

Ira Hirschman Papers

Box 2

Preliminary Report re Activities in Turkey 7-18-44 -  
8/19/44 + Related letters

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

Laurence A. Steinhardt  
U. S. Ambassador to Turkey

Enclosure:  
Report as described.

LAS/pe  
File No. 840.1  
To the Department in original and hectograph

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. Katzki and the two secretaries assigned to me in Turkey, I wish to acknowledge here again the loyal and tireless efforts of Mr. Katzki who has compiled considerable of the data in the report, and whose efforts have been inordinately 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 Attache

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

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REPORT

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PART I

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BACKGROUND AND CHRONOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

Istanbul, Turkey  
August 19, 1944.

Confidential

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

Dear Mr. Pehle:

In pursuance of NY 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, J. C. Sterndale Bennett, Minister from Great Britain to Turkey, and myself, it was determined that I should return at once to Cairo, where, Minister Bennett informed us, Joel Brandt was incarcerated and under strict surveillance by the British Military Intelligence.

On June 22 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 we were 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, 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 Acikalin, to pool all of the rescue activities through the special representative of the War Refugee Board, upon my return to Turkey.

On Sunday, June 25, 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 Kelly, Counselor of Embassy; I. A. Hirschmann; Herbert Katzi; 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 Zeev Schind, representatives of the Jewish Agency; David Schweitzer, representative of the Hias-Ica Emigration Association (Hicem); and Jacob Griffel, representative of the Agudath Israel and the Vaad Haatzalah.

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 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 Dr. Judah L. Magnes, the group unanimously agreed to the suggested organizational plan.

B. Steps taken 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 the so-called Advisory Council. Minutes of this meeting are attached (Exhibit A.) With the exception of two discordant notes struck by the representative of the Emergency Committee for the Rescue of Jews in Europe, Mr. Jabotinsky, and by Mr. Denenberg of the International Rescue and Relief Committee, the meeting was harmonious and offered a promising, practical beginning.

Having secured unanimous approval to choose the so-called Working Executive Committee, I selected the following members: Reuben Resnik, representing the Joint Distribution Committee, Chaim Barlas, for the Jewish Agency, Zeev 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 the meeting are attached (Exhibit B.) With one exception, meetings have been held weekly.

The presence of Dr. Judah L. Magnes; Eliezer Kaplan, member of the Executive and Treasurer of the Jewish Agency; and Dr. 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 bound to create momentary divergences of view, 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, much overlapping of activity, waste of effort, and deflection from the object of saving lives.

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

### 3. Rumania

A. Discussions with Gretzianu. The results achieved from the satisfactory liaison which had been established between Gretzianu, Rumanian Minister to Ankara, and myself on my previous visit to Turkey, led to the resumption of these conversations at the home of Gilbert Simond 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 Gretzianu personally, and Mihai 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.

Gretzianu'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 Gretzianu 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. Gretzianu 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.

Gretzianu 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. Zissu, Fildermann, Rubin, etc. and (c) the expedition of the sailing of the Rumanian boats from Constanza. I have

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.

B. 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 Milca, 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 Bellacita, 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 Bellacita, 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 leis 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 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 Cretzianu regarding the new arrangement. The official pronouncement on this subject from Mihai Antonescu was delivered to me by M. Simond of the International Red Cross (Exhibit F.)

On July 23, 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 Haatzalah in his efforts to engage separate ships for the rescue of the people in whom the Vaad Haatzalah and the Agudath Israel organizations were interested. Efforts to secure other ships did not cease during the month of June.

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 Bulbul, capable of carrying 350 passengers; the SS Mefkura, capable of carrying 150 passengers; and the SS Morina, capable of carrying 350 passengers.\* In addition, the Greek flag steamship, the Suzette, 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 Transistria. 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 (Chalutzim,) 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.

\* See Section (b) below. A separate report on the voyage of the SS Bulbul, Mefkura, 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 15 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 Kazbek was en 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 Kazbek appeared in Istanbul harbor at about 2:30 on Sunday morning, July 9th.

A small wooden ship with high decks and motor propulsion, the Kazbek 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 Kazbek passengers were required to remain on the ship while in harbor. The existing passports had previously been secured on Saturday afternoon, while the Kazbek 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 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 450 refugees weekly on the twice-weekly trains which travel from Istanbul to Aleppo. It was expected, therefore, that it would be necessary to divide the Kazbek passengers into two groups and on two or more trains. The Minister of Communications, however, generously provided a special train for the Kazbek passengers. As a result, the entire group was able to leave Istanbul in one train on Monday evening, July 10th.

The distribution of the Kazbek passengers was as follows:

265 children, of whom 214 were children from Transnistria.

65 refugees newly arrived, of whom there were two Yugoslavs, two Slovaks, 25 Poles, mostly via Hungary, and 36 Hungarians.

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

20 Agudath Israel 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 moored 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, Smyrnie, which were being held in readiness for departure from Constanza.

(b) The SS Morina, Bulbul, and Mefkura. After weeks of delay in Rumania telegraphic exchange, dispatching of messages to Rumania through indirect channels, representations to the Turkish Foreign Office and Cretzianu 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 Mefkura 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 Mefkura, 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 Mefkura, 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 Mefkura 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 Mefkura 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 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. Simond 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 Constanza 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 Constanza. Several large Turkish boats have come under discussion for refugee movement. The story of the SS Tari is known to you. Two other boats had been offered by local steamship agencies, namely the SS Anadolu and the SS Akbel. All of the above are over 800 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 Tari (the movement of which had been authorized on July 25th by Balabanoff from Bulgaria) or any of

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 traveling 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.

## 5. Bulgaria

A. Political Background. Upon my return to Turkey, a survey of the attitude and efforts of the new Bagryanov Government in Bulgaria indicated the possibility of opening up this country, which heretofore had been virtually locked from the inside out, as an active field for rescue endeavor. The Bagryanov Government, established under the apparent surveillance of the Nazi regime, was reliably reported to be struggling for the independence and rehabilitation of Bulgaria, and moving closer to the Soviet. As time elapsed, it became obvious that the movement was perceptibly to the left, and that the Government was gaining some power and an enhanced degree of autonomy. The above view of the situation was concurred in by our Embassy, but represented a completely divergent opinion from that expressed by numerous so-called Bulgarian "experts" in Istanbul.

At the time of the Turkish break of relations with Germany, the Bagryanov Government had succeeded in coercing the German Government to abandon the two ports of Varna and Burgas, which had been German military zones, and to reduce its army within the borders of Bulgaria to one division (a scratchy one, at that). This information was confided to me by Balabanoff, Bulgarian Minister to Ankara.

Dr. Floyd H. Black,\* an accepted authority on Bulgaria, was consulted and his aid solicited by me. His advice and assistance have been invaluable. An intermediary was requested by Dr. Black to bring to the Prime Minister's attention the memorandum attached (Exhibit I) precisely at the time when the Bulgarian Minister to Turkey, Balabanoff, had been called to Sofia for urgent consultation. I am reliably informed that this specific memorandum was placed before Bagryanov on or about July 21. Three days later, upon his return to Ankara, Balabanoff requested an interview with me, through Mr. Simond of the International Red Cross. On July 24, as reported in my No. 1370, July 26, I conferred with Balabanoff. He reported to me the information that the present Government was categorically opposed in principle to the position taken by the previous regime relating to minorities and Jews, and that it would take "gradual steps" to ameliorate the conditions of the Jews, as well as to facilitate their transportation out of Bulgaria. Balabanoff was transparent in his effort to seek some measure of the much-desired good-will of the Government of the United States at this time in the crucial political position of the Bagryanov Government. I determined to exploit this to the utmost.

At the conclusion of my talk, I requested of Balabanoff, in view of the unambiguous position he had taken regarding the situation, that he "put it in writing" through a letter addressed to M. Simond. Much to my surprise, he agreed to do so by 1 p.m. the following day. I further requested permission to publish the letter, for which he stated he would be obliged to receive authorization from his Government. At 12 noon the following day, the note was delivered which contained a categorical criticism of the previous Bulgarian Government and its policies

\* From 1923 to 1942, President of the American College in Sofia. From October 19, 1942 to June 30, 1944, Special Assistant in the Foreign Auxiliary Service of the Department of State. Called to the Presidency of Istanbul Colleges, Istanbul, May 1, 1944.

in relation to treatment of minorities and Jewish questions, and which consolidated and confirmed his promises related in the foregoing. When shown the letter, Dr. Black described it as a valuable document, and one which we had every right to use as a basis for holding the Bulgarian Government to the promises, now given in writing, assuming that the promise of that Government can be regarded as given in good faith.

Predicated on Balabanoff's representations in behalf of his Government as verbally made to me and set forth in writing in the aforesaid letter of July 25, for me but addressed to M. Simond (see my No. 1371 of July 26), and in view of the rapidly changing political situation connected with Bulgaria's augmented efforts to withdraw from Nazi control, I addressed a note to the Bulgarian Government, again through an intermediary, dated August 1 (Exhibit J). The position taken by me for the War Refugee Board was: 1) We would not be satisfied until the two nefarious anti-Jewish laws were completely revoked; 2) The Bulgarian Government must demonstrate without delay its intention to reinstate and reconstitute its own Jewish citizenry to the same position of dignity and ability for self-sustenance which it enjoyed prior to the war; 3) The Bulgarian Government was to permit the exit without delay of all Bulgarian citizens voluntarily desiring to leave Bulgaria for Palestine, and all persons from Hungary or other countries requiring Bulgarian transit facilities were to be accorded them for travel to Turkey en route to Palestine.

On August 5, at my request, Balabanoff and I met again at the home of M. Simond in Ankara, and I presented the above demands to him. The results of this interview were reported to you in my No. 123 of August 7. In addition to the information disclosed therein, I had the impression that Balabanoff was "playing for time" and seemed not to possess sufficient power successfully to press his Government for my demands. It should be recorded that he expressed sympathy with our objectives. The fear of Russian domination of Bulgaria, which he had expressed in my previous interview, appeared to have been dissipated from his mind in this second interview. The efforts being made by his Government to remove itself step by step from under the Nazi yoke were distinctly reflected in his representations that its strictures against the Jews were allegedly Nazi-imposed. Its abrogation of the anti-Jewish laws should be one evidence of its will to break with Nazi control and the reassertion of its independence as a nation.

In connection with the repeal of the anti-Jewish laws, it must be borne in mind that only Parliament can vote these laws out of existence. Bagryanov does not possess the power to do so by decree; nor, in his present political situation, would he appear inclined to fly in the face of his Nazi-controlled Parliament.

On August 17, Gabryanov suddenly convoked Parliament into an emergency session. In his speech before Parliament he stated, among other things, the following:

"Decidedly, the Jewish question must be liquidated and we can achieve this without causing new and vain conflicts and sufferings, either to the Bulgarian people, to its neighbors or to its colleagues (confreres).

"In other words, the Bulgarian people by its acts must keep in mind the wisdom (prudence) due to Bulgaria. This is why the Bulgarian Government thinks that in the name of humanity, it has the right to ask from its bigger comrades (presumably the Germans) who are covered with wounds and who have been entailed in this struggle, not to ask the (Bulgarian) people to bleed a people which has so many times bled, a people which has no other desire but to rank itself with dignity in the new world, which after so many sufferings it has set about to construct."

I was informed in advance of the speech that the question of the "liquidation of the Jewish problem" would constitute an essential part of the program connected with Bulgaria's efforts to withdraw from the war, which Bagryanov was also requesting Parliament to legalize. In this connection, I was informed on August 7 that such a proposed emergency convocation was in prospect, and that the question relating to the Jewish population of Bulgaria would not be included in the agenda; that it was considered a subsidiary problem. I immediately took energetic measures to reinforce our position to the effect that, as long as so-called "Nurenberg" laws remained on the Bulgarian books, it could only be interpreted as a continuance of a policy under which the cardinal principle of the Nazi doctrine was retained. At this writing, I am informed that the abrogation of the laws is an essential part of Parliament's program under consideration, and it appears hopeful that they will be withdrawn.

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

Plodiv	8000 persons
Russe	5000 persons
Shoumen	3500 persons
Pleven	4000 persons
Kustendil	} 3000 persons each
Dupnitsa	
Pazardjik	
Vidin	
Dispersed in various towns and villages	<u>12,500</u> persons
Total	45,000 persons

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.

**C. 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 Vittel 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 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 800 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 K) 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.

D. 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 from the statistics in Exhibit L, the number admitted to Turkey in transit from Bulgaria during the first six months of 1944 was relatively small; 408 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 case 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 emigration from Bulgaria, indicating apparently the Government's revised attitude towards emigration. From July 1 to July 18, 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 had been made at one time 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 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 by the Foreign Office, and eleven or twelve persons actually did present themselves at the frontier during May and June. They were arrested 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 authorities. Approaches were made to the Turkish Foreign Office to secure their release and admission into Turkey. The Foreign Office agreed to send the necessary instructions to the frontier, but, prior to their arrival, all seven were returned to Bulgaria. Since then there have been no illegal entries from the land border from Bulgaria. (Subsequently, the seven people individually reappeared at the border and were admitted into Turkey upon the basis of the authorizations given. We are considering how this precedent might be employed to have additional lists sent to the border; see also Exhibit P.)

In explanation of the foregoing, the Turkish attitude has been that it is not possible to determine who is a genuine refugee and who is a political agent attempting to enter the country. Involved in this question is the political relationship between Turkey and Bulgaria. However, agreement has been reached with the Turkish authorities (see Exhibit P) as reported to you on August 9th, in the copy of the telegram from the British Embassy to its Foreign Office in London, 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.

E. 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 Uygar

wassent to Burgas but returned empty. From information at hand it is not clear whether passengers were not embarked because of difficulties created by the Bulgarians (there was some question regarding the adequacy of safety provisions), or because of difficulties created by the Turkish consulate, since the proposed passengers had no Turkish transit visas. In an effort to clear up the question, towards the end of May another ship, the Marina, was sent to Burgas, precautions having been taken in advance that safety provisions would all be met. It was definitely established, we are advised, that the Turkish Consul in Burgas gave official notice to the Bulgarian authorities that Jewish refugees could not be embarked unless the Consul received specific instructions from Ankara. A third attempt was made by using a Bulgarian boat, and we are advised that this effort likewise failed because of steps which the Turkish Consul and the Turkish Embassy took vis-a-vis the Bulgarian authorities.

In a telegram from Ambassador Steinhardt, you were informed that, due to the sinking of the SS 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 voyages was available during June, and emigrations 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. Through the assistance of the Embassy, the question of the departure of the SS Vita and the Pirin was presented to the Turkish Foreign Office, and Mr. Kelley secured authorization 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 800 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 through the Balkans, to explore the possibilities of securing additional Bulgarian ships in the event of a sudden influx of refugees.

### 6. 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 M). 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. "What 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.

A. Ulandestine movement. As reported to you in our No. 104, July 22, a sparse movement of refugee traffic from Hungary across the borders into Rumania has 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 great power guarantee 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 Gretzianu 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.)

A parenthetical reference to the movement of refugees out of Hungary into Yugoslavia is in order. In my conversation on August 8 with Baron Thierry, Counselor of the Hungarian Legation at Ankara, I questioned him regarding the feasibility of the movement of rescue in that direction. I referred to the mountainous territory which had been described to me as perilous for refugees to surmount in their efforts to escape. Baron Thierry was amazed at this reference, stating that he had visited the above-described territory on frequent occasions, and that it constituted a flat plain, minus any physical hazards, but that there were other dangers involved for the refugees, who would find it necessary to travel on foot for many miles without mean of success.

B. Other methods of rescue. Apparently as a result of extraordinary 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 public 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 18, 1944, and was reported to you in my telegram No. 101 of July 21.

In my interview with Baron Thierry, above referred to, on August 8, he read to me a translation from the Hungarian decree which he reported had been issued and published in neutral sources on July 18. Exhibit N is a copy of the translation of the actual text later transmitted to me by Baron Thierry. At the present writing, the decree has not resulted in any emancipation, although we have had unconfirmed reports from time to time that a number varying from one to two thousand refugees were being organized on the border of Hungary for departure through Rumania to Turkey. Concerning the July 18, decree, it remains to be seen whether it can be translated into actual departures by the children under the age of 10, and the special groups of 8200 families for whom Palestine certificates are reported to have been delivered through the Swiss Legation in Ankara to the Swiss Legation in Budapest; also through the Papal Nuncio.

It is to be noted here that Baron Thierry expressed some skepticism regarding the practicability of this plan in his conversation with me. When I pressed him to broaden the base for the inclusion of larger numbers of Jewish nationals in Hungary, he insisted that we should first determine whether the first steps contained in the decree could succeed. He referred to the difficulty in securing means of transportation, but subsequent indications in Istanbul suggest that the Germans have not yet approved the Hungarian decree, and are not permitting the refugees to depart. This was reported to you in our telegram No. 127, August 10.

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 5, 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 Gretzianu, who is consulting Bucharest, to this urgent request is momentarily awaited.

Similar representations were made to Balabanoff, Bulgarian Minister to Ankara, to permit the transit through Bulgaria of Hungarian Jews traveling through Rumania en 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 Mr. Kelley, Charge d'Affaires a.l., 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 Mr. Kelley 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. Simond, Ankara representative of the International Red Cross.

From the above it may be seen that the doors into and out of the two Balkan 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 addressing ourselves to this task 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 German approval for the departure of the Hungarian Jews.

D. The Catholic Church. Pursuant to our information that the leaders of the Catholic Church throughout the world had made strong 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, Monsignor Ange M. Roncalli, with a view to (a) thanking him for the assistance rendered by him in his strong telegraphic representations in Budapest on the subject, and (b) requesting that further steps be made 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 in my No. 131, August 12, and relates to the baptism of thousands of Hungarian Jews in air-raid shelters, in spite of energetic Nazi protests.

It was also reported to us that the strong protests by radio, leaflets, and other means introduced by the War Refugee Board and other United States Government leaders, had had a salutary effect upon the Hungarian Government. It is recommended that this means of pressure be continued in all possible variations from the United States and neutral sources. Baron Thierry, in his interview, conceded (not in so many words) that the pressure against the Nazis had braced the resolution of the Hungarian Government to take the measures in the July 18 edict, and to stiffen its back against the incipient Nazi putsches which had been reported to us in Istanbul. There are tendencies toward the introduction of a more conservative Hungarian Government at this writing, and all means should be employed to encourage this group in its resistance to the Nazis.

From the above conclusion, 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 beggar description. Political information reaching us, checking with such facts as are available, indicate that the Hungarian leaders themselves are backtracking and fear the ultimate consequences of their vicious and extravagant action towards their Jewish population. As the war's end seem inevitably to 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 break in the Hungarian muzzle. Symptoms of contrition, fear, and now "spine" on the part of the Horthy Government are in evidence according to information reaching me here.

#### 7. Greece.

Your 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 through December, 1943	300
January, 1944	8
February	25
March	62
April	173
May	74
June	<u>104</u>
Total	746

Towards the middle of June, I was informed by the agency in Istanbul charged with these operations that, due to a lack of a base in Turkey at which the refugees could be debarked, the rescue from Greece in this manner had ceased. 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 Eubosa, an island off the Greek mainland, with the assistance of the EAM while en route to Eubosa and while waiting there. To bring these refugees from hiding in Athens to Eubosa to congregate there would be dangerous for the refugees, unless their arrival in Eubosa could be timed to meet boats sent to Eubosa to evacuate them. The chief problem, therefore, continued to be transportation from the east coast of Eubosa to the Turkish coast, for which a Turkish base was required. It became obvious that the movement from Eubosa 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 refuelled. 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 O. S. S. 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. I agreed. It was then requested of Charge d'Affaires Kelley to secure the authorization of the Turkish Foreign Office for the establishment of an additional base exclusively for the reception of refugees. 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.

### 8. Emigration from Turkey.

There has been a small but continuing emigration from Turkey to Palestine of Jewish people

residing in the former country. Certain onerous restrictions which exist in Turkey and which, in substantial measure, affect the Jewish people who are regarded here as a minority group, have persuaded some of the Jews here to emigrate. The ruthless tax (Varlik) on minorities which was levied in Turkey a year ago has substantially reduced to economic ruin a large section of the Jewish people. As a result of this atmosphere, a number of Jews have left the country, especially the Jewish youth, whose prospects at the present moment in Turkey are rather dim.

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