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Evacuation Through Turkey  
Vol. 5, Folder 1, 11.

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PROGRAMS WITH RESPECT TO RELIEF AND RESCUE OF REFUGEES; EVACUATION TO AND THRU  
TURKEY VOL. 6

11. LETTERS AND REPORTS FROM HIRSCHMANN
12. "PRESS CONFERENCE", OCTOBER 17, 1944.
13. NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS
14. LETTERS FROM KATZKI
15. RESNICK'S REPORTS

WAR REFUGEE BOARD RECORDS

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BLOOMINGDALE'S  
NEW YORK 22

EXECUTIVE OFFICES

October 24, 1944

Mr. John W. Pehle  
Executive Director  
War Refugee Board  
Treasury Building  
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear John:

I found among my papers the enclosed  
letter which, for reasons of expedition,  
I felt it desirable not to put into  
the mail at the time, and to bring to  
you directly.

Cordially yours



lah:ret

I. A. Hirschmann

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THE FOREIGN SERVICE  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

AMERICAN EMBASSY

Ankara, October 4, 1944

Dear John:

Mr. Joseph Klarman, representative of the Revisionist movement of Palestine and correspondent of the Revisionist paper "Hamashkif", Tel-Aviv, the "Jewish Telegraphic Agency" of London, the "Jewish Times" of London, and the "Jewish Herald" of Johannesburg, employed his imagination and wrote the statement below which appeared in the "Hamashkif" of September 13 and probably in the other papers listed above:

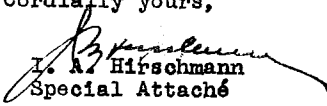
"Mr. I. Hirschmann, representative of the WRB to Turkey disclosed in the middle of August that it was his opinion that emigration from Balkan countries is not necessary any longer. With a liberated Bulgaria and Rumania it is evident that the only function of the WRB will consist in pressure to be put on the respective governments, including the Hungarians, to improve conditions for Jews in their countries.

"This change in Mr. Hirschmann's policy means that instead of efforts to save Hungarian, Rumanian and Bulgarian Jews and refugees in these countries, they will have to stay there and wait for the results of his endeavor to obtain for them equal rights."

Since it is a complete distortion of the truth and a misrepresentation of the policy of the Board, and in view of the fact that it is entirely probable that such a statement will be or has been picked up by other papers here or in the United States for republication, I have issued the enclosed affirmative statement covering the Board's policy with respect to its program from its headquarters in Turkey.

I deemed it desirable that you should be informed about this.

Cordially yours,

  
I. A. Hirschmann  
Special Attaché

J. W. Pehle, Esquire  
Executive Director  
War Refugee Board  
Treasury Building  
Washington 25, D. C.

Encl.

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News Release

September 23, 1944

In a statement issued today by Mr. Ira A. Mirschmann, Special Representative in Turkey of the War Refugee Board of the United States, he reaffirmed the policy of the board, stating:

"The important political and military events which have occurred in the last weeks in Bulgaria and Rumania have unquestionably served to aid the condition of the stricken Jews and other minorities in those countries. Little is known, as yet, of the conditions of the Jewish populations in these countries, who suffered so sorely in the last few years, but the revocation of the anti-Jewish laws in Bulgaria, initiated by the War Refugee Board with the Bogdanov Government, and the categorical reinstatement of the rights of all citizens in Rumania, in the new armistice agreement, will unquestionably provide the basis for these Jews to re-establish their lives as citizens in their own countries. Undoubtedly, there will be a difficult, convulsive period in which the Jewish citizens will require all the help necessary from inside and outside sources.

"These events, presaging, we hope, the eventual return to a new normal life for the Jewish citizens in these countries, do not in the slightest degree alter the policy of the War Refugee Board as set forth by President Roosevelt in his order of January 22, 1944. The rescue of all citizens in danger of death, wherever they are and wherever they are, will be aided by the representatives of this Board. It is assumed that the conditions in Bulgaria and Rumania have been ameliorated to a point where there is little danger of annihilation from the

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als, which is now in the process of being thrown out of these countries.

The situation in Hungary is entirely different. The condition of the Jewish population in that country, as well as Slovakia, according to unofficial reports received by us, remains critical; and all possible measures for rescue are being pressed without let-up by the War Refugee Board and its representatives in Istanbul and elsewhere. The battle-front where sporadic fighting is now occurring in Transylvania may have sealed up the possibility of escape in the direction of Turkey from Hungary. But every means for rescue is being explored and exploited, with all resources at the War Refugee Board's command, in cooperation with all other responsible agencies in the field."

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Istanbul, 21.9.1944

Under the headline "Radical change in policy of the War Refugee Board" reports the Revisionist paper "Hamashkif", Tel-Aviv [September 13, 1944]:

Mr. I. Hirschmann, representative of the WRB to Turkey, disclosed in the middle of August, that it was his opinion, that emigration from Balkan countries is not necessary any longer. With a liberated Bulgaria and Rumania it is evident, that the only function of the WRB will consist in pressure to be put on the respective governments, including the Hungarians, to improve conditions for Jews in their countries.

"This change in Mr. Hirschmann's policy means, that instead of efforts to save Hungarian, Rumanian and Bulgarian Jews and refugees in these countries, they will have to stay there and wait for the results of his endeavor to obtain for them equal rights."

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We shall be delighted to publish an authorized statement in the Palestine press.

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No. 808  
X

Ankara, October 8, 1944

Subject: Forwarding summary report from  
Mr. Ira A. Hirschmann, Representative  
of the War Refugee Board, to Mr.  
John Lehle, Executive Director of  
the War Refugee Board.

The honorable  
The Secretary of State,  
Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to forward herewith a summary  
report from Mr. Ira A. Hirschmann, Representative  
of the War Refugee Board, to Mr. John Lehle,  
Executive Director of the War Refugee Board, Wash-  
ington, covering efforts made by Mr. Hirschmann and  
the Embassy to rescue oppressed minorities from  
axis-occupied Europe.

Respectfully yours,

Laurence A. Steinhardt

Enclosure:

1/ Summary report from  
Mr. Ira A. Hirschmann

**CONTROL COPY**

File No. 840.1

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To the Department in Original and Hecograph.

DECLASSIFIED  
State Dept. Letter, 1-17-72  
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 18 1972

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Ankara, Turkey  
October 4, 1944

Mr. John W. Fahie, Executive Director  
War Refugee Board,  
Washington.

Dear Mr. Fahie:

The following is a summary of the operations of the War Refugee Board in Turkey from the date of my second incumbency, June 14, until my departure on October 4, 1944. Most of the material condensed herein has been fully elaborated in my report dispatched to you by Ambassador Steinhardt on September 11, but I deem it desirable to offer a résumé of the Board's operations in a final report, which includes the activities in Turkey up to and including October 4, immediately prior to my departure for the United States.

1. Joel Brandt.

Following my interview of Joel Brandt in Cairo, a report was submitted to Ambassador Steinhardt and dispatched to you on July 3, covering Brandt's visit to Turkey and subsequently to Cairo. No further action was taken in this matter, following the receipt of telegrams of instruction from the Department.

2. Coordination of Organizational Activities in Istanbul.

Due to the influx in Turkey of numbers of representatives of various relief and rescue agencies, a situation had arisen which resulted in confusion, overlapping of efforts, embarrassment to Ambassador Steinhardt, and an unfavorable reaction in the Turkish Foreign Office. At Ambassador Steinhardt's initiative, a single overall committee was organized which included representatives of all interested agencies in Turkey. This committee has met on several occasions, for the purpose of interchanging information.

In addition, a small working committee, which includes the leading representatives of the most active organizations here, was established to deal with day-to-day problems. Both committees were established under War Refugee Board leadership, and continue to act under our direction. This procedure resulted in the concentration and definition of the activities of the various organizations, and placed the Consulate in Istanbul and the Embassy in Ankara in a more effective position to lend their aid and influence to the rescue work recorded hereinafter. At the same time, it added to the effective liaison and cooperation of the Embassy with the Turkish Foreign Office in these matters.

3. Rumania.

DECLASSIFIED  
State Dept. Letter, 1127-72  
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 18 1972

2. Rumania.

A. Two informal conferences with Mr. Alexander Gretzianu, Rumanian Minister to Ankara, led to the following results:

(1) The Rumanian Government, and particularly Mihai Antonescu, Rumanian Vice President of the Council of Ministers, was informed again of the outraged opinion in the United States with respect to the treatment by Rumania of the minorities and Jewish citizens in that country. As the result of our representations and the stated desire of the Rumanian Government to win some measure of good-will in the United States, it became apparent that a relatively more humane approach to the problems of the Jewish people in Rumania was resulting;

(2) In connection with the foregoing, Mr. Gretzianu was helpful on several occasions in securing information for me relating to Jewish affairs in Rumania. Impetus was given to the general relaxation of strictures against the Jews. This abatement manifested itself in a willingness and permission on the part of the Rumanian Government to condone the clandestine entry into Rumania of refugees coming from Hungary, and to grant transit facilities to Hungarian refugees. It was reported that approximately 3500 to 4000 Hungarians entered Rumania with the tacit consent of the Rumanian Government during this period, in spite of an official edict issued by Baron von Killinger, German Minister to Rumania (since deceased) to execute any refugees who have succeeded in escaping from Hungary into Rumania.

B. Without the strong representations of Ambassador Steinhardt, the War Refugee Board would not have been able to succeed in its operations in bringing 2672 persons who arrived in Istanbul by sea from Rumania during the period of January-August, 1944. These refugees arrived without Turkish visas. Such visas were issued to them upon their arrival, enabling them to continue their emigration without delay to Palestine. Part of the arrangement made by the Ambassador with the Turkish Ministry of Communications resulted in the provision of special trains to transport these refugees from Istanbul to the Syrian border.

C. In the instance of the Malkara disaster, the Turkish Foreign Office instructed the Turkish Red Crescent to care for the safe arrival of the Malkara survivors and the Bilibli passengers, who were permitted to proceed overland from Igneada to Istanbul under Foreign Office and Red Crescent auspices and protection. In view of the apparent dangers lurking in the Black Sea, it was essential that the passengers of the Bilibli were not exposed to further dangers of sea transport, and were provided with the means for their removal to Istanbul by land.

D. Preliminary steps were taken to secure permission to dispatch Turkish passenger vessels to Constanza for the

evacuation

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evacuation of refugees from Rumania. The change in the political scene during early August, especially the Turkish-German diplomatic break, brought this initiative to a halt.

A. Bulgaria.

A. Jewish population in Bulgaria. There are about 45,000 Jews in Bulgaria. About 12,000 to 14,000 Jews have been deported, mostly from Thrace and Macedonia.

B. The exchange of Jewish Refugees for German Nationals. On July 6, 1944 an exchange of 113 Germans for 283 Jewish refugees took place in Istanbul, under the auspices of the Turkish Red Crescent. The 283 Jewish refugees were chosen by the Gestapo from a list submitted by the Jewish Agency. We are informed that there are three to four thousand such exchange certificates still outstanding.

C. Rescue by land from Bulgaria. 408 persons, including 46 children under the children's scheme, entered Turkey from Bulgaria during the first six months of 1944. The Turkish Foreign Office, at the intervention of the British and American Embassies, agreed to admit all refugees to enter Turkey in transit to Palestine.

D. Several informal conferences were arranged through Simond of the International Red Cross with Monsieur Balabanoff, Bulgarian Minister to Ankara. The apparent desire of the Bulgarian (Bogryanov) Government to win the goodwill of the American people at that time and the obvious impediments in the way of sea-transport of Jewish refugees from Bulgaria, suggested the possibility of saving the Jewish population within Bulgaria, instead of continuing the sporadic efforts to bring out a relatively few victims.

With the aid of Ambassador Steinhardt, Balabanoff was pressed during these conversations and through the intervention of other intermediaries to the elimination of the Bulgarian anti-Jewish Law and the immediate, complete reinstatement of the Bulgarian Jewish population to its former rights and liberties. These views were placed before the Bogryanov Government. Although it was reported at one time, through most reliable source, that this question would be considered secondary to the major ones under discussion, at the special convocation of Parliament on August 17 we succeeded in having the question included on the agenda. On August 28, the famed Nuremberg Anti-Jewish laws were formally withdrawn. This constituted the first revocation of anti-Jewish legislation by any Axis country or satellite, since the nefarious campaigns preceding and following the war.

During the conversations above-mentioned, a statement in writing was secured from Balabanoff, setting forth that the Bogryanov Government was categorically opposed to the anti-Jewish activities of the preceding Bulgarian governments, and promising that steps would be taken to annul the anti-Jewish laws at the first opportunity. Permission to

publish

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publish this statement was also later secured from Dalabanoff.

E. The steps in principle taken by the Bagryanov Government in conjunction with the reinstatement of the Jewish Bulgarian population were implemented and enforced by the succeeding Bulgarian Governments. On September 22 the present Georgieff Government issued the statement quoted below, in the radio and press:

"(1). The Bulgarian Government takes a positive attitude regarding the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine.

"(2). The Bulgarian Government has no objection and will make no difficulties for those Jews who wish to emigrate to Palestine. Regarding those as Bulgarian citizens who enjoy full rights, the Government will require of them merely that they comply with all laws or regulations obligatory for all citizens of the country.

"(3). The Government has annulled all exclusive laws of anti-Jewish character. Such an exclusive law was that establishing a surtax to the extent of 20 to 25 per cent of the value of all Jewish property. This tax, being the result of a vicious law, was discriminatory against the Jews. The excess amount will now be returned, but because of Bulgaria's difficult financial situation, such amount will be transferred into a state loan of definite maturity.

"(4). The Jews now enjoy full equality of rights, and live under the same conditions and in freedom as do other Bulgarian nationals.

"The following procedure will be applied to the property falsely held and confiscated:

"Property, firm rights, and other assets still owned by the State will be returned to the Jews. There will remain to be settled the question of assets about which legal obligations have arisen between the State and private interest, that is, where property or firm rights have been transferred to third parties, or where other obligatory relations have been created during the course of the last few years. The solution of this problem is a question of time. The Government will find the means to solve it in such fashion as not to disturb the traditional friendship and mutual understanding between Bulgarians and Jews. The Government is being assisted in this matter by Jewish people who have confidence in it. The Government will solve the problem in accordance with national relations between a democratic State and its citizens.

"In cases where fictitious property transfers have been made by Jews to Bulgarians, such property will be automatically returned to its lawful owner. In cases of fraudulent transfers, the public authorities will make investigations and will proceed in favor of the injured party."

F.

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F. On August 23, agreement and permission were secured for the Bulgarian vessels Vita and Pirin to make several voyages to carry refugees from Bulgaria to Istanbul. The realization of this scheme was interrupted by political events in the Balkans. Ultimately, the Vita was sunk, reportedly on August 24, while en route from Balchik, Bulgaria, to Burgas, to embark passengers at the latter port. The voyage of the Pirin is now uncertain. Thus far, all emigration from Bulgaria has taken place via railroad.

#### 2. Hungary.

4. A flow of refugee emigration from Hungary gave promise of fulfillment as a result of the pronouncement of Regent Horthy on July 18, 1944. It stated that Jewish people in certain categories and under certain limiting conditions were to be permitted to emigrate to Palestine, Sweden, and elsewhere. The Board assisted the Swiss Legation in Ankara in the arrangement for 2000 people to have all of their documents put in order for emigration to Palestine. Transit through Rumania and Turkey had previously been arranged for them by the American Embassy. Bulgarian transit visas were also in the process of obtaining. The Rumanian Government, through Great Britain, had agreed, in principle, at our request, to permit the Hungarian refugees to remain in Rumania for a brief period, until transportation could be arranged. Meanwhile, investigations were made as to the feasibility of transporting the refugees from Budapest via Bulgaria to Istanbul (Transylvania had become a scene of Russian military operations). As result of Nazi interference none of the Hungarian refugees to date have been permitted to leave by this route.

5. Through Stimson's intervention, an informal and confidential interview was held with Baron Thierry, Counselor of the Hungarian Embassy in Ankara. A broadening of the categories of Hungarian Jewish people who might be permitted to leave Hungary was sought. Baron Thierry informed me at that time (August 6) that it would be advisable, before requesting further concessions, to determine whether the first steps contained in the decree could succeed. He expressed some skepticism regarding the practicability of Regent Horthy's plan.

6. A small but steady stream of Jewish emigration had been taking place clandestinely from Hungary into Rumania. This required the development of complicated but secure underground agencies. It is estimated that 3500 to 4000 persons entered Rumania in this manner. Several hundred of them have already reached Palestine, via the Turkish boats sailing from Constantza. The Rumanian authorities, though aware of this movement, did not interfere with it.

#### 6. Greece.

There has been a sporadic movement, which we have encouraged, of refugees from Greece to Turkey by sea. This has taken place on a more or less informal basis, as opportunity afforded. Nevertheless, since October, 1943

approximately

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approximately 900 Greek refugees have entered Turkey in this manner, and with the aid of the Turkish authorities have been expedited to Palestine. Inquiry disclosed that this movement from Greece might be accelerated and augmented if the Turkish authorities would be willing to designate a special base from which refugee rescue operations might be specifically undertaken. At our request, the Embassy discussed the matter with the Turkish Foreign Office, which agreed to issue the necessary instructions. With this assurance, inquiry into the practicability of establishing a base was made by Katak at Izmir. Informed opinion there was that the establishment of a special base in Turkey at this time to direct the evacuation of refugees from Greece is not feasible because of indications of early evacuation of Greece by the Germans.

### 7. Turkey.

Reference has been made previously to the cooperation of the Turkish Foreign Office in issuing Turkish transit visas to refugees who entered the country by sea. A number of other proposals were made to the Turkish Foreign Office by the American Embassy, the British Embassy, and both Embassies jointly, in which the cooperation and assistance of the Foreign Office was requested for the purpose of expanding rescue activities from Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria. In order to consolidate in an overall agreement the various understandings with the Foreign Office, it was agreed that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs would issue Turkish transit visas to any number of Jews who might apply for them at the Turkish Consulate in Budapest, who were in possession of any one of four different documents, as enumerated in the agreement. Similar instructions were to be sent to the Turkish Consulates in Constantza and Burgas, authorizing them to issue up to 400 visas between them every ten days to applicants, bearers of similar documents. At first, the Turkish Foreign Office desired to limit entry into Turkey from Rumania and Bulgaria to persons arriving by ship, but this was subsequently amended to include rail transportation, until such time as it could be demonstrated that voyages by sea could be made with some degree of regularity. The Foreign Office also undertook to request the Ministry of the Interior to admit into Turkey without delay and without reference to Ankara any persons arriving at Turkey's land borders without Turkish visas, provided such persons were in possession of one of the four types of documents referred to above.

This broad concession on the part of the Turkish Foreign Office can be attributed also to a desire on the part of the Turkish authorities to cooperate with the United States Government program in the work under the aegis of the War Refugee Board and to the confidence and respect in which it holds Ambassador Steinhardt.

### 8. United States Visa Instructions.

Instructions have been received by the American Consulate General in Istanbul, as a result of War Refugee

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Board discussions with the State Department, authorizing the issuance of United States visas for which advisory approval had been granted subsequent to July 1, 1941, or the renewal of visas actually issued since that date, but which have expired. These instructions applied to visa applicants in Axis or Axis-dominated countries, and were to be issued under certain circumstances and conditions. They were subsequently amended to include specified close relatives of American citizens or of aliens legally admitted into the United States. The Turkish Foreign Office has been informed thereof, in connection with the issuance of Turkish transit visas, and such prospective visa-holders have been included among the categories of persons to whom the Foreign Office instructions, relative to the issuance of Turkish transit visas referred to above, apply. Developments in the Balkans, up to the present time, have precluded any substantial activity to implement the intent of the State Department's instructions.

#### Observations

The rapid and radical political and military changes in the Balkans since the capitulation of the Rumanian Government on August 23, 1944, has fundamentally altered the possibilities of rescue through Turkey. It was hoped, when Rumania and Bulgaria became "liberated areas", that access to these countries would be available without too much delay, and that information regarding the precise status of the victimized populations of their own countries, and those who had immigrated to them, would be available. For reasons well justified such has not been the case.

Rumania has become a field of military operations. At the present writing, sporadic fighting is continuing in Transylvania, which promises to become a major battle-line of the Russians. For the present, this has sealed up the possibilities of migration from Hungary through Rumania. No information has been forthcoming from Rumania, except an occasional letter from Biosa, representing the Jewish Agency, and Filderman, of the Joint Distribution Committee. Filderman has urgently requested basic supplies for an impoverished Jewish population. Since the Board's definition of our activities precludes relief work, we have not pursued any efforts in this direction, although Ambassador Steinhardt is aiding, at the approved time, the efforts of Passman, the representative of the Joint Distribution Committee, to enter Rumania and Bulgaria for the purpose of surveying the situation for the purpose of introducing relief operations.

In Bulgaria, a few newspaper correspondents and informal representatives of Palestine agencies succeeded in arriving in Sofia. They reported a city, formerly populated by 300,000 people, reduced to a skeleton of some 45,000. The promise of the Dragyanov Government to the Embassy and the War Refugee Board to revoke the anti-Jewish laws was kept by the Georgieff Government. In addition, the rights and properties of the Jewish population are

being



being restored as rapidly as possible, under fairly chaotic conditions.

Under the above circumstances, it appears at this writing that the major program of the War Refugee Board, operating through Turkey, is concluding. There remains, in my opinion, further explorations in Bulgaria, Rumania and also Hungary when the latter is liberated. The possibility of any further operations from Turkey, however, are dependent on the newly oriented military and political situation, wherein Russia appears to be playing a dominant role, and in which our efforts must be guided entirely by the representation of missions in Bulgaria and Rumania and, it is hoped, eventually Hungary.

#### Conclusions.

As observed in my two previous reports, the establishment of the War Refugee Board and the dispatch of representatives to Turkey working with the sympathetic and successful aid of Ambassador Steinhardt resulted in the rescue of thousands of refugees who were admitted into Palestine. It is doubtful if these refugees would have been permitted to enter Turkey and proceed to Palestine without the personal intervention of the Ambassador and the Board representatives on the scene in Turkey. It bears repetition that it is regrettable that the Board, which has demonstrated its vitality and the success of its operations, was not created a year or two ago. There is no doubt from the evidence at hand that additional thousands of refugees could have been saved.

It is evident that the mere existence of the Board and its representatives in Turkey acted as a catalytic agent in nourishing the morale of the destitute and terrorized citizens in the Balkans, who had reached a low ebb of existence. It is consistently reported by numbers of refugees who had come through Turkey that the existence of the Board and the work by the Embassy in Turkey was known throughout the Balkans, and that it provided for the victims a ray of hope which resulted in lifting their own morale and an eleventh-hour self-sustaining effort on their own part. In retrospect, and as a precedent, the establishment of the War Refugee Board can be viewed as a sharp and vitalizing instrument for rescue in the face of the mechanisms brought to bear in warfare against non-participating, innocent populations.

The example is cited of the abandonment of the disease-ridden Transnistrian camp, through the initiative of the Board with Cretzianu, in March, 1944. Several thousand of the children released from this camp have passed through Turkey into Palestine.

The final phase of the Board's program in establishing a supplementary program of saving the populations within their own country, instead of attempting the sporadic rescue of small groups during the closing days of the war

should

Should also be emphasized. While there is reason to believe that the anti-Jewish laws in Bulgaria, for example, would have been revoked at some stage in the liberation of these countries after their capitulation, it is stated on high authority from the Bulgarians themselves that the Jewish question was considered an incidental one, and was to be treated at a convenient later hour. It is believed that every day in which the 45,000 reinstated Bulgarian Jewish citizens were given back their freedom is a day won for freedom.

Finally, as a blue-print for peace, the precedent established by Bulgaria in making its first bold and dramatic steps in the direction of the freeing of the first victims of the war, the Jewish population, is one that may not be lost in the fall of the other satellites, and in Germany itself.

Respectfully submitted,

Frank S. Mischewski  
Attache

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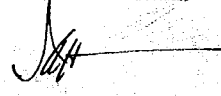
Ankara, September 29, 1944

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see [unclear]  
KS*

MEMORANDUM TO THE AMBASSADOR:

Attached is the Summary Report which I have written at your suggestion to take back with me to the United States. After you have edited it I should appreciate it if you would direct someone to copy it for hektograph so that it can be complete for our signatures and ready for me to take along with me on Wednesday morning.

I. A. Hirschmann



000148

Ankara, October 4, 1944

No.

Subject: Forwarding summary report from  
Mr. Ira A. Hirschmann, Representative  
of the War Refugee Board, to Mr. John  
Pehle, Executive Director of the  
War Refugee Board.

The Honorable  
The Secretary of State,  
Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to forward herewith a summary report  
from Mr. Ira A. Hirschmann, Representative of the War  
Refugee Board, to Mr. John Pehle, Executive Director of  
the War Refugee Board, Washington, covering efforts made  
by Mr. Hirschmann and the Embassy to rescue oppressed  
minorities from axis-occupied Europe.

Respectfully yours,

Enclosure:  
Report as described.

000144

Ankara, Turkey  
October 4, 1944

Mr. John W. Pehle, Executive Director  
War Refugee Board  
Washington

Dear Mr. Pehle:

The following is a summary of the operations of the War Refugee Board in Turkey from the date of my second incumbency, June 18, until my departure on October 4, 1944. Most of the material condensed herein has been fully elaborated in my report dispatched to you by Ambassador Steinhardt on September 11, but I deem it desirable to offer a resume of the Board's operations in a final report, which includes the activities in Turkey up to and including October 4, immediately prior to my departure for the United States.

1. Joel Brandt.

Following my interview of Joel Brandt in Cairo, a report was submitted to Ambassador Steinhardt and dispatched to you on July 3, covering Brandt's <sup>visit to</sup> ~~representations in~~ Turkey and ~~thereafter in~~ Cairo. No further action was taken in this matter, following the receipt of telegrams of instruction from the Department.

2. Coordination of Organizational Activities in Istanbul.

Due to the influx in Turkey of numbers of representatives of various relief and rescue agencies, a situation had arisen which resulted in confusion, overlapping of efforts, embarrassment to Ambassador Steinhardt, and an unfavorable reaction in the Turkish Foreign Office. At Ambassador Steinhardt's initiative, a single overall committee was organized which includes

DECLASSIFIED  
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72  
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 18 1972

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representatives of all interested agencies in Turkey. This committee has met on several occasions, for the purpose of interchanging information.

In addition, a small working committee, which includes the leading representatives of the most active organizations here, was established to deal with day-to-day problems. Both committees were established under War Refugee Board leadership, and continue to act under our direction. This procedure resulted in the concentration and definition of the activities of the various organizations, and placed the Consulate in Istanbul and the Embassy in Ankara in a more effective position to lend their aid and influence to the rescue work recorded hereinafter. At the same time, it added to the effective liaison and cooperation of the Embassy with the Turkish Foreign Office in these matters.

3. Rumania.

A. Two informal conferences with Mr. Alexander Cretzianu, Rumanian Minister to Ankara, led to the following results:

(1) The Rumanian Government, and particularly Mahai Antonescu, Rumanian Vice President of the Council of Ministers, was informed again of the outraged opinion in the United States with respect to the treatment by Rumania of the minorities and Jewish citizens in that country. As the result of our representations and the stated desire of the Rumanian Government to win some measure of good-will in the United States, it became apparent that a relatively more humane approach to the problems of the Jewish people in Rumania was resulting;

(2) In connection with the foregoing, Mr. Cretzianu was helpful on several occasions in securing information for me relating to Jewish affairs in Rumania. Impetus was given

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to the general relaxation of strictures against the Jews. This abatement manifested itself in a willingness and permission on the part of the Rumanian Government to condone the clandestine entry into Rumania of refugees coming from Hungary, and to grant transit facilities to Hungarian refugees. It was reported that approximately 3500 to 4000 Hungarians entered Rumania with the tacit consent of the Rumanian Government during this period, in spite of an official edict issued by Baron von Killinger, German Minister to Rumania (since deceased) to execute any refugees who have succeeded in escaping from Hungary into Rumania.

B. Without the strong representations of Ambassador Steinhardt, the War Refugee Board would not have been able to succeed in its operations in bringing 2672 persons who arrived in Istanbul by sea from Rumania during the period of January-August, 1944. These refugees arrived without Turkish transit visas. Such visas were issued to them upon their arrival, enabling them to continue their emigration without delay to Palestine. Part of the arrangement made by the Ambassador with the Turkish Ministry of Communications resulted in the provision of special trains to transport these refugees from Istanbul to the Syrian border.

C. In the instance of the Mefkura disaster, the Turkish Foreign Office instructed the Turkish Red Crescent to care for the safe arrival of the Mefkura survivors and the Bulbul passengers, who were permitted to proceed overland from Igneada to Istanbul under Foreign Office and Red Crescent auspices and protection. In view of the apparent dangers lurking in the Black Sea, it was essential that the passengers of the

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Bulbul were not exposed to further dangers of sea transport, and were provided with the means for their removal to Istanbul by land.

D. Preliminary steps were taken to secure permission to dispatch Turkish passenger vessels to Constanza for the evacuation of refugees from Rumania. The change in the political scene during early August, especially the Turkish-German diplomatic break, brought this initiative to a halt.

4. Bulgaria.

A. Jewish population in Bulgaria. There are about 45,000 Jews in Bulgaria. About 12,000 to 14,000 Jews have been deported, mostly from Thrace and Macedonia.

B. The exchange of Jewish Refugees for German Nationals. On July 6, 1944 an exchange of 113 Germans for 283 Jewish refugees took place in Istanbul, under the auspices of the Turkish Red Crescent. The 283 Jewish refugees were chosen by the Gestapo from a list submitted by the Jewish Agency. We are informed that there are three to four thousand such exchange certificates still outstanding.

C. Rescue by land from Bulgaria. 408 persons, including 46 children under the children's scheme, entered Turkey from Bulgaria during the first six months of 1944. The Turkish Foreign Office, at the intervention of the British and American Embassies, agreed to admit all refugees to enter Turkey in transit to Palestine.

D. Several informal conferences were arranged through Simond of the International Red Cross with Monsieur Balabanoff, Bulgarian Minister to Ankara. The apparent desire of the Bulgarian (Bagryanov) Government to win the good-will of the American people at that time and the obvious impediments in

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the way of sea-transport of Jewish refugees from Bulgaria, suggested the possibility of saving the Jewish population within Bulgaria, instead of continuing the sporadic efforts to bring out a relatively few victims.

With the aid of Ambassador Steinhardt, Balabanoff was pressed during these conversations and through the intervention of other intermediaries to the elimination of the Bulgarian anti-Jewish laws and the immediate, complete reinstatement of the Bulgarian Jewish population to its former rights and liberties. These views were placed before the Bagryanov Government. Although it was reported at one time, through most reliable source, that this question would be considered secondary to the major ones under discussion, at the special convocation of Parliament on August 17 we succeeded in having the question included on the agenda. On August 28, the famed Nurenberg Anti-Jewish laws were formally withdrawn. This constituted the first revocation of anti-Jewish legislation by any Axis country or satellite, since the nefarious campaigns preceding and following the war.

During the conversations above-mentioned, a statement in writing was secured from Balabanoff, setting forth that the Bagryanov Government was categorically opposed to the anti-Jewish activities of the preceding Bulgarian governments, and promising that steps would be taken to annul the anti-Jewish laws at the first opportunity. Permission to publish this statement was also later secured from Balabanoff.

E. The steps in principle taken by the Bagryanov Government in connection with the reinstatement of the Jewish Bulgarian population were implemented and enforced by the succeeding

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Bulgarian Governments. On September 22 the present Georgieff Government issued the statement quoted below, in the radio and press:

"(1). The Bulgarian Government takes a positive attitude regarding the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine.

"(2). The Bulgarian Government has no objection and will make no difficulties for those Jews who wish to emigrate to Palestine. Regarding them as Bulgarian citizens who enjoy full rights, the Government will require of them merely that they comply with all laws or regulations obligatory for all citizens of the country.

"(3). The Government has annulled all exclusive laws of anti-Jewish character. Such an exclusive law was that establishing a surtax to the extent of 20 to 25 per cent of the value of all Jewish property. This tax, being the result of a vicious law, was discriminatory against the Jews. The excess amount will now be returned, but because of Bulgaria's difficult financial situation, such amount will be transferred into a state loan of definite maturity.

"(4). The Jews now enjoy full equality of rights, and live under the same conditions and in freedom as do other Bulgarian nationals.

"The following procedure will be applied to the property falsely sold and confiscated:

"Property, firm rights, and other assets still owned by the State will be returned to the Jews. There will remain to be settled the question of assets about which legal obligations have arisen between the State and private interest, that is, where property or firm rights have been transferred to third parties, or where other obligatory relations have been

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created during the course of the last few years. The solution of this problem is a question of time. The Government will find the means to solve it in such fashion as not to disturb the traditional friendship and mutual understanding between Bulgarians and Jews. The Government is being assisted in this matter by Jewish people who have confidence in it. The Government will solve the problem in accordance with national relations between a democratic State and its citizens.

"In cases where fictitious property transfers have been made by Jews to Bulgarians, such property will be automatically returned to its lawful owner. In cases of fraudulent transfers, the public authorities will make investigations and will proceed in favor of the injured party."

F. On August 23, agreement and permission were secured for the Bulgarian vessels Vita and Pirin to make several voyages to carry refugees from Bulgaria to Istanbul. The realization of this scheme was interrupted by political events in the Balkans. Ultimately, the Vita was sunk, reportedly on August 24, while en route from Baltchik, Bulgaria, to Burgas, to embark passengers at the latter port. The voyage of the Pirin is now uncertain. Thus far, all emigration from Bulgaria has taken place via railroad.

5. Hungary.

A. A flow of refugee emigration from Hungary gave promise of fulfillment as a result of the pronouncement of Regent Horthy on July 18, 1944. It stated that Jewish people in certain categories and under certain limiting conditions were to be permitted to emigrate to Palestine, Sweden, and elsewhere. The Board assisted the Swiss Legation in Ankara in the

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arrangement for 2200 people to have all of their documents put in order for emigration to Palestine. Transit through Rumania and Turkey had previously been arranged for them by the American Embassy. Bulgarian transit visas were also in the process of obtention. The Rumanian Government, through Cretzianu, had agreed, in principle, at our request, to permit the Hungarian refugees to remain in Rumania for a brief period, until transportation could be arranged. Meanwhile, investigations were made as to the feasibility of transporting the refugees from Budapest via Bulgaria to Istanbul (Transylvania had become a scene of Russian military operations). As result of Nazi interference none of the Hungarian refugees to date have been permitted to leave by this route.

B. Through Simond's intervention, an informal and confidential interview was held with Baron Thierry, Counselor of the Hungarian Embassy in Ankara. A broadening of the categories of Hungarian Jewish people who might be permitted to leave Hungary was sought. Baron Thierry informed me at that time (August 8) that it would be advisable, before requesting further concessions, to determine whether the first steps contained in the decree could succeed. He expressed some skepticism regarding the practicability of Regent Horthy's plan.

C. A small but steady stream of Jewish emigration had been taking place clandestinely from Hungary into Rumania. This required the development of complicated but secure underground agencies. It is estimated that 3500 to 4000 persons entered Rumania in this manner. Several hundred of them have already reached Palestine, via the Turkish boats sailing from Constanza. The Rumanian authorities, though aware of this movement, did not interfere with it.

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6. Greece.

There has been a sporadic movement, which we have encouraged, of refugees from Greece to Turkey by sea. This has taken place on a more or less informal basis, as opportunity afforded. Nevertheless, since October, 1943 approximately 900 Greek refugees have entered Turkey in this manner, and with the aid of the Turkish authorities have been expedited to Palestine. Inquiry disclosed that this movement from Greece might be accelerated and augmented if the Turkish authorities would be willing to designate a special base from which refugee rescue operations might be specifically undertaken. At our request, the Embassy discussed the matter with the Turkish Foreign Office, which agreed to issue the necessary instructions. With this assurance, inquiry into the practicability of establishing a base was made by Katzki at Izmir. Informed opinion there was that the establishment of a special base in Turkey at this time to direct the evacuation of refugees from Greece is not feasible because of indications of early evacuation of Greece by the Germans.

7. Turkey.

Reference has been made previously to the cooperation of the Turkish Foreign Office in issuing Turkish transit visas to refugees who entered the country by sea. A number of other proposals were made to the Turkish Foreign Office by the American Embassy, the British Embassy, and both Embassies jointly, in which the cooperation and assistance of the Foreign Office was requested for the purpose of expanding rescue activities from Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria. In order to consolidate in an overall agreement the various understandings with the Foreign Office, it was agreed that the Ministry of

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Foreign Affairs would issue Turkish transit visas to any number of Jews who might apply for them at the Turkish Consulate in Budapest, who were in possession of any one of four different documents, as enumerated in the agreement. Similar instructions were to be sent to the Turkish Consulates in Constanza and Burgas, authorizing them to issue up to 400 visas between them every ten days to applicants, bearers of similar documents. At first, the Turkish Foreign Office desired to limit entry into Turkey from Rumania and Bulgaria to persons arriving by ship, but this was subsequently amended to include rail transportation, until such time as it could be demonstrated that voyages by sea could be made with some degree of regularity. The Foreign Office also undertook to request the Ministry of the Interior to admit into Turkey without delay and without reference to Ankara any persons arriving at Turkey's land borders without Turkish visas, provided such persons were in possession of one of the four types of documents referred to above.

This broad concession on the part of the Turkish Foreign Office can be attributed also to a desire on the part of the Turkish authorities to cooperate with the United States Government program in the work under the aegis of the War Refugee Board and to the confidence <sup>and respect</sup> in which it <sup>held</sup> Ambassador Steinhardt.

8. United States Visa Instructions.

Instructions have been received by the American Consulate General in Istanbul, as a result of War Refugee Board discussions with the State Department, authorizing the issuance of United States visas for which advisory approval had been

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granted subsequent to July 1, 1941, or the renewal of visas actually issued since that date, but which have expired. These instructions applied to visa applicants in Axis or Axis-dominated countries, and were to be issued under certain circumstances and conditions. They were subsequently amended to include specified close relatives of American citizens or of aliens legally admitted into the United States. The Turkish Foreign Office has been informed thereof, in connection with the issuance of Turkish transit visas, and such prospective visa-holders have been included among the categories of persons to whom the Foreign Office instructions, relative to the issuance of Turkish transit visas referred to above, apply. Developments in the Balkans, up to the present time, have precluded any substantial activity to implement the intent of the State Department's instructions.

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Observations

The rapid and radical political and military changes in the Balkans since the capitulation of the Rumanian Government on August 23, 1944 has fundamentally altered the possibilities of rescue through Turkey. It was hoped, when Rumania and Bulgaria became "liberated areas", that access to these countries would be available without too much delay, and that information regarding the precise status of the victimized populations of their own countries, and those who had immigrated to them, would be available. For reasons well justified such has not been the case.

Rumania has become a field of military operations. At the present writing, sporadic fighting is continuing in Transylvania, which promises to become a major battle-line of the Russians. For the present, this has sealed up the possibilities of emigration from Hungary through Rumania. No information has been forthcoming from Rumania, except an occasional letter from Zissu, representing the Jewish Agency, and Filderman, of the Joint Distribution Committee. Filderman has urgently requested basic supplies for an impoverished Jewish population. Since the Board's definition of our activities precludes relief work, we have not pursued any efforts in this direction, although Ambassador Steinhardt is aiding, at the approved time, the efforts of Passman, the representative of the Joint Distribution Committee, to enter Rumania and Bulgaria for the purpose of surveying the situation for the purpose of introducing relief operations.

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In Bulgaria, a few newspaper correspondents and informal representatives of Palestine agencies succeeded in arriving in Sofia. They reported a city, formerly populated by 300,000 people, reduced to a skeleton of some 45,000. The promise of the Bagryanov Government to the Embassy and the War Refugee Board to revoke the anti-Jewish laws was kept by the Georgieff Government. In addition, the rights and properties of the Jewish population are being restored as rapidly as possible, under fairly chaotic conditions.

Under the above circumstances, it appears at this writing that the major program of the War Refugee Board, operating through Turkey, is concluding. There remains, in my opinion, further explorations in Bulgaria, Rumania and also Hungary when the latter is liberated. The possibility of any further operations from Turkey, however, are dependent on the newly oriented military and political situation, wherein Russia appears to be playing a dominant role, and in which our efforts must be guided entirely by the representation of missions in Bulgaria and Rumania and, it is hoped, eventually Hungary.

#### Conclusions.

As observed in my two previous reports, the establishment of the War Refugee Board and the dispatch of representatives to Turkey working with the sympathetic and resourceful aid of Ambassador Steinhardt resulted in the rescue of thousands of refugees who were admitted into Palestine. It is doubtful if these refugees would have been permitted to enter Turkey

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and proceed to Palestine without the <sup>personal intervention</sup> operations of the Ambassador and the Board representatives on the scene in Turkey. It bears repetition that it is regrettable that the Board, which has demonstrated its vitality and the success of its operations, was not created a year or two <sup>ago</sup>. There is no doubt from the evidence at hand that additional thousands of refugees could have been saved.

It is evident that the mere existence of the Board and its representatives in Turkey acted as a catalytic agent in spurring the morale of the destitute and terrorized citizens in the Balkans, who had reached a low ebb of existence. It is consistently reported by numbers of refugees who had come through Turkey that the existence of the Board and the work by the Embassy in Turkey was known throughout the Balkans, and that it provided for the victims a ray of hope which resulted in lifting their own morale and an eleventh-hour self-sustaining effort on their own part. In retrospect, and as a precedent, the establishment of the War Refugee Board can be viewed as a sharp and vitalizing instrument for rescue in the face of the mechanisms brought to bear in warfare against non-participating, innocent populations.

The example is cited of the abandonment of the disease-ridden Transnistrian camp, through the initiative of the Board with Cretzianu, in March, 1944. Several thousand of the children released from this camp have passed through Turkey into Palestine.

The final phase of the Board's program in establishing a supplementary program of saving the populations within their own country, instead of attempting the sporadic rescue of small groups during the closing days of the war should also be emphasized. While there is reason to believe that the anti-Jewish laws in Bulgaria, for example, would have been revoked at some stage in the liberation of these countries after their capitulation, it is stated on high authority from the Bulgarians themselves that the Jewish question was considered an incidental one, and was to be treated at a convenient later hour. It is believed that every day in which the 45,000 reinstated Bulgarian Jewish citizens were given back their freedom is a day won for freedom.

Finally, as a blue-print for peace, the precedent established by Bulgaria in making its first bold and dramatic steps in the direction of the freeing of the first victims of the war, the Jewish population, is one that may not be lost in the fall of the other satellites, and in Germany itself.

Respectfully submitted,

Ira A. Hirschmann  
Attache

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10/17/44

Copies to:

Mr. Pehle  
Mr. Abrahamson  
Mr. Friedman  
Mr. Lesser  
Miss Hodel

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October  
Istanbul, 3rd. September 1944.

Mr. Ira N. Hirschmann  
Special Attache  
War Refugee Board  
Washington.

Dear Mr. Hirschmann,

At to-day's meeting of the Executive Working Committee ~~WE~~ we learned with mixed feelings of your decision to leave for Washington, and report and consult with your Board on further activity and future plans in the light of the changed situation. True, the military and political field changed, one or the other country are out of the war; you were witness to the culmination of a task, terminated in the strict sense of rescue, with the restoration of all rights to the oppressed in Bulgaria.

The tenseness of the situation which moved, those horrified by the inhuman treatment of helpless victims, to its very depths; which prompted the creation of the War Refugee Board for an all out effort to rescue, where there is still a spark of hope of success; this tenseness which confronted you, when you first faced the task in being gradually dissipated, but grim reality still prevails.-

At the meeting to-day, the last before your departure, some of us took occasion, each from his own point of view, to express the need and to impress upon you the urgency of exploring all ways for the full realisation of rescue of broken and shattered lives, of homeless people, of nameless orphans, still in concentration camps, still exposed to the threat of deportation. Clearly the

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rescue of those who are threatened with their lives is, in a sense, an end.

Outstanding in the effort of rescue directed from and through Turkey to Palestine, however, and in its complexity by its very nature, made more complex by the multitude of organizations engaged in the work, by limited means or physical facilities, was the unequivocal definition of the War Refugee Board of rescue to apply to all who are in danger, thus dissipating fears and doubts.

It led to another outstanding achievement, in that it produced the necessary unification and coordination of the effort. This principle must be applied in the interim period between rescue from destruction, and the reconstruction of lives, physically and morally broken-down, and the ultimate return to a home.

Since the terms of references of the W.R.B. do not correspond any longer to the new situation, does it mean that the tasks of the Board have already been fulfilled and the reasons for its existence exhausted?

In Roumania, not all anti-Jewish laws have, as yet, been abolished. The waiting-rooms of philanthropic institutions there are now, more than ever, crowded with Jewish people, whose existence had been ruined and who are left with no other alternative than living on charity. Uprooted refugees from Bucovina and other former Rumanian provinces are queuing at the doors of Palestine Emigration offices throughout Roumania. Refugees from Hungary and Poland are loitering everywhere, pale and hungry, haunted from street to street and possessed by the constant fear of being stopped and asked for a passport they <sup>do</sup> not possess and for an address they <sup>do</sup> not have. Thousands of orphan-children from former Transnistria and other starvation camps are wandering about, nameless, abandoned and driven at anything by the <sup>N</sup>instinct of subsisting at any price, changing from one way of dog-life to another.

Now- as to Bulgaria. In fact, what good has it done to the Jews there that all rights have been, *de jure*, restored to them? ./.

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The 25,000 Jews who in May 1943 have been expelled from Sofia and scattered over 25 places of concentration, how will they be able to recover their houses, businesses and means of existence, merely on the basis and strength of the Government's order that everything plundered, expropriated or purchased in public auction during the last two years, can be reclaimed without further formalities? Laws of this kind, by means of which a Government that perhaps actually has no funds is trying to shirk from the responsibility and task of rebuilding the broken Jewish economic life, would not they perhaps bring about a new hatred and renewed frictions between Jews, claiming their property back on one hand and Bulgarians, who have to return it, on the other? Information received from reliable representatives in Bulgaria, depicts the terrible condition prevailing there among the returning Jews: with no roofs over their heads, with no means to subsist on, without the slightest idea as to how to start again earning some bread for one's wife and children, nor as to wherefrom to obtain some clothing to shield them from cold, right now on the threshold of winter - this is how most Bulgarian Jews stand now, while the rest of the country is jubilant with joy over the liberation from tyranny. True, the Government is promising, sincerely and in good faith to include the Jews into the general reconstruction schemes now under consideration. THE JEWS, HOWEVER, CAN NOT AFFORD TO WAIT. To them this is no question of improving one's standard of living, as it perhaps is to most Bulgarians; it is a question of how to preserve the lives and health of thousands and thousands of hungry people.

Then there is still the new inferno: Hungary. A report dated Sep. 4, from the representative of the Jewish Agency in Budapest to the representative of the International Red Cross sums up the position of the Jews in Hungary as follows: "Of 800,000 Jews there are only 200,000 left. The major part of those are kept in refugee-camps and forced labor camps. Starvation, cold and despair prevail in all these camps, no matter

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to which of the two types any of them belong. Moreover, the uncertainty and the permanent fear of deportation that may come along at any moment, drives people crazy. Waiting for rescue to come, those unfortunate human beings have constantly in their mind the picture of what has happened on previous occasions, when such rescue was hoped for, but never came true." The report further says: "an agreement has been concluded between Hungarians and the Germans under which even the remaining Jews of Budapest are to be transferred to concentration camps, probably to make them easier accessible to the Hungarians. Hundreds of Jews are still trying to make the dangerous escape to Roumania or Yougoslavia. Are they to be left in the lurch now? Is there really no salvation for these Jews, who, on Sep. 4th, we definitely know it, were still alive?"

There is no need for us to go on drawing the sad picture of the still raging catastrophe, the very catastrophe which President Roosevelt wanted to avert or at least minimize by creating the W.R.B. and by appointing you a special attaché. There is still much that can be done and has to be done. Specifically the following immediate measures should be considered:

1. Hungary. The United Nations should immediately mobilize all means of pressure in their power, so <sup>as</sup> that to compel the Hungarian Government to put a definite stop to the deportations. This can be obtained by threatening the Hungarian Government with effective sanctions;
2. The Swiss and Swedish Government should be requested that, together with the International Red Cross, they create a control commission to be sent out to Hungary to examine the situation and take steps that no further deportations take place.

It is surmised that the Hungarian and German Governments which, so far, have proved reluctant to any control of such kind, would no longer venture to oppose to it if the demand for such a control is accompanied by the threat that the Red Cross would sever relations with Hungary and

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Germany and thus leave German and Hungarian interests, citizens, and war refugees, throughout the Allied World no longer protected.

3. Roumania: The Roumanian Government should be urgently required finally and completely to abolish all remnants of anti-Jewish legislation.

4. The Governments in Roumania and Bulgaria in general will be urged to facilitate as far as possible the emigration of Jews willing to emigrate from those countries.

As an immediate and urgent measure, the United Nations will aid and facilitate the evacuation by competent bodies of refugees from other countries now living in Roumania and Bulgaria, as well as of the unfortunate orphan-children from Transnistria.

To attain all this the following are necessary :

- a) pressure on the respective States in order to make the exit possible;
- b) the release of some of the now seized boats, so that they serve for the transportation of refugees,
- c) the approval of the Allied Occupation Authorities in Roumania and Bulgaria of the emigration of the people in question.

We beg you, dear Mr. Hirschmann, to make yourself the interpreter of the consequences deriving from these views to President Roosevelt, to the War Refugee Board, and to the American Public opinion. We trust that you will do it with the same energy, enthusiasm and conviction, that have characterised all your activity here in Istanbul and to which, to a very large extent, we owe the fact that it was possible to break through the cold and heartless wall, that had been surrounding the martyred remnants still alive and that thousands of them have been able to find their salvation in Palestine.

With all good wishes

*M. Kessler*  
*Mordecai Kessler*  
*S. Hirschmann*

respectively yours

*J.E. Uffersall*

*P.S. Represents different points  
of view, expressed in different  
languages - hence,  
too long, needs  
editing  
(over) 5.*

An edited copy will  
be forwarded to  
you in Washington

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OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES  
630 FIFTH AVENUE  
NEW YORK 20, N. Y.

September 16, 1944

Mr. John W. Pehle  
Executive Director  
War Refugee Board  
Treasury Building  
Washington, D.C.

Dear John:

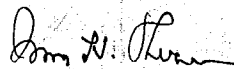
I am enclosing a letter which I brought back  
for you from Ira.

Although I did not stay in Istanbul as long  
as I had originally intended, I did stay three weeks and  
spent a considerable amount of time with Ira, and would  
be only too happy to tell you anything that you might  
like to know about his problems.

I expect to be in Washington some time this  
week and will call you.

With my kindest regards, I am,

Sincerely yours,



Irving H. Sherman

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EMBASSY OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Istanbul, August 30, 1944

Dear John:

I am seizing the opportunity of Sherman's return to write you personally, although by the time this letter reaches you the contents will probably be obsolete in view of the rapidly changing situation in the Balkans. Under separate cover I have forwarded to you my report covering rather fully the work of the Board's representatives in Turkey from June 18 to August 19, 1944. Since then Rumania has withdrawn, and as I write today Bulgaria is on the edge. The situation in Hungary still calls for urgent action. Taking each of the countries separately, the situation, as it appears from here today, is as follows:

1. Bulgaria

The Bulgarian Government, in its broadcasts and announcements has repeatedly referred to the question of the reinstatement of the Jews. We have been informed today, and as telegraphed to you, that the anti-Jewish laws have been completely wiped out by decree. This is extremely gratifying as we had set our hearts on this as part of the steps to be taken by the Bulgarian Government at the first possible moment. The fact that it has done so, even before it is able to achieve an armistice, is an indication of its concrete desire to satisfy the urgent request of the War Refugee Board, and the record can so state.

I believe, therefore, that our program designed to (a) concern ourselves with the rescue of the 45,000 Jews from within the country instead of the trickle from without seems to have been sound; (b) our insistence upon the complete revocation of the nefarious anti-Jewish laws seems to have been justified. Putting the 45,000 people back on their feet is in itself desirable, of course, but I know that you will agree with the larger aspect, namely, establishing a precedent and a blue print for the return of the rights and self-sustaining dignity of human beings in advance of the Governments' capitulation. I appreciate the Board's concurrence in my program to this effect, which has been confirmed by Ambassador Steinhardt on his return in the last few days.

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In the meanwhile we have determined not to relax in our program of evacuating Bulgarian Jews and children who wish for emergency reasons voluntarily to depart. As soon as the circumstances permit, it is my intention to go to Bulgaria or to send Katzki with a view of getting a first-hand picture of the situation as it relates to our program. We are working closely with Passman of the JDC and wish to assist him also in introducing an emergency relief program there. Reports reaching us indicate that the 45,000 Jewish citizens are in a rather precarious state, and notwithstanding the impending withdrawal of the restrictions against them, experience has taught that it will be some time before the rights, economic possibilities and mechanisms for the return to normal life will be possible. We hope to expedite this within the framework of our jurisdiction.

## 2. Rumania

We have very little information of any authenticity or clarity at this writing. Our view is not to press, in any unusual way, the Rumanian citizens to evacuate, especially since all concentration camps and restrictions (as reported to me by Cretzianu) seem to have been abolished by the new Government, and we may expect that, with the United Nations in control, the pressures which compelled the Jews in Rumania to emigrate will be relieved. There are, however, in Rumania Poles, Slovaks, Hungarians, etc. who should probably be assisted in their exodus, and we expect to introduce measures to locate these people and assist them. Rumania still offers, in our opinion, a real possibility for aid to the blighted Hungarians. Although fighting is proceeding in Transylvania, which was the route through which refugees travelled clandestinely from Hungary to Rumania, we are not excluding the possibility of finding some means of continuing and possibly accelerating this movement. It will, of course, have a much better chance of succeeding if we can get somebody into Rumania, and we plan to do so at our first opportunity. I discussed this today with Ambassador Steinhardt.

I am interpreting the function of the Board's representation in Turkey as being not terminated until every possibility for rescue and salvage through the Balkans has been explored and activated. With the opening of the two countries now we should enter them and exploit their possibilities until the problem seems resolved. If the Board does not concur in this I should appreciate hearing from you. It may be necessary

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to secure your help with the State Department or the military authorities in authorizing us to move into one or both of these countries. I do not exclude the possibility of some resistance in this effort. At that time we shall telegraph you so that you may take the appropriate steps in Washington, provided that you agree.

The question of transportation from Rumania has become complicated since the turn in events. With the principal ports in the hands of the Russians it is not clear at this moment whether a real transport by sea will be possible. There were four boats available in Rumania -- Smyrnie (Greek), Alba Julia (Rumanian), Salahaldin (Turkish) and Milka (Bulgarian). We are without information as to whether any of these or any other boats may now leave Rumania. War conditions likewise have snarled up railroad traffic.

### 3. Hungary

Hungarian reports reaching us today indicate that the Germans are resorting to extraordinary pressure to exact the last pound of flesh. What I fear at this writing is the last minute convulsions of the Nazis which might exert a steel-like grip on the victims and take an eleventh-hour toll. We shall do whatever is within our means and possibilities from Istanbul, but such information as we have indicates that the Germans are unlikely to permit the evacuation of Jews from Hungary via the Balkans to Palestine. We had made arrangements for transit from Hungary via Rumania and the Black Sea, should the Hungarian Jews be able to leave, but the possibility of this is now doubtful. Meanwhile we are exploring other possibilities.

### 4. Greece

I telegraphed you today on the number of refugees who had been rescued from the Greek Islands into Turkey in the last several months. We have been working on the Greek rescue program for several months here but I did not report to you until it was possible to open a new base under the Board's auspices. The "Kayaks" had virtually ceased operating due to the absence of a base in Turkey, and we have been working with the O.S.S. and the Turkish authorities to secure an extra base exclusively for our rescue operations. It seems that this has finally come through, and we are now in a position to undertake this operation in that area from a base under our control, provided it seems feasible, in order to snatch as many people out of Greece as possible at this moment. You will undoubtedly have heard from me by telegraph regarding this by the time this letter reaches you.

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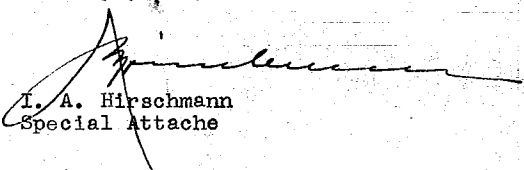
As I wrote in my report to you, I have had an especially smooth working group with which to operate. The Embassy has been completely cooperative. Ambassador Steinhardt's return is welcome. I only regret that we haven't been able to bring more victims out of the Balkans, but I believe I can say with confidence and candor that, looking back, I cannot see any other device that might have been used from here to have increased the flow. In fact, if anything, I may have overstepped my bounds somewhat. Judging from one of the telegrams, the State Department was somewhat critical of my pressure on the Bulgarian Government, and Ambassador Steinhardt has intimated that he had received the same impression from the State Department. I hope that the Board was in no way embarrassed by my conversations, and I can see no reason for regret on my part for the steps which I undertook with the enemy. On the contrary.

As I see the picture here now (and it changes radically from day to day) I personally should be operating here from four to six weeks longer, although I shall not leave until I consider my part of the direction in the work completed. When I do request approval for my return, you may be assured that I have determined from all the aspects of the program as seen from this part of the world that my work is completed. This, however, should not preclude the continuance of it in certain phases by Katzki and the secretaries. He is an exceptionally able fellow. Sherman, coming along at the time he did, was helpful with advice and certain suggestions.

Again let me thank you and your associates for the support and the encouragement you gave me, which I appreciate very much.

With kind personal regards,

Cordially yours,

  
I. A. Hirschmann  
Special Attache

John W. Pehle, Esquire  
Executive Director  
War Refugee Board  
Treasury Building  
Washington, D. C.

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THE FOREIGN SERVICE  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

AMERICAN EMBASSY

Istanbul, September 16, 1944

Dear John:

I am enclosing a memorandum from Mr. Katzki covering his investigation at Izmir for the purpose of exploring the possibilities of opening an independent American base under the auspices of the War Refugee Board for the transportation of additional refugees from Greece to Turkey.

Cordially yours,

*I. A. Hirschmann*  
I. A. Hirschmann  
Special Attache

Mr. J. W. Penh, Executive Director  
War Refugee Board  
Treasury Building  
Washington, D. C.

Enclosure

*Kuno personal regards to all!*

000177



September 13, 1944

M E M O R A N D U M

From Mr. Katzki to Mr. Hirschmann

Pursuant to your instructions, on September 9, 1944 I proceeded to Izmir to investigate on the spot the feasibility of establishing an independent rescue service under War Refugee Board auspices to transport refugees from Greece to Turkey. (Mr. Osheverbuch, representing the Palestine Rescue Committee, accompanied me.) We had previously been informed that, following the representations made by the American embassy at Ankara at the request of the War Refugee Board, instructions had been sent from Ankara via the Turkish secret police to the latter's agent in Izmir, authorizing the establishment of an independent base on the Turkish coast to be used exclusively for rescue operations for Greek refugees. We had also previously been informed that the evacuation of refugees from Greece had been taking place under independent auspices, and the purpose of the investigation was to determine whether or not such movement could be accelerated and increased through the establishment of a special service for that purpose.

Upon our arrival at Izmir, inquiry was made of the Turkish Secret Police, and we were informed that no instructions had been received from Ankara authorizing the opening of a base. However, the police had been instructed by Ankara at an earlier time (I do not have the exact date) to grant all facilities to refugees coming by sea to the Turkish coast from Greece, by refraining from placing any obstacles before their debarkation on Turkish territory. We were informed, and experience seems to bear this out, that the local police were proceeding according to this instruction, and they stated that they would continue to permit the entry into Turkish territory of all refugees from Greece coming by sea. (Approximately 200 refugees from Greece, according to our information, have already arrived in Turkey

in this manner.) In the opinion of the police, however, it is too late now to establish a base, for in their opinion the need therefor will shortly be obviated, as a result of recent developments in Greece. This refers to the evacuation by the German military of Greek islands, which is now taking place, and which, one may expect, will shortly take place on the Greek mainland. However, if Ankara should instruct the police to make a base available, they of course would do so.

I spoke with Mr. Ellis A. Johnson, Vice-Consul in Charge of the American Consulate in Izmir. I discussed our plan with him. In his view, had the proposed steps been taken six months ago, they might have had value. At the present time, in his opinion, which reflects information which he has received from various sources, the need for a base might be expected to be eliminated within a matter of weeks.

I conferred with Miss Dorothy Cox, who has represented the Greek War Relief Association in Izmir, I understand, for almost two years. She has followed up the Greek refugee movement closely, and has personally spoken with a great number of refugees who have come from that country. Although she naturally is vitally interested in the welfare and fate of Greek people, her opinion likewise was that it probably is too late to open a base under War Refugee Board auspices. The time for this is past.

I also spoke with the U.S.S. Representative in Izmir. He informed us that he had received instructions from Washington to assist the War Refugee Board in whatever way he can, by advising it and lending such guidance as may be feasible in view of his other responsibilities, in preparing a base for Greek refugees. This representative was most helpful in advising us regarding the basic steps which would have to be taken in terms of initiation, preparation, and operation of a base.

He likewise was of the opinion that the time had passed when independent operations by the War Refugee Board would have been urgent and useful. That is not to say that every effort should not be made to evacuate refugees at this time, but considering the time-lag between the initial steps for preparing the base and the time when refugees might be awaited as the result of its operations, the situation in Greece might well be clarified.

Further inquiry was made in other channels in an informal manner regarding the possibility of creating a base, staffing it, supplying it, etcetera. Such inquiry indicated that, given sufficient time, a base could be put in operation. However, there was no way for determining in advance how long this period might be.

In view of the foregoing opinions and other expressions of opinion which had been received in Istanbul from informed persons, it would seem that no further steps for establishing a base should be taken at this time, especially since the Turkish Secret Police apparently had issued no instructions authorizing it. To pursue the matter again through Ankara would probably consume still more time, and we have before us the opinion of the local representative in Izmir of the Turkish Secret Police, who, one may assume, would express himself in the same manner should Ankara request his views on the subject.

Herbert Katzki

HR/b

000180



EMBASSY OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Istanbul, September 14, 1944

Dear John:

The Istanbul newspapers of today carried an item with a Washington date-line, which referred to a press release issued by Mr. Patrick Malin on the subject of the post-war plans of the Intergovernmental Committee in behalf of displaced populations in Europe. Included in this statement was the information that there were between one and two million persons who may not be able or willing to return to their countries of origin, and for whom, in consequence, other arrangements for permanent settlement will have to be made.

Having been rather close to the scene of refugee activity, and having participated in operations connected with it in the Balkans, I naturally have a deep-seated interest in what will happen here after the war.

When the emergency rescue phase of the refugee job ceases, after the war, it will not be possible for me to shut off my emotional interest in this humanitarian problem, and even after I return to my business I do not intend to lose interest in what is happening in this field.

I am taking this occasion to write to you on a matter in this connection which has been disturbing me for some time. Events in the Balkans appear rapidly to be coming to a conclusion, and one may hope that in the not-too-distant future problems of displaced persons in this area will shift from the stage of academic discussion and planning to that of concrete work. While I am not fully informed of what the Intergovernmental Committee has been doing or the plans it is making, it appears to me to be incomprehensible that at this stage of affairs that the Intergovernmental Committee is without its own permanent representative in Istanbul, familiarizing himself with Balkan conditions in terms of the task of the Committee, collecting information, and performing such preliminary and detailed duties as might now be possible in order that no time will be lost when it is able and necessary to function in this region. Perhaps such delegate is already here, but if that is so I certainly do not know about it.

In view of the close relationships which exist between the War Refugee Board and the Intergovernmental Committee, I feel that I should bring this to your attention. I am sure that the matter is under consideration, not only for the Balkans but for other areas as well. Nevertheless, for the sake of our common cause, I thought that you would be interested in the views of someone at this point adjacent to the Balkans.

With warm personal regards,

Cordially yours,

*I. A. Hirschmann*  
I. A. Hirschmann  
Special Attache

J. W. Pehle, Esquire  
Executive Director  
War Refugee Board  
Treasury Building  
Washington, D. C.

**CONTROL COPY**

Unrestricted

Ankara, September 11, 1944

No. 783

Subject: Forwarding report from Mr. Ira A. Hirschmann, Representative of the War Refugee Board, to Mr. John Pehle, Executive Director of the War Refugee Board.

The Honorable  
The Secretary of State,  
Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to forward herewith a report from Mr. Ira A. Hirschmann, Representative of the War Refugee Board, to Mr. John Pehle, Executive Director of the War Refugee Board, Washington, regarding efforts which are being made by Mr. Hirschmann and the Embassy to rescue oppressed minorities from Axis-occupied Europe.

Respectfully yours,

Enclosure:  
Report as described.

L./pe  
File No. 340.1  
To the Department in original and hectograph

000182

COPY

Embassy of the  
United States of America  
Istanbul, September 11, 1944.

Dear Mr. Pehle:

I am enclosing herewith my preliminary report covering the activities of the Board's program in Turkey from June 18 to August 19, 1944. In order to make for easier reading I have divided this, as in my previous report, into two major sections:

- (1) Covering the background and chronological development of our work;
- (2) Conclusions, observations and recommendations.

Political events are moving with such rapidity in the Middle East and the Balkans that many of the situations referred to in the report may have undergone considerable change by the time this reaches you. It is hoped that the report will serve, however, as a record of the steps taken by me and my associates here in our work during the period stated above.

In addition to the reference made in the final pages of the report to Mr. Katski and the two secretaries assigned to me in Turkey, I wish to acknowledge here again the loyal and tireless efforts of Mr. Katski who has compiled considerable of the data in the report, and whose efforts have been indubitably helpful.

A subsequent report will be mailed to you in due course.

May I again offer my hearty thanks to you, the Board, and your associates for the full support which you have accorded me, without which I could not have functioned.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed)  
I. A. HIRSCHMANN  
Special Attaché

John W. Pehle, Esquire  
Executive Director  
War Refugee Board  
Treasury Department  
Washington, D. C.

REPORT

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PART I

BACKGROUND AND CHRONOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

000187

Istanbul, Turkey  
August 19, 1944.

Mr. Joseph P. Cahle, Executive Director  
American Refugee Council  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Cahle:

In pursuance of my instructions from you, this is a preliminary report designed to offer a picture of the refugee situation as I found it upon my return to Turkey on June 19, 1944, and the results achieved to date.

1. Joel Brandt, I arrived in Ankara on Sunday evening, June 18. The following day, after a conference with Ambassador Steinhardt, I was informed that Joel Brandt had left Turkey, presumably for Jerusalem, some days prior to my arrival in Turkey. After a conference between Ambassador Steinhardt, F. C. Stern, Acting Minister from Great Britain to Turkey, and myself, it was determined that I should return at once to Jerusalem. Minister Bennett informed us, Joel Brandt was incarcerated and under strict surveillance by the British Military Intelligence.

On June 20, I forwarded to you a copy of my report submitted to Ambassador Steinhardt, covering my interview with Joel Brandt and my observations and recommendations connected with the matters relating to Joel Brandt's visit to Turkey.

Upon my return to Ankara, I was informed by Ambassador Steinhardt that he was instructed to take no further action in the above matter, and have acted accordingly.

A telegram was dispatched on the subject, informing the Board concerning certain steps which were being taken in connection with the proposals by representatives of the Jewish Agency, the German Consul in Istanbul, Joseph Schwartz of the Joint Distribution Committee, and others. In this connection, may I add that the city of Istanbul, which at best is a hotbed of gossip, was rife with the most fantastic rumors concerning the so-called Brandt proposals. As a final

Word

DECLASSIFIED

State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72

By R. H. Parks Date SEP 18 1972

word, I deem it a matter of regret that Joel Brandt was urged and virtually obliged by the British to depart from Turkey and not returned to his Jewish principals and family in Hungary.

## 2. Organizational Chaos in Istanbul.

### a. Situation found here upon my arrival.

Upon my arrival in Ankara, Ambassador Steinhardt informed me that, since my return to the United States, a large number of representatives of various organizations from the United States and Palestine had arrived in Turkey. In their zeal to assist in the rescue of refugees representing their own special constituents, and because of a lack of familiarity with what had already been undertaken and with conditions for such operations in Turkey, a confused and chaotic situation was developing. As a result, a disproportionate amount of the Ambassador's time, and that of his already hard-pressed staff, was being absorbed. The situation had also created embarrassment for him as a result of the numerous disconnected approaches which were being made by these individuals to the Turkish foreign office. As reported to you by Ambassador Steinhardt, an arrangement had been made by him with the Secretary General of the Foreign Office, Ankara, to pool all of the rescue activities through the special representative of the War Refugee Board, upon my return to Turkey.

On Sunday, June 20, Ambassador Steinhardt invited to his home the representatives of the various agencies who had converged upon Turkey and who were then in Ankara for a luncheon and a discussion of a new modus operandi to synchronize the efforts involved in the rescue work from Turkey. At this luncheon there were present: Ambassador Steinhardt, Robert Galley, Counselor of Embassy; I. A. Hirschmann; Herbert Katzki; representing the War Refugee Board; Dr. Joseph Schwartz and Reuben Resnik, representatives of the American Joint Distribution Committee; Dr. Judah L. Magnes, President of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and Harry Viteles, both of the Middle East Advisory Committee of the American Joint Distribution Committee; Chaim Barlas and Leev Schind, representatives of the Jewish Agency; David Schweitzer, representative of the Hias-Loa Migration Association (Hiasem); and Jacob Griffel, representative of the Agudath Israel and the Vaad Mahatzalah.

Ambassador Steinhardt pointed out the impairment in the efforts to achieve results on the competitive and disconnected basis with which the various organizations were attempting to function in the urgent field of rescue. He recommended that a general overall committee be organized to

consider

consider all matters relating to refugee work, which committee was to consist of all the representatives of the interested agencies in Turkey. In addition, there was to be appointed a so-called working committee, to deal with immediate problems and to make decisions, these committees to be headed by the representative of the War Refugee Board. Mr. Katzki was to act as executive secretary. Seconded by Mr. Judith L. Magness, the group unanimously agreed to the suggested organizational plan.

It was then to coordinate activities of organizations. On July 10th, after my arrival in Istanbul, I called together the representatives of all the organizations for the first preliminary meeting of an inter-agency advisory council. Minutes of this meeting are attached (Exhibit 1). With the exception of two discordant notes struck by the representative of the Emergency Committee for the Rescue of Jews in Europe, Mr. Dubotinsky, and by Mrs. Rosenberg of the International Rescue and Relief Committee, the meeting was harmonious and afforded a promising, practical beginning.

It was secured unanimous approval to choose the so-called working executive committee, I selected the following members: Nathan Resnik, representing the Joint Distribution Committee, and David Schweitzer for the Jewish Agency, Leev Schind, and David Schweitzer. The first meeting was held at the offices of the United States Consulate General in Istanbul on July 17, 1944. The minutes of this meeting are attached (Exhibit 2). With one exception, meetings have been held weekly.

The presence of Mr. Judith L. Magness; Alexander Kaplan, member of the Executive and Treasurer of the Jewish Agency; and Mr. Joseph Schwartz, European Director of the Joint Distribution Committee, was most helpful in defining the objectives of their respective organizations. They eliminated certain tangent and conflicting activities in which the organizations were indulging, such as competitive bidding for ships for rescue. They agreed to pool their organizations' rescue activities under the War Refugee Board's program. While certain differences in method and objective were found to create momentary divergences of views, some of which we have reported by telegram, it is confidently believed at this writing that a degree of harmony and cooperation has been established between the numerous representatives which has eliminated to a fair extent confusion, such overlapping of activity, waste of effort, and deflection from the object of saving lives.

Exhibit B is a list of the organizations now engaged in relief and rescue activities in Turkey, their representation and activities.

### B. Rumania

1. Discussions with Cretzianu. The results conveyed from the satisfactory liaison which had been established between Cretzianu, Rumanian Minister to Ankara, and myself on my previous visit to Turkey, led to the resumption of these conversations at the home of Gilbert Grand of the International Red Cross at Ankara, on July 21. The contents and results of these talks were dispatched to you by telegraph and pouch. I gained from these conversations, as reported to you, the further conviction that Cretzianu personally, and Minai Antonescu, were endeavoring to win a measure of good-will from our Government through their acquiescence in the requests made on behalf of the Board's rescue program.

Cretzianu's agreement to permit refugees from Hungary into and through Rumania was an affirmative step. The transmission of this information to Hungary, especially by the International Red Cross in Ankara, is reported to have had a salutary effect.

At my second conference with Cretzianu on August 5, he was urged for his Government to permit the Hungarian refugees to remain temporarily in Rumania, where "havens" could be established for them. This introduced a new and perhaps novel situation for the Rumanians. Whereas four months ago we were pressing the Rumanian Government to permit the evacuation of any number of Rumanian Jewish citizens so as to evade their persecutors, we were today requesting of the same Government permission for the use of its territory as a so-called temporary "safe haven" for refugees from its neighbor, Hungary. Cretzianu seized upon the irony of the situation, choosing to interpret our request for so-called "temporary havens" in Rumania as an indication that we had conceded Rumania to have become safe for refugees. Nor did I make any effort to discourage him in this assertion, urging instead that his Government substantiate the new situation in terms of results.

Cretzianu was consistently helpful in complying with my requests for information regarding (a) the new organization sponsored by the Government to deal with refugee matters and to facilitate the transit connected therewith, (b) the roles being played by Messrs. Ciuru, Silbermann, Rubin, etc. and (c) the expedition of the sailing of the Rumanian boats from Constanta. I have

every

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every reason to believe that he has also urged his government to make all feasible arrangements for the reception and temporary retention in Rumania of the Hungarian Jews when they arrive. In this connection, I have promised that the authorized Jewish organizations, by our direction, will provide the necessary food, clothing, funds, etc., for the refugees in Rumania who are obliged to seek temporary haven there en route to Palestine.

4. Rescue by sea. The rescue of refugees from the Balkans by sea, which was accelerated in the months of March and April (see Exhibit D), materially decreased during the months of May and June. The facts leading to this situation are:

1. General situation. The branch of the Jewish Agency which had succeeded in chartering the SS Sila, Maritza, etc., and in laying the groundwork in Bucharest for this unauthorized operation, faced numerous problems connected with obtaining Rumanian passports, and exit visas essential for transportation. On July 5, I reported the additional obstacles which had arisen during the interim period to obstruct the departure of refugees from Constanza (Exhibit E). After the earlier obstacles had been overcome, the final hurdle was taken through the efforts of Ambassador Steinhardt with the Turkish Foreign Office, as a result of which the latter permitted the entry of refugees by sea into Turkey without Turkish visas, and arranged for the immediate dispatch of the refugees by rail to Palestine. You are already familiar with the details and routine connected with this movement.

An exception was the Bellacite, another Bulgarian boat which made its trip under independent and different arrangements. In this instance, a group of ten families in Rumania, with ample funds, chartered the Bellacite, paying enough for the trip to carry free of charge 130 of the children who had been released through the efforts of the War Refugee Board from Transnistria. Some of these families paid, we are informed, 1.5 million to 2 million lei each. (Perhaps it is in this connection that reports reached you concerning high prices paid for passages to Turkey by certain individuals.) We are advised, however, that on all ships where people of means wish to travel, they are charged abnormally high fees by the local organizations in Rumania, which are employed to help secure the necessary funds to meet expenses in Rumania for passport and visa fees and other costs in connection with the sailings, especially in behalf of refugees who succeeded in entering Rumania and were without funds. For your information, no refugee from Rumania, as distinguished from Rumanian nationals, who has been transported by sea to Istanbul, has been required to pay for his transportation. Such expenses have been defrayed by the private relief organizations, notably the Joint Distribution Committee.

In

In the meanwhile, other complications arose in Bucharest. A change occurred in the internal affairs of the organization in Bucharest which, on behalf of the Jewish Agency group, had been making the selection of refugees in Rumania for embarkation to Istanbul, and which had been in charge of the technical details in preparing the refugees for departure. Here the mysterious Mr. Zissu rears his head. We are informed that this personality, a staunch Zionist and a man alleged to be of substantial means, in addition to being a close friend of Mihai Antonescu, having been appointed the representative of the Jewish Agency, took virtual control of the choice of refugees to be embarked from Constanza. Conflicting stories have reached us, ranging all the way from accounts of Mr. Zissu's extraordinary capacities and leadership to accusations of dilettantism and an arbitrary obstructionism. At this writing, I am inclined to the view that Mr. Zissu found a highly complex situation connected with the choice of refugees for embarkation, and in his zeal to perform his task in a fair manner according to his lights the final embarkation was somewhat delayed.

In an effort to determine the composition and auspices of the new organization set up by the Rumanian government to facilitate refugee travel, I requested information of Minister Gretzianu regarding the new arrangement. The official pronouncement on this subject from Mihai Antonescu was delivered to me by M. Simon of the International Red Cross (Exhibit E).

On July 25, the International Red Cross transmitted to me the text of a cable from Mihai Antonescu to the Rumanian Legation, Lisbon, dated July 18, which provided further details concerning the interministerial Committee (Exhibit G).

On July 21, in an effort to break the deadlock existing in Rumania with regard to the choice of the type of refugees to be chosen for embarkation to Istanbul, I caused to have delivered to Mr. Zissu the attached letter (Exhibit H). Two days prior to that, I threw the support of the War Refugee Board behind the efforts of Mr. Griffel of the Vaad Lehatzalah in his efforts to engage separate ships for the rescue of the people in whom the Vaad Lehatzalah and the Hadath Israel organizations were interested. Efforts to secure other ships did not cease during the month of June.

2b. Turkish

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2. Turkish boats. There were small Turkish boats which, under an agreement between the German and Turkish Government, were engaged in carrying merchandise to Varna, Bulgaria, from Istanbul. Arrangements were made independently with various of the ship captains to travel from Burgas to Constanza to pick up refugees instead of returning with empty bottoms directly to Istanbul. The four Turkish boats were: the SS Kazbek, which arrived on July 9 with 759 passengers who have proceeded to Palestine with the assistance of the Turkish Government as reported to you in my No. 404, July 10; the SS Sulbul, capable of carrying 350 passengers; the SS Melkura, capable of carrying 150 passengers; and the SS Morina, capable of carrying 350 passengers.\* In addition, the Greek flag steamship, the Myrnie, was found to be at Braila, which with some refitting would be able to accommodate 1700 to 2000 passengers.

(a) The SS Kazbek. On July 7th, information was received in Istanbul that the Kazbek, carrying 759 people, had left Constanza and was en route to Istanbul. In view of the fact that this voyage is typical of the manner in which emigration from Rumania was taking place by sea, it will be described in detail:

Selections for this boat were made by the local organization of the Jewish Agency in Bucharest from the thousands of people who desired to travel on this ship. In consequence, some order of priority had to be established. In the first place, preference was given to children, especially those from Transylvania. These were selected without regard to party affiliations or background. Second in priority were refugees in Rumania who had arrived from other countries. Their position was most insecure, and they likewise were selected without regard to party affiliations. Third were young agricultural workers and youths (conaluzai), similarly selected. The remaining ones were chosen from among Zionists, non-Zionists, persons who were affiliated or not affiliated with political parties. It is in the selection of this latter group, from the above organizations and from individuals not affiliated with them, that the friction occurs at the place of departure. Obviously, each organization exerts efforts to include the largest number of its own adherents, and any basis of division would be cause for complaint at some point.

Since

\*See Section (b) below. A separate report on the voyage of the SS Sulbul, Melkura, and Morina is being sent to you.

Since the refugees are destined for Palestine, one might expect that some emphasis would be placed upon the selection of Zionists.

All the passengers, with exceptions as noted below, had individual or collective Rumanian passports and Rumanian exit visas. Only about 12 or 13 had received Turkish transit visas in advance, the remainder had none. It was understood with the Turkish Foreign Office as the result of arrangements made by Ambassador Steinhardt, that all would be permitted transit through Turkey as Palestine visas had been promised by the British Embassy. You have already been informed of the general understanding between the British Embassy and the Turkish Foreign Office to the effect that any Jewish refugee appearing on Turkish soil would receive a Palestine visa.

Upon receipt of information that the Mazbek was on route we immediately advised the American Embassy in Ankara, in order that the Turkish Foreign Office in turn could be given notice. Due to the arrangements which had been made by Ambassador Steinhardt, the Embassy was assured of the full cooperation of both the Turkish Foreign Office and the Turkish Ministry of Communications, in connection with the disembarkation without Turkish visas of the refugees provision of transit facilities and railway accommodations. The Mazbek appeared in Istanbul harbor at about 2.30 on Sunday morning, July 9th.

A small wooden ship with high decks and motor propulsion, the Mazbek was expected, with some crowding, to accommodate 450 people. It carried 759 passengers to Istanbul. The refugees were crowded into every part of the ship, and it was surprising to find that the masts themselves were not being used for passengers. (As an interesting sidelight, it was discovered that 13 people embarked on the boat in Constanza without passports and without Rumanian exit permits, and were illegally on this unauthorized boat.)

Under the agreement with the Turkish authorities, the Mazbek passengers were required to remain on the ship while in harbor. The existing passports had previously been secured on Saturday afternoon, while the Mazbek was still several hours from the port of Istanbul, and were brought to the British Passport Control Office for Palestine entry certification. The British were most cooperative, and under Major Whittall, worked far into early Sunday morning to issue all the necessary Palestine entry certificates. The passports, including special travel documents which the British issued on behalf of the 13 passengers on the boat who had no passports, were then taken to the Turkish police for the necessary transit visas. At the same time final

arrangements

arrangements were made with the Turkish State Railways for train accommodations to Aleppo, Syria.

It will be recalled that the Turkish Foreign Office had promised Ambassador Steinhardt to accommodate an approximate total of 400 refugees weekly on the twice-weekly train which travels from Istanbul to Aleppo. It was expected, therefore, that it would be necessary to divide the Uzbek passengers into two groups and on two or more trains. The Minister of Communications, however, generously provided a special train for the Uzbek passengers. As a result, the entire group was able to leave Istanbul in one train on Monday evening, July 10th.

The distribution of the Uzbek passengers was as follows:

268 children, of whom 214 were children from Transnistria.

65 refugees newly arrived, of whom there were two Yugoslavs, two Slovaks, 20 Poles, mostly via Hungary, and 36 Hungarians.

107 Cholutzim, which included 25 from Poland and eight who had escaped to Rumania from Odessa during the time of the Rumanian occupation.

20 Jewish Israeli members.

222 mixed Zionists, non-Zionists, and so forth.  
759 total.

On behalf of the refugees, various special problems had to be met. Licenses had to be secured from the Turkish officials in order to provide food for the refugees while they were still aboard the ship in the harbor. There were additional problems in securing permission to obtain milk for the children. This was arranged by us after some slight delay.

Only proper accredited representatives were permitted to board the boat, nor could any passenger on the boat take leave of it while it was in the harbor. Contact with the passengers was only possible by means of small motor boats. The ship itself was later moved directly to the railway station, which abuts on the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus; the refugees there debarked in an orderly way, and were escorted directly to the railway. The train left with a police escort.

It was hoped that the foundation had been laid at this time for the continued arrival in Istanbul of ships bearing refugees from Constanza. Reference has been made to the Turkish boats and the Greek boat, Myrnie, which were being held in readiness for departure from Constanza.

(b) The SS Morina, Bulbul, and Lefkura, after weeks of delay in Rumania telegraphic exchange, dispatching of messages to Rumania through indirect channels, representations to the Turkish Foreign Office and Grotzianu to aid in pressing for the departure of the boats which were scheduled to leave Constanza six weeks ago, we received the news on August 4 that the SS Morina, Bulbul, and Lefkura were in the Black Sea en route to Istanbul. First reports from the Black Sea entrance of the Bosphorus were that all three vessels and then that the Bulbul and the Morina had entered the Bosphorus. It later developed that in fact only the Morina had made port. It arrived on August 5 with 308 passengers, who were dispatched to Palestine by rail on August 9. The story of the disaster connected with the shelling and sinking of the SS Lefkura, along with the machine-gunning of the passengers in the water, has been dispatched to you through telegram and letter. The SS Bulbul as reported, at my request and at our direction disembarked its passengers at Ignaeda, a Turkish port on the Black Sea, and under the auspices of the Turkish Red Crescent the 400 passengers, including five rescued from the Lefkura, were brought by rail to Istanbul by the courtesy of the Turkish authorities. They arrived in Istanbul on August 14 and proceeded to Palestine on August 15.

The shock of the disaster to the SS Lefkura naturally occasioned serious review in conference by the various representatives of relief organizations regarding the future action which should be taken for rescue activities to be conducted by sea passage. The position was taken by me at the outset that the catastrophe was an act of war, and that as long as the risks involved were known to the passengers, it was incumbent upon us to proceed in our rescue operations. (The loss of the Lefkura was the only casualty, whereas eight similar voyages by other vessels, sailing under similar circumstances, had been successfully completed.) On this point, I am grateful to the War Refugee Board for its prompt support of this policy.

### 3. Rumanian

3. Rumanian ships. The Rumanian Government, it appears, at our insistence had revised its policy and agreed to permit the departure of Jewish refugees from that country. It apparently had taken some positive steps to facilitate the departure of the waiting refugees. It was reported that they had offered the use of Rumanian ships for the movement of refugees. The agencies in Istanbul have indicated their willingness to accept the use of Rumanian boats as additional means of transportation. One of the vessels mentioned is the Rumanian ship Alba Julia. On August 16, a message was received from M. Diamond of the International Red Cross that the Alba Julia would be prepared to depart within approximately ten days of the date mentioned. Others may follow. Such boats would sail under Rumanian Red Cross protection. There still remains the question as to whether additional Rumanian boats, as a practical matter, would be sent to Istanbul at this time.

4. Other Turkish ships in contemplation. The sailing of Turkish boats involves the completion of special arrangements concerning the voyages, as these trips are unauthorized. Technically, any Turkish boat leaving Constantinople must have a permit therefor. It is this technicality which has made impossible up to the present the dispatch of Turkish boats directly from Istanbul to Constantinople. Several large Turkish boats have come under discussion for refugee movement. The story of the SS Sari is known to you. Two other boats had been offered by local steamship agencies, namely the SS Anadolu and the SS Kbel. All of the above are over 600 tons in weight, and it is to be noted that no Turkish boat of more than 600 tons is permitted to leave Turkish waters without a special permit. Such a permit has been requested for the SS Anadolu.

In the meanwhile, on July 27, as you were informed telegraphically, the Turkish Government took steps to recall all of its shipping from foreign waters. This was followed on August 2 by the Turkish rupture of diplomatic and economic relations with the German Government. Obviously, the Turkish Government would not and has not during this juncture permitted the sailing of any of its ships, large or small, from its ports, which has precluded the movement of the SS Sari (the movement of which had been authorized on July 25th by Balabanoff from Bulgaria) or any of

the

the boats above mentioned. If and when the situation clears sufficiently to permit the sailing of Turkish vessels, the Turkish officials will be requested by us to engage in the movement of refugees from the Balkan countries to Istanbul, en route to Palestine.

Referring again to the statistics concerning emigration from Rumania during the first six months of the year (Exhibit D), you will note that the number of persons who arrived in Istanbul by rail numbered only 55. All of these were in possession of Turkish transit visas which were issued under the agreement for the authorization of nine transit visas per week for Bucharest. The continuing refusal of the Bulgarian government to grant facilities to refugees had limited the number travelling from Bucharest. With the changed attitude of the Bulgarian government towards transport, it is planned by us that a flow of rescue traffic by rail will develop out of Rumania. We are waiting momentarily for the arrival into Rumania of Hungarian refugees who will receive priority by us in being evacuated by sea or rail.

Regarding the arrangement of nine visas per week, this has now undergone a radical revision, in view of the valuable new agreement whereby the Turkish government has agreed to issue transit visas on application to any number of Jews who apply for them, provided that they hold the proper documents (see Exhibit I). This important agreement is a revolutionary departure in principle, eliminating as it does many of the technical barriers which existed, and which we have been attempting to break down since the inception of the War Refugee Board.

A. Jewish population in Bulgaria. For your information, we are advised that the Jewish population of Bulgaria today is divided as follows:

Plowdiv	8000 persons
Russe	5000 persons
Shoumen	3500 persons
Rleven	4000 persons
rustendil	} 3000 persons each
Dupnitsa	
razardjik	
Vidin	
dispersed in various towns and villages	12500 persons
Total	43000 persons

The

The number of Jews deported from Bulgaria is said to be 12,000 to 14,000. Deportations took place about a year ago, and comprised largely the Jewish people of Thrace and Macedonia, which territories had come under Bulgarian occupation.

B. Exchange of Jewish refugees for German nationals.

You have heretofore been advised by telegram of an exchange which took place in Istanbul on July 6, 1944. By virtue of this exchange, 283 Jewish refugees arriving from the concentration camps of Bergen-Belsen and Mittel were exchanged for 113 Germans from Egypt, South Africa and Palestine. This exchange took place in Istanbul, under the auspices of the Turkish Red Crescent. The differential in the numbers of persons exchanged resulted from a deficit in a former exchange, in which the number of Germans exceeded the number of Jewish refugees.

The 283 refugees were chosen by the Gestapo on an unknown basis from a list of 600 names submitted by the Jewish Agency. The refugees, who were destined for Palestine, all had close relatives residing there, or were veteran Zionists. They were in possession of certificates issued by the Palestine Government at the suggestion of the Jewish Agency, thereafter transmitted by the British Government to the protecting power. The attached statistical data (Exhibit A) are provided regarding this exchange group.

We are informed that there remain three to four thousand exchange certificates of the above-mentioned character outstanding, but the British contend that they are not in possession of any additional exchange material. A separate report is being sent to you, containing figures which were supplied by informed individuals coming from Bergen-Belsen, who were included in the exchange group, setting forth the numbers and nationalities of the internees still in Bergen-Belsen. You will note that a substantial number are nationals of various Central and South American countries. These data may be useful in the event that developments permit an exchange of the holders of Central and South American passports for German nationals not yet offered for exchange.

C. Rescue by land from Bulgaria. With the exception of 11 or 12 persons who presented themselves at the Turkish border without Turkish transit visas in May and early June, emigration from Bulgaria has been legal and by land. However, as will be noted

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from the statistics in Exhibit M, the number admitted to Turkey in transit from Bulgaria during the first six months of 1944 was relatively small: 403 persons, including 46 children under the children's scheme. As in the case of Rumania, nine Turkish transit visas per week had been agreed upon for Sofia. The principle of refusing exit permits to Jewish people in Bulgaria had greatly hampered the land flow from that country.

From time to time it had been reported that the Bulgarian border was entirely closed to Jewish refugees. A number of conflicting stories on this point were reported. We were informed that the border had been closed; that exit visas were issued in some cities and not in others; that exit visas were permitted for women and children and for men excepting those between the ages of 18 and 45; that exit visas are issued to everyone, even for men between the ages of 18 and 45, but that in this instance each is considered individually and handled on its merits. A recital of these stories illustrates the difficulty in determining the exact situation which then existed in Bulgaria. Since the beginning of July, however, there has been an increase in immigration from Bulgaria, indicating apparently the Government's changed attitude towards Jewish emigration. From July 1 to July 19, 1944, 59 persons arrived in Istanbul from Bulgaria, which is a substantial increase in the rate as compared with averages for the past six months, but still on the whole pitifully small.

Representations were made to the Turkish authorities to secure their consent to admit into Turkish territory all refugees from Bulgaria who might appear at the border, even though they might not be in possession of the Turkish transit visas. Assurances had been given to the Turkish Foreign Office by the British Embassy that all Jewish refugees appearing in Turkey would be given Palestine immigration visas. (This is a general assurance and does not relate solely to refugees coming from Bulgaria.) Appropriate instructions were sent to the Turkish border guards by the Foreign Office and eleven or twelve persons actually did present themselves at the frontier during May and June. They were detained by the Turkish authorities, and after investigation were released for onward transportation to Palestine. Subsequently, in June, seven other people presented themselves at the frontier. They were taken into custody by the Turkish frontier guards. Approaches were made

to



to the Turkish foreign office by the Embassy to secure their release and admission into Turkey. The foreign office sent the necessary instructions to the frontier, but, prior to the arrival of the instructions all seven were returned to Bulgaria. Since then there have been no illegal entries from the land border from Bulgaria. (Subsequently, the seven people reappeared at the border and were admitted into Turkey upon the basis of the authorization previously given. We are considering how this precedent might be employed to have lists sent to the border guards in advance of arrival; see also exhibit I.)

An explanation of the foregoing, the understandable Turkish attitude has been that it is not possible to determine in advance who is a genuine refugee and who is a political agent or spy attempting to enter the country. Involved in this question is the long standing antagonism between Turkey and Bulgaria. Notwithstanding this obstacle agreement has been reached with the Turkish authorities, as reported to you on August 19, for admission into Turkish territory of any number of refugees presenting themselves at the frontier without Turkish transit visas but who are in possession of identifying documents, as set forth in the agreement. Steps are under way to take advantage of these new facilities. Up to the present, with the exceptions noted, only those people who have actually been in possession of Turkish transit visas have been admitted into the country from Bulgaria.

This appears to narrow the problem entirely to the field of transportation facilities into and from Bulgaria, towards which we are bending our efforts.

D. Rescue by sea. Previous efforts had been made to bring people from Bulgaria to Istanbul by sea. At the end of April the Turkish vessel Uyur was sent to Burgas but returned empty. From information at hand it would appear that passengers were not embarked because of difficulties created by the Bulgarians (there was some question regarding the adequacy of safety provisions).

In a telegram from Ambassador Steinhardt, you were informed that, due to the sinking of the S. Maritza, the Bulgarian authorities had withdrawn permission to release ships to be utilized for refugees. The Bulgarians feared the loss of additional small ships, and the Germans maintained that the tonnage was needed for military purposes. As a result, no transportation for sea voyage was

available

available during June, and emigration from that country ceased.

There was no question in our minds, however, but that a substantial movement of refugees could be initiated from Bulgaria to Istanbul by boat if the above technicalities could be overcome. We are advised, for example, that there were at least 1,000 young people in Bulgaria prepared and ready to go to Palestine. With the assistance of the Embassy, the question of the departure of the SS Vita and the Sirla was presented to the Turkish Foreign Office, and permission obtained for these boats to proceed from Varna. In addition, the Turkish Foreign Office has encouraged and authorized the continuous movement of these or other similar boats in a circuit, permitting as many as 200 refugees a week to arrive in Turkey, provided facilities for onward transportation to Palestine can be arranged. All possible efforts and resources are being employed to expedite the movement of these ships. I have been discussing with the Antalya Shipping Agency, operating vessels from Istanbul to the Balkans, to explore the possibilities of securing additional Bulgarian ships in the event of a sudden influx of refugees.

### 3. Hungary

The tragedy that befell the Jewish people in Hungary immediately following the occupation by the Germans on March 19, 1944, is too well known to require elaboration here. The steps taken by the Nazis in their program of annihilation are detailed in a report made available to me in Istanbul (Exhibit A). The speed with which the Germans executed their barbarisms in Hungary is referred to in the interview by me with Joel Brandt in Cairo on June 22, 1944 "that has been done in Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland in years has been done in Hungary in a few weeks' time--it all came about very quickly." he said. Efforts to effectuate rescue from Hungary through countries other than the Balkans into Turkey for settlement in Palestine are known to you. Under present circumstances, direct emigration from Hungary is not possible. Refugees, who can, make their way eastward through Rumania and thence to Bulgaria and Turkey.

4. Clandestine movement. As reported on July 22, a limited movement of refugee traffic from Hungary across the borders into Rumania has

been

been operating since March, 1944, and it is reported that some 3500 to 4000 have crossed the borders into Rumania in this way. This includes Hungarians and refugees from Poland and Slovakia who had previously made their way to Hungary. In spite of a German-inspired Rumanian decree threatening the death penalty for refugees crossing the border illegally and for anyone assisting them, the Rumanians have closed their eyes to this traffic. It is hoped that a larger movement can be effectuated through this method, and with all means at our disposal we have encouraged the agency charged with this operation, to increase its personnel and supplement its energies to that end. It must be pointed out that this movement is complex and requires a high degree of underground organization. The results at this writing have been only sporadic, but a recent report indicates a larger flow of refugees across the border. Every effort is being made to evacuate these refugees from Rumania at the earliest moment.

It is of interest to note here that in the present circumstances in Hungary a number of people who escaped from Slovakia to Hungary are now attempting to return to Slovakia. Safety for Jewish people in European countries today is apparently a relative matter.

Early in July we were advised that the Swedish Legation in Budapest has declared that it is willing to grant entry to Sweden to Jewish women and children from Hungary on condition that an acceptable host power guarantees that they would leave Sweden at the latest within three years for Palestine, the United Kingdom, or the United States. (No indication has been received by us which would indicate whether this means three years from the date of entry into Sweden or three years after the termination of the war. In addition, there will remain the question of transportation from Hungary to Sweden which, by the most direct route, would involve possession of German transit visas.)

In one of my conversations with Cretzianu he expressed especial interest in helping in arrangements for the legal movement of Hungarian refugees into Rumania, to displace the illegal traffic, of which he appeared to be aware, and to establish legitimate bases for those entering Rumania (see above, Section 3 A.)

B. Other

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5. Other methods of rescue. Apparently as a result of pressure from the War Refugee Board, the Catholic Church, the International Red Cross, the Swedish Government, the Swiss Government, and other neutral sources, the Hungarian government determined to appease an aroused world opinion by offering concessions and slight ameliorations to some designated sections of the Hungarian Jewish population. This action, to the best of our knowledge, occurred some time about July 13, 1944, and was reported to you on July 21.

6. Hungarian movement through Rumania. On July 21, 1944, I urged Cretzianu, Rumanian Minister to Turkey, to grant visas for the entrance of unlimited numbers of refugees from Hungary. On August 4, Cretzianu reported to me that his government had authorized such tacit agreement but feared, considering the heavy bombing of Rumanian centers, and the limitations imposed thereby upon food and housing facilities, that these refugees would become charges of the Rumanian Government. Cretzianu was pressed by me to agree for his government to permit these refugees to remain temporarily in Rumania, with the promise that we should be able to supply the requisites for the "Haven", through the medium of the International Red Cross. A reply from Cretzianu, who is consulting Bucharest, to this urgent request is momentarily awaited.

Similar requests were made of Balabanoff, Bulgarian Minister to Ankara, to permit the transit through Bulgaria of Hungarian Jews traveling through Rumania on route to Turkey and eventually to Palestine. Balabanoff consented to press his government to offer entrance and exit visas for these refugees when they arrived. Meanwhile the Embassy requested of the Turkish Foreign Office that entrance visas into Turkey for the above referred to refugees be granted, and that their Turkish legations at Budapest, Bucharest and Sofia be so notified. The Turkish Foreign Office agreed to do so, and notified the Embassy that such authorizations had been telegraphed by the Turkish Foreign Office to the three aforesaid legations. We requested that this information be imparted to the representatives of the International Red Cross in the three satellite capitals by M. Simons, Ankara representative of the International Red Cross.

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From the above it may be seen that the doors into and out of the so-called satellite countries are virtually opened from the technical point of view for appreciable movements of refugees out of Hungary, provided that the bottleneck at the Hungarian border can be broken. We are endeavoring ourselves to talk back through whatever means are available to us in Turkey. As previously mentioned, however, the basic difficulty so far as we are informed is the absence of certain approval for the departure of the Hungarian Jews.

Re. The Catholic Church. Pursuant to our information that the leaders of the Catholic Church throughout the world had made strenuous representations to the Hungarian Government to cease the oppressions, persecutions, and deportations of the Jewish population of Hungary, I visited the papal nuncio in Istanbul, His Eminence Luigi Bommarito, with a view to (a) thanking him for the assistance rendered by him in his strong telegraphic representations in support of the subject, and (b) requesting that further steps be taken to urge the release of the Nazi-Hungarian grip on a persecuted people. A special reference was made by me to the reportedly large Hungarian population who were technically defined as members of the Jewish race by the Nazis, but who had been converted to Catholicism in the present generation, or whose parents or other immediate ancestors had been so converted.

For the record, it should be stated that the Catholic hierarchy, which enjoys a large influence in Hungary, took unusual spontaneous measures to rescue Hungarian Jewish citizens wherever possible. This was reported to you on August 15, and relates to the baptism of thousands of Hungarian Jews in air-raid shelters, in spite of energetic Nazi protests.

All reports indicate that the extreme persecutions and deportations have for the moment ended in Hungary. The strictures placed upon the Jewish population, however, still remain in force, are onerous and beyond description. Political information reaching us, checking with such facts as are available, indicates that the Hungarian leaders themselves are unrepentant, and fear the ultimate consequences of their vicious and extravagant action towards their Jewish population. As the war's end seems inevitably to be

closing

be closing in upon them and their consciences, they appear also to be looking for "a way out". This is our moment of opportunity and it should be exploited to the utmost.

It is for the above reason that we have recommended that ceaseless and augmented pressure from the board, from neutral governments, the Church, and through every possible friend of Hungary, be brought to bear upon the Hungarians at this time.

The work of the board as a driving force and catalytic agent in focussing upon the Hungarian Government the indignation and criticism of responsible leadership would appear to us in Turkey to have caused the recession in the Hungarian attitude. Symptoms of contrition, fear, and new "spine" on the part of the worthy Government are in evidence according to information reaching us here.

#### Greece

Four representatives in Turkey consider rescue from Greece within their province, and have addressed themselves to this phase of their assignment in the following way:

Our best information discloses that there are between five and eight thousand Jewish people in Greece who for the present at least are in comparative safety, either in bands of, or in territory controlled by, the EAM (National Liberation Front). There are also approximately 2,000 in hiding in Athens and the vicinity. The latter number is being continually reduced by the work of the Gestapo and by the escape of those who are able to find some means for fleeing to safety.

The organization of the rescue of the Jewish people in Greece through evacuation to Turkey was exceedingly difficult. It required some time before an organization could be set up for that purpose and put into operation. The use of three or four kayaks was secured with the services of the necessary Greek boat captains who knew Greek territorial waters intimately, and the movement of Jewish fugitives from Greece to Turkey and thence to Palestine began about October, 1943. The following table shows the number of people rescued from Greece from October, 1943, to the end of June, 1944.

October

October through December, 1943	300
January, 1944	8
February	25
March	62
April	172
May	74
June	104
Total	745

Towards the middle of June, I was informed by the agency in Istanbul charged with these operations that, due to the lack of a base in Turkey at which the refugees could be debarked, the rescue from Greece in this manner had been suspended. In consequence, no Jewish refugees arrived from Greece during the month of July, and it was not until August 1 that news was received in Istanbul that one further contingent of 40 persons arrived in Turkey and were at Izmir.

We are informed that escape from Athens by people now in hiding there, for purposes of the trip to Turkey, is not difficult. The refugees are brought from Athens to an island off the Greek mainland, with the assistance of the Luftwaffe while en route to the island and while waiting there. To bring these refugees from hiding in Athens to the island to congregate there would be dangerous for the refugees, unless their arrival on the island could be timed to meet boats sent there to evacuate them. The chief problem therefore, continued to be transportation from the east coast of the island to the Turkish coast, for which a Turkish base was required. It became obvious that the movement from the island could be simplified and expanded if there were a base on the Turkish coast where these people could land and where the ships could be refueled. Such a base would serve as a point of communication with Greece.

The boats are available. The problem of a base and the organization of its operations must be met, and the reception of the refugees and their onward transportation to Palestine must be provided for. In conversations with certain American representatives, they agreed to make their experience available in organizing such a base, and to be as helpful as they could in this operation, but they requested that it become a responsibility of the War Refugee Board.

1 agreed. The Embassy was then requested to secure the authorization of the Turkish Foreign Office for the establishment of a base exclusively for the reception of refugees. The Foreign Office has given its informal consent. While it is not expected that a large number of refugees can be brought from Greece as a result of this operation, it is felt that no possibility should be ignored in which a single refugee can be rescued, and that the operation of a Turkish base should be made a part of our activity.

For completion of your records, the enclosed statistics (Exhibit 2) are given concerning Jewish emigration from Turkey during the first six months of 1944.

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PART II

CONCLUSIONS, OBSERVATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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I. Representatives of Organizations.

The chaotic situation arising from the surfeit of representatives which I found here in Istanbul upon my return on June 19, outlined in Section 2 above, requires further elaboration here.

It is regrettable, in my opinion, that so many organizations were permitted to send representatives to Turkey at this time. This was especially regrettable in the light of the type of representative sent by several of the organizations. A higher type of representative, whose duties were more clearly defined, charged with an unselfish spirit, especially in cooperating with other agencies, unquestionably would have led to more concentrated effort and better coordinated results.

Visits by Dr. Magnea of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, and Dr. Eliezer Kaplan of the Jewish Agency, will result, I am told, in additional personnel to supplement the efforts of Dr. Barlas. It is freely admitted by all, including Dr. Barlas, that additional assistance by top-flight men during this emergency might open additional doors for rescue through Turkey. It should be said, however, for the Jewish Agency, that the results to date here could not have been achieved without its original activities, initiative and exertions.

The American Joint Distribution Committee, which rightfully enjoys an enviable and solid reputation among Government as well as private organizations, has been conducting a broad program of rescue from, and relief work in, the Balkan countries. Through its office in Istanbul, it has provided between 80 and 100 per cent, depending upon the individual program, of all moneys expended by the rescue and relief organizations here. Some of these projects it has undertaken itself, directly. For others, it has provided the funds to, and collaborated with, other organizations, notably the Jewish Agency and groups affiliated with it.

The program of the Joint Distribution Committee can be divided broadly under three headings:

1. (A) Financing local organizations in the various Balkan countries which assist Jewish refugees from other countries, notably Hungary, to enter Rumania; which maintain them while in Rumania; and which facilitate their emigration from that country. The Joint Distribution Committee provides the greater part of the funds expended for these purposes.

(B) Assisting emigration of Jewish refugees from Rumania and Greece to Turkey, en route to Palestine. The Joint Distribution Committee

contribution

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contribution towards this work covers 80 per cent of the total costs.

(C) Maintaining all needy Jewish refugees in Turkey while in transit, and providing onward transportation from Turkey to Palestine. These requirements are met 100 per cent by the Joint Distribution Committee.

Approximately \$2,000,000 have been expended by the Joint Distribution Committee for the above described purposes. Since November, 1943, approximately 4500 refugees have been assisted by the Joint Distribution Committee in their emigration from the Balkan countries to Palestine.

ii. Dispatching food-parcels to Rumania, Transnistria, and Theresienstadt, through the International Red Cross. Approximately 14,000 five-kilogram packages, costing \$100,000, have already been sent under this project.

iii. Supporting through local Turkish Jewish Communities about 425 persons of Turkish nationality, who were repatriated in 1943 under Nazi threat of deportation from France. For this purpose, between \$4,000 and \$5,000 monthly are being expended.

(In addition to the foregoing projects in behalf of refugees, the Joint Distribution Committee also partially supports the local charitable institutions of the Turkish Jewish Communities.)

The influence and prestige of the Joint Distribution Committee, the scope of its activities, its energy and its contribution in terms of reputation, experience, money, and morale, can be properly assessed only on the scene of its operations, where the results of its efforts are manifest. The value of the Joint Distribution Committee as the leading private American agency in Istanbul, engaged in effective relief and rescue work in the Balkans and Central Europe for assisting Jewish people who are under the threat of extermination by the Nazis, cannot be overestimated. The solid background, the enormous strength and stature of this organization has been demonstrated again by its indispensable value at a critical time in the life of helpless victims.

M. Ari Jabotinsky, who is not an American citizen, representing the Emergency Committee to Save the Jewish People of Europe, and M. Leon Benenberg,

representing

representing the International Rescue and Relief Committee, are a pronounced handicap in the efforts of the War Refugee Board and other organizations in the work of rescue. Mr. Jabotinsky is a confessed opportunist. He is also an obstructionist, unable to operate, without a plan, organization, or mechanisms, his methods have been designed to criticize others and employ anarchic devices. Many hours have been devoted to attempting to dissuade this individual from embarrassing our government which sponsored his visa, and from hamstringing the Board's program. He continues openly to threaten all organizations and to generate trouble wherever and whenever possible. In the latter effort he has thus far enjoyed unsatisfactory results, - from his point of view.

Mr. Benenberg is talkative and loose in his conversations to a point where the Germans were reported to be following him, reporting his conversations verbatim, and finding them useful. It was necessary at one time to threaten to have him deported. In a work of the kind with which the Board representatives are charged in Istanbul, a hot bed of intrigue at best, where representatives of all belligerent and neutral powers send their most competent agents for espionage and counter-espionage, it is highly dangerous for an American government agency to sponsor or assist persons to enter Turkey as a humanitarian act, where the avowed aim of enemy agents is to exploit such activities for political purposes of their own. In the case of Mr. Jabotinsky, it would appear that his presence is admittedly designed to aid ultimately the Revisionist movement in Palestine, and in the case of Mr. Benenberg to enhance the reputation of the organization which he represents.

The Board representatives here have taken the position that it was our responsibility and within the scope of our assignment to coordinate all elements, where possible, including the "lunatic fringe". Efforts to do so have met with some progress, but only at the price of innumerable conferences, restraining devices, appeasement, etc., which could have been better employed in affirmative efforts toward constructive aims. As I write the above, Mr. Burton Y. Berry, Consul General of the United States in Istanbul, has registered a complaint regarding irresponsible actions of Mr. Benenberg, which have embarrassed the functioning of the consulate. It is not improbable that by the time this report reaches you it may be found necessary to take measures to remove one or both of these "representatives" from the scene. Should this develop it may be found necessary to call upon the Board for support to this end.

2. The

## 2. The three phases.

Looking back at the situation as I found it upon my arrival in Turkey in February, 1944, and gauging it in terms of the movement of events, it is apparent that we have passed, even in this brief period, through three definite phases. The intensity and confluence of events pour in into this pivotal center in and out of the Balkans, render the steps of progress somewhat imperceptible from day to day, but progress of a fundamental nature in the improvement of the condition of the Jews in the Balkans, even including Hungary, can be recorded.

I. The first phase, which was found in February, was concerned with deportations, executions, persecutions, and death to thousands in disease-ridden camps, where humans were treated below the status of animals. All this was rampant in the Balkans at that time. Major pressure was directed against the satellite governments to cease these ruthless barbarisms and to break the bottleneck for refugee escapes. The violent and organized excesses indicated above are now reported to have almost completely, if not wholly, ceased. While there may be sporadic manifestations in this direction, the Rumanian and Bulgarian governments and even Hungary, as a matter of policy, have ceased these persecutions, deportations, and exterminations, the most conspicuous example of which was the breaking up of the disease-ridden Transnistria camp in March, 1944. As reported to you in various telegrams, the children from this camp are now arriving in Palestine via Turkey.

II. The trickle of refugee evacuation from the Balkans via the small boats from Rumania and by rail traffic through Bulgaria grew in the aggregate at one time into a minor stream. While this stream dried up during the month of June, the dam had again been broken by the arrival of the three boats, the SS Mashek, with 750 passengers, in July; the SS Morina, with 308 passengers, and the SS Bulbul, with 363 passengers in August; not of course including the tragic war catastrophe occasioned by the sinking of the SS Meffura. Efforts to continue evacuation by sea are under way, especially from Bulgaria.

III. As the Balkan governments, particularly Bulgaria and Rumania, began, even in their myopia, to perceive the inevitable collapse of Germany, they became more and more tractable in their

attitude

representing attitude towards their Jewish populations. Our efforts to gain surcease for their own victimized citizenry began to offer more promise. Rumania, from all accounts, ceased all official measures of abuse. With the havoc occasioned by the incessant bombing of Rumanian centers, the economic and security situation for a large section of the population of that country became somewhat chaotic; transportation was choked, housing and food became a problem. Accordingly, the major concern of the Rumanian Government became four-fold: 1) to remain in power; 2) to find a graceful exit from the war; 3) to save their necks; and 4) to salvage their own population and economy. By this deflection from the satisfaction and alleged advantages of exploiting a local minority, and by virtue of the representations made by the War Refugee Board representatives at a time when the Rumanians were searching for any measure of good-will from the United States, the Rumanians saw an opportunity to capitalize on the Jewish problem created by them. A virtue could be made of restraint. Having indicated to the Rumanian Government that assistance to its Jewish citizenry could be "highly evaluated" at the proper time by the American people the Rumanians seem to have taken the bit in their teeth and seem now genuinely to be making attempts to salvage their Jewish population and to demonstrate a sympathy and interest in the problem they had created by their own hands.

At this turn of events it became apparent that the Board's program should be reoriented in some measure by attempting to bring the governments to the point of reinstating, rehabilitating, and reconstituting their own Jewish citizens rather than to attempt to "move heaven and earth" to increase the pitifully small exodus from each country. Furthermore, as the war's end seemed to approach, the problems which would be occasioned by thousands of strange people driven to strange lands seemed to become a factor for consideration.

### 3. Acknowledgments.

I cannot close this report without recording my thanks and gratitude to the Board for its support of my efforts here. Working remotely, in foreign fields, in the most important neutral

country

country under conditions prescribed by strange laws, customs and habits, under restrictions and with problems connected with enemy territory, the only encouragement I have from day to day apart from the privilege of being able to bring some measure of amelioration to oppressed people derives from a sense that the board and its Director are sympathetic with the problems of its representatives abroad and are prepared at all times to support them. No project or proposal suggested by me to the Board has been rejected, nor have I been subjected to delaying action or ambiguous rejoinders to my requests. Without this support, our efforts would have been futile.

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The Embassy in Ankara and the Consulate General in Istanbul have at all times been wholeheartedly cooperative. Ambassador Steinhardt, in person while in Ankara and during his visit to Washington, has specifically requested the Turkish Foreign Office, the British Embassy and his own staff to give me undeviating support in my efforts to which they generously responded. While the advice and skill of Ambassador Steinhardt were greatly missed during his enforced absence, the support of Mr. Colley and Mr. Earl Becker, First Secretary of the Embassy, and their untiring and sympathetic efforts in all of our problems are greatly appreciated. Mr. Walton Y. Berry, Consul General, and the staff of the Consulate General in Istanbul have likewise been most helpful.

No report of this kind could be complete without reference to the stalwart, loyal, and able assistance afforded to me by Mr. Herbert Matzki. His untiring energies and devotion to the task have been exemplary. The same, in their capacities, may be said of the two selected secretaries, Mrs. Henderson and Miss Siler, who have labored tirelessly and skilfully and with self-sacrifice.

4. Future Operations.

At this writing, and with even wilder rumors than usual floating up and down the Bosphorus, it cannot be predicted what form the Board's program in Turkey will take. The situation changes literally from day to day. The principle I have established has been to work on the assumption that the rescue-problem will be indefinitely prolonged, and that each day's rescue work must proceed vigorously, without relation to the hopes and rumors regarding the termination of the war in the near future. Obviously, as indicated in point III along the three phases referred to (Section 2 above, the color and techniques of our operations are subject to change by the rapidly moving political and military events which are seen and heard here with perhaps too much sensitivity. Istanbul has been described in many ways, but from the point of view of a rescue center facing the Balkans, it is nothing short of a seismograph.

While the results established and indicated herein cannot be measured in terms of enormous numbers of persons actually evacuated from the Balkans, this can in no way be interpreted as detracting from the broad opportunity and the indispensable necessity of an energetic program

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directed exclusively towards rescue work by an agency of the United States Government in Turkey. The various established relief and rescue organizations now at work here are severely limited in their organizing ability, scope, and personnel, and cannot treat on a sufficiently high level with government officials necessary for the successful completion of an emergency rescue endeavor in war-time. The prestige, and influence of the Government of the United States of America so ably represented by Ambassador Steinhardt especially in a changing war-zone, is hardly to be measured when it is employed with discretion to humane ends. It bears repetition to assert that the results, both actual and in terms of the morale of the victims of oppression, resulting from the appointment of board representatives to operate authoritatively and backed by the full weight of the Embassy has had a constructive effect which should be gratifying to the board, the Director, and his associates. While the people in the Balkans and the Middle East look with respect, awe, affection, and hope for salvation to President Roosevelt and the American people, this still abides as something in the realm of the academic, unless the supplicants are permitted to see evidence of this out-stretched arm of mercy in some tangible form. The very existence of board representatives here, operating with the full support of the Embassy and Washington had, as reported previously, an electrifying effect on the people of the Balkans, and provided for them that necessary evidence of the implementation of the American Nation's philosophy regarding its sympathy for minorities and the oppressed. The board will be gratified to learn that following the recent break in relations between Turkey and Germany, when individual Germans, Austrians and Czechs, known to be anti-Nazi, were threatened with expulsion from Turkey, they turned to the United States Embassy in Ankara, the consulate in Istanbul and to the War Refugee Board representatives for aid. They received it. One of the fugitives, a woman with a one-year-old child who had lived in Turkey for 15 years, when asked why she had come to the United States officials, replied: "Where else should I go? It seemed only natural to come here. No else really cares?" This recognition by the victims we had come to serve succeeded in enhancing our sense of the responsibility as representatives of the War Refugee Board, and as well to enhance our appreciation of the opportunity in the assignment and in its broader implications.

As on my previous incumbency here, it is my observation that Turkey is a window into the Balkans. The job, as I saw it, was to attempt to

make of the window, a door. In the spring of 1944, a small aperture had been established; today it looms as a large gateway through which our aims are directed, not alone to bring out the suffering and ill-treated victims of persecution, but also for the return trip into the Balkans by government agencies who may restore the surviving minority populations to their deserved status as self-respecting and self-sustaining citizens of their re-established homelands, citizens whose torture, woe and despair have earned for them the right to a higher appreciation of the living spirit of freedom, security, and human dignity.

Respectfully submitted,

Ira A. Mirschmann  
Attache

IAM/hb/emj

Enclosures:  
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Representative of the War Refugee Board,  
to Mr. John Pehle, Executive Director  
of the War Refugee Board.

September 11, 1944

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- Exhibit L: Persons who Arrived in Transit in Istanbul from Bulgaria, January-June 1944.
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- Exhibit O: Number of Immigrants to Palestine from Turkey, January-June, 1944.

EXHIBIT A.

Minutes of an Informal Meeting  
held on Monday, July 10, 1944,  
at the office of the C.W.I., Istanbul,  
of Representatives of Relief Organizations in Istanbul

Those present: I. A. Hirschmann, Herbert Katzki, Chaim Barlas, Joseph Klarman, Reuben Resnik, Ludwig Kastner, Eliezer Kaplan, Harry Viteles, Iri Jabotinsky, Izok Mitrani, Judah Pagnes, Zeev Schind, David Schweitzer, J. Golden, Jacob Griffel, Joseph Schwartz, Leon Benenberg, Leder, Enachim Bader, Moshe Averbush, Akiba Levinsky.

The meeting was called to order at 4:45 p.m. by Mr. I. A. Hirschmann, as representative of the War Refugee Board.

At the outset, Mr. Hirschmann explained that the entire meeting was informal and off the record, and requested that no reports be made by the representatives of the respective organizations to their head offices until such time as definite accomplishments could be reported.

Mr. Hirschmann explained that he had called the meeting pursuant to suggestions made by Ambassador Steinhardt at an informal luncheon conference, which he arranged in Ankara on July 2, 1944. A number of people now present had likewise been present at Ambassador Steinhardt's luncheon.

For the benefit of those who were not there on July 2, Mr. Hirschmann recapitulated briefly some of the things concerning which the Ambassador had spoken to the organization representatives. The Ambassador urged that the relief organizations coordinate their efforts for the rescuing of persecuted peoples. Independent action, such as competitive bidding for ships, independent demarches with various authorities without regard to what others might have done before, conflicting reports and projects, all made very difficult the work of the Embassy in its relationships with the individual organizations, with Washington and with officials in Turkey. All this had an effect disadvantageous to those whom the several agencies tried to serve. The Ambassador had, therefore, suggested that the work of the organizations, all of which was directed to the same end, be coordinated, perhaps through the establishment of a committee upon which would be represented all the agencies in Turkey engaged in refugee relief work. However, recognizing that such a committee might be too large and unwieldy, the Ambassador had suggested, further, that a smaller operating committee be created which would be responsible for the execution of the day-to-day work involved in the rescue and relief programs. The Ambassador also proposed that both committees operate under the leadership of the War Refugee Board and its special representative, Mr. Hirschmann.

In accordance with the Ambassador's suggestion, Mr. Hirschmann had called today's meeting together. Furthermore, he wished to take advantage of the presence in Istanbul of Mr. Pagnes, Dr. Schwartz and Mr. Kaplan, all of whom

had had wide experience, and whose judgment and advice would be most helpful.

Mr. Hirschmann went on to explain the great and sympathetic interest of the United States Government in refugee rescue activities, which had been exemplified in part through the creation of the War Refugee Board. Mr. Hirschmann had been sent to Turkey by the Board both to initiate rescue projects and to assist the agencies already in the field in those programs upon which they were working. He referred to the many ways in which the Board can be helpful to the private agencies, and called upon them to make use of him to the fullest extent where his aid and that of the Board might be of assistance. He briefly outlined the problems in Istanbul and Bucharest, the point of origin of many of the refugees now passing through Turkey, and then asked for suggestions from the floor as to the manner in which the work in both centers might be coordinated in order to achieve maximum results.

Dr. Fagnes stated that he had studied the situation in Turkey at first hand for a number of days, and had spoken with a great many people. He felt that, although there may be room for improvement in the work up to this point, it was wise for all to withhold judgment at the present time. It is his own feeling, however, that accomplishments have been very great, and the work of the organizations very much better than he had been led to expect. Dr. Fagnes then outlined briefly what he had learned during his various conversations concerning the position of Jewish people in the Balkan countries, and emphasized the scope of the problems which, in his opinion, made all the more necessary concerted action on the part of the relief organizations. He recommended, therefore, that the representatives of the various organizations form themselves into an advisory committee which would meet from time to time to report, advise and suggest programs and plans of action to a smaller committee, to be created, which would conduct the day-to-day work. This smaller committee, however, need not take instructions from the larger advisory committee, although being guided by it. He asked for coordination and cooperation behind the War Refugee Board and Mr. Hirschmann. Concerning the distribution of places on the boats coming from Rumania, he suggested as a solution to the problems in Bucharest that the passengers be designated, one-half by the Zionist representative, and one-half by an apolitical person.

Dr. Schwartz stated that thought should be given at this meeting to the mechanics to be set up, and not to the designation of responsibilities. He agreed with what Dr. Fagnes had said, but did not like the concept of an advisory committee. In his opinion, there should be general discussions and interchange of information and views among the agency representatives, but the representatives should not be crystallized into a formal advisory group. He preferred that everything be done on an informal basis. Dr. Schwartz then made the following suggestions:

- 1) The representative of the War Refugee Board should call the people together whenever he thinks they should meet, or when their advice is necessary. He pointed out that more formal organization might result in complications arising out of the fact that a number of the representatives, being

Palestinian, were British subjects, and consequently it might be embarrassing for them if they were tied up too closely with an American organization, the War Refugee Board. Their actions might be construed as being subject to American control.

2) The Joint Distribution Committee could not formally tie itself up with a mixed group, which included agencies interested not only in relief, but also in political work. The JDC is non-political in character, and is interested solely in humanitarian work. Therefore, it does not want to, nor can it, become involved in political matters. However, the JDC would be very happy to meet with representatives of any organization either at the call of Mr. Hirschmann or at that of the other organizations if they think it desirable.

He recommended, therefore, that the small working committee be made up of the representatives of agencies effectively working in the field of rescuing people or the relief of people in occupied countries. The JDC would be very glad to participate in such a committee, provided its make-up were satisfactory to it.

As Dr. Schwartz saw it, the work in Istanbul divided itself into three sections:

- a) The rescue of people by providing transportation.
- b) The relief of people in occupied areas.
- c) Providing for rescued people while in transit through Turkey.

He suggested that the smaller committee be made up of representatives of the Jewish Agency, the JDC, and "minority" groups, even though their participation in the work is small because they are nevertheless interested. He suggested a working committee of a maximum of five people, keeping the number small for the sake of getting things done.

Mr. Kaplan opposed the conception of an advisory committee, and thought that such meetings should be in the form of conferences, as more closely characterizing their work. Of course, the principle of all the organizations is to save as many people as possible, and the function of the conference would be to put workable ideas before the group. He touched briefly on the matter of the selection of emigrants, and pointed out that some of the organizations, such as the Jewish Agency, have responsibilities toward Palestine which must guide them in making selections. Therefore, this question cannot be regarded as a simple one. He recommended that discussions for the improvement and expansion of the work be taken up immediately after today's meeting and that the organizations intensify their efforts.

Mr. Larlas suggested omitting all discussions having to do with the refugee position in Bucharest, and that this meeting should confine itself to the question of organization. He thought that the War Refugee Board should call meetings of representatives whenever three organizations requested them.

Mr. Jabotinsky stated that he had been studying the

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situation for upwards of two months and that during this period he had undertaken no projects at all. In his opinion the cooperation offered by the American Embassy had been good, and he expressed his expectation that, with the presence of Mr. Hirschmann, the cooperation extended through the Embassy and other channels will be even better. He also thought that the rescue work done by Messrs. Schind, Averbuch, and others whom he mentioned by name, had been excellent. He thought, however, that the question of the distribution of places on boats cannot be the subject of discussion, as this is related to that of responsibility for determining who is or who is not suitable material for Palestine. He thought it important that, in setting up the smaller committee, due regard should be had for assisting non-Jewish refugees. He was glad the group had met, since it brought the relief and rescue work under United States Government auspices.

At this point, Mr. Hirschmann in response to a question defined the purposes of the two proposed committees as follows: the larger group would be informative, and the smaller group would make operating decisions.

Mr. Rosenberg was of the opinion that the time had arrived when all the organizations should cooperate and work together, and that everyone should participate in the work, avoiding "monopoly".

Mr. Kaplan suggested that Mr. Hirschmann assume the responsibility for designating the smaller operating committee, to consist of up to five persons, not counting Mr. Hirschmann, who would serve as chairman. The meeting unanimously accepted this proposal.

Mr. Hirschmann accepted this responsibility, saying that he will designate a committee after full discussions with those present.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:15.

Herbert Katzki

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EXHIBIT B.

Minutes of an Informal Meeting  
of the Operating Group of Relief Organizations  
held at the American Consulate, Istanbul  
July 17, 1944.

Those present: I. A. Hirschmann, Herbert Katzki, for War Refugee Board; Joseph Schwartz and Reuben Resnik, American Joint Distribution Committee; Eliezer Kaplan, Chaim Barlas, and Zeev Schind, Jewish Agency; David Schweitzer, Hias-Ica Immigration Association.

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Hirschmann at 4.15 p.m. He welcomed the representatives present, and stated that he is not regarding those present as forming either a formal or informal committee, but his only desire is to get work done, and the characterization of the meetings, of which this was the first, can be developed later.

Rumania. Mr. Schind advised the group that there are still three Turkish boats at Constanza, and the Smyrnie, a Greek boat, waiting to carry refugees from Constanza to Istanbul. The last news he has was to the effect that the Smyrnie has permission to carry people from Constanza and is now awaiting the completion of some technical details before undertaking its voyage. The three Turkish boats are ready to leave at any time, but in addition there are three Bulgarian boats in Varna, the Milca, the Vita, and the Lirin, which likewise can be sent from Varna to Constanza to carry people to Istanbul. The Milca has definite permission to go to Constanza for this purpose. The question now arises as to whether or not any of the three boats should be sent to Constanza to be kept there in the event that emigration again becomes possible. In his opinion, the Milca should be sent to Constanza, leaving the other two boats at Varna to carry refugees from Bulgaria, should this become possible. It was his view that, because of the reported uncertain political situation in Rumania, it might be well to concentrate there the largest number of available boats, to move people as rapidly as opportunity afforded. In any event, even if emigration by sea from Bulgaria should become possible, it would take several weeks before arrangements could be made for filling two boats, so that the third, the Milca, could be spared. In addition, the shipping situation in Bulgaria is not as acute as it is in Rumania, since there is a number of small boats going to Varna each week from Istanbul, to carry merchandise to Bulgaria.

Mr. Kaplan stated that there was some difficulty with regard to the Smyrnie. Mr. Schind and his friends say that the departure of the boat is dependent only upon the preparation of passenger lists. According to Mr. Zissu, it is not possible for the Smyrnie to leave at all. Mr. Kaplan stated that two cables had been sent to Zissu, stating that the Smyrnie must sail, and indicating that perhaps it might be advisable to condition any discussions concerning the Rumanian boats upon the departure of the Smyrnie. He asked whether it would be possible, through fresh channels, to determine what is holding up the Smyrnie, either through



Fildermann, or through channels available to Mr. Mirschmann. It should also be determined whether the discussion of Rumanian boats has any reality, or whether the entire discussion is without foundation.

In Mr. Schind's opinion, and according to information he has, it would take at least two months to put the Rumanian ships in physical condition to sail to Istanbul.

Mr. Resnik stated that it is possible to send additional Turkish boats directly from Istanbul to Rumania, and suggested that perhaps the Turkish Minister, who had just returned to Rumania, might be helpful. He foresees no difficulties in obtaining the necessary Turkish permits for the boats to go directly to Constanza. Such boats could be made available through the same channels as are those now being used.

Discussion then ensued as to the person or agency responsible for the filling of the ships in Constanza. The discussion developed that it was entirely unclear as to whether this responsibility lay with Zissu, the Rumanian Government, both together, or with the organization Orat, which has prepared the boats which thus far have come from Constanza.

Mr. Kaplan reported that Zissu states explicitly and Fildermann in part that, after the three Turkish boats now in Constanza had left, only Rumanian ships can be used for carrying refugees.

Discussion was then had as to the advisability of sending additional Turkish boats to Constanza at the present time, despite Zissu's messages concerning Rumanian ships, on the grounds that the actual presence of additional boats might exert sufficient pressure to make them acceptable for use. No decision was taken as to this. The question then arose as to the manner in which pressure might be applied on Zissu to remove whatever obstacles he may be creating to the movement of the ships, if, indeed, he is creating any. Mr. Kaplan stated that he will write a strong letter to Mr. Zissu on the subject, of which a copy will be made available to Mr. Mirschmann. Mr. Mirschmann would consider whether or not, and by what means, he would attempt the same thing.

Mr. Mirschmann reported that he had written to Charge d'Affaires Kelley concerning the Turkish ship Anadolu, which could go to Constanza if Turkish permission were received. He had asked Mr. Kelley to follow this up with the Foreign Office. It was decided that Mr. Larlas and Mr. Resnik should make inquiry into the general question of sending further Turkish ships from Istanbul to Constanza with Turkish permission.

Bulgaria. Mr. Schind suggested that steps be taken to arrange for the release of people now in Bulgaria, of whom a large number are ready to depart for transport by sea to Istanbul, in the same manner as do those coming here from Rumania. Turkish boats are available for this purpose, since several go to Bulgaria each week with cargo.

Mr. Kaplan's information is that Bulgaria does not oppose the exit of Jewish people, but that it appears that

the Turkish consul has been obstructing it. He suggested that Mr. Hirschmann have the Turkish Foreign Office inform the Consulate in Bulgaria that the Turkish Government is ready to close its eyes to the fact that people arrive by ship to Turkey en route to Palestine, without being in possession of Turkish transit visas. Apparently, the Turkish Consul has informed the Bulgarian Government that he opposes the departure of Jewish people to Istanbul under these circumstances. In addition, the Turkish Foreign Office should advise the Bulgarian Government of its attitude concerning the arrival in Istanbul of people without Turkish transit visas.

Dr. Schwartz suggested pursuing the question of increasing land traffic from Bulgaria to Turkey by increasing from nine to twenty the number of transit visas authorized weekly for Sofia. An additional argument might be used on the grounds that no refugees are arriving from Hungary, for which nine visas weekly had likewise been authorized.

Mr. Hirschmann referred to the reluctance of the Bulgarian Government to permit refugees to come to Istanbul on the grounds that they are subjected to too many G-2 investigations upon their arrival here. He thought it might be helpful if assurances could be given to the Bulgarian Government that no such interview would take place in Istanbul, so far as refugees are concerned.

Mr. Hirschmann stated that, in a memorandum which he had prepared for transmission to the Bulgarian Government, he had suggested that priority be given to children and young people, if emigration from Bulgaria were permitted. He had done this in order to overcome Bulgarian objections to emigration on the grounds of G-2 interviews.

Dr. Schwartz opposed emigration limited to specific categories, since more people than just children and youths want to leave Bulgaria, and their departure may not be opposed.

Hungary. Mr. Kaplan reported that further clandestine movement of refugees in Hungary to Rumania, according to information he had just received, depended upon finances. He, in behalf of the Jewish Agency, and Dr. Schwartz, are consulting together on this question. Dr. Schwartz indicated that finances provided no problem at the moment.

Mr. Kaplan thought it important that movement from Hungary to Rumania be augmented, through strengthening of appropriate local organizations. Although Rumania officially has decreed a death sentence to anyone assisting such movement, in reality they apparently are willing to take no notice of it. Naturally, complications arise in Bucharest, where decision must be taken as to whether available places on boats should be given to people already in Rumania or those coming from Hungary, since all are anxious to leave. Mr. Schind reported that there are already fifteen hundred Hungarian refugees in Rumania who could be brought to Istanbul, were shipping facilities available.

Mr. Schind referred also to the group of six hundred Yugoslavian Jews in Hungary, who are in possession of Swiss Schutzpasse, and which might be regarded as a group for

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emigration. Apparently, a time-limit of July 1st for moving them out of Hungary has been extended to August 1st, and the matter should be followed up.

Mr. Kaplan referred to a scheme put forward by the Swedish Minister in Budapest, by which Swedish visas of a limited number and to certain categories of Jewish people might be issued, if a guarantee is provided the Swedish Government that such people would be removed from Sweden within three years' time. This matter should also be looked into and followed up.

Mr. Kaplan referred to a letter he had just received from Budapest which indicated that tens of thousands of persons could be saved if the cost of their maintenance could be taken over. He is pursuing the matter, in order to secure more information.

Mr. Mirschmann referred to his conversation with Mr. Briffel, and advised the group that the War Refugee Board, as representative of the United States Government, has adopted the principle that it cannot discourage the sending of ships by individual private agencies, if they have responsible projects in hand. He had tried to concentrate all ship questions into one channel, but apparently all necessary agreements could not be achieved.

Both Mr. Kaplan and Mr. Schwartz expressed their approval of the idea of periodic conferences similar to the present one, and felt that much good could come of them in terms of cooperation and coordination of the work. Each felt that better understanding and cooperation had been reached in behalf of their respective organizations as a result of their personal talks in Istanbul.

Mr. Mirschmann explained the presence of Mr. Schweitzer, saying that he had been invited in order to present the point of view of an outsider, that is, one who is neither Jewish Agency nor Joint Distribution Committee. He will be invited to subsequent meetings.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Herbert Katzki

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JUL 11 1943  
COMMUNICATIONS SECTION  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

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EXHIBIT C

Organization Representatives  
Engaged in Relief and Rescue Activities  
in Istanbul

The following list sets forth the agencies and their representatives in Istanbul, permanently located there,

- 1) Reuben Resnick represents the American Joint Distribution Committee.
  - a) Directly or indirectly engaged in emigration from Turkey to Palestine or from occupied countries via Turkey to Palestine. For these purposes, it makes the necessary transportation arrangements or provides the funds therefor.
  - b) Provides relief for refugees in Turkey or in occupied areas either in funds or in kind, directly and indirectly, under Treasury license.
  - c) Provides maintenance for refugees while in transit from countries of emigration to countries of immigration.
- 2) Chaim Barlas represents Jewish Agency of Palestine, officially represents the Jewish Agency in Turkey and is in charge of their activities in that country.
- 3) Dr. J. Golden heads the Palestinian office in Turkey of the Jewish Agency. Directs a special office for assisting legal emigrants to Palestine departing from or travelling via Turkey.
- 4) Leder, Jewish Agency, has special assignments in Turkey for the Jewish Agency.
- 5) Zeev Schind, Moshe Averbuch, Ehud Ueberall represent Palestine organization interested in special emigration from occupied areas to Palestine, specially matters relating to shipping.
- 6) Mnachim Bader, Venja Pomoraniec represent Palestine organization interested in special relief assistance to people in occupied areas.
- 7) Jacob Griffel represents Agudath Israel of Palestine and United States, and the Vaad Haazalah of United States interested in assistance, emigration, and providing relief for Orthodox people in occupied areas.
- 8) Joseph Klarman represents the Vaad Haazalah of the United States and Palestine organizations.
- 9) Ludwig Kastner represents the Vaad Haazalah of United States and the Bratislava Jewish community.
- 10) David Schweitzer represents the Haas-Ica emigration association (Hicem).

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11) Leon Benenberg represents the International Rescue and Relief Committee, the Jewish Labor Committee, and is a correspondent for the New York Jewish Daily Forward, interested in relief and emigration of intellectuals, anti-Nazi refugees, scholars, etcetera, in occupied countries.

12) Uri Jabotinsky represents the United States Emergency Committee for the rescue of Jews in Europe, interested in the emigration of people in occupied areas.

In addition to the foregoing there were present in Ankara or Istanbul for longer or shorter periods at the end of June and first weeks of July:

13) Dr. Joseph Schwartz, European chairman of the American Joint Distribution Committee.

14) Dr. Judah Lagnes of the Hebrew University, Palestine, who is a member of the Middle East Advisory Committee of the JDC.

15) Harry Viteles, a member of the Middle East Advisory Committee of the JDC.

16) Eliezer Kaplan, a member of the Executive and Treasurer of the Jewish Agency.

17) Izok Litvani represents the Bulgarian Department of the Jewish Agency.

July 10, 1944

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MIDDLE EASTERN REFUGEE BOARD  
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## EXHIBIT D

EMIGRATION STATISTICSRumania:

Number of persons who arrived in Istanbul in transit  
from Rumania.

January 1944	-
February	12
March (1)	252
April (2)	667
May (3)	340
June	2
Total:	<u>1273</u> persons

(1) n/s Milca (first trip) 239

Railway 13

Total: 252

(2) n/s Maritza (first trip) 234

n/s Bellacita 153 including 130 Trans-  
nistrian children

n/s Milca (second trip) 272

Railway 8

Total: 667

(3) n/s Maritza (second trip) 318

Railway 22

Total: 340

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EXHIBIT L

Paraphrase of telegram sent to  
Washington on July 5

The following is sent from Hirschmann for the WRB. The information below is based upon preliminary investigations concerning the stoppage in May and June of refugee movements to Istanbul from Constanza.

The Bulgarian authorities withdrew permission to release ships to be utilized for refugees, because of the sinking of TARITZA. The Germans claimed that the tonnage was needed for military needs, and the Bulgarians feared to lose any more small ships. Since the Turkish Government does not desire to operate its large ships in foreign waters, a move was initiated to obtain small Turkish ships which, under an agreement between the German and Turkish Governments, were engaged in carrying merchandise to Varna, Bulgaria, from Istanbul. We have been informed by the Jewish Agency that arrangements have been made by it to transport refugees on one Greek and four Turkish ships on their return voyages to Istanbul from Constanza. Following is the approximate number of persons to be accommodated on the ships now ready at Constanza for sailing: The Greek SS SYRMA 1200 passengers; FALKURA 150; FARINA 350; MAZELK 450; BULEUL 350. If the above mentioned five ships, the first of which is daily expected to sail, complete their voyages successfully, there is reason to hope that these and similar ships will follow under like conditions. In order to break the deadlock now delaying the sailing of these vessels, Katzki and I are conferring with representatives of the Joint Distribution Committee and of the Jewish Agency. We have Ambassador Steinhardt's assurance that his personal understanding with Cevad Acikalin, Secretary General of the Foreign Office, will preclude any difficulty in permitting disembarkation at Istanbul for passengers without proper papers and in making arrangements for transportation to Palestine via Turkey.

The reorganization of the control of the Rumanian Government over this so-called illegal transportation is an additional factor causing the delay in the movements of the above-mentioned ships. According to information which we have received, an inter-Ministerial Committee for Immigration has been established by the Rumanian Government and among representatives of several Departments of the Government is included one Jewish representative, Zissu, reportedly a rich man and a close friend of Nicolai Antonescu. The formation of this new Committee has interrupted previously made arrangements for securing the exit permits which people leaving Rumania are required to have. It evidently required an interim period in order to establish new contacts. Reportedly, children and adults over 45 are to be permitted by the Rumanians to leave the country and this plan has allegedly been accepted by the Germans. Many refugees have come from Poland to Rumania illegally, and some from Hungary are now arriving.

Of the 2600 refugees mentioned above, an appreciable number will be children who, due to the efforts of the WRB in March of this year, were released from Transnistria.

Schwartz in Ankara has been informed of the details. It is recommended by Ambassador Steinhardt and me that the program which was proposed in your 64 be adopted with joint participation in the responsibility by the WRB, since our

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The Bulgarian Government stands today in the position where it can create a priceless measure of good will without, as I see it, giving up anything fundamental, by taking the essential steps without delay to abrogate the scandalous anti-Jewish laws and to permit us to announce it forthrightly to the world. Whatever sacrifice on its own part is necessary at this time for it to do so, I am confident that the scales will weigh heavily in its own favor after the decision is announced.

I have promised Kalabanoff and you that such a step would be heralded with the widest publicity throughout the United States (and Britain), which I shall take it as my especial task to discharge. The evidence in the instance of the abolition of the camp in Transnistria by the Rumanians is with you. The step I am suggesting would elicit publicity and good will of a manifold nature and scope.

There is another aspect of the subject which we discussed and which should be re-enforced with the Bulgarians. It is my sense that this may well be no time for planning large-scale emigration movements out of a country like Bulgaria if the present government of Bulgaria is as sound and forward-looking in its determination to reconstruct its country as is indicated. The Jews who have been reduced by these two laws to complete deprivation and inability to carry on any legitimate work must be put on their feet, not for themselves alone as Bulgarian citizens, but for the enormous contribution that they will make in helping build the new Bulgaria. It is a strange paradox which history relates that the depressed and depleted Jewish populations have without exception rebounded in the countries where they found themselves and become valuable citizens in building the wealth and culture of their communities. Considering the history of Bulgaria, the Jews as an indigenous part of that nation, received relatively fair treatment which they enjoyed until recently when this latter record was smudged by one of the blackest pages in Bulgarian history. With any fair chance at economic assistance, rehabilitation and sustenance, the Jewish people should quickly become essential and useful participants in building the new nation.

Why send them in lost groups to strange lands if, as the Minister of their country asserts, they will "gradually" find themselves back in the position of respect and responsibility where they were before the war. It may even be that the Bulgarian Government some months hence may find itself in the position of beckoning for the return of these self-same citizens whom they helped to deport to Palestine at great expense and inconvenience. I trust that you are not burdened by my over-emphasis of the point, but I insist that the step we are suggesting will be of even greater advantage to Bulgaria than to those who will be saved.

One more point: I think the leaders of the Bulgarian Government should know that I shall expect to hold them responsible for that which Kalabanoff signed. While he wrote somewhat less than he reported to me verbally, his letter is categorical in asserting that (a) the government will ameliorate

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the situation of the Jews and cease all forms of persecution without delay; (b) transport will be facilitated within all possible technical means. The letter goes further in its implications, but speaking for the War Refugee Board I repeat that we shall never be satisfied with these conversations and representations until these two laws are revoked. In the meanwhile the government can be completely lax in its enforcement of them.

Nor will this be sufficient: Reports coming currently from Bulgaria indicate a state of economic depravity on the part of its Jewish citizens resulting from these laws. What is the good of permitting people freely to leave their homes if they have nowhere to go, nor means of securing funds except by immoral and illegal means; if there are no possible available methods of reconstructing their lot or their dignity as human beings? Measures must be found at once to supply them with food, the necessary means of living as decent citizens, and economic assistance to rehabilitate their businesses, their families and their homes.

I propose to offer through the assistance of existing relief agencies, now represented in Turkey, along with that of our government, such means to rehabilitate this population as possibilities permit. Obviously it is not too much to ask that the Bulgarian Government permit this and assist it in every possible reasonable way. They have decimated the population. We do not ask them to revive it but only to permit others to do so without let or hindrance so that they may contribute towards the wellbeing of their own country.

I hope to hear that the forthright and sincere steps suggested herein have been taken by the Bulgarian Government in order to fortify its position among the humane nations of the world and to win back the respect and good will of our people which they had so scrupulously built in the last half-century and which they have so sorely lost in the last black war-years.

With thanks for your kindness and friendship,

Cordially yours,

I. A. Hirschmann  
Special Attache

P.S. If the Bulgarian Government is seeking methods to demonstrate its sincerity in being helpful in this situation connected with refugee movements, we are informed that a number of refugees, possibly up to 2,000, will be leaving Hunary in the next few days. We have requested of the Rumanian Government that they permit these refugees to enter Rumania in transit and we have been informed that the Rumanians have agreed in principle to this procedure. Obviously the Bulgarians would not at this time wish to set up a blockade against these refugees in the face of their representations. It will therefore be necessary for them to agree to permit

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WASHINGTON, D. C.

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these refugees to come through Bulgaria and to provide for them the necessary transit facilities out of Bulgaria to Turkey without delay. The above will apply similarly to refugees who will be leaving Rumania (who do not arrive from Hungary), and for whom transit facilities through Bulgaria will be required.

I.A.H.

Dr. Floyd H. Black  
President  
Robert College  
Hisar

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EXHIBIT F

Communication received on the 13th of July 1944. from Mr. Al. Cretzianu, Rumanian Minister to Turkey, written on behalf of Mahal Antonescu, Vice President of the Council of Ministers.

"I wish to inform you that an inter-ministerial commission has been constituted since the beginning of the month of May, under my chairmanship, for the purpose of organizing officially and efficiently the emigration of the Jews. During the sessions of this Commission Messrs. Fischer, Wildermann and Zimmer, the representatives of the Jews of Roumania, have been consulted, as well as the Commissioner for Jewish Affairs. These persons have jointly established the practical means for organizing the Jewish emigration, either with the help of medium-size ships flying a foreign flag (which have recently effected transports), or with ships of greater tonnage that the Service Maritime Agency may charter to that effect.

"The decision of the government has been officially communicated to the Swiss, Swedish, Turkish, Portuguese Legations; to the Delegates of the International Red Cross Committee; as well as to His Eminence the Apostolic Nuncio at Bucharest.

"The inter-ministerial commission is in full activity. I hope that the International organizations, which have dealt with the question of the Jewish emigration, will assist in giving their full support."

EXHIBIT F  
TO MR. BOYD  
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EXHIBIT G

Copy of telegram dated July 18,  
1944, addressed to the Rumanian Legation,  
Lisbon

Three days ago a ship, flying a neutral flag, left Constanza having on board a large number of Jewish refugees. Three other vessels, which are in the port of Constanza will follow.

Several months ago the question of obtaining a German guarantee for the safe passage of a neutral vessel in the Black Sea was raised, but negotiations were suspended.

A ministerial committee, over which I preside, is handling the question of Jewish emigration and is examining the possibility of facilitating the departure of the emigrants by using Rumanian ships.

Mr. Eildermann, Mr. Zissu (Jewish Central) and the Commissioner General for Jewish questions discussed the matter with me several times.

I beg you to refute all false information circulating with respect to Mr. Eildermann's case. The latter enjoys full freedom and is collaborating with the Jewish Central, with a view of organizing, together with Mr. Zissu, the emigration of refugees.

Mr. Eildermann's son, who has been in France since the outbreak of the war, has apparently been deported to Poland. I have personally intervened on his behalf with the German Government and was promised that he would be set at liberty.

(signed) Mihai Antonescu

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EXHIBIT II

July 21, 1944

Dear Mr. Zissu:

I am taking the liberty of writing to you on behalf of the victims of the war who are desperately seeking refuge from Rumania. I understand that you are giving your devoted efforts to assisting them, and in this respect we have a common interest.

May I identify myself as the special representative of the War Refugee Board of the United States of America. This Board was created in January 1944 by a special Order of President Roosevelt and consists of the Secretaries of State, War and Treasury of the United States. Our orders are to initiate and assist in the rescue of people who are seeking havens of refuge, wherever and wherever they may be. As of this date and by virtue of the powers vested in me by my Government, and with the cooperation of existing relief agencies such as the United States Joint Distribution Committee, the Palestine Jewish Agency and others, we have had some partial success.

I am informed that the Rumanian government is not opposed but in fact is helping to facilitate, through its Ministerial Committee, the transportation of refugees from Rumania via sea, and that following the successful voyage of the S. S. Kazbek there are four additional vessels now prepared to embark. Our Government is watching with great interest the plans for the quick movement of these vessels, and may I urge that nothing be done to obstruct the immediate embarkation of these four ships, as well as the movement of other ships whether they carry a Rumanian flag or any other flag, provided passages are arranged without delay. The ideal situation that could be created would be a so-called "bridge of ships" at this time, which would contemplate not alone the Rumanian ships, which, we understand, you can be instrumental in organizing without delay, but other ships, so that a constant flow of refugee traffic may continue without interruption during these months, when every day is critical for those whose salvation we have at heart.

I am also informed that there have arisen a number of questions regarding those who should be chosen to make these voyages to safe havens. In this connection, may I say that it is not the province of my Government to make or influence such determinations. The bases for these choices are not our special concern. We are deeply interested, however, in not permitting this question in any of its aspects to interfere with the prompt embarkation of these and additional ships by even so much as a single hour. You undoubtedly are more conscious of the acuteness and danger of the situation for these innocent citizens than we can be from here, and you will forgive me for emphasizing again the essential importance of not permitting anything, especially of jurisdictional or technical nature, to stand in the way of the immediate release of these vessels.

EXHIBIT I

July 21, 1944

Memorandum of conversation held  
at 12:15 p.m., July 21, 1944 with Dr. Black

Pursuant to my previous conversation with Dr. Black and the memorandum dated July 13, 1944 which I handed to him covering the background of the successful liaison between Cretzianu for the Rumanian Government and myself, and the request for similar assistance of the Bulgarian Government for the release of Jewish refugees, Dr. Black visited me and reported as follows:

1. He had reason to know that I would be given favorable news through Balabanoff, the Bulgarian Minister, when I meet him within the next few days;
2. That Balabanoff has made the request to see me;
3. That in his recent visit to Sofia he was informed of a reversal of the policy of the Bulgarian Government with regard to minorities and Jews and that he would seek every possible means of winning our good will through efforts connected with the release of refugees.

I was informed that the head of the police in Bulgaria issued a statement (not public) in which he stated that the Government will facilitate all police permits necessary for the release of refugees.

In the latter connection it is important to remember that while the Bulgarian Government may approve the release of refugees from Bulgaria, enormous complexities of a technical nature will interfere. Six different types of permits are required before a person may leave the country. They are tax, military, police, etc. In normal times these permits were available at Government headquarters which were centered in Sofia. Since the severe bombing of Sofia the Government offices have been moved to various cities and it is necessary for a citizen to travel considerably to secure the certificates. In addition, many of the forms have been lost in the bombing and the moving. There will be much obstruction and delay in any authorization for citizens to leave the country. In addition, transportation facilities are strained to the utmost, also due to the bombing, and it will be a difficult matter for evacuees to reach Burgas, the one possible port of debarkation.

The best possible solution is for children to be given priority and placed on the boats and trains. They will not require certificates of release. It is possible in this connection that parents may not be willing to separate themselves from the children, especially since the announcement has been made that no further personal or physical persecutions will take place in Bulgaria. There are, however, hundreds of children who are without parents or homes who should be corraled and sent by boat and rail to Istanbul and Palestine.

In my proposed conversation with Balabanoff I am to request of him that:

I am confident that, in your broad humanitarian efforts (which will be remembered long after these difficult days have passed) you will manage to bring into your councils, on a productive and a cooperative level, the services which Mr. Bildermann can render with skill and effectiveness. Mr. Bildermann is also regarded with deep respect by the great agencies operating in the rescue field, as well as by the representatives of the Government of the United States. Certainly, it would be unfortunate not to utilize fully his experience, sincerity and representative power.

Again may I offer my assurance of our high regard for your efforts in the field of human welfare at this crucial time in the history of all peoples, but especially for the minorities and the Jews, who are suffering so sorely.

Faithfully yours,

I. A. Hirschmann  
Special Attache  
United States of America

P.S. I have just read a copy of the letter from Mr. E. Kaplan of July 17 addressed to you and wish to assert that I subscribe completely with the views expressed by him.

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EXHIBIT J

Istanbul, August 1, 1944

Dear Dr. Black:

Pursuant to our conversations I am confirming several of the points which were concurred in by you and me in our discussions relating to efforts to rescue victims of persecution and oppression in Bulgaria.

The conversations with and reports from Balabanoff for his government were encouraging as first possible steps. His letter written to Simond for our government, which has been transmitted to Washington, is confirmatory of the above. But I believe that you will agree with me that the Bulgarian Government is not going far enough at this crucial hour on these matters. I am thoroughly convinced that the government will take whatever possible steps are available to expedite the release, within technical possibilities, of their citizens who happen to be Jews. From information at hand, confirmed by you and Balabanoff, these steps at this time can result in only a pitifully small emancipation.

I am bothered by two aspects of this problem: a) that few refugees will be able to leave Bulgaria in the next important weeks and months; b) that the War Refugee Board, watching daily for specific acts of large refugee movements out of Bulgaria, will have no choice but to interpret these negative results as a breach of faith by the Bulgarian Government in the face of its verbal and written representations by Balabanoff.

Considering the acute political situation today, the desire expressed by Balabanoff for his government to make such moves which would win the good will of the United States Government and its people, we stand today in a position where the fortuitous first steps in a program which could be productive of good on all sides could be unwittingly misconstrued. I therefore made to you today the proposal which I believe is the only solid and satisfactory move that should be offered by the Bulgarian Government without delay; namely, concrete steps to revoke and abolish forthwith the two notorious anti-Jewish laws on its books. In asserting the above I am not unaware of certain technical and political obstacles which the government in Bulgaria today may find it necessary to overcome. But these are days when I presume to suggest that governments will persist only by bold and forthright steps, especially with relation to the onward sweep of Allied victory, and if they wish to find themselves in some measure of good grace at the peace table.

As you know, I have no authority to speak in connection with the latter, but I am charged with a special responsibility and can offer now a specific opening for the good will that will result from broad strokes in the direction of humanitarianism, especially as related to refugees, which will not promise but fulfill a policy which will negate that of a former government in ruthlessly corrupting a helpless minority of its own people, and which will be designed concretely to rehabilitate these victimized members of its own citizenry.

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1. He should give me in writing a statement of the present attitude of the Bulgarian Government on the question of minorities and Jews;
2. Information concerning Laganoff's recent meeting with the Jewish authorities and his statement.  
My understanding is that they are to be treated like all Bulgarian citizens within the framework of the Bulgarian law which still contains the two anti-Jewish laws which are severe and which reduce the Jews to economic pariahs;
3. He will state the position of the Bulgarian Government regarding its willingness to permit Jewish refugees to leave the country.

I will request of Lalabanoff that he authorize me to send a specific telegram with his own quotation on the above suggestions, and also inform him of my intention to utilize this for good will for the present Bulgarian Government in our own Government and for publicity to our people in the United States.

Arrangements should be made for me to see Lalabanoff during Dimond's absence in Switzerland.

I. A. MIRSCHMAN

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EXHIBIT K

Composition of the Exchange Group  
which arrived in Istanbul 6/7/1944.

From BLAHEM-BLEHEM		222 persons	(72 men and 150 women)
<u>Age</u>		<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
1 - 10		10	9
11 - 20		3	19
21 - 30		1	20
31 - 40		3	12
41 - 50		7	24
51 - 60		21	31
61 - 70		21	29
71 - 80		6	4
81 - ...		<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>150</b>

Nationality

Holland		99
Without nationality		76
Poland	10)	
Russia	1)	47
Palestine	2)	
Divers	34)	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>222</b>

From VITTEL 61 persons.

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EXHIBIT L

Persons  
who arrived in transit in Istanbul  
from Bulgaria

January 1944	38
February	55
March (1)	131
April	17
May	46
June	<u>127</u>
Total:	408

(1) Group of children under children's emigration scheme:	46
Number of families:	<u>85</u>
Total:	131

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EXHIBIT M

Part I

Survey of Events

I.

On March 20, 1944, the German authorities ordered the establishment of the Central Council of Jews in Hungary, and named the members thereof. They issued instructions that the Jews might not change their place of residence, travel, nor move within the confines of Budapest.

The first anti-Jewish proclamations on behalf of the Hungarian Government appeared on March 31, when Jews were forbidden to employ non-Jewish domestic servants, without distinction as to the age of the members of the household or the domestics. Further orders provided for the immediate striking of the names of Jewish public officials, entertainers, and journalists from their respective professional associations, the exclusion of lawyers from the bar, within two months, as well as the wearing of a yellow star ten centimeters in diameter on the outer clothing (firmly sewed on). All these orders were enacted on strictly racial grounds, and permitted only very infrequent exceptions for meritorious service in the war.

On April 5, the day on which the Jewish badge was to be worn for the first time, those members of the above-mentioned categories of exceptions, as well as baptized Jews married to Aryans, were exempted from wearing the star, as well as from most of the restrictions connected therewith. The vehicles, telephones, and radios of the Jews were taken away.

Even those Jews who, because of their military distinction, had not lost their rank, were not exempted from wearing the star--strict instructions were given on this point--and were forbidden to wear their uniforms.

On April 7 appeared the decree forbidding Jews to travel, after which they had no right to use automobiles, and could not even ride in public conveyances without police permission.

On April 14 appeared the decree withdrawing druggists' licenses.

On April 16 all Jewish fortunes were confiscated. Valuable objects and securities were to be deposited. Permission was given to take 1,000 Pengo monthly out of the blocked accounts.

On April 21 Jewish shops were ordered closed, their furnishings and stocks were confiscated. Aryans were appointed to head a few businesses whose continuance was held to be in the public interest.

On April 22 a Government decree constituted the Union of Hungarian Aryans in place of the Central Council of Jews appointed by the German authorities.

On April 23 food rations for Jews were diminished. The sugar ration was decreased from 1040 gr. to 300 gr. monthly, and there were no exceptions. Pregnant and nursing mothers, as well as infants, receive the same ration, whereas these

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categories among the non-Jews are able to get many times the normal ration. Instead of fat, the Jews receive 300 gr. sesame oil per capita monthly, and even Jewish heavy laborers receive no supplement. The weekly meat ration of the Jews is 100 gr. beef or horse-meat; pork and veal are simply not to be bought. Milk is given only to pregnant women, infants and children under three years of age, but even here the amount is less than that of the non-Jews. According to the decree the Jews do not get their respective portions on Sundays from the milk station.

On April 26, the dismissal of Jews from academic posts was ordered. The dismissal is to be accomplished by the end of May, with the exception of a few persons acknowledged to be economically important.

On April 27 appeared the decree designating the homes and places of residence of the Jews. Even before this, after Budapest was bombed, Jewish dwellings had been requisitioned. The Central Council had to provide 500 lodgings within 24 hours. The Jews were charged with turning their brothers out of doors within a few hours, and those dislodged in this manner were compelled to leave all their furniture behind in their homes, as well as the bed and table linen required by those moving in. When it appeared that 500 dwellings did not stand ready for disposal at the stated time, it was ordered that 500 more dwellings be handed over within 24 hours, and two members of the Jewish Council were taken into custody; they were forced to sit in one spot with their faces turned to the wall until the Jewish community handed over the keys to the 1,000 dwellings.

The decree provided the basis for the sending away of Jews from towns with less than 10,000 population, and the creation of ghettos in cities with over 10,000 population.

On the same day permission to carry weapons was taken away from the Jews.

On April 30 appeared a decree on "safeguarding Hungarian Cultural Life from the works of Jewish authors", in accordance with which the works of Jewish writers had to be taken out of lending libraries and public libraries and macerated.

On the same day a review was ordered of the distinction earned during the occupation following the former world war.

On May 2 Jews were forbidden to visit public baths.

On May 6 the profit-bringing licenses, such as shopkeepers' licenses and tavern licenses were taken away from the Jews. Since these licenses had already been taken away by earlier decree, this new prohibition fell on those categories which had previously been exempted, that is, those who acquired merit in the war, war-widows and orphans, as well as those baptized Jews who, on account of the new decrees on racial grounds, were now accounted Jews.

On May 13 the categories of exceptions from the anti-Jewish decrees were revised, after which the various orders permitted only very rare exceptions. In consequence of these new regulations the only exemptions were for those of great military importance, 75% war-invalids, counter-revolutionary activities,

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fitting behavior during the occupation (after the first world war), while baptized Jews married to Aryans were exempted only from wearing the badge, from the prohibition against traveling, and from the prohibition against employing Aryan servants.

On May 20 the premises of a few Jewish entrepreneurs were also closed (hairdressers, inns, restaurants, hotels, garages, etc.).

On the same day Jews were forbidden to visit inns, restaurants, cafes, and amusements parks, with the exception of certain specified places.

## II.

The seizure of Jews had already begun on March 19. Without any kind of decree which would have forbidden traveling, every Jew who appeared at the station, whether going on a journey or arriving from one, was arrested and taken to jail and from there to the camp at Kistarcsa. About 2000 persons were interned in this way; they were crowded into the Kistarcsa internment camp which was intended for about 800 persons, and which already had earlier inmates, so that the overwhelming majority of the men lay on bare ground, and in individual barracks there was not even space to lie down. On account of the fact that in a few days the people became lousy, everyone was shorn and disinfected. The commandant of the camp did his best to improve it, but the overcrowding of the camp vitiated these exertions.

Children under 15 years old were let out of the camp, together with their mothers and pregnant women, as well as women over 55 and men over 65 years old. The remainder stayed under arrest, without any regard to whether they had wanted to fly the country, were going to work, or simply went to the station to meet someone.

On May 20, 250 prominent Jews were arrested, who were taken first to the building of the Rabbinical Seminary, and later to Kistarcsa. From this time on the building of the Rabbinical Seminary was a collection camp. Here the Central Council of Jews had to collect those to be arrested, the list of whose names was given out from time to time by the authorities. To this category belonged various journalists excluded from their associations, about 300 lawyers, and countless other people summoned for one reason or another--for example, after denunciation. They were interned without determining whether they were guilty or innocent.

The man-hunt in the streets began. Jews were interned without rhyme or reason, under the most diverse circumstances. The order on the wearing of the yellow star left room for doubt as to whether it was also to be worn in offices and shops. During the first two days, those who were found in these places without the star were taken to jail and fined; later they were interned. All those who, later, were picked up on the street, were interned on the ground that they were either not wearing the star, or not wearing it according to the regulations.

A few German soldiers broke into shops and homes and simply arrested those who resisted them.

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Politicians, prominent persons, and those who played a part in public affairs, were taken into custody and held in custody in most varied places (in the cellar of the Hotel Astoria, in the Royal Academy of Science, in the prison of the courthouse of the Budapest region, in the Schwabenberg, etc.). Later a camp was set up on the island Csepel; at present there are five such camps. People are interned in there as well as in three other camps in Budapest which previously had served for refugees.

Since the Jewish hospital was confiscated for an SS camp hospital, the patients had to be taken to two charity hospitals. It even happened that those sent by the doctor to the hospital were brought back into the camp by the authorities without another medical examination.

On April 15 began the internment of the refugees still at large. Those visitors who appeared at the police station for the monthly prolongation of their residence permits were simply arrested there and brought to the camp. Later they began to arrest foreigners in their homes.

English and American Jews were brought to a separate jail.

The travel-prohibition explicitly stated that it was not forbidden to ride on the interurban trains or the streetcar. Believing this, the Jews from the outskirts of Budapest rode calmly to their places of work and back, and on certain days these, too, were arrested and taken away.

Along about the last days of March there began the internments throughout the length of the land. The overwhelming majority of those Jews prominent in public affairs, as well as those who concerned themselves with political life, were interned. The reasons given for the internment were that it was to be understood that those concerned listened to foreign broadcasts or were engaging themselves in Communist propaganda activities. This was also the excuse given in the case of orthodox rabbis. The number of these internees was between two or three thousand.

These internees were taken to jail, as well as to camps in Gareny, Csorgo, Nagykanizsa, Bacstopolya and Ujacentgyorgy.

The deportation of internees began on April 28, on which day 1,170 persons from Kistarcsa, 400 from the jail, and 214 refugees from the building of the Rabbinical Seminary were transported. This transport consisted of men and women between 16 and 50.

On the same day those persons between 16 and 60 were deported from the camp in Nagykanizsa, as well as the whole camp of Bacstopolya. The transport from Nagykanizsa consisted of at least 2000 persons, that from Bacstopolya of about 1000 persons.

### III.

The concentration of Hungarian Jews began on April 16, 1944. Everywhere and always it occurred in the same manner. First, the precipitate concentration in the ghetto, then after continuing deterioration of conditions, the concentration in brickyards, in courtyards without water on bare ground;

*Copied from the Hungarian Papers*

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the plundering of all material possessions of the Jews, and then brutal questioning accompanied by gross bodily mistreatment to find out where valuable objects were hidden, and lastly deportation: 70 people in one railroad car, with one bucket of water as provision for the journey. We cannot describe in detail the progress of concentration in all places, although the data are at hand, but we will give a brief account of the short life of a few characteristic concentration camps.

Nyiregyhaza

April 16. To Nyiregyhaza, and Simapuszta 12 kilometers away, were brought the Jews from 46 surrounding communities. In Nyiregyhaza itself, 4180 Jews already there and 6839 from the surrounding country, that is, 10,759 persons, were crowded together in 123 houses. The floorspace of these 123 houses, counting kitchens and halls as well, amounted to about 8665 square meters, so that each person did not have so much as a square meter to himself. According to orders, each person could take with him, in addition to the clothes on his back, two sets of underclothing and a packet of 50 kilograms, which had to hold food for two weeks. Unfortunately the Jews in the provinces were driven together so suddenly by the gendarmes, that they could take nothing with them at all. An example is the case of the Jews from Nyirbator, who were taken to Simapuszta. On April 21, Friday night at 11 o'clock, they were taken from their homes by strange gendarmes, and at about 1 or 2 o'clock at night were loaded in farm-carts out of other villages and brought to Simapuszta with great brutality.

May 1. The situation has strikingly deteriorated. From those streets designated as the ghetto in Nyiregyhaza the people were brought to Madopuszta, where the arrangements for provisions are very bad. They requested covers, straw sacks, and especially straw, so that at least they can protect the old and the sick from lying on the bare ground.

May 5. Those Jews from the surrounding country concentrated in Nyiregyhaza were taken from the city to the farm of Baron Polnar, where they were put into frightfully crowded tobacco barns. In the whole place there was only a single well, 150 meters' distance from the camp, where the people could come and go to get water only when accompanied by a gendarme. The most pitiful part, however, is that the inhabitants of Nyiregyhaza itself, who after gross ill-treatment were placed in the ghetto, which they had almost completely furnished, were forced on account of the new decree to leave it.

May 7. In early dawn the camp at Nyirjespuszta, like the one in Simapuszta, was surrounded by gendarmes, so that from now on nobody can come near the camp. The people are starving, every day they get 100 gr. bread and as many beans. They have no money, and only those clothes which they have on.

May 8. The transporting from Nyiregyhaza keeps on. More of the members of the Jewish Council and the front-fighters are now there. In Nyirjespuszta there are still 5665 people, crowded together in the space of a few square meters. Treatment is like that in the concentration camp. The camp is all the more unbearable, because the only well is beginning to get fouled. The water shortage in Simapuszta is even greater than in Nyirjes. Today the camp at Madopuszta is beginning to be filled.

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May 10. The transportation by Marangodpuszta goes on. The capacity of the tobacco barns there is not greater than 3000 persons, but on May 10 they brought there a large number of people in conditions of dangerous overcrowding. The camp has absolutely no water, since the attempt to dig a well was unsuccessful. Although the authorities allowed the bringing of urgent necessities, the gendarmes took all necessities away from the people at the entrance of the camp, even the greater part of the food. In the camps of Simapuszta, Varjulapos and Nyirejes, the daily food ration per capita is 100 gr. bread, 100 gr. potatoes, and 10 gr. oil.

May 15. Monday in the early morning hours the first 3,200 people, among them old people, invalids, infants, pregnant women, were put 70 per car into railroad cars with gross bodily ill-treatment, the surrounding population kept completely at a distance, to go to an "unknown destination".

May 22. In the early morning we learned by telephonic report that the number of those shipped off is over 9,600. There are no longer concentration camps in Nyirejes and Marangodpuszta, in Simapuszta there are still 760 people, in Nyiregyhaza there are only the members of the Jewish Council left.

May 23. Even the 760 Jews from Nyiregyhaza left in Simapuszta were taken away in railroad cars.

June 6. Through a telephone conversation with the police we learned that all Jews from Nyiregyhaza and the surrounding "pusztas" are already taken away, among them also the Chief Rabbi Dr. Bela Bernstein.

Munkacs.

April 30. The Jews from Munkacs, about 15,000 souls, were confined to 12 alleys. The Jews belonging to the Komitat Bereg, about 30,000 of them, were concentrated in the brickyards of Kallus and Sajovics. Since they could take neither money nor food with them, the camp is pitiful and catastrophic.

May 1. The German soldiers broke into the ghettos, during which many lives were sacrificed. Word came of three cases of typhus. On account of shortages of medicine and food, the camp is horrible. One doctor and one engineer committed suicide.

May 9. Two members of the Jewish Council were shot, the others seriously ill-treated.

May 14. The situation in the ghetto in the city, and especially in the two brickyards, has markedly deteriorated since Sunday morning. The Jewish functionaries and the Jewish auxiliary police were forbidden to leave the ghettos, i. e. the camps, which heretofore had been allowed. The brickyards were surrounded by camp police, and with this begins the transportation of those concentrated there. Families were not separated, employables and unemployables were put into railroad cars under the most dreadful circumstances, accompanied by terrible atrocities. On Monday a fresh transport was sent on its way. The number of the members of the Jewish Council was reduced from 12 to 6.

May 18.

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May 18. The larger camp, where approximately 15,000 persons were crowded together, was completely emptied by Wednesday, after the transportation which began on Sunday. The transport--70 to 80 persons per car--was sent in the direction of Kassa. Those transported might take nothing with them, their better clothes were taken off them, and each railroad car had only one bucket of water. These Jews, tormented to death, tried to break out of the car in Satoraljaújhely, and 30 of them luckily lost their lives in this way. The smaller camp was also liquidated. Those persons brought from Munkacs to the ghetto number 7,000. The Jews from Munkacs, who were brought to the ghetto, were transferred under difficult conditions to the empty bigger camp early in the morning of the 17th. The circumstances of the transfer were so brutal, that some persons attacked the police with knives. Hereby five Jews lost their lives. Those belonging to the categories of exceptions, even those doctors transferred here from the Ministry of the Interior, underwent the same fate.

May 30. We received the following shattering information: "Munkacs, Muszt, Nagyszollos are empty. The Jews were all transported away."

Nagyvarad.

May 3. In the very early morning the ghetto placards appeared, and already at 5 o'clock in the morning a detective accompanied by a policeman took all valuables from the Jews, and gave them 15 to 20 minutes to pack the most necessary clothes, bed-linen and provisions for 14 days. In one room 15 to 18 persons were crowded together, the windows on the street were boarded up, the ghetto was surrounded.

May 11. The guard on the surrounded ghetto was strengthened on the 11th. The police on duty there were replaced by gendarmes, so that it was impossible to approach the ghetto. As an indication of the strictness of the watch, those streets, one side of which belonged to the ghetto, such as for example Kertesz, Szacsavay and Kapucinus Alley, were watched by the gendarmes, who allowed the Christian inhabitants to go only on the sidewalk. Those so-called rich Jews, or those considered rich, were without exception arrested. They found themselves under arrest in the police station, and in the Gendarmerie of the city, where they had to undergo devilish treatment. Through this means they tried to get them to tell where they had hidden their alleged valuables. The Jewish Council was likewise arrested.

May 24. The "little ghetto", where the Jews from the surrounding country were concentrated, is now completely emptied. The people, tormented half to death, were put into railroad cars, 70 each. The large ghetto was more strictly surrounded and the anguish continued.

May 26. The entrainment continues, Nagyvarad is empty of Jews.

Kassa.

April 28. Eleven streets were assigned to the Jews of Kassa as a ghetto. On the 30th of April these were reduced to three. Finally, however, the greater part of the Jews of Kassa

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Massa were taken and placed in the brickyard.

May 2. The fate of the 12,000 Jews in the brickyard is catastrophic. Women, children, and old men are, indeed, sheltered under a roof in a drying-room of the brickyard, but the poor people, deprived of all their possessions, cannot be protected there, as the drying-rooms have no side-walls. Since the deportees had to leave their homes, which later were completely plundered, very suddenly, they came to the brickyard without the barest necessities and without provisions. Only 60 per cent of the deportees had provisions. Drinking water was brought once daily in the city sprinkling carts.

May 8. From a true old friend, a prominent personality, we received the following letter: "For some hours I am out of the horrors. The community kitchen needed me for a certain work, and I came out for a short time. I am afraid I cannot stand it for long, for we are suffering beyond description. We lie in the dust, have neither straw-mattresses nor covers, and will freeze to death. The place is sealed, I do not see any way out. Do not send me anything, we don't get it anyway. For some days we still have something to eat, how it will be later on, only God knows. There are about 15,000 persons here. The community-kitchen now gives us, after long waiting in line, a sort of soup-liquid, but who will continue to support this institution? The community won't be able to do so. I have not eaten for days, and hope in this way to shorten my way. We are so neglected, that we do not look human any more. There is no possibility for cleaning anything. We have not taken off our clothes since coming here. Best greetings to you all, pray for us that we shall die soon."

May 15. The first eight barracks of the camps were emptied. With that began the last stage of the suffering of the Jews from Massa. First 4,500 persons were put into railroad cars. The men and boys were completely undressed under the open sky, in front of the cars, so that they might hide nothing. The women and girls were examined in the same way by the gendarmes in the barracks. The four weeks of concentration have so completely ruined our brothers, that eight of them died when put into the cars. In each car were put, with terrifying brutality, 70 to 80 persons.

May 18. The evacuation is going on. The concentration camp was completely cut off from the outer world by the gendarmes and policemen. Even the members of the Jewish Council were not allowed to approach the camp.

May 20. In the evening, at 6 o'clock, the members of the Jewish Council were arrested. Those Christians who helped the Jews in some way were also put into cars and taken away together with the Jews.

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June 7. In Kassa there are no more Jews. In the same or similar circumstances the whole Jewish population of Hungary, with the exception of Budapest, was concentrated. During the next days the orders relative to Budapest were made public, and there was no doubt what fate was in store for the last city in Hungary which up to that time was not yet subject to concentration. At that time the following cities were completely empty of Jews: Munkacs, Ungvar, Beregszasz, Nagyszollos, Muzst, Maramarossziget, Nagyvarad, Nagybanja, Beszterce, Kolozsvar, Marosvasarhely, Szatmarnemeti, Matliszalka, Baja, Barcs, Bacstopolya, Ujvidek, Szabadka, Lenta, Zombor, Murakoz, Gyongyos, Satoraljaiuhely, Sarospatak, Szilagysomlyo, Szasregen, Sepsiszentgyorgy, Teeso, Aknaszlatina, Nagykaroly, Felsosviso, Nagykanisza, Kassa, Des, Nyiregyhaza, Miskolc.

The population of the following cities, together with the Jewish population of the surrounding country, was concentrated in ghettos and will be deported in the next few days: Komaron, Gyor, Dunaszerdahely, Miskolc, Rezs.

There follow the statistics on our brothers deported from each individual city:

Subcarpathia:

Munkacs	35,000	souls	
Ungvar	12,000	"	
Beregszasz	9,000	"	
Nagyszollos	8,000	"	
Muzst	12,000	"	
Maramarossziget	12,000	"	
Felsosviso	3,500	"	
Teeso	8,000	"	
Aknaszlatina	3,500	"	
iza	3,000	"	106,000 souls

Transylvania:

Nagybanja	14,000	souls	
Beszterce	8,000	"	
Kolozsvar	18,000	"	
Marosvasarhely	6,000	"	
Nagyvarad	25,000	"	
Des	6,000	"	
Szilagysomlyo	8,000	"	
Szasregen	6,000	"	
Sepsiszentgyorgy	3,000	"	94,000 souls

Upper Hungary:

Kassa	15,000	souls	
Satoraljaiuhely,			
Sarospatak	15,000	"	
Gyongos	5,000	"	35,000 souls

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Upper Hungary:

Nyiregyhaza	18,000	souls
Nisvarda	12,000	"
Mateszalka	12,000	"
Szatmarnemeti	25,000	"
Segykaroly	8,000	"
	<u>75,000</u>	souls

South Hungary:

Nagykanizsa	7,000	"
Baja	8,000	"
Bacs	2,000	"
Bacsstopolya	5,000	"
Ujvidek, Szabad- ka, Zenta, Zom- bor, Marakoz	3,000	"
	<u>25,000</u>	souls

From the 15th of May to the 10th of June, there were in all 335,000 Jews deported from Hungary.

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Budapest July

On the basis of reliable information, 90% of the Jews deported from Hungary were taken to Auschwitz in Upper Silesia.

We are in possession of an exact description of the extermination camp, Auschwitz. From our detailed protocol relative to this, which is well authenticated and confirmed from several sources, we are only giving a short extract. The protocol was taken word for word from the deposition of two young Slovakian Jews. One of them was taken on April 13, 1942, from the concentration camp of Szarad to Auschwitz and from there to Birkenau, and the other came on June 14, 1942, from the camp near Nowaky to Lublin, and from there to Birkenau and later to Auschwitz. These two deported Slovakian Jews succeeded, after long preparation and superhuman exertions, in escaping, and they are now in neutral territory.

"In Auschwitz we were brought directly to a big barracks. On one side of the barracks we had to strip and give up our clothes and valuables. In this state we went to a neighboring barracks, where after being completely shorn we were disinfected with Lysol. Each one received a number upon leaving the barracks. The numbers began at 28,600. With this number in our hands we were driven to a third barracks, where, as a sign of our admission, the number was tattooed on the left breast in the most brutal manner. From there we were driven, a hundred at a time, into a cellar, and then again into a barracks, where we received the clothes of convicts and wooden shoes. These clothes were taken from us on the same afternoon, and we received old ragged Russian uniforms. Thus we were brought to Birkenau.

"The camp commandant of Auschwitz supervised the work camp of Birkenau and Marmansé, the small farm of the camp. The prisoners were provided with consecutive numbers according to their entry into the camp. At the time of our escape, in the beginning of April, 1944, these numbers amounted to 180,000. Later the numbers were tattooed on the left foot. Although the treatment

of the

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of the prisoners was the same for all, still they were differentiated according to nationality and category of the 'crime', by means of different colored triangles with different letters on their outer clothing. (Pertinent details are to be found in the original protocol.) On the grounds of the camp at Auschwitz are the workshops of the DAW (German Armament Works), of the firms of Krupp and Siemens, a large factory of the BUM under construction. Here many of the prisoners work.

"The actual grounds of the camp cover a surface of 500 by 300 meters, surrounded by a double row of concrete pillars and high tension wires. Between the two fences, about 150 meters apart, there are watch-towers about five meters high, which are provided with machine-guns and searchlights. In front of the inner electric fence goes an ordinary wire fence. Any disturbance even at this fence is answered by firing from the watch-towers. This system of guarding is called the 'little chain of posts'. The camp itself consists of three rows of houses. Across from these stands the big chain of posts, which surrounds the whole camp in a circle of about two kilometers, with watch-towers 150 meters apart. On the camp grounds, between the little and the big chain of posts are the various workshops and labor areas. The little chain of posts is guarded only at night, and at the same time the electric current is turned on in the double wire fences. In the mornings, when the garrison of the little chain of posts goes off duty, the towers of the big chain of posts are manned by guards. It is nearly impossible to get through both chains of posts. The guards in the big chain of posts are relieved only after the number of prisoners in the little chain of posts is confirmed. When an escape is made, sirens are blown, and with the help of SS men and bloodhounds the fugitive is hunted for three days. After three days the search is given up. If the fugitive is caught alive, he is hanged in the presence of the whole camp. But if only his corpse is found, it is brought back to the entrance of the camp and a tablet is put in its hand with the inscription: 'here I am.'

"When we got to Birkenau, there were furnished a kitchen set up for 15,000 people, two completed houses, and one under construction. Each building is about 300 square meters big, and 400 to 500 persons are crowded together in them.

"Three days after my arrival I was sent with 200 Slovakian Jews to work in the DAW of Auschwitz. Our living quarters were still in Birkenau. Twice a day we got something to eat. Noontimes a liter of turnip soup, and in the evenings 300 grams of bad bread. Working conditions were the worst and hardest imaginable, so that most

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of us, weakened by hunger and un nourishing food, could not stand up under it. Out of our working group, 30 to 35 people died daily. Many were simply struck down while working by the 'Capos' (overseer). The deficiency resulting from this was daily made up from those left in Birkenau. When the second transport arrived, after 14 days, out of our transport of 650 persons only 150 people were left in the so-called 'sick house'. To it were brought the unemployable prisoners. We counted about 150 dead daily. The corpses were delivered to the Auschwitz crematorium.

At the same time began the so-called 'Selection'. Every week, Mondays and Thursdays, the Standortsarzt determined the number of prisoners who were to be gassed and their bodies burned. Those selected were loaded on a truck, which brought them to the neighboring Birkenwald. Whoever arrived there alive was gassed and burned in a pit. In the sick house, the notorious 'Block No. 7', about 2000 people died weekly, of whom about 1,200 died a 'natural' death, and about 800 through 'Selection'."

(in the original protocol there follows here very exact information on the origin, number, and identifying numbers of the deportees.)

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Exhibit M

Part III

Report of a Hungarian deported  
woman from the extermina-  
tion camp

In Munkacs we were brought in terrible circumstances together with other Jews from the vicinity, to a brickyard outside the city. There were a few thousand of us, who had mostly to live in the open. At first we received absolutely nothing to eat, and had to make out with the stocks we brought with us and packets sent by friends living in Munkacs. Later they opened a kitchen, from which we got just enough to keep us from starving. The men were taken out to work, they had to do quite pointless and worthless labor. They were severely beaten and exercised for hours. Among others, a Hungarian officer behaved himself very brutally.

Wednesday, the 17th of May this year, 3,300 of us were packed into 48 freight-cars, 75 in a car. We were told in behalf of Dr. Spiegel, who ran the chancery, that the Partfogy Brodaja had set aside a million zengo to enable us to be taken inland, to Horotbagy. Consequently, we left Munkacs in the belief that we were going to Horotbagy to work. As we passed Matoraljaufhely, some in our car expressed a certain doubt, because they maintained that we were going in the direction of Kassa, not Horotbagy. And sure enough we came to Kassa. There the cars were opened and Jewish members of labor battalions gave us water. They told us that we should take as much water as we could stock up, because we would get no more until reaching our destination. This proved to be true. We traveled for three days without the car doors being opened. I do not know the direction of the journey. A few, who stood by the window, said that we passed Arakau. On Saturday, May 20th, we arrived, after a fearful trip. There was no station to be seen, but there must have been one fairly near, since there were many railroad tracks there. Besides our transport there were three other transports standing on the tracks, two from Subcarpathia, one from Bacska. We had to get out. The baggage had to be left in the cars. This was taken out by young people with striped clothes, smeared with red color. We were separated into three groups: 1) Men, 2) Childless women and girls, 3) Women with children. The two first groups were led off in a direction where a few houses were

to be

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evening. I asked a railroad man, how I could get to Hungary, he asked me, whether I had papers. I answered, Of course. I asked for a ticket for Szloyva, because I saw exactly the same mountains as we have at home, and I assumed from that that I was near home. They answered me that they did not know the city. I was taken to an old gentleman, who also didn't want to know anything about this city. I was asked, where the station was; I naturally answered, in Hungary. They asked me again, if I had papers, I said I did. Since it was evening, I said that I would look them up and show them next morning. They were satisfied with this. Since I naturally wasn't going to wait until morning to show the papers, I went away from the station in the direction of the mountains on foot. I spent the night in the woods, in the morning I came to a hunter's house and asked, how I could get to Slovakia. I had been told, in the meantime, that Slovakia was over there. I was received in an unfriendly way and went on. Later I asked people, how to get to Slovakia, the direction was pointed out to me, but I was told that in this direction there was a border guard, and one could only pass there with papers. I naturally asserted that I had these, but went in another direction. I came back to Polish territory. A day and a night I wandered around, until I saw farmers working in a valley, who told me, that I was on Slovakian ground.

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Translation

Budapest, July 13, 1944

The present state of measures taken by the Hungarian Government with regard to Jews is as follows:

I.

1. The dispatch of Jews for work abroad is temporarily suspended.

2. In view of proposals submitted by the Swedish Red Cross, the Immigration Commission of Palestine, transmitted by the Swiss Legation, as well as by the War Refugee Board, the Hungarian Government has authorized the emigration of Jews to Sweden, Switzerland, Palestine and other countries.

a.) To Sweden, within the aforementioned scope of action of the Swedish Red Cross, Jews who will obtain from H. M. the King of Sweden Swedish nationality may emigrate.

Jews who have relatives in Sweden, or have had commercial connections for some time with that country may emigrate to Sweden or Palestine.

This category includes between 400 and 500 persons.

b.) Emigration to Palestine, with the assistance of the Immigration Commission of Palestine and with the intervention of the Swiss Legation at Budapest, has been authorized to several thousands of Jews.

The above-mentioned persons may emigrate to Palestine if they are in possession of an "Immigration Certificate" delivered by British authorities.

c.) On the basis of the above-mentioned proposals of

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the War Refugee Board, the Hungarian Government has authorized the International Red Cross to send Jewish children under 10 years of age to Palestine. The same Committee (Board) will be authorized to materially aid Jews interned in Hungary.

II.

Aside from the above-mentioned concessions the following alleviations have been accorded with regard to the treatment of Jews:

1. The sending of baptized Jews for work abroad has ceased for the future.

2. a.) The special administration of baptized Jews has been entrusted to the "Council of Baptized Jews" organized on July 6, 1944.

b.) Jews who have been baptized before August 1, 1941, may remain in the country but their segregation from non-Jewish persons will be ordered.

c.) They are entitled to all the advantages of practising their religion.

3. a.) Facilities provided for with regard to Jews domiciled at Budapest will be applicable to baptized Jews outside the capital.

b.) A revision on the subject of baptized Jews sent to work in Germany is envisaged.

4. It will be established, as soon as possible, who is to be considered as a converted Jew and that will be done not only for Jews between 16 and 60 years but for all Jews of all ages.

5. Non-converted Jews serving in labor groups in Hungary

will

will be replaced by baptized Jews.

6. Converted Jews will be authorized to leave their home on Sundays and religious holidays at a time which will permit them to satisfy the obligations of their religion.

7. The following are exempt from wearing a Jewish star:

- a.) Members of the family of ministers of a Christian faith (relatives, brothers and sisters, wives and children of Protestant pastors.)
- b.) Bearers of ecclesiastical decorations (Papal)
- c.) Members of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre.

III.

1. a.) Discretionary right is reserved by H.S.H. the Regent to exempt a certain number of Jews.

b.) Jews married to a person of Christian faith will be exempt.

c.) Jews who wear certain war decorations (Gold Medal of Military Bravery, etc.)

d.) Jews who have certain special merits.

e.) Priests of Christian cults.

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2. The departure of Jews for work abroad will be done within conditions respecting the laws of humanity and the Hungarian Red Cross will have the possibility of supervision.

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3.

3. The dispatch of parcels of foodstuffs will be authorized for persons interned in concentration camps through the channel of the Red Cross.

Budapest, July 18, 1944

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Number of Immigrants  
to Palestine from Turkey

January	1944	275
February		181
March		242
April		198
May		14
June		28
Total:		938

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NOTE

Mr. Katzki is communicating with Mr. Maxson, in the Military Attache's office in Istanbul, in order to attempt to have these questions answered by courier from Bucharest.

Mr. Wisner has been supplying information to the OWI.

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Istanbul, September 5, 1944

Mr. F. Wilderman:

Mr. Charles Fassman who, as you probably know, is now representing the Joint Distribution Committee in Istanbul in place of Mr. Masnik, has been consulting with us following the receipt of your letter addressed to Mr. Masnik and delivered through the kindness of Mr. Bratiano.

The United States War Refugee Board is actively and deeply interested in assisting refugees and oppressed peoples in German-occupied or satellite countries, and we were very much interested and impressed with the things that Mr. Bratiano had to say. His requests regarding relief contained in your letter are being carefully considered by Mr. Fassman, and you will hear from him more directly about this. In the meanwhile, in relation to rescue work we find that we are lacking considerable information which, if in our possession, would assist us greatly in assessing the refugee situation in Rumania with reference to the programs which we are trying to develop. It would be of tremendous aid to us if you could advise us in a number of matters which are troubling us, and in which we would like to have your judgment.

1. Do you have any information as to the number of non-Rumanian nationals, such as Poles, Hungarians, etc., who are now in Rumania? Are these refugees concentrated in one place, and are they being cared for? What is the status of these people in Rumania, in view of present circumstances? Is their evacuation to other countries urgent? If so, for what reasons?

2. Is there any chance, as you see it, for any ships to leave Rumania in the near future? I refer especially to the Myrtle and the Salahaddin. Under whose auspices would these boats leave?

3. Is there a need on the part of Rumanian nationals to depart for Palestine or elsewhere? I refer to

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departure for emergency reasons, and not ordinary  
voluntary migration. The desire of our Govern-  
ment is to help where rescue is urgently needed,  
and we are prepared to help perform that task.

We are greatly concerned over the reports  
of operations concerning the collecting tactics of  
gangs, and perhaps others in Bucharest, which,  
according to Mr. Hoffman, have resulted in the  
deportation of many thousands of those who have  
been evacuated from Romania. We cannot conceive any  
deal with Mr. Hoffman and I are both in agree-  
ment on this. Accordingly, we would appreciate  
your suggestions as to the manner in which  
migration or relief work might be organized, without  
commitment on our part, and in such time as circum-  
stances permit. Hoffman and myself are anxious to  
come to Bucharest to view the situation at first hand.

What present possibilities exist for  
conducting rescue operations through Rumania from  
Hungary, Slovakia, Poland, or elsewhere?

We sincerely appreciate the great personal efforts  
you have made and are making to meet the problems  
which lie close to you and to ourselves. We look  
forward to the continuation of this conversation and  
are hopeful that it will be possible to establish  
direct communication with you. We are anxious to  
obtain further information of developments, and as to the  
manner in which the War Refugee Board can be helpful  
in the circumstances.

Faithfully yours,

I. A. Hirschmann  
Special Attaché  
United States of America

P. S. / I would suggest that, for the sake of quick  
communication, you telegraph to me such information  
whenever, in your opinion, should be imparted to us  
promptly, and which is of such a nature that it can  
be sent through open wires. My address is, care of  
the American Consulate General in Istanbul.

I. A. H.

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EMBASSY OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
Istanbul, August 29, 1944

*Trunk*

Dear Mr. Pehle:

For your information, and in the event that you have not already received it from other sources, we are enclosing herein a translation of the Amnesty Decree issued by the new Rumanian Government, which relates in part to persons in Rumania who have been interned or imprisoned on political grounds.

We call your attention particularly to the special section decreeing the abolition of concentration camps in Rumania.

We have no further information, up to this moment, as to the manner in which the provisions of the Amnesty Decree are being executed, but we are pursuing the matter because of their connection with the efforts of the War Refugee Board in behalf of oppressed peoples in Rumania.

Cordially yours,

/s/ I. A. Hirschmann

I. A. Hirschmann  
Special Attache

Mr. J. W. Pehle, Executive Director  
War Refugee Board  
Treasury Building  
Washington 25, D. C.

Enclosure

CC - Messrs. Pehle, DuBois, Abrahamson, Friedman, Lesser

Miss Hodel

000268

Translation

August 23, 1944

AMNESTY DECREE

Regarding Decree No. 3072 of September 7, 1940,  
we decree:

Article 1. Amnesty is granted on all violations of law provided for by penal codes, military justice codes and special laws, brought to action (charged) or committed after January 1st, 1918, meted out on political charges, whether they have not been proved, are about to be investigated, or have been definitely tried, without regard as to whether they come under civil or military codes.

Article 2. Those persons do not benefit under the amnesty who, after January 1st, 1934, have been guilty of intention or execution of political infractions, either as moral or material authors or accomplices of political murders, murders, thefts, perpetrators or instigators of arson, or those who under the pretext of political activity have pursued such aims.

Article 3. Amnesty is granted for infractions committed by civilians or army men after January 1st, 1918, which are provided for by military justice codes, whether they have not as yet been discovered, are being investigated, or are now at the examining magistrate's, or have been definitely tried. These are:

Desertions, Article 545, 557 of the Code of Military Justice.

Non-submission to enlistment, Article 542, 544

Destruction of military objects, Article 558, 568 of the Military Code, as well as infractions provided for and punished under Articles 569, 570, 609, 611, 612, 615, 619, 617, 498, and 503 of the Military Justice Code.

Also, infractions intended or committed after January 1st, 1930, and provided for by special decrees:

Decree dated February 26th, 1940, and its amendments on requisitions; the decree for espionage of June 26th, 1930; the decrees on AA-defense; the decrees which deal directly with mobilization of the war, 1941-1944, as well as those provided for by military orders, regardless as to whether they are applied (meted out) to military men or civilians.

Article 4. Amnesty is granted for infractions committed after January 1st, 1918, whether they have been discovered or are by way of being investigated, or are now being tried, or even if they have been definitely judged:

a) for the peasants within the application of prestation tax, agricultural mobilization, the practical application of agricultural plans in war-time, as well as for infractions of public laws.

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b) for workers in industries and employees of all categories for having supported their claims, on professional questions, or for infractions of the application of the decree regarding regulation in time of war.

c) all infractions provided for by the law on religion, in relation to the persecutions of religious sects, and the decrees having a racial character.

Article 5. This decree applies to the perpetrators, their accomplices, and all those who have favored any infractions, as well as to any additional accomplices. Those definitely condemned will be restored to their political and civil rights. The Minister of Justice will see to the application of the present decree.

Bucarest, August 23, 1944. The President of the Council of Ministers, C. Sanatescu. The Minister of Justice, Lucretiu Pataskanu.

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Translation

August 23, 1944

DECREE REGARDING THE ABOLITION OF CONCENTRATION CAMPS

On the basis of Decree No. 3072, September 7, 1940, in conformity with a report issued by the Minister of Justice, we decree:

As from the publication of the present decree, all internment camps created by any administrative order are abolished on Rumanian territory. All those interned will be set free immediately without further formality. At the same time, from the publication of the present decree all administrative orders relating to forced domicile are abolished. Article 26 of Decree 236, dated February 5th, 1941; Decree 552 of March 2, 1943, as well as all other decrees contrary to the present decree are abrogated.

Signed: The President of the Council of Ministers,  
Constantin Sanatesou.

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THE FOREIGN SERVICE  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

AMERICAN EMBASSY  
Istanbul, August 5, 1944

Dear Mr. Abrahamson:

In connection with the fresh possibilities which now seem to exist for the emigration of Jewish people in Hungary to Palestine, Mr. Katzki has submitted to the Jewish Agency representatives in Istanbul the list of Jewish people in Hungary which you gave him prior to his departure. The Jewish Agency representatives in Istanbul have advised us as follows:

"The list is being checked by our office and unless the persons mentioned therein have already been approved, they will be now granted immigration certificates to Palestine."

Cordially yours,

I. A. Hirschmann  
Special Attache

Mr. Albert Abrahamson  
Assistant Executive Director  
War Refugee Board  
Treasury Department  
Washington 25, D. C.

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AMERICAN EMBASSY  
Istanbul, August 2, 1944

Dear Mr. Pehle:

I am enclosing herein a copy of an interesting report which I just received from the Jewish Agency representative in Istanbul.

1) Report dated July 7, 1944, including statistics on the situation of the Jews from Holland, etc. These figures were based upon information received by Mrs. Gertrude Van Tijn, who was a leader of the Jewish Refugee Committee in Amsterdam; Dr. Taubes, a veteran Zionist; and others. These people passed through Istanbul among the group exchanged for German nationals, as reported to you in a special cable on the subject.

2) A digest of reports regarding the situation of the Jews in Belgium.

3) On pages 3 and 4 of the report are some notes on the concentration camps in Holland. Page 5 contains some information about the camps in Poland.

I trust you will find these reports of interest.

Yours truly,

(s) I. A. Hirschmann

I. A. Hirschmann  
Special Attache

Mr. John W. Pehle, Executive Director  
War Refugee Board  
Treasury Department  
Washington, D. C.

Enclosures.

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Istanbul, 7.7.1944

Situation of Jews from Holland etc.  
(information received by  
Mrs. Van-Tijn, Dr. Tauber, etc.)

1) <u>HOLLAND</u> :	Departed to Poland . . . . .	110,000
	Interned in conc. c. Westerbork . . . . .	3,000
	" " " Bergen-Belsen . . . . .	4,500
	Hidden . . . . .	1,500
2) <u>BERGEN-BELSEN</u> :	Internees according to nationality	
	Holland . . . . .	1,380
	Without nationality . . . . .	1,320
	Double nationality . . . . .	600
	(Engl.-Holl.)	
	Paraguay . . . . .	180
	England . . . . .	270
	Equador . . . . .	150
	Palestine . . . . .	3
	Haiti, Peru and )	
	San Salvador ) . . . . .	80
	Honduras . . . . .	80
3) <u>VIENNA</u> :	Jews remaining in Vienna . . . . .	180
	Hidden . . . . .	2,000
	Mischlinge . . . . .	6,000
	Deported to Theresienstadt . . . . .	15,000
	(only 3,500 remained)	
	Deported to Poland.	48,000

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Digest of Reports  
regarding the situation of Jews in  
Belgium

Before the war there were about 100,000 Jews in Belgium. The majority of them emigrated (sic) to France after the occupation of Belgium but 55000 came back after the armistice.

In 1941 the Jews must present themselves to the police and wear the David star. 43,000 Jews, only 5000 of which are Belgian, declare themselves.

The Germans appoint the "association of the Jews of Belgium" to defend the Jewish interest. This association helped the German authorities by encouraging and even calling the Jews to present themselves to the police, or as workers for obligatory work. They were all interned in the camp of Malines, then deported about 1,500 at a time. The Germans also hunted the Jews everywhere and in every way. Thus the number of Jews deported so far is no less than 27,000

Clandestine Jewish Relief Organizations.

The Central Committee of Defense is responsible (sic) for everything concerning Jews. It works and collaborates with the Belgian National Movement of Resistance. It has two sub-committees.

1. Children's Committee
2. Social Relief Committee

In the central committee of Defense and in the children's committee the majority are communists.

The Belgian authorities as well as the national institutions (Red-Cross, National Relief etc.) have been most helpful in the renewal of identity cards for example and in many other ways.

Deportations.

First the Jews are concentrated in the Malines camp where they are allowed to get parcels. Since a certain time children and people above 50 years of age are not deported but are placed under the care of the "association of the Jews of Belgium". In July 1941 and October 1943 the number of deportees per month was 1500. Today about 800 every two months. At first about 200 Jews could escape from the trains every month, but now this has become impossible.

No news from those who were sent to Poland except an occasional letter telling of massacres. Numerous letters

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from Upper-Silesia where Jews work in mines, underfed, with no medical care. They are sent to Poland when they are too weak to work.

About 15-18,000 Jews are left in Belgium.

I. Jews with a legal status. (about 5000)

- a) 3000 personal of the A.J.B.
- b) 600-800 people above 60 years of age, taken care of by the A. J. B.
- c) 400 children
- d) 200 sick people living in two Jewish hospitals.
- e) 600 Jews in concentration camp of Malines.

II. Jews in illegal position.

12,000 Jews are hiding. 1800 children were hidden in convents or in Christian families by the children's committee, who looks after them and has a monthly budget of 1,000,000 Belgian Francs that comes from the Joint through certain Belgian banks, from a monthly collection of money raised by the members of the committee, from contributions from national Belgian institutions and from certain private donors.

1,000 children placed in families by their parents.  
1,000 children hiding with their parents  
8,000 adults hiding. (3,600 in Brussels, 600 in Antwerp 800 in the country)

The minimum sum needed to survive is 1000 francs per month per person, but the central committee can give only 300 to a person plus a parcel, or 400 francs to a couple plus two parcels. The number of those who need help and cannot get it is augmenting every day. The Red-Cross and the Belgian national Relief gives 8000 food parcels a month to the central committee, who has a monthly budget of 1,200,000 francs (200,000 being the normal monthly budget of the A.J.B. and 1,000,000 from the Joint).

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Barneveld

At Doethuchem 8 Jews, former members of the N.S.B. live freely but cannot leave the city.

At Barneveld in two castles, Jews who had rendered service to Holland in different fields were interned under the supervision of a director and 6 assistants who are antigermans. They are not obliged to work, but must cook and keep the place clean.

Chaloutsim at Westerbork

The first big group which stayed in W. came from a Ni-ha Kiboutz the 1.10.42. Most of the Chaloutsim were saved from deportation due to their producing work and to their connections. They lived in barracks (sic), worked out of the camp, in a broom factory in winter, and with peasants in the summer. They continued their work of education. In September 40 they had to leave for Poland, about ten were sent in a camp in Southern Germany with all those who had certificates for Palestine.

By Aspera ad astra.

Westerbork

Former camp for emigrants, who had illegally arrived from Germany. After German occupation only for Jews. At the beginning of 1942 all Jews of German origin and all others from 18 to 55 years of age were concentrated there. A German commander (Deppner) was appointed besides the Dutch one. The camp was enlarged and used as a transit camp. In July 750 young Jews ordered to go to work in Germany came to Westerbork with no luggage except a rucksack. They had to get inscribed at the Judenrat and declare their wealth. In August 600 Jews who had tried to escape from going to Germany were caught and came to W. in terrible condition. Thereafter deportees were allowed to take only 10 R.M. From a concentration camp at Amersfort came 250 Jews most of whom were converted and 50 of which were priests etc. Every week 2 convoys left for Auschwitz.

Life and Conditions at Westerbork

The Jews themselves were in charge of the canteen and of the service in the camp, as well as of the office of "reclamations" where one could write a petition to be freed if one were a foreigner, a half-Jew, or a diamond worker. The German commander had a Jew as an assistant. The camp had a special body of men acting as police (Ordnungsdienst) who were in charge of keeping order, transporting the luggage and keeping watch over the camp prison (Strafbaracks)

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Food very poor. In two dormitories containing 150 places, 1000 Jews were packed with one washstand and one W.C. in every dormitory. They were not given any blankets. They had to work twelve hours a day plus hours of exercise, even on Sundays. For any small reason people were sent to the camp prison or S/baracks. Even here one could bribe the Germans with money and diamonds. Sometimes the Dutch policemen would help a Jew to escape. The 54 Dutchman who watched the camp were thieves or murderers freed from prison to become SS. Every two months the Dutch police would be changed. The Chalouzin killed the earth watched by the police. In June 1943 a "recreation" group formed by 50 artists under the direction of Max Ehrlich gave concerts or shows.

On the 1st of October all the Jews working in camps came to Westerbork followed by their families. Thus 12000 Jews came and there was food for 3500 only. Many died of hunger.

In a camp for training SS, experiments were made on Jews, they were buried alive up to the neck or were fed on half a liter of soup a day. They were all carried to the hospital of Westerbork. All those whom I saw had their flesh decomposed and their bones showing and many had to be amputated (sic) of a leg or arm.

Every Tuesday or Friday a train left with 1000 Jews for Auschwitz to Poland. Old people of 99 years of age, the sick as well as the crazy were packed in wagons and sent to W. In May 1943 no Jews were left in Amsterdam except those working for the Judenrat. The Jewish quarter was surrounded by the German police and the Jews were sent directly to Poland.

3000 sick children were sent to the camp at Vught; 50% of them died there, but three days later they were again packed in merchandise wagons, the living and the dead together.

The last action took place on September 23, 1943. All the Jews were arrested and sent to Westerbork including the Judenrat. Only the Jews married to Christians were left. In Holland, officially, no Jew is left.

#### Vucht

At first 600 Jews (300 men and 300 women) arrived at the former concentration camp of Vught as specialists to prepare barracks for different industries such as textile, diamond, leather and electrotecnic (Philips). Mr. Bluth of the Judenrat went to Vught to talk over certain questions with the camp authorities. He is responsible for having propagated the news that the conditions at Vught were satisfactory. In reality 8,000 Jews work terribly until they are sent further on. There is no medical care and the men see their wives and

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children only once every fifteen days.

Letter and Information about the camps

In Poland

About 1,500 letters received from Poland through the Judenrat, from Monevitz, Lesnovitz. Men and women are separated, food is poor, work hard and treatment bad. In many cases we found out that the letters were dictated to the expeditors. Illegal letters coming with the Westerbork-Poland train informed us that the deportees passed through Bremen, Breslau, Berlin or Auschnitz. The trip lasted three days. Sometimes the German Red-Cross would give bread and coffee or soup or nothing. Near Breslau there was a camp for the Jews of Rotterdam and a big camp with stone houses near Auschnitz.

The night before the departure of the convoy it was forbidden to leave the barack to prevent running away or hiding in the camp. At 4 o'clock in the morning the ones who were leaving were notified. Luggage was carried to the train by porters of the "Voluntary Column". At first the trains were normal with seats for everyone, and beds for the sick and for people above 75 years of age. After May 80 people were packed in wagons of merchandise trains. The sick 25 in a wagon get a bit of straw to sleep on.

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THE FOREIGN SERVICE  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

AMERICAN EMBASSY

Istanbul, August 2, 1944

Dear Mr. Pehle:

The enclosed reports were made available to us by a representative of one of the Palestine agencies engaged in relief and rescue work in Istanbul.

1) A report regarding the method of operation of one of the centers for the destruction of Jewish property. I have copied this report exactly as it was received in Istanbul, through underground channels.

2) A report on the deportation of Jewish people from the town of ~~Warsaw~~. This was one of the larger Jewish communities in Europe.

It is clear that both the foregoing reports are fragmentary in nature, and it may well be that additional sections will be received in due course. Should we succeed in obtaining copies thereof, we shall, of course, send them to you.

In another fragmentary message, which arrived from Polish underground channels under date of June 6, we learned that on May 15, 68 railwa. carriages carrying Jewish children between the ages of two and eight, and from the 15th to the 27th of May, daily six trains of adults passed through the city of Krakow, coming from Hungary.

The above may help to convey an idea of the conditions which exist in Central Europe. It may be read as a commentary upon statements which one has heard from time to time that the Hungarian authorities had no part or responsibility in the deportation of Jews to Poland.

Yours truly,

*I. A. Hirschmann*  
I. A. Hirschmann  
Special Attache

Mr. John W. Pehle, Executive Director  
War Refugee Board  
Treasury Department  
Washington, D. C.

Enclosures

7-10-28

Unsubscribed report no. 1 July 4, 1944

38.000 - 38.600 600 naturalized french Jews. These Jews arrived with their relatives (altogether about 1600 persons). Therefrom came about 400 men and 200 women, wearing the above numbers, to the usual manner, in the camp whereas the other 1000 french Jews: women, old men, children, were simply sent on a nearby rail in the Birkenwald, and were put to death by gas and burned.

From then on each Jewish transport was handled in the same way. About 10% of the deported men and 5% of the deported women were sent to the camp, the others immediately put to death by gas and burnt.

The putting to death by gas and the burning was executed by the so-called "special detachment" which worked in two layers, day and night. During this time the Jews were put to death by gas and burned at a number of 100.000.- The persons of the "Special detachment" lived separately. Because of the corpse-scent, which they spread, we were not left in contact with them. They were always dirty (sic), completely unpruned and brutal.

In February 1943 the newly constructed crematory and the gas-room were opened. For the moment there are 4 crematories in Birkenau: The crematories consists of three parts:

- a) burning-stoves
- b) "bathing-hall"
- c) gas room.

From the middle of the stoves a high chimney stands out, around which nine stoves with each 4 openings are constructed. Each opening can contain three normal corpses. The capacity of the stoves is of 2000 corpses daily. Nearby is a big preparation hall which is constructed as to give the impression of a bathing establishment. The hall can contain 2000 persons and as it is pretented (sic), there are beneath big waiting rooms too. From here a door and some stairs lead to the gas-room, which is below, very long and narrow. On the wall of the gas-room are applied imitations of shower-arrangement, so that the rooms awakes the impression of a giant bathing-room. On the flat roof of the room is a window, which is closed hermetically by three valves. From the gas-room, rails are leacing through the hall to the stoves. The victims are lead (sic) into the hall, where they are told to get a bath. There they undress themselves and in ordor (sic) to strengthen their belief, they get a towel and soap. Then they are driven into the gasroom. After closing the doors, the SS-men spread through the valves into the room, a powderlike preparation out of tins. On the tins is the inscription "Cyclone for combating the nuisance" and they wear the mark of a Hamburg factory. Probably it is a zyan-preparation which, at a certain temperature, gets sort of gas. After three minutes everyone is dead.

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Kassa.

April 28. 11 streets were assigned to the Jews as a ghetto. These were reduced to three, on the 30th of April. At least the greater part of Jews of Kassa were nevertheless sheltered in the brick-yard.

May 2nd. The fate of the 12,000 Jews sheltered in the brick-yard is catastrophic. Women, children and old persons are sheltered under a roof in a drying-room of the brick-yard, but the poor persons deprived of all their goods, cannot be protected there, as the drying-rooms have no side-walls. As the evacuated had to leave at once their lodgings- which afterwards were completely robbed- they arrived at the brick-yard without the slightest equipment and without food. Only 60% of the evacuated got food. Drinkwater is brought there once a day by the watering-cars of the town.

May 8th. From a true old friend, a high personality, we got following letter: "for some hours I am out of the horrors. The community kitchen needed me for a certain work, and I came out for a short time. I fear, I can't stand it for long, for we are suffering beyond description. We lay in the dust (have neither straw-mattress nor cover) and will freeze to death. The lodging is sealed, I do not see any way out. Do not send me anything, we don't get it anyway. For some days we have still something to eat, how it will be furtheron, only God knows. Here are about 15,000 persons. The community-kitchen gives already yet, after long waiting in a line, a sort of soup-liquid. But who will continue to support this institution, the community won't be able to do so. I don't eat for days and hope so to shorten my way. We are so neglected, that we do not look humanlike anymore. No possibility for cleaning. Since we are here, we did not take off the clothes. Bestgreetings to you all, pray for us, we should die soon.

May 15th. The first 8 barracks of the camp were emptied. With that begun the last steps of the suffering of the Jews from Kassa. First 4800 persons were put into waggons. The men and youngsters were completely undressed under the open sky, in front of the waggons, so that they may hide nothing. The women and girls were examined in the same way by the constables in the barracks. The four weeks of concentration, have so completely ruined our brothers, that 8 of them died when put into the waggons. In a waggon were put, under terrifying brutalities- 70 to 80 persons.

May 18th. The evacuation is going on. The concentration camp was completely cut off from the outer world by the constables and policemen. Even the members of the Jewish council were not allowed to approach the camp.

May 20th. In the evening at 6 o'clock, the members of the Jewish council are arrested. Those christians who helped the Jews in some manner, were also put in waggons and taken away together with the Jews.

June 7th. No Jew is anymore left in Kassa.



THE FOREIGN SERVICE  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

AMERICAN EMBASSY

Istanbul, July 29, 1944

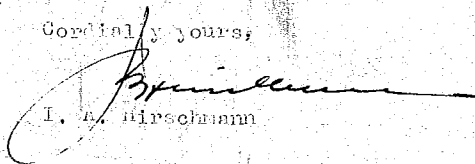
Dear Sir :

Enclosed is a copy of a letter from Budapest of July 18, 1944, reported to have been written by one of the members of the Jewish Central Committee in Budapest. The gist of the contents of the letter was contained in a telegram from Joseph Schwartz of the Joint Distribution Committee to his office in New York.

The letter is being forwarded to you at this time in the event that the full information contained therein has not yet been made available to you through other channels.

Also included is a report from Bratislava with details relating to the concentration camps in Hungary which may be of interest.

Cordially yours,

  
I. A. Hirschmann

Mr. John Fahle, Executive Director  
War Refugee Board  
Treasury Department  
Washington 25, D.C.

Enclosures

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August, June 14, 1944

I have just been advised that in all things the most of the money to which the first 20,000 are to be sent will be used for food. If it is a question of persons unable to work (children, women, sick and old people), the maintenance of the camps will have to be taken care of until they are transported to Berlin. After preliminary quite modest calculations the conclusion was reached that per person and day one must figure at least half a franc. This would mean, therefore, that monthly for the feeding of 20,000 need at least half a billion Swiss franc must be at disposal. On this the people of the KZ (concentration center), where they had to leave behind all their property, including clothes, and hence camp must be taken of every little thing. . . . Covers, linen, clothing, shoes and so on had to be prepared. Here, too, one will have to figure with a low estimated minimum sum of 25.00 fr. The total cost would amount, therefore, to 750,000 fr. Medicines and other hygienic means must also be kept in readiness. These would have to be prepared by the "KZ".

My proposal would be that, in order to unify all these actions, an amount of 860,000 dollars shall be available in Switzerland, which amount shall be disposed of by a local action committee under the chairmanship of Dr. Philip von Freudiger. To this committee ought to belong further: Dr. Roscoe Pastner, Julius Jank, Joel Brand and Josef Blum.

It can not be sufficiently often emphasized of what importance the immediate availability of moneys is. The moneys ought to be available at any time and in appropriate amounts, for only in this way can one hope that at least part of the Jews living here will remain alive.

1) therefore, recapitulate: (1) For general expenditures an amount of 500,000 dollars is to be kept in readiness.	500,000 dollars
2) for the cost of maintenance for temporarily 30,000 persons, 500,000 fr. per month	125,000 dollars
3) for clothing and equipment, 750,000 fr.	150,000 "
4) medicines and hygienic supplies per month	25,000 "
5) for unforeseen costs in connection with the camps	20,000 "
	<hr/> 860,000 dollars

Rebelle's death sentence shall not be able to furnish until we receive your concrete data.

First, the report is directed to the writing of these lines and I must, therefore, be as brief as possible. Weeks ago I still thought I shall soon speak to you personally, unfortunately I have not been able to realize my plan. Many mistakes have been made and I, too, unfortunately, fell victim thereto. But I have not given up the hope that you will be able to help me. I shall still endeavor to do it with you and the other friends. I am still with my family and my colleagues, but I am not sure. To describe the events which occurred since the 15th of March it will be a long and tiresome task of 1.1 liter. Each paragraph ought to fill volumes, nevertheless, I want to try to describe them in a few brief sentences.

- 1) Decree on wearing the star
- 2) Cancellation of non-Jewish citizenship
- 3) Withdrawal of foreign and radio concessions
- 4) Elimination of businesses
- 5) Expropriation of Jewish property and blocking the same
- 6) Driving out all attorneys

These decrees revealed the intention of the establishment of ghettos. According to the decrees, Jews must not reside in places of less than 10,000 inhabitants, but even in places where the number of inhabitants are over 10,000 Jews must be separated from non-Jewish population.

Subject to the so-called anti-Jewish decrees are also those Christians who belong to at least two (non-Jewish) grand-fathers.

7) Concerning deportations for Jews, only bread is left in the same quantity. The most horrible of all decrees was the ghetto decree. The establishment of ghettos was begun already at the beginning of May, but even in those the Jews could not stay long, for soon they were brought into concentration camps in order to be deported from there.

The first ghettos were established in the cities which were restored to Hungary in the year 1920, as well as in sub-Carpathia and Transylvania, as well as in the southern regions, and the deportations were carried out. Out of about one million souls, there have been deported to this day about 400,000, further transports are being prepared. In the following days transports will leave from Miskolc and from the Trans-Danubian cities. It is planned by the State Secretary, Andre to free Hungary completely from Jews until the end of August. Even those privileged by law (invalids of the First World War or distinguished soldiers) were deported. The first reports on the deported have already arrived, persons able to work were partly brought to Maldece in the

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RECEIVED  
JUL 10 1944  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

vicinity of Ludwigschan, about 750,000 postal cards came from there. The reports on the fate of the others are, unfortunately, not clear.

Upper Hungary, Cut-Carpathia, Transylvania and South Hungary are free from Jews. From Transylvania, mainly from Kolozsvar, there came a group of 300 persons, who were sheltered in a local, so-called privileged town. We shall speak in detail on this plan and similar ones which are being planned. Among the Kolozsvareans are found, among others, Joel Weitzelbaum, chief Rabbi Szatmar, Akiba Glantz, chief Rabbi Kolozsvar, Dr. Josef Fischer, Dr. Theodor Fischer, Miksa Lehmann.

The plan which is dictated here on Jewish matters can not be described. Usually the German and Hungarian authorities issue measures and decrees which can hardly be followed. The Jewish council, which consists mainly of the leaders of the cultural communities, is not quite fit for the tasks. One man stands out most prominently in the person of the Pressburg chief rabbi's son-in-law, and to his efforts as well as to the efforts of a few other persons will it be due if the plan is carried out whereby a few thousand persons will save themselves.

You have probably been most accurately informed on the negotiations carried on during the last weeks by Joel Brand. I am assuming that the JIC was also shoved into this action. It is, therefore, a question of saving persons in the manner of a deportation. The Aschkenazim, naturally, wish, as you know, to bring people to Spain by adequate counter-performance. Should you not be informed on this action, which I do not assume, I beg you to communicate immediately with the people in Istanbul and get detailed information thereon. My advice to you would be that immediately upon receipt of these lines you betake yourself to Spain and urgently negotiate with the Government there to take over the transports. The German authorities decidedly decline another solution, a journey to Turkey does not come into question at all, there remains, therefore, open this only way through Spain. Therefore, care should be taken that:

- 1) Reception camps for five to six thousand a week be available.
- 2) That this weekly quota per ship be further carried to Palestine.

On point 1) it is to be remarked that the number 6,000 is not fixed, it may eventually amount to a threefold or fourfold figure. Therefore, care should be taken that if eventually this number arrive the reception possibility be secured.

at point 2): Should Palestine be unable to receive at once 50,000 -- 50,000 persons, then North Africa or another State ought to be ready to accept them; these people temporarily should again not agree to their temporary sojourn. Should, finally, this part of the question be settled, the first transport could be immediately sent off. Generally it could be said that the people are being deported, the Germans want to have it so, and as concerns the Hungarians it would still be a question of transportation. It is, unfortunately, to be ascertained, and thereby is enhanced the cruelty of the Jews in Hungary, that both authorities endeavor to surpass each other in cruelty and hence Judaism is being ground between two millstones.

He who acts quickly helps doubly and, therefore, I beg you, to do everything just urgently in order that what is to be or can still be saved may be saved.

In the next days the establishment of the local ghetto is expected. Three meters per person is estimated, at the same time thousands of excellent objects, this is the prelude to further actions.

I hope that you have received my hand-written letter. In this letter I begged you to help in raising an amount of 500,000 dollars. This request has already been overtaken by the deportation action, which is now in full swing. Nevertheless, I must beg you to keep an amount of temporarily 500,000 dollars at Saly's at our disposal in order that, in case of necessity, the expenditures here, which rise daily, can be covered. You would not believe it that lack of money prevails here after every day, prior to March 10, took to flight before the enemy and invested his property in merchandise; money for the most part anyway things can be raised only with the greatest difficulty. I beg you to inform also to the person of Mr. Freudiger, member of the Council, the right to dispose over this amount as well as over several other amounts which are due in the for this country. At the same time, I beg to be instructed to make no difficulties for us and to omit certain formalities, finally, we are serious and responsible men who know just as well as we know the intentions of the money beneficiaries.

Finally, I should like to advise you that I have heard about Gittermann and Szajb. Have you also heard about this? Both are said to be in the Reich as resident citizens, allegedly since July, 1943.

Perhaps you have the possibility to send me news, in the same manner in which I am sending you these lines, about your health and about the condition of our friends, then I beg you to do so. Particularly will you let me know whether your efforts in our favor have been successful. You would thus gladden and comfort many Jewish hearts. May God help us!

With many hearty greetings in the hope that I may be privileged in this life to see you, I sign

Sincerely yours,

P.S. If you have the possibility to procure some identification  
documents, or so if other protection through I. R. K., please  
let this, too, many thanks!

Prepared by  
Sgt. J. Selman  
August 26, 1947.

Bratislava, June 18, 1944

Since my last report there have elapsed three to four weeks, no long interval, but so much of decisive importance in the life of European Jewry has happened as never before. Up to this day 400,000 men have been deported, and it is declared quite clearly that nothing can be changed about the complete execution of the Imperial Service, so this is a matter decided upon.

For judgment, it is said, no decision has been taken about its fate, but we do not deceive ourselves with vain hopes and here, too, we are prepared for the worst. At the same time it is already openly admitted by the Aschkenazim that a selection of the deported human material is taking place, namely: 1) men able to work 2) girls able to work and childless women 3) persons unable to work and children. The first two groups, according to promise, are supplied for various works. From these is destroyed in the ill-famed Auschwitz. These are the naked facts!

We have reported in due time that a trusted man (Joel), equipped with our recommendations, was sent to Buscha with the power of attorney that a first certain merchandise services counter-services were promised on the part of the Aschkenazim, which were expressed on our part in the wish for the suspension of deportation. This man arrived there, negotiated and there came from all very promising reports on a complete success of his journey. With this success in his pocket and with the agreements in his hands he was expected here fully, but, unfortunately, circumstances shaped themselves so that, instead of returning, he had to continue his journey to Trebn. Now he sits there, willy nilly, and he hangs, and every day 12,000 Jewish men leave our ranks. Meanwhile the happenings toppled over: what before was actual is to-day no longer an object of negotiations about a suspension of deportation in general, there can no longer be any question about that. What can be negotiated about is the saving of a small part of the men unable to work and of the children, and the alleged promise that nothing will befall the Jews assigned to work and that they will generally receive maintenance like the other labor categories there. Unfortunately, we must be satisfied with these meagre promises and spend all our strength in order to secure a bare livelihood at least on this line. In this connection the following plan is available:

In Aschkenaz's three camps are being erected, each for 10,000 men of these categories unable to work, which, however, must be furnished and maintained exclusively by us or by foreign Jews (for the settlement



in Auschwitz could not put in any other names to the Aschkenazim, except the gas cost, and to say for this they are unable and unwilling. These camps would have the destination of being transit (corridor) camps, with the final object of letting these men emigrate to Palestine or other countries in so far as emigration possibilities to Africa, America, etc. are available and others will be ready to carry these people further.

It is, therefore, your first and most important task to coordinate through the Joint (Distribution Committee) in Lisbon in this direction. To negotiate with the proper authorities about the necessary facilities and continued migration possibilities, for this purpose to shelter in interim (provisional) camps in Spain until the possibility of emigration is given, the maintenance of the men and children, providing them with everything necessary, in short, all the questions connected with such transports must be thoroughly worked out and conscientiously organized.

In connection with this problem, as a first transport 1000 men will depart directly from here, in which are to be included many prominent public men, their families, and so on. This transport would be sheltered at first in the German provisional camp and sent further as soon as the emigration possibility into the Iberian Peninsula is secured. If it is possible for you, it would be, therefore, extremely urgent to intervene with these two Governments or embassies in order that the emigration permission be granted immediately, if not elsewhere, then into a pick-up camp, and the U. S. could also be inserted. Perhaps the help of the Allied representatives could also have to be obtained and it might be pointed out that all these men will continue their journey to Iraq as soon as possible, for the Iraqis have certificates. If 1,000 obtain quickly permission to immigrate into Iberia, it might contribute to the possibility of having the others in the above-mentioned camps, and if these continue their journey, they could be filled again -- presuming it is not too late. At any rate, however, if it is shown by the Aschkenazim that the matter is seriously taken in hand, there is a greater guarantee and security for the men sheltered in Spain and no ill-will is reserved. Please take this important circumstance into consideration in your efforts and in your work, as it is a question of saving the best of Hungarian Jewry without making any concessions.

For I am reverting to the fundamental problem of supervising these camps. The first of these transports will be dispatched this week from Nikolic, Gdr, Komarov, Gresskivay, on the whole 12,000 men in the category of those unable to work. They arrive in camps, which, it is said, have nothing but straw and paper straw sacks. We must equip the camps

1947-1948  
The following information was obtained from a review of the records of the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, for the years 1947 and 1948. It is noted that the total number of acres of public lands in the State of California is approximately 100,000,000 acres.

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Prepared by:  
Date: 10/23, 1947

Bratislava den 18.6.44

Seit meinem letzten Bericht sind drei bis vier Wochen vergangen, keine grosse Zeit, es geschah aber soviel Entscheidendes im Lebens des ung. Judentums, wie nie zuvor. Bis zum heutigen Tage sind 400.000 Menschen deportiert worden und es wird klipp und klar erklart, dass an der vollkommenen Raemung der ung. Provinz nichts geandert werden kann, da dies beschlossene Sache sei.

Fuer Budapest, heisst es, dass noch keine Entscheidung ueber dessen Schicksal gefallen sei, wir tauschen uns jedoch nicht, mit vergeblichen Hoffnungen und sind auch hier auf das Schlimmste gefasst. Dabei wird schon von Aschkenas offen zugegeben, dass eine Selektion des deportierten Menschenmaterials stattfindet und zwar: 1) Arbeitsfaehige Maenner 2) arbeitsfaehige Maedchen und kinderlose Frauen - 3) Arbeitsunfaehige und Kinder. Die ersten zwei Gruppen werden der Zusicherung nach verschiedenen Arbeiten zugefuehrt. Gruppe drei wird im beruechtigten Auschwitz vernichtet. Das sind die nackten Tatsachen!

Wir haben seinerzeit berichtet, dass ein Vertrauensmann (Joel) auch mit unseren Empfehlungen ausgestattet, nach Kuschta entsendet wurde mit der Vollmacht, dass gegen gewisse Warenleistungen, aschkenas-seits Gegenleistungen zugesagt wurden, die unsererseits in dem Wunsch zur Einstellung der Deportation zum Ausdruck kamen. Dieser Mann kam dorthin an, verhandelte und es kamen von ihm sehr verheissungsvolle Berichte ueber einen vollkommenen Erfolg seiner Reise. Mit diesem ~~Ergebnis~~ Erfolg in der Tasche und mit den Abmachungen in der Hand, wurde er hier taeglich erwartet, doch haben sich die Umstaende ungluecklicherweise so gestaltet, dass er statt retour, seine Reise nach Eretz fortsetzen musste. Jetzt sitzt er, gewollt oder ungewollt dort und wir hier, und jeden Tag gehen weitere 12000 Jued. Menschen aus unseren Reihen. Inzwischen haben sich die Geschehnisse ueberstuerzt: was fruher aktuell war, ist heute mehr kein Gegenstand von Verhandlungen von einer Einstellung  
**REX**

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der Deportation im allgemeinen, kann mehr keine Rede sein. Worueber verhandelt werden kann, ist die Rettung eines kleinen Teiles der arbeitsunfaehigen Menschen und Kinder und die angebliche Zusicherung dass den in der Arbeit eingereihten also Juden nichts zustossen wird und im allgemeinen die Verpflegung erhalten, wie die sonstigen Arbeitskategorien dort. Mit diesen kaerglichen Zusicherungen muessen wir uns leider zufrieden geben und alle Kraft aufwenden, um wenigstens auf dieser Linie das nackte Leben zu sichern, alles getan zu haben. In diesem Zusammenhange besteht folgender Plan:

In Aschkenas werden drei Lager fuer je 10.000 Menschen dieser arbeitsunfaehigen Kategorien errichtet die aber ausschliesslich von uns bzw. von auslaendischen Juden eingerichtet und erhalten werden muessen (denn die Erleichterung in Auschwitz wuerde doch den Aschk. ausser den Gaskosten keine sonstigen Ausgaben verursachen und Graufzahlen koennen und wollen sie doch nicht). Diese Lager haetten die Bestimmung Durchgangslager zu sein, mit dem Endzweck, diese Menschen nach Spanien oder Portugal auswandern zu lassen, sofern Ausreisemoeglichkeiten nach Braz, Afrika oder Ueberssee vorhanden sein werden und Schiffe bereitstehen, diese Menschen weiter zu befoerdern.

Es ist daher Ihre allererste und wichtigste Aufgabe, sich durch Baly mit dem JOINT in Lissabon in dieser Richtung insinvernehmen zu setzen. An zustaendiger Stelle um die noetigen Einreisen und weiterreisemoeglichkeiten zu verhandeln, evt. zu diesem Zwecke die Unterbringung in Interimslagern in Spanien, bis die Moeglichkeit der Einschiffung gegeben ist, die Versorgung der Menschen und Kinder mit allem Noetigen, kurz es muessen alle mit solchen Transporten zusammenhaengende Fragen gruendlich bearbeitet und gewissenhaft organisiert werden.

Im Zusammenhang mit diesem Problem sollen als erster Transport 1000 Menschen evt. direkt von hier abgehen, in welchem viele Prominente, Rabbonim, deren Familien usw. eingereiht werden sollen. Diesen Transport wuerden sie auch zuerst in den deutschen Interimslager unterbringen und weiterexpedieren

sobald die Einreisemöglichkeit nach der iberischen Halbinsel gesichert ist. Wenn es in unserer Möglichkeit besteht, wäre es daher ausserst dringend bei diesen zwei Regierungen oder Botschaften zu intervenieren, dass die Einreisebewilligung sofort erteilt werden, wenn nicht anders so in ein Auffangslager und könnte auch das R. K. eingeschaltet werden. Vielleicht müsste die Hilfe der alliierten Vertretungen auch in Anspruch genommen werden und könnte darauf hingewiesen werden, ~~xxxii~~ dass all diese Menschen sobald als möglich nach Brez weiterfahren, denn der grösste Teil besitzt Zertifikate. Wenn tausend die Einreise nach Iberien rasch erhalten, so möchte das dazu beitragen, die Uebrigen in den obenwähnten Lagern halten zu können und wenn diese weiter so könnten diese frisch ausgefüllt werden - vorausgesetzt, dass es nicht zu spät wird. Jedenfalls aber, wenn aschkenazeits gezeigt wird, dass die Sache ernst angepackt wird, besteht mehr Bürgschaft und Sicherheit dafür, dass die in den Lager untergebrachten Menschen erhalten bleiben werden. Diesen wichtigen Umstand wollen Sie bei Ihren Bemühungen und bei Ihrer Arbeit erwägen, es gilt ja, ohne sich in Uebertreibungen einzulassen, den Rest des ungarischen Judentums zu retten.

Nun komme ich auf das Grundproblem der Erhaltung dieser Lager zurück. Die ersten dieser Transporte werden diese Woche aus Miskolc, Győr, Komárom, Érsekújvár abgefertigt, insgesamt 12.000 Menschen der Kategorie der Arbeitsunfähigen. Sie kommen in Lagern an, die laut Behauptung nichts anders als Stroh und Strohsäcke aus Papier zur Verfügung haben. Mit allen anderen Noetigen müssen wir die Lager ausstatten und die Menschen müssen wir verpflegen. Den Transporte werden gleich Waggons mit noetigen Lebensmitteln angeschlossen, damit die Menschen unverzüglich etwas Nahrung zur Verfügung haben.

Sowohl die Aufgabe, als auch die Verantwortung ist sehr gross. Die Lage ist im allgemeinen bereits geschildert, sie hat sich nur verschlechtert und es wird Tag fuer Tag aerger und schlimmer.

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Die Mittel die Sie uns zur Verfügung gestellt haben, sind relativ fuer diese ungeheure Aufgabe gering. Wir sprechen schon nicht von den Verpflichtungen, die die Z. fuer die skizzierten Ausgaben uebernommen haben, wobei wir allein auf Euch angewiesen sind. Wir rechnen, dass die primitivste Speisung pro Mann bei Zugrundlegung des letzter Berechnung ungef. 0.50 Fr. also monatlich ca. Sfr. 500,000 erfordern, dies muessen von Euch unter allen Umstaenden flott zur Verfügung stehen, ausserdem Mittel, die wir fuer andere Zwecke evt. noch benoetigen oder benoetigen sollten. Sie zu beschaffen, muss und soll die erste Pflicht sein.

Sobald wir den genauen postfaehigen Ort wissen werden, geben wir Ihnen diesen an, Sie muessen dann fuer Medikamente, Vitamine usw. usw. sorgen und diese evt. durch Mithilfe des A. A. verschicken. Die Sache gilt sehr da wie erwaehnt die ersten Transporte bereits diese Woche den 15. ds. nach diesen Lagern abgefertigt werden. Rufen Sie zu diesem Zwecke ein besonderes Komitee ins Leben, es ist der Muehe wert, das Leben von Kindern zu retten.

Budapest den 13.6.44

Soeben wird mir mitgeteilt, dass in einigen Tagen die Namen jener Lager in welche die ersten 30.000 geschickt werden sollen, bekannt gegeben werden. Da es sich durchwegs um arbeitsunfähige Personen (Kinder, Frauen, Kranke und alte Leute) handelt, wird die Erhaltung der Lager bis zu ihrem Abtransport nach Spanien gesorgt werden müssen. Nach vorläufigen ganz bescheidenen Kalkulationen kam man zum Ergebnis, dass pro Person und Tage mit mindestens einem halben Frank kalkuliert werden muss. Dies würde also bedeuten, dass monatlich allein fuer die Bespeisung von 30.000 Menschen mindestens eine halbe Million Schweizer Franken bereit stehen muss. Da in diesem Lager die Leute von dem KZ wo sie alle ihre Habe, die Kleidung mitinbegriffen, zurueck lassen mussten und somit auch nur fuer jede Kleinigkeit gesorgt werden muss. Decken, Waschen, Kleider, Schuhe usw. müssen besorgt werden. Auch hier wird mit einer ganz niedrig kalkulierten minimalen Summe von 25.- Fr. gerechnet werden müssen. Die Gesamtkosten würden daher ca. 750.000 Fr. betragen. Arznelien und sonstige hyg. Mittel müssen ebenfalls bereitgehalten werden, die müsste die GSS besorgen.

Mein Vorschlag waere, dass zur Vereinheitlichung alldieser Aktionen ein Beitrag von monatlich 600.000 Dollar in der Schweiz bereit stehen soll ueber welchen Betrag ein hiesiges Aktionskomitee unter Vorsitz des Herrn Philip von Freudiger, disponieren soll. Diesem Komitee müssten weiter angehören: Dr. Herzog Fastner, Julius Link, Joel Brand und Josef Blum.

Es kann nicht genug oft betont werden, von welcher Wichtigkeit die sofortige Disponibilitaet von Geldern ist. Die Gelder müssen zu jeder Zeit und in den entsprechenden Ausmass zur Verfuegung stehen, denn nur auf diese Weise kann gehofft werden, dass wenigstens ein Teil der noch hier vorhandenen Juden am Leben bleiben wird.

Ich rekapituliere daher:

- 1) fuer allgemeine Auslagen ist ein Betrag von 500.000 Dollar bereit zu halten

2) fuer Erhaltungskosten von vorlaeufig 30.000 Personen monatlich 800.000 Frs.	125.000 Dollar
3) fuer Bekleidung und Ausruestung 750.000 Frs.	190.000 "
4) Arzneien und fuer hyg. Bedarfsartikel monatlich	25.000 "
5) fuer unvorgesehene Kosten im Zusammenhang mit den Lagern	20.000 "
	<u>360.000 Dollar</u>

Stellierte Kostenvoranschlaege und Kalkulationen werden wir erst nach Erhalt von ganz genauen Daten uebergeben koennen.

Wenig Zeit steht mir zum Schreiben dieser Zeilen zur Verfaugung und muss mich deshalb so kurz als moeglich fassen. Ich wollte noch vor Wochen, dass ich Sie bald persoenlich werde sprechen, leider war es mir nicht gelungen meinen Plan zu verwirklichen. Viele Fehler wurden gemacht und diesen fiel ich auch leider zum Opfer. Doch immer habe ich aber die Hoffnung nicht aufgegeben und wenn Sie uns rasch zur Hilfe kommen, so hoffe ich, dass Sie und die uebrigen Freunde bald sprechen zu koennen. Ich bin mit meiner Familie noch zusammen und man freut sich fuer jeden Tage den man so verbringen kann. Die Ereignisse zu schildern welche sich seit dem 19.5 ergeben, ist im Rahmen eines Schreibens ganz ausgeschlossen, eine solche Schilderung muesste Laende fuellen, ich will trotzdem versuchen in paar kurzen Saetzen dies zusammen zu fassen.

- 1) Verordnung ueber Tragen des Sterns
- 2) Entlassung arischer Angestellter
- 3) Entzug der Telefon- und Baubankkonzessionen
- 4) Sperrung aller Geschaeft
- 5) Konfiskation juad. Vermoegen und Sperrung desselben.
- 6) Vertreibung aller Avokaten

Diese Verordnungen gingen der Verordnung ueber die Errichtung von Ghettos voran. Der Verordnung zufolge duerfen Juden in Ortschaften von unter 10.000 Einwohnern nicht wohnen, aber selbst in jenen Ortschaften wo die Einwohnerzahl 10.000 uebersteigt muessen die Juden von der nichtjudischen Bevoelkerung abgesonder werden. Den sogenannten anti-juedischen Verordnungen unterliegen auch diejenigen Christen, die nicht ueber mindestens zwei arischen Grossvaetern verfuegen.

7) Kuerzung der Rationen fuer Juden, nur Brot wird im gleichen Quantum belassen. Das schrecklichste aller Verordnungen war, die Ghettoverordnung. Schon anfangs Mai wurde mit der Errichtung



von Chitloc begannen, aber selbst in denselben Konzentrationen nicht lange verbleiben denn bald wurden sie in Konzentrationslagern verbracht um dort ausbeutert zu werden.

Es besteht u. a. Karten in den Städten, welche im Jahre 1900 an Ungarn zurückgegeben wurden, sowie in Subkroation und in Slavonien, sowie in den Ausgabestellen verteilt und die Konzentrationen durchgeführt. Von der Stadt sind Millionen zählend an Anzahl sind bis zum heutigen Tag, etwa 400.000 verbleibt, während in den Städten, in den nächsten Tagen an den Lagern von Miskolcz und aus den anderen Konzentrationslagern abgeholt werden. Die Karte ist durch den Kontakt mit den Juden in Ungarn jedenrein zu machen. Selbst diejenigen welche die Div. (die die bevorzugte (einzelnen des ersten Weltkrieges oder aus (zweifelhaft) war, wurden abgeholt. In der Stadt sind die von den Konzentrationen sind bereits eingetroffen, einhundertfünfzig Personen sind teilweise nach Klasse in der Stadt von Ludwigshafen gebracht, etwa 700.000 verbleiben in der Stadt. Die Mitteilung über das Schicksal der übrigen sind leider nicht erfreulich.

Abteilungen, Subkroation, Slavonien und in den Lagern sind zu sein. Von Transilvanien hauptsächlich aus Kolozsvar traf eine Gruppe von 300 Personen ein, welche in ein hiesiges sog. bevorzugtes KL untergebracht wurden. Über das Lager und über ähnliche Lager welche geplant sind werden wir noch eingehen. Später den Kolozsvaren befinden sich u. a. Joel Mittelbaum, Chifrabbi Szatmar, Arise Glasner, Chifrabbi Kolozsvar, r. Josef Fischer, r. Theodor Fischer, Miksa Schwarz.

Das Tempo welches hier diktiert wird in jug. Angelegenheiten kann nicht geschilfert werden. taendig werden von den deutschen und von den ung. Behörden Verfügungen und Verordnungen getroffen die man kaum folgen kann. Der Judenrat welcher sich hauptsächlich den Führern der Kultusgemeinden zusammen gesetzt hat, ist

den Aufgaben nicht ganz gewachsen. Mir kann ragen, unter denen, die weit hervor in der Person des Schwiegersohnes des Oberrabbiners von Pressburg und seine Beziehungen sowie den Beziehungen noch einiger Personen wird es zu verankern sein, wenn der Plan zur Ausführung gelangt, dass einige tausend Personen sich retten werden.

Schwerlich wurden wir über die Verhandlungen, welche in den letzten Wochen durch Joel Brand geführt wurden, genauest informiert. Ich nehme an, dass auch der JLC in diese Aktion mit eingeschoben wurde. Es handelt sich demnach um die Rettung von Personen in der Weise, einbravourtransportation. Die Maschkenassim wollen natürlich wie Sie wissen gegen entsprechende Gegenleistungen, Leute nach Spanien bringen. Sollten Sie, was ich nicht annehmen über diese Aktion nicht informiert sein, so bitte ich Sie sich sofort mit den Leuten in Istanbul ins Anvernehmen zu setzen und hierüber Nacheres zu erfahren. Meine Bitte an Sie wäre, sofort nach Erhalt meiner Zeilen, sich nach Spanien zu begeben und mit der dortigen Regierung wegen Übernahme der Transporte dringend zu verhandeln. Die Deutschen Behörden lehnen eine andere Lösung entschieden ab, eine Reise nach der Türkei kommt überhaupt nicht in Frage, es bleibt daher nur dieser einzige Weg über Spanien offen. Es müsste daher dringender vorgesorgt werden, dass:

- 1) Aufnahmslager fuer woechentlich 5-6000 vorhanden sein sollen.
- 2) dass diese woechentlich per Schiff nach Palaestina weiter befördert werden.

Zum Punkt 1) ist zu bemerken, dass die Zahl von 6000 eine nicht fixe Ziffer ist, sie kann evt. auch das drei- oder vierfache betragen. Somit wäre dafür zu sorgen, dass bei einem evt. Eintreffen dieser Zahl die Aufnahme-möglichkeit gesichert sei.

Zum Punkt 2) Sollte Palaestina nicht in der Lage sein, auf einmal dreissig-fuenfzig tausend Personen aufzunehmen, so müsste evtl. Nordafrika oder ein anderer Staat bereit sein, voruebergehend die Leute aufzunehmen, wenn Spanien mit ihrem voruebergehenden Aufenthalt nicht Anverstanden wäre. Wenn naemlich dieser

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... (den Schluss macht) Ich Ihnen noch mitteilen, dass ich  
über Pittman und bezügliche Nachricht habe. Was sind Sie auch hier-  
über gewohnt? Sie sollten sich in einem Akt als argentinische  
Staatsbürger befinden, angeblich seit Juli 43.

Vielleicht haben Sie die Möglichkeit auf derselben Weise  
wie ich Ihnen helfen möchte, Ihre Mitteilungen über Ihr Befinden  
und über das Leben anderer Argentinier zukommen zu lassen, wenn  
Sie die Bitte des. Insbesondere wollen Sie mir bekannt geben,  
ob Ihre Bemühungen zu unseren Gunsten von Erfolg waren. Ich  
vertraue sehr viel auf Ihre Bemühungen und auf Ihren Erfolg. Gott  
bald!

Mit vielen herzlichen Grüßen, in der Hoffnung, dass es mir  
noch in diesem Leben gegönnt sein wird, Sie zu sehen, zeichne  
ich, Ihr ergeblich.

... (den Schluss macht) Ich Ihnen noch mitteilen, dass ich  
über Pittman und bezügliche Nachricht habe. Was sind Sie auch hier-  
über gewohnt? Sie sollten sich in einem Akt als argentinische  
Staatsbürger befinden, angeblich seit Juli 43.

000300

Ankara, March 13, 1944.

No. 596  
7

Subject: Forwarding report from Mr. Ira A. Hirschmann, Representative of the War Refugee Board, to Mr. John Pehle, Acting Director of the War Refugee Board.

The Honorable  
The Secretary of State,  
Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to forward herewith a report from Mr. Ira A. Hirschmann, Representative of the War Refugee Board, to Mr. John Pehle, Acting Director of the War Refugee Board, Washington, regarding efforts which are being made by Mr. Hirschmann and the Embassy to rescue oppressed minorities from Axis-occupied Europe.

Respectfully yours,

Laurence A. Steinhardt

Enclosures:  
Report as described.

ELP/mp

To Department in original and hectograph.

cc: Chauncey, Abrahamson, Akzin, Bernstein, Cohn, DuBois, Friedman, Gaston, Hodel, Laughlin, Lesser, Luxford, Mann, Marks, McCormack, Murphy, Paul, Pollak, Rains, Smith, Standish, Stewart, H. D. White, Pehle, Sargoy, Mannon, Weinstein, Files

[REDACTED]

Office of the Assistant Secretary  
for Refugee Affairs  
Washington, D.C.

When I arrived in Istanbul on 12/17/47, I was met by the Turkish authorities and taken to the Hotel Excelsior. I was there for two days before being taken to the Hotel Excelsior. I was there for two days before being taken to the Hotel Excelsior. I was there for two days before being taken to the Hotel Excelsior.

I was in Istanbul for five days in total. I was there for two days before being taken to the Hotel Excelsior. I was there for two days before being taken to the Hotel Excelsior. I was there for two days before being taken to the Hotel Excelsior.

Extract from the report of Ambassador Eisenhardt to the Secretary of State covers the period up to the date of my arrival. The position as I found it at the time of my arrival and the steps taken by me thereafter are as follows:

The relatively limited number of refugees who had been coming through Turkey by rail since 1941 from the Balkan satellite countries virtually ceased on or about January 1, 1947. Prior to that date, during October, November, and December 1946, 1947 refugees came through Turkey from Rumania, Bulgaria, and Hungary and are now in Palestine. The Hungarians could not go through Rumania and the Rumanians could not go through Bulgaria. Nor would the Bulgarians or any refugees who had found their way into Bulgaria with Turkey as their intended destination leave Bulgaria. But for this stoppage the number of rescued people would have been more or less regular according to the schedule then existing.

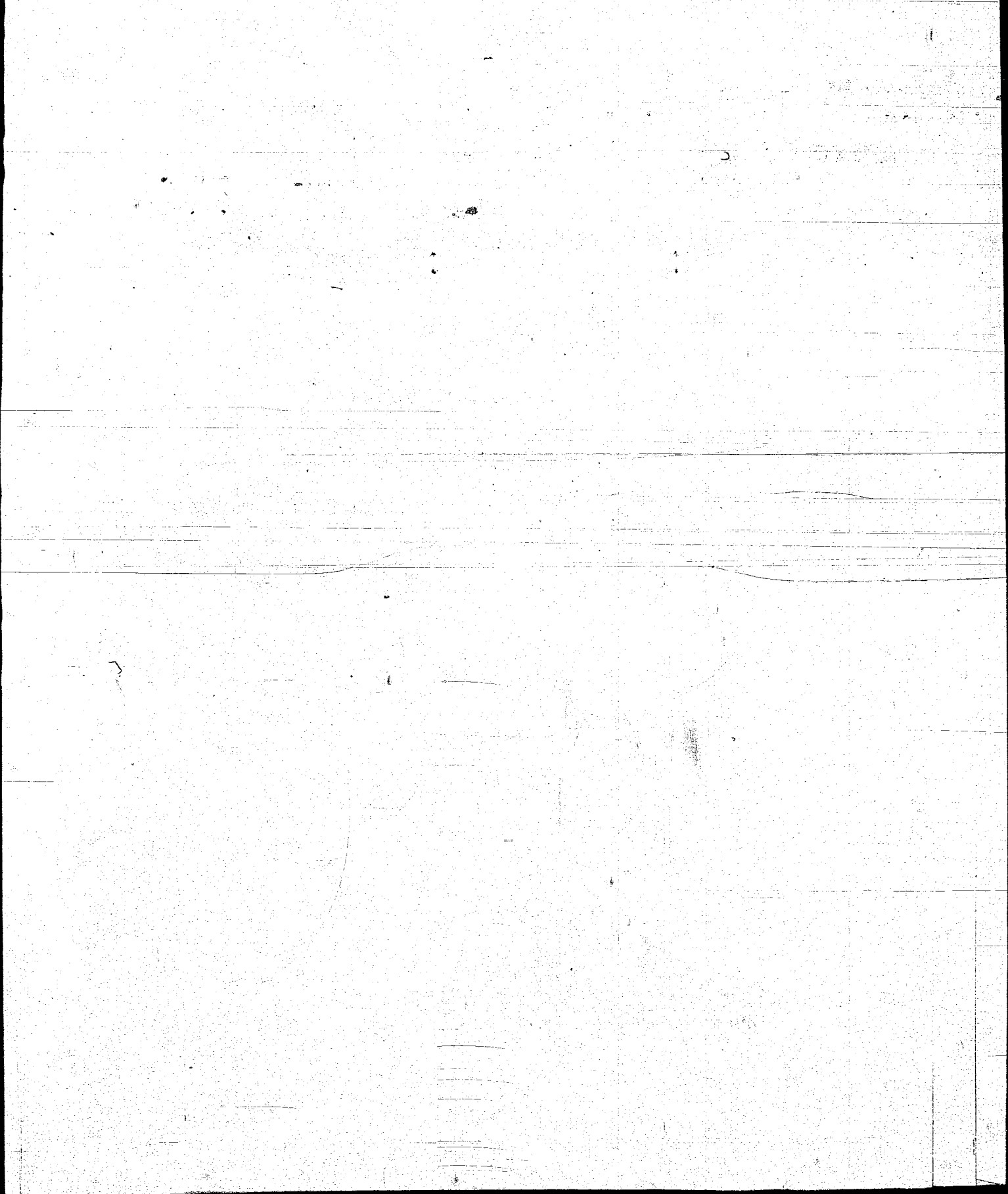
This schedule of about sixty a week constituted nine families permitted to enter Turkey en route to Palestine from each of the

DECLASSIFIED  
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72  
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 18 1972









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Simultaneously with our efforts to secure the Turkish ship we determined to press for a Swedish boat. On February 21 a meeting was arranged for me by the Ambassador with Mr. Modig, the Swedish Minister in Ankara who agreed to telegraph his government in Stockholm recommending the use of a Swedish ship for the above mentioned purpose. He cabled on that day asking for permission to have the SS BARDALAND, which was then en route to Salonica to tow the Swedish ship GANELIA damaged by accidental bombing diverted to Constantinople for our purpose. There being a considerable movement of Swedish ships plying from Canada to Greece, we recommended that this or another Swedish ship be diverted by permission of Stockholm for this purpose. In my telegram to you of February 21st (No. 396) I requested you to synchronize these efforts through the Swedish Minister in Washington. I should like also to record the cooperative attitude manifested by the Swedish Minister and his sincere efforts in behalf of our work.

Mr. Modig has today informed me of the telegram received from Stockholm, about which I telegraphed you on March 9 (No. 397).

Meanwhile an alternative proposal was made by the Jewish Agency to a shipowner in Istanbul for the lease and eventual purchase of the SS NECAT. In his telegram No. 380 of March 3, Ambassador Steinhardt informed you of the preliminary negotiations concerning the SS NECAT. If the purchase of this boat can be arranged at a cost of approximately \$400,000, it is our opinion that it will be a sound investment in the furtherance of our work and the larger scope of the War Refugee Board's operations. It will cost no more than transporting the same number of refugees by a vessel under charter. It will also open up possibilities of introducing the subject of larger quotas with the Turks by reason of the donation of the vessel by the Red Crescent. Ambassador Steinhardt informs me that as a result of his discussions with the Turkish officials concerned with the matter, he believes that may be amenable to the proposal. I talked today with Mr. Ahmet Ruzul Gonenc, Director General of the Red Crescent, which as the beneficiary of the proposed purchase of the NECAT is obviously eager to see the negotiations materialize as the organization of which he is head is in need of materials and funds, especially in view of recent earthquakes in Turkey, and would receive the proceeds of the sale of the vessel. We are planning to press these negotiations with all possible speed, provided of course the War Refugee Board authorizes the \$400,000 payment for the vessel.

By the time you receive this report we will either have concluded some arrangement for a ship or by telegraph informed you of the refusal of the Turkish authorities to charter us a vessel, or of new obstacles beyond our control which may have intervened.

### 3. Inside the Balkans.

A. Bulgaria. For some time prior to my arrival here it was reported that the Bulgarian officials, controlled or supervised by Nazi officials, had substantially closed the door on refugee exits from Bulgaria. In my talks with the British authorities noted above, they insisted that the door out of Bulgaria was closed from the inside. On February 26th, at the suggestion of Ambassador Steinhardt, I made a trip to Istanbul, remaining five days, and among other things explored the situation presently existing in Bulgaria relating to the departure of Jewish refugees. I spoke with numbers of refugees who had just escaped from Bulgaria including several men who had previously held responsible positions in that country and whose information was checked as being truthful and reliable. It appears that at this date of writing the Bulgarian officials will permit a large number of refugee departures from Bulgaria thenceforth. This I reported to you in my cable of February 16th, No. 233. It is now claimed that the Bulgarians will release their minority victims in large numbers, but they seem willing to release two to three hundred a week if transportation can be provided and administrative routine relaxed. It was reported by the refugees who were interviewed by me and who had just arrived that the pressure of the Nazi military had somewhat eased prior to their departure. To this connection I am attaching a memorandum from Dr. Albert Bernard, President of the Jewish Organization of Bulgaria, whom I interviewed in Istanbul on March 12, 1944, after he had escaped from Bulgaria. Attached is also a memorandum of a conversation with Dr. Lloyd H. Black, Auxiliary Foreign Service Officer, who deals with Bulgarian questions in the American Consulate General at Istanbul, together with a copy of the Bulgarian anti-Jewish law of August 29, 1942, with comments which were forwarded to the Secretary of State by the then American Consul General, Mr. Samuel W. Benson, on November 16, 1942. Included for your background information is a letter of March 15, 1943, from a Bulgarian woman describing vividly and at first hand the situation connected with the persecution program on a single day (Exhibit B). In addition, there is enclosed herewith a copy of a despatch dated February 26th, 1944, from the American Consulate General at Istanbul to the Secretary

Smith

Chicago

Chicago, Illinois  
Dear Sirs:  
I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst. in relation to the above captioned matter.  
The same has been referred to the proper authorities for their consideration.  
Very truly yours,  
J. H. [Name]

Enclosed please find report as reported to you.

000311









Rumanian Government by the Department of State, as a consequence of which the Rumanians are alleged to have repatriated the Jews deported from Transnistria to Rumania. After 6,400 Jews had been thus returned, the Germans intervened and the repatriation was halted. Incidentally, I was told that a report was issued by Mr. Long prior to my departure, that the United States Government had allocated the sum of \$300,000 to cover the expenses of the transportation of 5,000 children from the Balkan countries to Palestine. I do not know the authority for this statement and refer to it only in the event that the War Refugee Board may wish to check with the Department of State regarding its veracity.

It is apparent that efforts to secure the release of the thousands of Jewish refugees caught in the millstone in Transnistria can only be achieved at the moment by the willingness on the part of the present Rumanian Government to permit the release of these people and for us then to find means of transportation, either direct or through Turkey to Palestine, which for the moment is the only country where provision has been arranged to accept any considerable number of refugees.

Special attention is again directed to the man who is generally held personally responsible for the policy leading to these extremes. Marshal Antonescu enjoys a brilliant page in the annals of infamy. I have been told that Mr. A. Cretzianu, the newly appointed Rumanian Minister in Ankara, has the Marshal's confidence and is ideologically and sentimentally opposed to the Government's anti-semitic policy. At the proper moment, with Ambassador Steinhardt's consent and employing the authority vested in me by the War Refugee Board to deal with the enemy, I expect to approach Mr. Cretzianu and possibly others who have connections with the present Rumanian Government. Before these talks you may be assured that I will first consult with Ambassador Steinhardt and use every discretion not to make any statements which could be interpreted as having a bearing on the present political or diplomatic situation between Rumania and the United States.

The Jewish population in Rumania, which was estimated at the beginning of the war at about 900,000, is now considerably reduced by: 1) mass massacres of the Jews in Bessarabia and Bucovina; 2) the annexation of provinces of Transylvania to Hungary; 3) the flight of Jews from Bucovina to Russia at the beginning of the war with Russia. The greater part of the Jews from Bessarabia and Bucovina (about 180,000) were expelled to Transnistria (the area previously belonging to Russia). Of



group of 300 Spanish refugees were protected by the Spanish Government and efforts are being made for their return to Spain with a view to their immigration to Palestine.

E. Hungary. I do not intend to give any protracted or detailed picture of the situation in Hungary as it does not at the present time constitute an acute problematic situation. On the contrary, as you are undoubtedly informed, the Hungarian Government has recently been relatively human in its attitude towards the minorities in offering them means of entry into Hungary from the German-occupied countries and permitting the organization of methods for their safety and safe exit to other countries. The suggestion had been made with special publicity of a congratulatory nature to encourage the Hungarians to proceed with and further their program of enlightenment. The delicacy of the situation and the possibility of momentary change are such that I should not recommend any such propaganda in this respect. While the Hungarians have recently become "nobles" compared with their neighboring satellites, even their work has been of a limited nature and any statements which might encourage them to feel that they had done a satisfactory job in this field of protecting minorities less ferociously might lead them to terminate their efforts and to decide that they had already won an honorable place at the Peace Table.

F. France. As stated in my telegram No. 295 of February 19th, Ambassador Steinhardt had, prior to my arrival here, been exerting every effort to influence the Turkish Government to repatriate 10,000 Jews in France who were allegedly divested of their Turkish nationality by operation of Turkish law. These Jews of Turkish origin (many of whom admittedly must go back many generations to establish Turkish origin) were reported as about to be deported to Poland. On February 12th Ambassador Steinhardt spoke with the British Ambassador here who, at his request, sent a note to the Foreign Office in support of a note previously sent by our Ambassador concerning the plight of these Jews in France of Turkish origin. In so doing the British Ambassador supported the request made by Ambassador Steinhardt to the Foreign Minister personally on two occasions to make the necessary representations to the Vichy Government that Jews of Turkish origin not be expelled from France. On March 3rd in Istanbul I interviewed the first Jewish refugees who had arrived from France in the last week. They reported to me that the Jews in France of Turkish origin numbered about 10,000 and of these the Turkish Government had thus far authorized entrance visas to Turkey for about 700. They stated with a degree of authority that several thousand Jews of Turkish origin had been deported to Poland, notwithstanding repeated protests by the Turkish

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The following information was obtained from the records of the  
 Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, on the  
 subject of the above-captioned matter.  
 The land in question is situated in the  
 County of \_\_\_\_\_, State of \_\_\_\_\_.  
 The land is owned by \_\_\_\_\_  
 and is being offered for sale to the public.  
 The land is situated in the \_\_\_\_\_  
 Section \_\_\_\_\_, Township \_\_\_\_\_, Range \_\_\_\_\_,  
 County of \_\_\_\_\_, State of \_\_\_\_\_.  
 The land is being offered for sale to the public  
 at the \_\_\_\_\_  
 on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 19\_\_\_\_.  
 The land is being offered for sale to the public  
 at the \_\_\_\_\_  
 on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 19\_\_\_\_.  
 The land is being offered for sale to the public  
 at the \_\_\_\_\_  
 on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 19\_\_\_\_.

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