

Council for German Jewry (CFGJ)

British Jewish organization established in 1936 to help German Jews leave Germany. British Jewish leaders instituted the CFGJ in response to the racial Nuremberg Laws of 1935; they designed an emigration plan whereby 100,000 German Jews aged 17--35 could leave Germany in an organized manner. Half were to move to Palestine, and half to other countries. The CFGJ also hoped that another 100,000 German Jews would emigrate without their help.

The CFGJ held its first meeting in London in March 1936. Two American groups, the Joint Distribution Committee and the United Palestine Appeal, formally joined the council in August.

The CFGJ was never able to achieve the prominence to which it had aspired. It was blocked by many obstacles, including Britain's restrictive Palestine immigration policy; German barriers to emigration; the growing poverty among German Jews due to Germany's oppressive anti-Jewish legislation; and the deterioration of the situation in the Reich after Germany annexed Austria in March 1938. Nonetheless, the CFGJ was able to help almost 100,000 Jews leave Germany by the time World War II broke out. It also financed several work-training programs in Germany and other countries. During the war, the CFGJ was limited to helping refugees already in Britain.