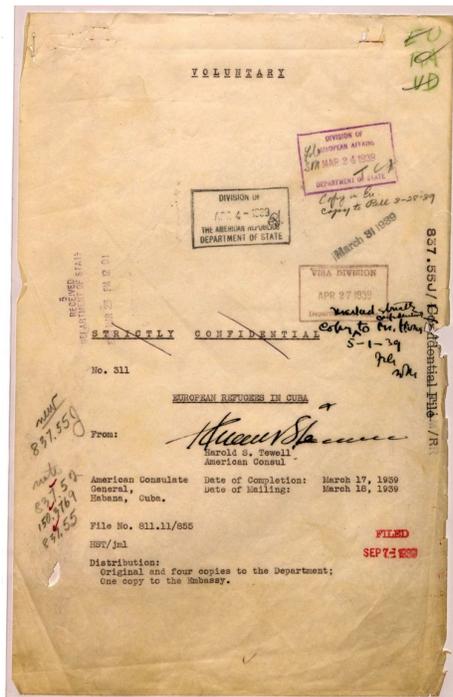




## WORKSHEET: GROUP 3

### Instruction

Read the report by the American Consul in Havana on the European refugees in Cuba from March 17<sup>th</sup> 1939. What were the arguments that were brought up by the Cuban government to justify its decision to refuse the refugees?



Report of the US-american Consul in Havana on the European Refugees in Cuba, March 17, 1939, p. 1.  
NARA CDF 837.55J/1.

### Report by the American Consul in Havana on the European refugees in Cuba from March 17th 1939

On November 7, 1938 the Cuban government took further recognition of the European refugee situation by promulgating Decree No. 2507, the preamble of which read as follows:



“The republic of Cuba has the right to select the quality of immigrants most suited to the development of the population, its industries and commerce, classifying each immigrant as useful or not useful to our nationality.”

On February 23 the Director General of Immigration placed the following statement in the Habana newspapers:

“That he is decidedly favourable to closing the ports of the country to all immigration that intends to come to our territory to enter into competition with native labor in any kind of work, and under the circumstances he has not authorized nor will he authorize in the future the landing of any person, of any nationality whatever, who intends to become a rival of our compatriots, and that he takes very special care that all who disembark fulfill the requirements of current immigration regulations, and unless the applicant previously has declared unequivocally that his journey here is solely and exclusively to await the necessary visa in order that he may enter the United States of America or some other country where he can locate permanently, that is, in the status of a ‘tourist’...”

After discussing the accomplishments of the conference of Evian, with emphasis upon the statements of the representatives of Great Britain, France, Belgium, Netherlands, Canada and the United States that such countries are not prepared to admit large numbers of European refugees, the Association for the Defense of Citizens Rights inserted in “Diario de la Marina” of January 25, 1939, a lengthy article concerning immigration into Cuba, from which the following excerpts are quoted:

[...]

“the nation is an organism whose economic and social necessities require careful attention. the entrance of great numbers of people in addition to what may be indicated, produces great disturbance and creates difficulties not less grave.

Accordingly, an immigration policy, generous and unlimited, which has been followed in some countries in our America, should be changed for one more selective in the States of less density of population.”

In newspaper editorials and over the radio the continued admission of Jewish refugees has been severely criticized, the Habana newspapers on May 3 announced that a leading member of Congress had requested the President to promulgate a decree “prohibiting repeated immigrations of Hebrews who have been inundating the Republic and prohibiting permits that are being issued for the entrance of such immigrants to Cuba, until the House can approve a proposed law imposing severe penalties upon fraudulent immigration that makes a joke of the laws of the Republic”.

*Source: State CDF 837.55J/1. Published in: The Holocaust: selected documents in eighteen volume, volume 7 (Jewish emigration: the S.S. St. Louis affair and other cases), 1982.*