

23

President's Secretary's File
Subject File
War Refugee Board
Box 173

PSF: War Refugee Bd.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

*Full
Personal*

NAMES SUGGESTED FOR CHAIRMAN OF
WAR REFUGEE BOARD

Frank Graham

Aubrey Williams

Tom Finletter

John Burke

Wendell L. Willkie

John Coleman

John Raskob

MS
A. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1.

Frank Graham.
Audrey Williams
Tom Finletter
John Burke
Dendell L. Wilkie
John Coleman
John Ruskat -

Head the list
Names suggested
for Chairman of
War Refugee Board

Refugee Bd. folder 2-10

GREENBAUM, WOLFF & ERNST
285 MADISON AVENUE
NEW YORK 17, N. Y.
TELEPHONE CALEDONIA 5-1882

JAN 29 9 25 AM '44
RECEIVED

LAWRENCE S. GREENBAUM
EDWARD S. GREENBAUM
HERBERT A. WOLFF
MORRIS L. ERNST
JONAS J. SHAPIRO
SAMUEL J. SCHUR
ALEXANDER LINDEY
JEROME HANDLER
THEODORE S. JAFFIN
BENJAMIN KAPLAN
LEO ROSEN
HAROLD H. STERN
HARRIET F. PILPEL
SYLVESTER BENJAMIN
RAYMOND HERZOG
CASSRELL GREENBERG
MONROE R. LAZERE
JEROME G. GREENE

January 27, 1944.

Hon. Franklin D. Roosevelt
Hyde Park, N.Y.

Tidbits

Dear Governor:

1. Henry Morgenthau called me today to suggest names for operating head of the new Refugee Committee. I suggested, among others, the following:

Frank Graham - a great guy.
Swing, who knows Europe and has popular support.

Bill Douglas, who might be willing to get off the bench for this great job.

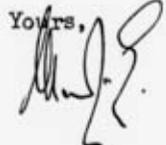
Leon Henderson, who is very popular once more with the boys on the Hill, because every big employer whom he attacked while in the government, has offered him a huge retainer.

Stassen, who would do a good job and whose appointment might have very swell implications in another direction.

I had long talks with Oliver Stanley and Richard Law in England on this subject, with some cute angles that you might be interested in.

2. I suggest you get the U.S. Employment Service immediately to create a Division so as to tie in at once with future employment of the soldier boys now lying in the hospitals.

3. I suggest that you will get nowhere on your international communications problem unless you appoint a small committee of three, with Jim Fly as chairman, to take the place of the big "convention" now working through the State Department, etc., to try to bring in a formula.

Yours,


THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

*file
Confidential*

February 24, 1944.

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF WAR

This is an order to show cause --
and you are probably out-voted to
start with.

I honestly think that Colonel
William O'Dwyer can do relatively
a more important job for the War
Refugee Board at this time than
in any other capacity. I would
want him to be under Stettinius
and go over to Spain at once. I
know no one else who could do
as good a job.

I do not think this need be
called a permanent assignment.
It is my thought that you could
detail him to Stettinius and that
the assignment would not last
more than a few months.

F. D. R.

PSF: War Refugee Bd folder
2-44

GREENBAUM, WOLFF & ERNST THE WHITE HOUSE
285 MADISON AVENUE
NEW YORK 17, N. Y.
TELEPHONE CALEDONIA 5-1582

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RECEIVED

LAWRENCE S. GREENBAUM
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HARRIET F. PILPEL

SYLVESTER BENJAMIN
RAYMOND HERZOG
CASSRELL GREENBERG
MONROE R. LAZERE
JEROME G. GREENE

February 21, 1944.

Hon. Franklin D. Roosevelt
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Tidbits

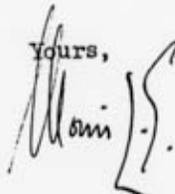
My dear Governor:

I have seen John Pehle and Col. Bill O'Dwyer. There is no question that Bill should be allowed by the Army to do an immediate job for your War Refugee Board. He ought to be assigned to Stettinius. He can go over immediately with a letter from Spellman to Franco. Pehle is enthusiastic about him and tells me that Bob Patterson has turned it down cold because he says that O'Dwyer is irreplaceable. I understand that Lt. Col. John Amen is available for O'Dwyer's place and that there is also a Lt. Col. Ellison in the Inspector General's office who is a knockout.

I have looked into the claim that the Army needs O'Dwyer vis-a-vis the Truman Committee. It just isn't true and in fact if you send for O'Dwyer you will learn what a row he had with the Committee.

We cannot think of anybody in the American scene who politically and socially can do the job vis-a-vis Spain and Catholic South America. Obviously Pehle cannot press any further because he has to deal with the Army, but if you should desire O'Dwyer to get out of the Army to be assigned to the State Department, I think it would be giving really great support to Pehle. Do consider it.

Yours,



Letter of FDR to Ira Hirschmann, June 8,
1944 published in LOOK magazine, May 9,
1961, page 32.

R L Jacoby
6/21/61

(3075)

lms

Signed original of this letter sent to Dr. Lubin for delivery to
Mr. Hirschmann, 6/9/44.
has

PSF; War Refugee Bd. folder 2-44

PSF

June 8, 1944.

My dear Mr. Hirschmann:

John W. Pehle, the Executive Director of the War Refugee Board, informs me that you are returning to Turkey to continue your work as the Board's representative under the able direction of Ambassador Steinhardt. The great task of mercy which the War Refugee Board is successfully undertaking is of paramount importance and I am confident that Ambassador Steinhardt and you will receive the support of the governments and individuals whose cooperation we are seeking in the interest of humanity.

In this you have our Government's full support and hearty wishes for success. I shall follow the work with great interest.

Sincerely yours,

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

Mr. Ira Hirschmann,
Special Representative,
War Refugee Board,
Washington, D. C.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

June 8, 1944

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: THE PRESIDENT

FROM: MR. LUBIN 

John Pehle tells me that one of his representatives, Mr. Ira Hirschmann, is leaving Saturday night for Ankara where he is to resume his work for the War Refugee Board. Hirschmann was in Turkey for several months and, from all reports I can get, did a remarkable job in getting the cooperation of the Turkish government in aiding refugees to come out of the Balkans.

As you will note from the attached memorandum from Pehle, he feels that a letter from you to Hirschmann would be of great help in carrying on the work of the Board.

If you deem it advisable to sign the attached letter, I will see to it that it gets into Hirschmann's hands before he leaves.



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
WAR REFUGEE BOARD

INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION

DATE June 8, 1944

TO Mr. Lubin
FROM J. W. Pehle

Attached is the proposed letter which we discussed. It would be very helpful to the work of the War Refugee Board if Hirschmann could carry such a letter back with him to Ankara.



Attachment

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
WAR REFUGEE BOARD
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

file



OFFICE OF THE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

June 22, 1944

MEMORANDUM TO THE PRESIDENT

For your confidential information

I should like to call your attention to some recent developments with respect to sending food to some of the unfortunate victims of Nazi terror now in internment camps in enemy Europe.

We have just worked out in personal conversations with Mr. Dingle M. Foot, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of the British Ministry of Economic Warfare, a program under which the British and American blockade authorities will permit the shipment from the Western Hemisphere of 100,000 standard food parcels (550 tons) a month for three months to be distributed by the International Red Cross to persons in European internment camps. It is understood that this three months' project is only an experiment, and, if successful, it is contemplated that this system of relief will be extended considerably. Since time is of the essence, steps have been taken to get the initial program under way at once.

In addition to the foregoing, the blockade authorities have agreed to permit the distribution by the International Red Cross to persons interned in Southern France of certain foodstuffs still fit for human consumption salvaged from the cargo of the "S. S. Christina," now at Cette, France. The food supplies in question are contained in 315,120 food parcels which were destined originally for distribution to Belgian and French prisoners of war. Negotiations with the French, the Belgians and the International Red Cross have commenced and it is hoped that all arrangements will be completed soon. The War Refugee Board is doing everything it can to expedite this relief measure and has indicated that it will arrange for any financing that may be necessary.

We are very encouraged by these developments and hope they are only a beginning. At this stage, sustaining the lives of these unfortunate people may be quite as important as attempting to rescue them from enemy territory.

J. W. P. K. C.

War Refugee Bd. - 2-45
fileTHE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY
WASHINGTON

January 27, 1945

My dear Mr. President:

John Pehle, Director of the War Refugee Board, as you know has also been acting for me as the head of the Procurement Division in the Treasury due to the resignation of Mr. Olrich. Mr. Pehle felt that he was not able to give to the War Refugee Board the time it deserved and, therefore, he has been urging the Board to appoint a successor.

The Board offered the Directorship to General O'Dwyer who was very much interested and wanted to take on the job subject to the approval of the War Department. Mr. Stimson gave his approval and so did Joe Grew as well as myself.

Due to the unfortunate publicity in connection with the resignation of Mr. Pell from the War Crimes Commission, we felt that it was important to accelerate the announcement of Pehle's resignation and the appointment of General O'Dwyer. Attached hereto you will find a copy of the release which was given out today to the newspapers.

We did not bother to radio you about this as we were confident that this would meet with your hearty approval.

With kind regards, I remain

Yours sincerely,

Henry M. Smith

The President,
The White House.



WAR REFUGEE BOARD
Executive Office of the President
Washington

FOR RELEASE, MORNING NEWSPAPERS,
Sunday, January 28, 1945.

Release No. 17

The War Refugee Board announced today that John W. Pehle has resigned as Executive Director of the Board. The Board made public Mr. Pehle's letter of resignation and the Board's acceptance (copies attached).

Mr. Pehle was designated Acting Executive Director of the Board shortly after its creation on January 22, 1944. Later, on March 24, 1944, the Board, with the approval of the President, designated him permanent Executive Director.

As explained in the letter of resignation, Mr. Pehle resigned because of the increasing burden of new duties which have been assigned to him as Assistant to the Secretary of the Treasury.

At the same time the Board announced the selection of Brigadier-General William O'Dwyer as the new Executive Director. General O'Dwyer is being returned to inactive status by the War Department to handle this assignment. General O'Dwyer is District Attorney for Kings County, New York, on leave, and recently returned to the United States from Italy where he served as Vice President of the Economic Section of the Allied Control Commission for Italy, with the personal rank of Minister.

January 27, 1945

MEMORANDUM TO THE WAR REFUGEE BOARD

I hereby submit to you my resignation as Executive Director of the War Refugee Board effective immediately. As Assistant to the Secretary of the Treasury there has recently been assigned to me the supervision of the operations of the Treasury Procurement Division, which includes the difficult task of disposing of the surplus consumer goods turned over to the Treasury Department by the Army and the Navy. In view of the increasingly heavy burdens imposed on me by this new assignment, I have found it necessary to resign as Executive Director.

It has given me deep personal satisfaction to have been a part of the vital work undertaken by this Government to save and protect the innocent victims of Nazi persecution. While many lives have been saved as the result of our efforts, we have not, of course, met with complete success. However, I am proud of our achievements in the face of the difficulties encountered.

I have been reluctant to take this action and leave the Board because of the important work which remains to be done. I no longer have this reluctance, however, in view of Brigadier-General William O'Dwyer's willingness to assume the responsibilities of Executive Director.

(Signed) J. W. Pehle

Executive Director

January 27, 1945

MEMORANDUM TO JOHN W. PEHLE

We have received your letter of resignation dated January 27, 1945.

In view of your request and the pressure of your other duties, your resignation is hereby accepted. The Board appreciates the services you have rendered and your devotion to the great and important task assigned to this Board by the President.

(s) Joseph C. Grew
Acting Secretary of State

(s) H. Morgenthau, Jr.
Secretary of the Treasury

(s) Henry L. Stimson
Secretary of War

MEMORANDUM TO BRIGADIER-GENERAL WILLIAM O'DWYER

You are hereby appointed Executive Director of the War Refugee Board effective immediately.

We are sure we can rely on you to carry on the important task assigned to this Board by the President.

(s) Joseph C. Grew
Acting Secretary of State

(s) H. Morgenthau, Jr.
Secretary of the Treasury

(s) Henry L. Stimson
Secretary of War



THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY
WASHINGTON

Bx194

March 24, 1945

file

My dear Mr. President:

I am sending you herewith a most interesting cable from Mr. McClelland, representative of the War Refugee Board in Switzerland; also a one-page digest of this cable. Mr. Burckhardt, who is mentioned in this cable, is president of the International Red Cross.

Sincerely yours,

J. M. Nuttall

The President,

The White House.



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
WAR REFUGEE BOARD

INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION

DATE March 24, 1945

TO Secretary Morgenthau
FROM Miss Hodel

For your information

The attached cable has just been received from Mr. McClelland reporting on Burckhardt's visit with the German authorities.

The main points in the Burckhardt report are as follows:

1. International Red Cross delegates will be permitted to be stationed in major camps for Schutzhaeftlinge (political deportees) and prisoners of war to supervise relief distributions;
2. The Germans are willing to allow deliveries of relief by truck to political deportees irrespective of nationality or race;
3. The Germans have agreed in principle to allow evacuation of women, children, elderly and ill people irrespective of religion or race;
4. International Red Cross is planning to utilize returning prisoner of war relief trucks for evacuations.

McClelland suggests that the War Refugee Board's most effective contribution to this double program of relief and evacuation will be (a) obtaining trucks and tires, and (b) organizing the evacuation from Switzerland of those refugees who are non-repatriable in Europe.

J. Hodel

COPY

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Legation, Bern,
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATED: March 22, 1945
NUMBER: 1727

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

US URGENT

McClelland sends the following for O'Dwyer, WRB, and the Department.

I refer herewith to the Legation's telegrams of March 8 and March 21, Nos. 1481 and 1687 respectively.

It has unfortunately not been possible for me to report sooner on results of recent discussions with German authorities by ICRC President Burckhardt, because of illness.

Burckhardt first met with Kaltenbrunner of SS on March 12 in the Vorarlberg region between Swiss border and Innsbruck. A personal letter was sent by Himmler stating that he was prevented by military duties from being present and delegating to Kaltenbrunner full power.

On March 13 conversations were continued in Kreuzlingen, Switzerland, with Kaltenbrunner plus Berber, Director of Foreign Political Institute of Foreign Ministry, and Windecke of German FD, and on March 14 with Berber alone in Zurich. For some months now Berber has been in Switzerland and appears to be one of Ribbentrop's special contact men.

The main concession obtained from SS, as Burckhardt explained the matters, is permission for delegates of ICRC to be stationed in all major camps for both "Schutzhaeftlinge" (SH) and POWS to supervise personally distributions of relief. SS laid down one condition which was that such representatives of ICRC not circulate particularly back and forth to Switzerland but that they remain in these camps until the end of the war. Since certain numbers of SH are being worked in War Industries, this restriction is presumably on the grounds of military security.

On the 21st of March, Burckhardt of ICRC reported to me that the choice of appropriate delegates for these camp posts

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date JUN 2 1972

- 2 -

was being actively pursued by the committee, and they will be despatched as rapidly as possible into Germany.

There is willingness on the part of VG to allow deliveries of relief of all types by truck or other means of transport to SH irrespective of nationality or race. It was requested by SS that any such relief distribution should be conducted discreetly, especially any relief given to marching columns along the roads, in view of difficulties of food supply situation for the Germans themselves.

With respect to evacuation of SH, final detailed authorization covering specific persons whom ICRC will be permitted to evacuate has not been obtained from Berlin as yet, although the SS agreed in principle to allow the exit of women, children, elderly and ill people irrespective of religion or race. An answer is expected by ICRC by the 26th or 27th of March.

It was suggested by Burckhardt of ICRC that, in view of danger of approaching front, inmates of women's concentration camp of Ravensbrueck be among the first evacuated. This camp is located on the main highway to Neustrelitz approximately 70 kilometers north of Berlin and contains at least 30,000 women of principally Hungarian (Jewish), Polish, Norwegian, Belgian, Czech, Dutch, French, Russian and other nationalities, and it is definitely one of the bad camps.

It was stated by the Germans that transportation for any such evacuations would not be supplied by them. Consequently, it is planned by ICRC to utilize returning POW relief trucks, although this will be a difficult and inadequate method of effecting evacuation, especially persons who are ill.

The use by ICRC for evacuees of parcel ships returning from Luebeck to Goteborg was not favored by the Germans who stated that these waters were thickly mined and that they did not wish to be held responsible for sinking any ships loaded with evacuees.

The possibility of sending sanitary blocked train to Ravensbrueck from Switzerland if and when final authorization for the evacuation of this camp is given by the Germans, is still being discussed with the Swiss authorities by ICRC, although the Swiss are both reluctant to release such transport equipment and doubt that train could get through under the present chaotic state of German railroads which are being constantly bombed.

Robert B. Fisher 2-45

- 3 -

With respect to the question of evacuation of SH in general an attempt was made by Kaltenbrunner to create the impression that SS had really been only an executive organ throughout the past years of mass arrests and deportation of civilians to Germany from occupied countries and SS would be willing to allow useless SH to leave Germany now that food and housing situation was growing difficult within Germany.

It appears that Burckhardt of ICRC is working on some special scheme for evacuation of French SH who are to be exchanged for German civilians held by the French (I understand mainly Baltic Germans taken in Alsace region by the French). It is reported that French authorities are prepared to furnish 100 trucks to carry out this plan.

As soon as information regarding identity of first groups of SH whose evacuation will be permitted by the Germans is obtained from ICRC, I will report to WRB promptly.

In summing up, War Refugee Board can contribute to this double relief and evacuation program most effectively by (1) obtaining as many tires and trucks as possible, and (2) organizing and placing into operation mechanism for evacuating from Switzerland such SH groups who may arrive here and who are non-repatriable in Europe for the time being.

HARRISON

DC/L: IDB:AN
3-23-45

March 29, 1945

file

Not necessary to send in pouch.

5/1-2-4

B+
194

NOF MEMORANDUM FOR MISS TULLY

PSF: War Refug
Dr. 2-4

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON
March 29, 1945

PSF

MEMORANDUM FOR: Miss Grace Tully

Early in the week General O'Dwyer passed on to me through Dave Niles this memorandum with regard to the work of the War Refugee Board. It did not seem to me that in the midst of the midst of discussions about food and the postwar treatment of Germany, we should try to get out any Presidential statement about the Board's work. When I talked with General O'Dwyer he agreed, but he wanted this material passed on to the President.


Jonathan Daniels

March 27, 1945

Jonathan Daniels
The White House

This is the memorandum to the President, together with the covering memorandum to David Niles, which I discussed with you on the phone.


William O'Dwyer
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
WAR REFUGEE BOARD

cc Board

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EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

WAR REFUGEE BOARD

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

March 27, 1945

OFFICE OF THE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MEMORANDUM

TO: David Niles

FROM: William O'Dwyer

The following is some background material which may be of assistance in the preparation of a release on the attached memorandum to the President:

"President Roosevelt established the War Refugee Board by Executive Order on January 22, 1944. Its members are the Secretaries of State, Treasury and War. The Board's functions are to 'rescue the victims of enemy oppression who are in imminent danger of death and otherwise to afford such victims all possible relief and assistance consistent with the successful prosecution of the war.'

"In carrying out the President's directive, the War Refugee Board has concentrated its efforts on getting food to these innocent victims and on rescuing as many as possible from enemy territory to safe havens. In addition, the Board has developed other protective measures to safeguard the lives of many of these people.

"The work of the War Refugee Board has constantly been faced with extraordinary difficulties, since its operations are designed for people suffering behind the enemy lines. In spite of the many obstacles, the Board is able to announce substantial success in its operations. Thousands have actually been rescued from enemy territory, in addition to the many more thousands whose lives have been preserved while still in enemy-controlled territory."

William O'Dwyer

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
WAR REFUGEE BOARD
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.



OFFICE OF THE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MAR 27 1945

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

On February 20, 1945, the War Refugee Board approved a specific program to (1) bring relief to civilian detainees in Germany in imminent danger of death due to starvation, exposure and deliberate neglect and (2) to remove as many as possible of these people to safety. The exposure and danger to these people increased as a result of conditions inside Germany. The Board has pushed ahead on this program and important results have been obtained in the last few days.

The War Refugee Board, as you know, has shipped several hundred thousand three-kilo parcels from this country to stockpiles in Sweden and Switzerland for delivery by the International Red Cross to civilian detainees, regardless of race, religion or nationality, in German concentration camps. Our best information indicates that the largest concentrations of these people are now in the north of Germany around Hamburg and in the south of Germany near Dachau. There are millions of civilian detainees still under German control and a relatively small number (about 200,000 or 300,000) are Jews.

In recent months, because of disrupted transportation conditions inside Germany, no deliveries of War Refugee Board food parcels have been made.

Recently, as the result of arrangements made between the Board and the International Red Cross, War Refugee Board food packages will go forward on trucks obtained by the Board. These packages are destined for the sick, the disabled, women and children, who, because of their unimportance to the enemy's war program, are in the greatest danger from starvation and exposure.

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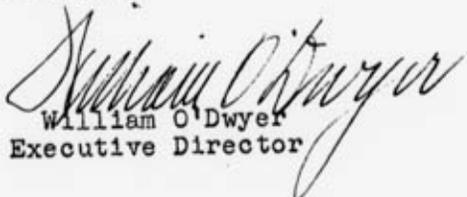
Our latest cables from the field report the following developments:

1. The bottleneck on the delivery of War Refugee Board food packages has been broken. Within the last few days, 20,400 parcels have left Goteburg, Sweden, and 6,090 have left Switzerland for enemy territory.
2. The Board's representative in Bern has rented from a private concern in Switzerland six 12 ton trucks which will be available within the next few days. The Y.M.C.A. has agreed to turn over 12 wood-burning trucks now in Germany to the International Red Cross for relief delivery work.
3. With the approval of the Secretary of War, arrangements are now under way with General Eisenhower for the acquisition by the Board of gasoline, tires and trucks to be turned over to the International Red Cross for War Refugee Board operations.
4. Arrangements are being made by the International Red Cross to station personnel in the concentration camps to supervise the distribution of relief parcels.

In addition to the War Refugee Board parcels already in Switzerland and Sweden, the Board is completing arrangements for the procurement of an additional 300,000 packages for early shipment abroad.

It is to be understood that the War Refugee Board feeding program is independent of the delivery of prisoner of war food packages, but it is planned that all trucks operated by the International Red Cross for the delivery of relief in German territory will be utilized to evacuate physically unfit civilian detainees to safety.

UNRRA has agreed to furnish to the International Red Cross, at the request of the War Refugee Board, relief supplies for the maintenance of refugees removed to safety and who are in transit to UNRRA-controlled camps.


William O'Dwyer
Executive Director