



WORKSHEET: PERU

You are the representatives of Peru at the Evian Conference. Prepare and deliver a speech with the help of the following information. Consider which of the following points can be made public in the speech, and which should better be kept hidden.



Peru on the globe
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Flag of Peru, approx. until 1950
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Background information



- Peru's population in 1938: about 6.5 million, including approx. 3.000 Jews.
- The majority of the population works in agriculture and lives in the countryside.
- Latin American countries export much of their goods (such as sugar, cotton, coffee) to European countries (including Germany), and wish to maintain good relationship with them.
- There are very significant socio-economic gaps between rich and poor and between the rural and the urban populations, which often lead to social and political tensions.
- The population in Peru consists of different ethnic groups (such as indigenous people and people who originally came from Europe). At the same time, they have a strong Hispanic tradition and identity. The Catholic Church and traditions also play a major role in the culture, identity and values of many in Latin American countries.
- Peru is very concerned that Western countries (such as United Kingdom and the United States) would pressure them to accept most of the Jewish refugees.

Major points by the delegation of Peru at the Evian Conference

- Peru is willing to cooperate and admit refugees within the limits as stated in its immigration laws.
- Peru is willing to accept agricultural workers and industrial technicians.
- It is necessary to limit the entry of physicians and lawyers, in order to keep the stability of the existing upper class. Intellectuals, middlemen and traders would pose competition against native businesses and professions:
- *“Peru would be very glad to see colonists, agricultural labourers with some experience, or technical experts for her young industry arriving in the country. If traders or workmen came, it might disturb her economic system or create problems similar to those which other countries had had to tackle. In the same way, to prevent the growth of an intellectual proletariat, restrictions would be laid on the settlement of a large number of lawyers or doctors. [...]”*
- Peru claims that it must preserve its national essence, based on Latin and Catholic traditions. Therefore, *“an unorganized influx [of non-Catholic and non-Latin immigrants] would be dangerous”*.
- The Peruvian delegate mentions that in the past the American government also restricted the entry of foreigners, in order to preserve its Anglo-Saxon heritage and to prevent conflicts with minorities.

Sources





Dennis R. Laffer, *The Jewish Trail of Tears: The Evian Conference of 1938*, University of South Florida, 2011.

Rex A. Hudson, ed. *Peru: A Country Study*. Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1992.

[Peru: historical demographical data of the whole country.](#)

Verbatim Record of the Plenary Meetings of the Committee. Resolutions and Reports – Proceedings of the Intergovernmental Committee, Evian, July 6th to 15th, 1938, Leo Baeck Institute New York: Robert Weltsch Collection, 1770-1997, AR 7185 / MF