieb zu übergeben wurde er jedem möglichen Druck ausgesetzt und als unzuverlässliche Person betrachtet. Deswegen war gegen ihm ein Anzeige-Verfahren im Gange. Nachdem sein Cousin in dieser Gelegenheit bereits verhört wurde, flüchtete Sandor aus Ungarn" [spelling mistakes in the original].

[23] IRO. Refugee Center Vienna, Personal Interview Summary and Language Test, Stefan Zonew, November 8, 1950, 3.2.1.4 / 81248081, ITS Digital Archive.

[24] For the case of Stefan Zonew, see also Huhn 2020.

[25] For the 'Western' perspective', see, for example, Jacobmeyer 1985, Wyman 1989, Cohen 2011, or in a broader context, Marrus 1985, Gatrell 2015, Ther 2017, or Nassaw 2020. For a perspective from the receiving countries, see, for example, Persian 2017 and Fitzpatrick 2021 for the case of Australia or Huhn 2022 for the case of Venezuela.

'Asian' immigration (Churyumova/Holland 2021). DPs and refugees also knew of examples of the opposite. They were informed about receiving countries' general policies. In March 1948, Boris Lisowecki, who was born in Kiev in May 1892 and lived in Landshut, Germany as an accepted DP for a few months,[26] wrote a letter to the General Secretary of the IRO, stating:

> *"My wife and I are Polish Ukrainian refugees. I am a lawyer and writer, with experience of farming, and am 55 years of age […]. Four months ago we obtained entry visas for Paraguay, but we are unable to procure any foreign currency and are afraid we are going to lose this opportunity of leaving Europe. […] We are not young, and we suffered a great deal at the hands of the Nazis. […] we refugees from the east are living in perpetual terror of Bolshevism, and we know that the Germans hate us and grudge us every bit of bread we eat. We hope that the IRO will be able to help us to emigrate to Paraguay, which is so far the only country to accept old people as colonists, and does not impose such high medical standards as other countries. Please send instructions to IRO Amberg to pay our passage to Paraguay as soon as possible, and send us notification that you have done so […]."[27]*

Apart from how much this letter says about the human agency of the DPs and refugees, it illustrates how important the recruitment regulations of the receiving states were for many of them and that they were aware of those policies. What remains unclear, however, is what limitations the rules of the receiving states imposed on the actions and decisions of the Eligibility Officers. To pursue an answer to this important question for the overall assessment of the resettlement project, the CM/1 files are not sufficient but may provide important insights.

The 'Recommendation for Employment' letters that IRO staff wrote for certain DPs and refugees provide a strong indication that the employees of the IRO were actively involved with the rules of the receiving countries and that these played a role in their daily work. These formalised letters, which appear in some CM/1 files in the Arolsen Archives, contained photographs of the DPs and refugees, and often their whole families, a 'professional history' in the form of a resume emphasising the skills and text under the headline 'Employment Possibilities'.[28] These letters served as a kind of institutionalised intercession by the IRO on behalf of DPs and refugees towards the receiving states (or at least employers in those states). In terms of content, the IRO employees described people with precisely those characteristics that the receiving states valued.

Finally, even the structure of the CM/1 form itself addressed not only one or two aims addressed by the IRO, but all three. The questions about school career, professional experience or language skills did not help to determine whether someone was a DP or refugee according to the constitution. Rather, IRO employees could use this information to describe a DP or refugee according to the rules set by the receiving countries.

The negotiation of resettlement in the field offices of the IRO addressed three interrelated aims: the aid for DPs and refugees anchored in its constitution, strategic interests of the West in the developing

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[26] IGCR Registration Record of Boris Lisowecki, 2. March 1948, 3.2.1.4 / 81077614, ITS Digital Archive.

[27] Letter of Boris Lisowecki to the General Secretary IRO, 17.3.1948, 3.2.1.4 / 81077615, ITS Digital Archive.

[28] See for example: IRO. Recommendation for Employment. Michael Heckler, 3.2.1.4 / 81002139 ITS Digital Archive, or IRO. Recommendation for Employment. Wladimir Lenskij, 3.2.1.4 / 81072797, ITS Digital Archive. These letters also exist in languages other than English, indicating that they were also addressed to actors in the receiving countries. See, for example, IRO. Recomendación Para un Empleo. Andreas Boda, 3.2.1.4 / 80920798, ITS Digital Archive.

Cold War and the interests of the receiving countries. Any assessment of the CM/1 files must take into account these three overlapping but distinct imperatives.

4.3. The Negotiations Among at Least Four Actors

While inspiring empirical and conceptual work has begun that uses the CM/1 files, the DPs and refugees often remain the sole focus of such studies.[29] With a view to the question of agency, scholars still devote attention to those strategies about which much was written and sometimes speculated before the ITS archive opened and which can be summarised a little bit polemically as 'lying' or 'cheating'. The holdings of the Arolsen Archives can provide a completely different perspective on the agency of DPs and refugees, and the Eligibility Officers and other members of the IRO staff must also be taken into account. To analyse the resettlement project of the IRO and to interpret the decision-making processes that are visible in the files, scholars must also consider private aid organisations and lobby groups and, above all, the thus far ignored members of the missions of the host countries. Their agency and influence are not primarily traceable in the CM/1 files, but they played a role in the evaluation of the IRO project and the recognition and rejection process, which is why they may speak indirectly through the CM/1 forms and files.

Henning Borggräfe recently observed, "Yet how can the issue of DPs' agency be studied systematically [...] it also seems worthwhile to examine the CM/1 files in order to find out if (and if so, how) DPs were able to influence IRO registration procedures and, consequently, resettlement programs" (Borggräfe 2020: 63-64). The CM/1 files can be utilised for far more than the false statements by DPs and refugees as a strategy to aid their goals that Borggräfe had in mind. That Borggräfe had in mind the search for this form of agency is clear from the four research strategies that he suggested. They included searching for inconsistencies in the CM/1 files, a comparison of statements made by the DPs and refugees on different occasions, a comparison of CM/1 files with administrative files from the NS regime and a comparison with statements they made later in their lives (ibid.).

The search for this form of agency is important, but as this study has already indicated in previous examples, the CM/1 files in particular are an impressive source for tracking down the diversity of human agency exercised by DPs and refugees and to supplement previous research in very important aspects. While quite a few DPs and refugees 'lied' and 'cheated' in their negotiations with the IRO staff and several studies have revealed why they did, but many more negotiated, complained, explained, argued and discussed on a very general level the 'right' interpretations of recent history and their roles in it.[30]

One very important institutional mechanism in this context is the IRO Review Board, an arbitration board based in Geneva to which applicants could turn if their applications had been rejected. The Arolsen Archives contains large numbers of letters to the board and letters of decision from the board.

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[29] The statement does not suggest that DPs and refugees should not be at the center of historical research on the IRO in the sense of a refugeedom, as suggested by Peter Gatrell and colleagues (Banko/Nowak/Gatrell 2021, Gatrell 2016, Gatrell et al. 2021), but the CM/1 files are suitable – for research on a space where negotiations among several actors took place.

[30] Hanne Leßau (2020) found similar forms of communication in her study about the negotiation of denazification.

Boris Lisowecki's letter illustrates the value of those sources to analyse the scope and diversity of the negotiations over their resettlement in which DPs and refugees engaged with the IRO.

The case of Janos Tamas offers another example. He applied for assistance in February 1949. In the interview at the IRO office, the Eligibility Officer added the reasons that Tamas provided on the CM/1 form. In Romania, according to his own statement, he had worked in railway construction and had told his colleagues that his situation had been much better when he had worked for the US Army in 1945 before his repatriation.[31] Tamas stated that he flew from Romania to Austria three months earlier after he heard that he had been reported to the police for distributing "reactionary propaganda". Fearing arrest, he fled to Salzburg where he was now applying for resettlement in North or South America, Australia or elsewhere. Tamas did not hide his military service in the Hungarian army between 1940 and 1943 in his application, which includes none of the other typical strategic 'lies'. His only argument was fear of arrest in Romania.[32] In March 1949, an Eligibility Officer re-interviewed Tamas, repeated Tamas' argument of fearing arrest, but added that he was unable to prove this statement with any documents. The IRO denied his application in April 1949. The following month, Tamas filed an appeal of the IRO's decision in Salzburg with the help of a legal adviser. He did not change his story, but explained it again:

> *"The statement that I do not fall under the competence of the IRO is not justified insofar as my flight is due to my political attitude towards the communist regime in Romania. Although I [unreadable word] have already been repatriated to Romania, I had to leave Romania after a three-year stay to avoid the danger of persecution. [...] A complaint was filed against me with the police so that I had to expect an arrest."[33]*

Although the Review Board's decision is not present in Tamas' file in the Arolsen Archives, someone wrote the following onto the first page of his application form from February 1949: "Appeal dismissed by Review Board 20.10.49."[34] Nevertheless, Janos Tamas appears on the "Nominal Roll of Emigrants "Mass Resettlement" Departing on ss. Protea, 10.6.50 to South America2[35], a document also in the holdings of the Arolsen Archives. After sixteen months of negotiating with the IRO, Tamas finally achieved his goal and was resettled in Paraguay with the help of the IRO. The holdings of the Arolsen Archives contain documents about thousands of similar cases, which document the variety of applicants' agencies and provide their voices (see Gatrell et al. 2021: 72) beyond 'lying' and 'cheating'. Examining those individual strategies adds nuance and depth to recent studies about group strategies of negotiation (see, e.g., Barna 2020, Chopard 2020, Panagiotidis 2020, Churyumova/Holland 2021).

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[31] The 'repatriated' and the 'resettled' are usually viewed in research as two completely different groups of people. What is interesting about Tamas is that he belonged to both groups.

[32] PCIRO. Application for Assistance Form by Janos Tamas, Austria 10.2.1949, 3.2.1.3 / 80853715, ITS Digital Archive.

[33] Translaton by the author. Original: „Die Feststellung, dass ich nicht unter die Kompetenz der IRO falle, ist insofern nicht gerechtfertigt, als meine Flucht auf meine politische Einstellung gegenüber dem kommunistischen Regime in Rumänien zurückzuführen ist. Obwohl ich [unleserliches Wort] bereits nach Rumänien repatriiert wurde, musste ich nach einem dreijährigen Aufenthalt Rumänien verlassen [sic] um der Gefahr einer Verfolgung aus dem Wege zu gehen. […] Es wurde gegen mich bei der Polizei eine Anzeige erstattet, sodass ich mit einer Verhaftung zu rechnen hatte." Letter by Janos Tamas, 25.5.1949, 3.2.1.3 / 80853716, ITS Digital Archive.

[34] PCIRO. Application for Assistance Form by Janos Tamas, Austria 10.2.1949, 3.2.1.3 / 80853715, ITS Digital Archive.

[35] 'Nominal Roll of Emigrants "Mass Resettlement" Departing on ss. Protea, 10.6.50 to South America', Genua, 3.1.3.2 / 81728957-81728963, ITS Digital Archive.

Scholars have so far paid too little attention to the Eligibility Officers of the IRO. On a theoretical level, scholars must reflect more on their roles and position as "street-level bureaucrats" (Fee 2019: 482), to borrow a term from Molly Fee. Too many studies equate these people with the IRO as an institution, but they held an intermediary role between DPs and refugees and the three underlying problems the IRO's aid programme addressed. Eligibility Officers had to translate the IRO constitution, the Western Cold war background, and the rules of the receiving countries into a "strategy of good implementation" (ibid.).[36] Scholars know little about who the Eligibility Officers were. Where were they recruited and what did they do before joining the IRO? What experiences did they have when dealing with applications and applicants and with bureaucratic processes? What did they know about the war and the situation in Eastern Europe? How did they understand their role as Eligibility Officers, and what aspirations did they associate with this task? Did they seek to help, to manage or just to do their jobs? What personal attitudes did they bring with them to their jobs? As gatekeepers, were they free from prejudice, widespread racism and the accusations of the populace against the IRO's programme? Scholars must recognise that the Eligibility Officers were also under considerable pressure; they had to deal with many cases a day, judging the claims made by the applicants as true or false, assessing the situations correctly, avoiding injustice to the applicants and assessing the most complex political and historical contexts. To aid them in this task, the IRO published a *Manual for Eligibility Officers*. The Eligibility Officers also faced pressure from the likewise overloaded Review Board in Geneva, which did not want to receive too many rejected cases for further processing, advocacy organisations for the various DP groups and the missions of the receiving countries on-site. These questions and observations apply equally to all other employees of the IRO at the middle and lower levels. This group of people has so far received little attention from students of the IRO project.

Systematic research on the Eligibility Officers and their role in the negotiation of resettlement may have to begin elsewhere than in the holdings of the Arolsen Archives, but the CM/1 forms and files nevertheless provide information about them. Like the applicants, they also entered information on the forms. A few examples indicate the subjectivity of the assessments by the Eligibility Officers, as just one of the numerous aspects of their role that deserve closer examination.

In September 1949, Ondrej Hurtis applied for IRO assistance. His appeal was approved. Three IRO officers wrote remarks on the CM/1 form under the category "Remarks. Use for any additional information"[37]. "Pers. Impression: the best", the first wrote. His or her colleague commented: "Personal impression good. Appl. is a simple country-man." A third person noted on the form: "Appl.'s story seems to be plausible enough" (ibid.). In the CM/1 form of Erzébet Patta from July 1948, the Eligibility Officer noted rather awkwardly: "Impression: Looks trustworthy"[38]. When Miroslav Meca applied for IRO assistance in October 1948, the Eligibility Officer wrote on his CM/1 form: "not very intelligent man".[39] These examples illustrate the relevance of subjective impressions in the interview situation and the power that the Eligibility Officers had quite independent of the rules laid down in the IRO constitution. In addition to the written statements of the applicants, the personal impression during the interviews played a major role, which is no surprise. The meaning of this impression was

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[36] Molly Fee wrote about case workers in the contemporary US refugee resettlement program, but the task of those case workers applies to that of the IRO Eligibility Officers in the 1940s and early 1950s.

[37] IRO. Application for Assistance. Ondrej Hurtis, 12.9.1949, 3.2.1.1 / 79197573, ITS Digital Archive.

[38] IRO. Application for Assistance, Erzébet Patta, 10.7.1948, 3.2.1.1 / 79571255, ITS Digital Archive.

[39] PCIRO. Application for Assistance, Miroslav Meka, 12.10.1948, 3.2.1.1 / 79467198, ITS Digital Archive.

not secret, and the impressions made a very explicit contribution to the decision-making process, which is quite remarkable.

There are also indications in the CM/1 files that the wishes of the receiving countries played a role in the selection process of the IRO. For example, some Eligibility Officers wrote, "The family is in good health".[40] This information was irrelevant to the question of whether applicants were entitled to assistance under the constitution. For their 'resettlementability' in receiving states, on the other hand, the information might fulfil a crucial role.

Another group of specific actors, to whom researchers on the IGCR, UNRRA or the IRO and the project to solve the 'European refugee crisis' have so far paid almost no attention, were the personnel in the missions of the receiving countries in Europe (see also Huhn 2022). Two examples make clear that the receiving countries were not the only places where the DPs and refugees should be resettled. Not only did governments create rules for this resettlement but they also sent to Europe people who were very actively involved in the IRO project.

Enrique Tejera París, chief of the Venezuelan selection mission in Italy, wrote about the mission's work in Europe in an article in the 1980s. In one section of the text, Tejera París commented on problems that existed with the IRO staff in Europe. One evening, Tejera París recalled, the mission staff interviewed 212 people, accepted 122 as immigrants to Venezuela, and rejected 87. Apparently, IRO employees had previously written an internal memo in which the 87 people who were rejected had been named as problematic cases (with only two exceptions). The IRO had tried to 'slide' them on to Venezuela. IRO member Mayor Shirkov asked Tejera París how he had obtained the IRO's secret file about those problematic cases. The outraged Tejera París then asked how it was even possible that an international organisation tried to hide data from him as a member of the same organisation in the first place. It was the task of the IRO staff, Tejera París argued in his memoirs, to support the missions of the receiving countries in their selection task, but instead, they tried to keep information secret from other members of the organisation (Tejera París 1987: 356-7).

A second example also illustrates the role of the members of the selection missions of the receiving countries. In June 1948, Orlando Shilts, the director of a resettlement centre, wrote an angry letter to his supervisor complaining about Mr. Culmanaras, a member of the Venezuelan selection mission in Munich. In his opinion, Culmanaras interfered too much in the work of the IRO in the Funkkaserne DP camp:

> "Mr. Culmanaras has introduced to us over 25 families and individuals he said he was 'personally' INTERESTED IN REVIEWING. [...] In one individual case of unclear DP Status Mr. Culmanaras personally visited the Control Center Officer in an effort to pust [sic] through the eligibility status of the person. [...] It had been made clear to Mr. Culmanaras what the IRO method of presentation is, but he continually presents persons by himself."[41]

This letter indicates that members of the selection missions were in direct contact with the IRO staff on-site, that they discussed the decisions of the Eligibility Officers and the suitability of the applicants with them and that they sometimes tried to interfere in the process. They did not exert influence in the abstract, from a distance and using agreed criteria, but on the spot, and there they saw themselves to be superior to the IRO staff in some cases.

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[40] PCIRO. Application for Assistance, Iwan Prokopenko, 12.2.1948, 3.2.1.1 / 79621741, ITS Digital Archive.

[41] Orlando P. Shilts, letter to Earl Blake Cox, 24.6.1948, AJ 43/ 96, Archives Nationales, Paris, France.

All these protagonists, the DPs and refugees, the IRO staff, private aid organisations and lobby groups and the members of the receiving states' mission in Europe must be considered in research and in the interpretation of the narratives in and the outcome of CM/1 files to understand what happened.

4.4. Theoretical Equipment That Can Make Interpretations Easier

Historical research on the IRO, the resettlement project, the negotiation of the resettlement, and working with the CM/1 files can draw from theoretical approaches to understand better the negotiation situation in the European field offices of the IRO. These theoretical approaches can inform many areas that play a role in the encounters among DPs and refugees, Eligibility Officers and the general staff of the IRO.

Theoretical approaches to identities can clarify that the DPs and refugees had several identities, and in the sources, they often presented more than one to the Eligibility Officers.[42] Could an applicant have been both a former Nazi collaborator on one hand and a victim of the present situation on the other? Ballint cited the example of a man who lied about his wartime service not because he was unwilling to face the consequences, but because as a husband and father – also identities – he wanted to protect his wife and son. Examples of multiple identities of refugees and DPs should be similarly theoretically conceptualised (Balint 2015: 178).

A clearer understanding and in many cases an operationalisation of human agency would benefit the examination of these sources. In general, all DPs and refugees who filled out a CM/1 form exercised human agency but the many people who consciously decided against doing so also exercised agency but remain invisible in the sources.[43]

A better theoretical understanding of learning and individual and collective memories would enhance this scholarship, even if it is already a focus in studies based on CM/1 forms and files (see, e.g., Barna 2020, Chopard 2020, Panagiotidis 2020, Churyumova/Holland 2021). Many DPs and refugees lived together in camps. Many of them surely thought and spoke about the past (while others may have refused to do so), about their roles in it and about how to interpret what happened and they were not yet able to examine the history books that were being written. They had to clarify for themselves and in communication with each other what had happened. Maurice Halbwachs' social-psychological approach to collective memory could assist in interpreting the gradually more and more similar nature of the stories about the past that applicants expressed in the CM/1 forms (Halbwachs 1950).

The finding that DPs and refugees told each other about their experiences – a finding that is emphasised in some studies about the IRO and the resettlement project – in the IRO's interviews and that they tried to find out how to give the 'correct' answers in the screening process, is not that surprising against the background of theories about collective memory and learning nor should it be overinterpreted. Peers often share their experiences. It would be naïve to assume, that the IRO could provide every applicant with a questionnaire for which they had in no way prepared. In a completely anthropologically consistent manner, DPs naturally thought about what the 'correct' answers could be and tried to behave in accordance with that understanding. Every child learns this lesson in school (or

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[42] On cultural identity, see, for example, Hall/du Gay 1996.

[43] For the request, see, for example, Castles 2002, Castles 2003. For theoretical discussions, see, for example, Bakewell 2010.

in any form of socialisation). The application process was about something important for people, and "many feared the consequences of wrong answers" as Afoumado noted (Afoumado 2014: 223). Having a clear understanding of the past was only possible in the collective discovery process with other people, and, as Chopard recently emphasised, it was also a challenge that the applicants were "forced […] to formulate" their personal resettlement plans on the CM/1 forms (Chopard 2020: 17). With this background, DPs and refugees had to prepare to understand the resettlement project and to develop their narratives accordingly.[44]

Finally, a theory-led understanding of the 'presentation of self in everyday life' and 'what happens when people give reasons' can allow scholars better to understand the basic rules of the negotiation process in the IRO's European field offices as an act of meeting and communication with underlying rules.

The screening processes in the European field offices – in the eligibility screening, in trade testing, in the pre-selection for resettlement, in the multiple medical screenings, in the literacy test, in the security interview, in the consular interview, in the resettlement centres (see IRO 1951: appendix) – took place in institutionalised settings with unwritten social rules. Both applicants and Eligibility Officers had to play their roles, whether they were aware or unaware of the rules. As Erving Goffman pointed out, one typical element in such settings – two or more people meeting each other in a situation of negotiation – is that both protagonists strive to "control the conduct of the other […]" (Goffman 1959: 3):

> "[W]hen an individual appears before others his actions will influence the definition of the situation which they come to have. Sometimes the individual will act in a thoroughly calculating manner, expressing himself in a given way solely in order to give the kind of impression to others that is likely to evoke from them a specific response he is concerned to obtain. Sometimes the individual will be calculating in his activity but be relatively unaware that this is the case." (Ibid.: 6).

Both sides, Goffman continued, can be honestly convinced of the "'realness' of what is presented." (ibid.: 17). Both protagonists in the IRO's field offices, the DP or refugee and the IRO employee, consciously or unconsciously, also had "items of expressive equipment", such as "insignia of office rank, clothing, sex, age, and racial characteristics; size and looks; posture; speech patterns; facial expressions; bodily gestures; and the like" (ibid.: 24), all of which influenced the mutual perception of the two protagonists on-site, initially regardless of what was written on the IRO's application form. Much that could influence the decision-making process depended on how both the applicant and the IRO employee 'played' their roles.

Finally, Goffman pointed out that when people take on new social roles, they find that established role models exist, which they then must learn (ibid.: 27). A young person who takes up a job as a teacher does not invent what it means to *be* a teacher but grows into an established social role. However, this interesting facet was only valid to a limited extent for the IRO project. Especially in the first months

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[44] The testimonies of refugees from completely different historical contexts substantiate this claim. J. Frederico, a refugee from East Timor, wrote about his experiences for a volume of the Journal of Refugee Studies in 1991. He applied for help from UNHCR and described the process: "The determination of 'refugee status' is not an easy test for any applicant. It requires a great deal of psycho-temperamental and 'theoretical' understanding of one's own tragic experiences in order to do well in the test. Those who have failed (including myself) to gain 'refugee status' had not understood properly at the time of the application, the 'prerequisites'." (Frederico 1991: 90). European DPs and refugees experienced the feeling expressed here in a comparable way.

and years of the project, applicants and Eligibility Officers had to work out what their role was because there was no blueprint for this project. The learning effect for the DPs and refugees also applied to the employees of the IRO, and it was inevitable. Finding the right execution of the role was not trivial. Eligibility Officers had to learn how to exude authority and create the impression that they had the rules of legitimate acceptance or rejection at hand at all times (the preparation of the *Manual for Eligibility Officers* suggests that within the IRO, the leadership did not assume that such was the case).

Applicants, on the other hand, had to learn their social role: they had to find a balance between 'helplessness' and 'strength', which at the same time conveyed that they needed support from the IRO but also that they could be resettled as 'productive' people in receiving states at any time. 'Lying' or 'cheating' could be a strategy, but it at the same time posed a danger that should not be underestimated. If the applicants were exposed, they ran the risk that their entire role might collapse (ibid.: 58-66). The Eligibility Officers tried to hide their knowledge of authority from the applicants, but it was only a matter of time and a perfectly normal social process that their 'secret' rules became more and more known to the applicants; "no social establishment can be studied where some problems associated with backstage control do not occur" (ibid.: 121).

The second component of the eligibility screening was the written. What did the applicants write on their CM/1 forms or what did they agree on in the interviews that should be written there?

From a sociological point of view, the assumption that 'truth' and 'lie' are the only interpretations that can apply to the CM/1 forms and the IRO project falls short of the mark. It was precisely this frequent focus on the normative level, on conscious deliberation, that prompted Charles Tilly to reflect on what reasoning is and why we give reasons (Tilly 2021: 31). First of all, Tilly – like Halbwachs before – reminded that people constantly adapt and change stories about what has happened in their memory, remaining anthropologically constant, without consciously manipulating or falsifying the story (ibid.: 47). Tilly distinguished four common forms of justifications: conventions, codes, technical accounts and stories. The CM/1 forms are filled with stories. Applicants had to draft a story there to identify the reasons they were entitled to receive help from the IRO, and they had a fairly limited space in which to do so.

According to Tilly, stories have three central characteristics: First, they reproduce social processes in such a simplified and coherent way that they can be told at all. 'Reality' could only be told in 'real time'. Second, they organise what has happened in such a way that it can be judged morally. Here again, it is an anthropological constant that people relativise or justify their own actions in cases of doubt, not only as a calculated strategy but also for psychological reasons. Third, stories are dependent on the situation (ibid.: 50-51). An applicant in the IRO office did not necessarily tell his story there as he did elsewhere, such as to a friend, someone in the same DP camp or a priest. So, a story is such a strong 'shortening' of subjectively imagined reality that it is no wonder that people tell the same story over and over again with a different focus, a different outcome, etc.

For the situation in the offices of the IRO against the background of the relationship between the applicant and the Eligibility Officer based on Goffman's considerations, Tilly's thesis that justifications are always negotiated tougher when the relationship between the negotiators is unclear and when there is much to lose or to gain for one or both of the negotiating partners has particular relevance (ibid.: 58).

Transferred to the situation of the screening process by the Eligibility Officers, this thesis, in turn, confirms theoretically the assumption that the applicants built and told their stories very

considerately, while it belonged, among other things, to the tasks of the Eligibility Officers to distrust these stories initially. It was not primarily a question of whether the applicants' stories 'actually', 'objectively' and measurably corresponded to 'the truth', but rather whether it was 'plausible enough' in the context of the social setting of the 'eligibility screening' to say it with the very realistic words of the IRO employee quoted earlier.

5. Final Considerations

This paper identifies several contextual aspects of the CM/1 forms and files in the holdings of the Arolsen Archives that historians should consider when using them as historical sources. Although Schulte characterised these files as difficult to verify and not very meaningful in their content shortly after the opening of the ITS archive in 2007. However, several more recent investigations have been published, arguing that these files should serve as narratives. Thus far, historians have interpreted those narratives primarily by asking whether applicants had told the 'truth' or not.

While this approach and the search for individual and collective strategies can be valuable, historians can interpret the narratives in the CM/1 forms differently by exploring the three simultaneous aims the IRO project addressed, paying attention to each of the actors involved and then trying, guided by theory, to explain the social setting of the eligibility screening and determining what the 'sense' of the CM/1 forms was.

As scholars move beyond observing *that* people told stories, they can ask how they told these stories and why. A content-analytical comparison of CM/1 forms over time, for example, can empirically confirm or relativise Salomon's assertions from 1991 that DPs and refugees learned the correct answers and that those who did not claim 'fear of persecution' were only the most naïve ones (Salomon 1991: 91). Salomon presented this thesis based on interpretations of the process by participating IRO actors, making it an interpretation based on an interpretation. Eligibility Officers and IRO employees involved expressed this allegation or resignation. The opening of the CM/1 files to research in 2007 provided an opportunity to overcome the middle instance of the speaking and interpreting IRO employees, which served as a filter, and examine the sources of the first instance to see whether this practice occurred and how. As the above-cited examples imply, the narratives of the applicants were much more complex. Historians can then also ask such questions empirically of the 'false farmers', etc.

Given the rules of interpersonal communication and collective memory, the strategies evident in the CM/1 forms followed the 'fear of persecution' principle, in which applicants gave the 'correct' answer they learned. More interesting are the many CM/1 forms that did not follow this obvious pattern, those in which applicants used a different personal strategy, opting for a different way of achieving their goal of assistance and resettlement.

Using the CM/1 files, scholars can empirically reconstruct the story of helplessness that was in the foreground in the 1950s, and the 'lying' and 'cheating' that came to the fore in the 1990s. There are also completely different narratives. First, there is a negotiation about the evaluation of the past and ongoing events in Eastern Europe. Applicants tried – consciously or unconsciously – to turn the setting and to explain to the Eligibility Officers what was happening in Eastern Europe or why certain groups had behaved in certain ways during the war. The evaluation of history was negotiated.

Second, some applicants relied entirely on the third aim the IRO project sought to address. The focus of their stories was not on the past, but how they could fit into the 'search scheme' of the receiving countries (see also Huhn 2020). Third, others argued with the Eligibility Officers or the Review Board about the correct interpretation of the IRO's Constitution, as if they were attorneys in a lawsuit. Fourth, some challenged the fundamental understanding of the IRO constitution and argued that it did not address directly enough what they had experienced or were experiencing.

With a view to the anthropological or sociological rules of the setting and the rules of reasoning, there are patterns of negotiation in the CM/1 forms that go far beyond the stories told thus far and reveal a fascinating range of negotiation of migration. The questions in the CM/1 forms structured the possible answers in a certain way, but not to the extent that the 'authors' of the bureaucratic questionnaire would have imagined. Therefore, the refugees and DPs may not speak through these forms "on their own terms" (Banko/Nowak/Gatrell 2021: 3) as Lauren Banko, Katarzyna Nowak and Peter Gatrell have argued, but they do speak "as purposeful agents" (ibid.).

Working out these diverse modes of action and argumentation from the CM/1 files offers a better understanding of how the refugees and DPs helped to create the migration regime of the post-war period and a clear identification and "thick description" (Geertz 1973) of these forms of agency provides a clearer understanding of their role as co-creators of the migration regime. The resettlement project of the IRO can thereby also serve as a historical example of fundamental processes in the negotiation of migration.

6. Literature

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7. Appendix

IRO Application for Assistance Form (CM/1 form) of Michail Zjabryn and family, September 28, 1949.

Source: 3.2.1.3 / 80890460, ITS Digital Archive, Arolsen Archives, Bad Arolsen.

CM/1

14. Financial Resources (Finanzielle Hilfsquellen) keine

For whom (Für wen)	Property (Besitz)	Value (Wert)	Location (Ort)
	Cash and income (Bargeld und Einkommen)		
	Assistance from relatives (Hilfe von Verwandten)		

15. Relatives (Verwandte) keine

Full Name (Voller Name)	Relationship (Verwandtschaftsgrad)	Complete Address (Volle Adresse)

16. Assistance (Unterstützung) keine

1. Have you or any member of your family been receiving assistance from UNRRA _____ GC _____ or from a Voluntary Agency _____
2. If you have been receiving assistance, please give the number of months _____
3. If you have received cash, please state the amount _____
4. If you have been receiving assistance from a Voluntary Agency, please give the name of the Agency _____

17. Documents (Dokumente)

For whom (Für wen)	Date (Datum)	Type (Art)	Place of Issue (Ausstellungsort)	By whom (Durch wen)
Michail	4/6/47	Präum.	St.Veit/Glan, Oesterr.	Bshptmannschaft
	31.3.1948	Certific.	Klagenfurt,	37 B.Supply Dep.RASC
	14/9.1949			West.Quart.Offz.RASC
	25.8.1948	Begbst.	Kappel	Ort Poppendikl
	6.3.1946	"	Baumdorf	Otto Aichbichler
	25.8.1946	"	Fischeldorf	Fa.Fuchs&Co.
Erna	25.11.47	Edrskunk,	Klagenfurt,	Orthod.Pfarrer

CM/1

11. Employment (last 10 years, including present) (Beschäftigung der letzten 10 Jahre einschl. der gegenwärtigen)

For whom (Für wen)	Date (Datum)	Type of work (Art der Arbeit)	Wages (Lohn)	Employer (Arbeitgeber)	Town, province and country (Stadt, Provinz und Land)	Reason for change (Grund des Arbeitswechsels)
Michail	1938 Jan 1942	Bergarbeiter	520.– Rbl.	Kohlengabe Donbas	Donbas, Russland	evacui
	Feb 1942 Sept 1943	Landarbeiter	in natural.	Don.buh.Kolchos	Ukraina, Russ.	Deport
	Okt 1943 Apr 1944	Deutsche Arbeitseinsätze in			Polen	vorini
	Jan 1944	Hilfsarbeiter	180.– RM	Firma Fuchs&Co.	Fischeldorf Oesterr.	ontl.
	Mürz 1945 Aug 1945	Landarbeiter	25.– RM	Landwirt Aichbichler Oes.Darr	Baumdorf Oes.Darr	"
	Mai 1946 Okt 1946 Nov 1946	"	50.– Sch	Gasthaus Poppendorf Oesterr.	Kappel	"
	Jun 1947	"	50.– Sch	Baumhof Landbrucken	Baumhof	"
	Jul 1947 Dez 1947 Jan 1948	Hilfsarbeiter	400.– Sch (600.– Sch)	Baufirma Biklin Brittsch Einheit	Klagenfurt Oesterr.	"
	jetzt					"

Fortsetzung Seite b

12. Education (Schulbildung)

For whom (Für wen)	Date (Datum)	Type of school (Art der Schule)	Town, Province and country (Stadt, Provinz und Land)
Michail	1919–1922	Volksschule	Konstantinowka, Russland
Erna	1918–1926	"	Land Salzburg, Oesterreich

13. Languages (Sprachen)

For whom (Für wen)	Speak (spricht)		Read (liest)		Write (schreibt)		Language (Sprache)
	fluently (fliessend)	slightly (wenig)	fluently (fliessend)	slightly (wenig)	fluently (fliessend)	slightly (wenig)	russisch
Michail	x		x		x		destsche
Erna	x		x		x		

CM/1

IV

18. Organizations (Organisationen) **keine**

Eintritt (Ein vom)	Date (Datum)	Name (Name)	Purpose (Zweck)

19. Present Address (Gegenwärtige Anschrift)

Date (Datum)	Street address or name of camp (Name der Straße oder des Lagers)	Town or city (Stadt)	Country (Land)
28.9.1949	Lorchenfeld 51	Klagenfurt	Oesterreich
8.6.1951	Klagenfurt,Ebentalerstrasse ,ehem.RAD,Lager		

20. Remarks. Use for any additional information.
(Bemerkungen. Für zusätzliche Informationen bestimmt)

23) zarist, russische

24) Während der Besetzung durch die Deutschen d es Kohlen -Reviers

Donbas arbeitete ich in der Grube Donbas bis zu Januar 1942 . Im
Februar 1942 evaquierten die Deutschen alle arbeitsfähige Männer
nach der Ukraina und hier wurde ich als Landarbeiter in der deutsch-
Kolchoswirtschaft, in Kospuchowo beschäftigt.Bei dem weiteren Rück-
zug der Deutschen wurde ich in eine fliegende Kolonne gesteckt und
arbeitete unter Zwang in der Rückzugsrichtung Polen.In Barwnowitsch
Polen wurde ich verladen und kam über Wien nach Klagenfurt wo mich
dass Arbeitsamt der Holzindustrie zuwiesen hat.Bis Januar 1948
arbeitete ich in der Landwirtschaft und dann bei der Britischen Ein-
heit in Klagenfurt,wo ich noch heute beschäftigt bin.

25) per Eisenbahn.

26) Nein,ich habe unter dem Kommunistischen Regimé die Wohltaten kennen-
gelernt und möchte diese nicht zum zweiten Male wiederholen,ich leb
ständig unter der Gefahr für dass kleine Vergehen verhaftet oder
in ein Arbeiterlager gesteckt zu werden.Wie wieder möchte ich mit
den Kommunisten etwas zu tun haben wollen,dann lieber tot sein.
Für mich ist Russland heute keine Heimat mehr, und ich möchte gerne
auswandern, um mit diesen Leuten nichts zu tun haben.Meine Kinder
will ich zu freien Menschen erziehen und nicht zu kommunistischen
Arbeitsklaven.

27)Ja nach Australien,
ich besitze die vorl.Aufenthaltserlaubnis,

Klagenfurt,den 28.9.1949.

Signature of Interviewer. Date
(Unterschrift des Vernehmers. Datum)

Residence 25.11.1949

Von der Kärntner Holzwarenindustrie erfahren wir, dass SLABKIN Michael bei obiger
Firma tätig war. Er kam als Zwangsarbeiter nach Österreich und wohnte auch im
Zwangsarbeiterlager. Sämtliche Zwangsarbeiter wurden von und zum Arbeitsplatz
unter Aufsicht geführt. Da dieses Lager eine Einheit für sich darstellten, waren
sie daher von polizeilichen Meldungen ausgeschlossen. Bestätigung der Kärntner
Holzwarenindustrie über die Tätigkeit des Antragstellers von 23.5.1944 – 27.3.1945
liegt dem Antrag bei.

16.10.1949. Not registered with Landesmeldeauskunftsstelle.

Benefit of the doubt extended.

Within the mandate of I.R.O.

Date
Eligibility Officer
IRO Area Team III

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