

Ira Hirschman Papers

Box 2

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

REPRODUCED FROM HOLDINGS AT THE FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT LIBRARY

PART I I

CONCLUSIONS, OBSERVATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. 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 A above, requires further elaboration here.

It is regrettable, in my opinion, that too many organizations were permitted to send representatives to Turkey at this time. This was especially regrettable in the light of the type of representative who was sent by several of the organizations. A higher degree of personnel, 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. Magnes of the Hebrew University, Jerusale^m, and Mr. Eliezer Kaplan of the Jewish Agency, will result, I am told, in additional personnel to supplement the efforts of Mr. Barlas. It is freely admitted by all, including Mr. Barlas, that additional assistance by top-flight men during this emergency might have opened 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 Joint Distribution Committee, which rightfully enjoys an enviable and priceless reputation among Government as well as private organizations, has been conducting a broad program of relief from Istanbul in the direction of the Balkans and Central European countries. Food has been sent from Turkey, and financial assistance has been made available from here. In addition, it is providing funds necessary to finance the bulk of the emigration of Jewish people from the Balkans through Turkey to Palestine, in addition to maintenance while en route. I understand that, to broaden further the scope of Joint Distribution Committee activities, Dr. Schwartz, who recently visited Istanbul, is taking steps to strengthen the Joint Distribution Committee representation in that city, in order that the enormous power and value of this organization and its indispensable contribution to rescue and relief work can be brought still further to bear in the present emergency.

Mr. Eri Jabotinsky, representing the Emergency Committee to Save the Jewish People of Europe, and Mr. Leon Densberg, 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 manifest power and usefulness through anarchic devices. Many hours have been devoted to attempting to keep this individual from embarrassing the Government which sponsored his visa, and hamstringing the Board's program. He continues openly to threaten all organizations and to generate trouble wherever possible. In the latter effort he has enjoyed only fair results, to date.

Mr. Denenberg 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 pot-boiler 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 for an avowed work of mercy, where the avowed aim of such persons is to exploit this privilege for political purposes of their own. In the case of Mr. Jabotinsky, his presence is admittedly designed to aid ultimately the Revisionist movement of Palestine, and in the case of Mr. Denenberg, for the enhancement of the reputations of the organizations 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 numerous hours of conferences, restraining devices, appeasement, etc., which could have been employed in affirmative efforts towards 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. Kenenberg, which have served to embarrass the functioning of the Consulate. It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that by the time this report reaches you it will be found necessary to have taken

measures to remove one or both of these "representatives" from the scene. In this connection it may be found necessary to call upon the Board's support.

2. The three phases.

Looking back at the situation as I found it upon my arrival in Turkey in February, 1944, and in gauging it in terms of the movement of events, it is apparent that we have operated, even in this brief period, through three definite phases. The intensity and confluence of events pouring 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 people in the Balkans, even including Hungary, can be recorded:

I. The first phase, which was found here 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 escape. 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 caused the legal cessation of these persecutions, deportation, and annihilations, the most conspicuous example of which was the breaking up of the disease-ridden Transnistrian camp in March, 1944. As reported to you in various telegrams, the children from this camp are now arriving through Turkey into Palestine.

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 Karabek, with 759 passengers, in July; the SS Morina, with 308 passengers, and the SS Bulbul with 395 passengers in August; not of course including the tragic war catastrophe occasioned by the sinking of the SS Hefkura. Efforts to continue evacuation by sea are under way, especially from Bulgaria, with increasing pressure by us.

III. As the Balkan governments, particularly Bulgaria and Rumania, began, even in their myopia, to perceive the inevitable collapse of their Colossus, they became more and more tractable in their 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 measure 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 and friendship 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 our Government, 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 to me 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.

The policy, therefore, of attempting to induce these governments to re-establish their own citizenry on a solid and normal basis was one which I introduced.

In Bulgaria, for example, the remaining 45,000 Jewish population, if reinstated to full citizenship, could become rehabilitated in its own land.

Since it is reported that there is plenty of food in Bulgaria and the Jewish population, virtually pauperized by the anti-Jewish laws, could be fed and rehabilitated if sufficient funds therefore could be made available, it was therefore suggested through Balabanoff that our Government required a) the immediate revocation of the anti-Jewish laws, and b) the facilitation of all technical measure necessary for the emigration of those only who voluntarily wished to leave Bulgaria at this time. Consequently, I advised Balabanoff that, although the United States Government expected that the Bulgarian Government would take steps to feed and rehabilitate its impoverished Jewish population, the assistance of private relief organizations or the War Refugees Board would be made available to the extent feasible.

It must be borne in mind here that the Bulgarian anti-Jewish laws were introduced by the Bulgarian Parliament at a time when it was dominated by Nazi sympathizers. An appreciable number of these members still remain in the Parliament, although the Bagryanov Government is taking steps to dilute their power. At the same time, it will be necessary for the Parliament to revoke the two aforesaid laws. Bagryanov does not enjoy the power of decree. At this writing he is struggling, with some success, to establish more firmly his position as leader of a government of national preservation, still, however, nominally squeezed within the Axis rim.

In this connection I have attempted to impress upon the Bagryanov Government the potential advantages in building good-will through the "open door" for emigration or transmigration which I have offered them, connected with the Board's rescue program. In several of my talks with Balabanoff, he introduced the subject of the precarious state in which his country now found itself. He said, in effect, that Sofia is almost completely destroyed. Bulgaria's number one problem is to save itself from destitution and collapse; the heart of Bulgaria's economy is in Sofia, and the regular life of the country has ceased.

It should not be inferred from the above that it is our intention to relent for a moment in our efforts to evacuate persecuted people who wish to leave the Balkans by all possible means. There are still thousands who crave rescue, especially from Hungary; the children from Transnistria constitute an immediate problem. The Board can be assured that all available efforts and resources are being directed to the third and last phase described above,

in attempting to re-establish people in order to give them the chance to become self-sustaining and normal citizens in their own countries.

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, under conditions prescribed by strange laws, tempi, personalities, 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 the representatives abroad and that they are being fully supported. No project or proposal introduced by me to Washington 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.

The Embassy in Ankara and the Consulate in Istanbul have been whole-heartedly cooperative. Ambassador Steinhardt, in person while in Ankara and prior to his visit to America, had left instructions with the Turkish Foreign Office, the British, and his own staff in a way which gave me undeviating support in my efforts. While the advice and skill of Ambassador Steinhardt were greatly missed during his absence, the support of Mr. Kelley and Mr. Earl Facker, First Secretary of Embassy, and their untiring, sympathetic effort in all our problems are a tower of strength. Mr. Burton Y. Berry, Consul General, and the staff of the Consulate General in Istanbul have likewise been most helpful.

Her report of this kind would be complete without reference to the stalwart, loyal, and able assistance afforded to me by Mr. Herbert Katzki. 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 Bixler, who have labored tirelessly and skillfully 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, with-

out relation to the hopes and rumors regarding the termination of the war in the near future. Obviously, as indicated in Point III among 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 sensitiveness. 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 directed exclusively towards rescue work by an agency of the United States Government in Turkey. The various organizations now at work here are limited in their organizing ability, scope, and personnel, and cannot treat on a sufficiently high level with Government officials which is necessary for the successful completion of any emergency rescue endeavor in war-time. The prestige, influence, and power of the Government of the United States of America, especially in a changing war-zone, is hardly to be measured when it is employed with discretion and direction by representatives. It bears repetition to assert that the results, both actual and in terms of the morale of the victims of oppression, deriving from the appointment of Board representatives to operate with authority and support from the Government 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 the American people, this still abides as something in the realm of the academic and prayer, 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 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 of relations between Turkey and Germany, when individual Germans, Austrians and Czechs, who claimed to be anti-Nazi, were being expelled from

Turkey, they turned to the United States Consulate in Istanbul and to the War Refugee Board representatives for refuge and aid. They received both. One of the fugitives, a woman with a one-year-old child who had lived in Turkey for 12 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. Who 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 was my observation that Turkey was 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 torn 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 state as 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. Hirschmann
Special Attache

IAH/hb

Enclosures: as per attached sheet

TABLE OF EXHIBITS

Report from Mr. Ira A. Hirschmann,
Representative of the War Refugee Board,
to Mr. John Pehle, Executive Director
of the War Refugee Board.

September 11, 1944

- Exhibit A: Minutes of an Informal Meeting & C. of Representatives of Relief Organizations in Istanbul, July 10, 1944.
- Exhibit B: Minutes of an Informal Meeting of the Operating Group of Relief Organizations, July 17, 1944.
- Exhibit C: Organization Representatives engaged in Relief and Rescue Activities in Istanbul, July 10, 1944.
- Exhibit D: Emigration Statistics: Rumania, January-June 1944.
- Exhibit E: Paraphrase of Telegram sent to Washington as Embassy's 1218, July 5, 1944.
- Exhibit F: Communications received July 13, 1944, from Mr. Al. Cretzianu.
- Exhibit G: Copy of Telegram dated July 18, 1944, addressed to Rumanian Legation, Lisbon, by Mihai Antonescu.
- Exhibit H: Letter to Mr. Zissu, July 21, 1944.
- Exhibit I: Memorandum of Conversation held with Dr. Black, July 21, 1944.
- Exhibit J: Letter to Dr. Black, August 1, 1944.
- Exhibit K: Composition of Exchange Group which Arrived in Istanbul July 6, 1944.
- Exhibit L: Persons who Arrived in Transit in Istanbul from Bulgaria, January-June 1944.
- Exhibit M: Part I: Survey of Events
Part II: Extract from Deposition of Two Slovakian Jews.

Part III: Report of a Hungarian Deported Woman from the Extermination Camp.
- Exhibit N: Edict of the Hungarian Government, July 18, 1944.
- Exhibit O: Number of Immigrants to Palestine from Turkey, January-June, 1944.
- Exhibit P: Copy of telegram from British Embassy, Angora, to Foreign Office, London, dated 9th August, 1944.

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

Those present: I. A. Hirschmann, Herbert Katkci, Chaim Barlas, Joseph Klarman, Reuben Resnik, Ludwig Kastner, Eliezer Kaplan, Harry Viteles, Eri Jabotinsky, Izok Mitrani, Judah Magnes, Eev Schind, David Schweitzer, J. Golden, Jacob Griffel, Joseph Schwartz, Leon Danenberg, Leder, Mnachim Bader, Moshe Averbuch, 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 Dr. Magnes, Dr. Schwartz and Mr. Kaplan, all of whom had had wide experience, and whose judgment and advice would be most helpful.

... 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. Magnes 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. Magnes 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 actions 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. Magnes 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

1) They were mixed 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. Barlas 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 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 purpose of the two proposed committees as follows: the larger group would be informative, and the smaller group would make operating decisions.

Mr. Denenberg 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

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 Pirin, 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. Hirschmann. 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. Hirschmann. Mr. Hirschmann would consider whether or not, and by what means, he would attempt the same thing.

Mr. Hirschmann 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. Barlas and Mr. Resnick 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 Schutzpässe, and which might be regarded as a group for 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. Hirschmann referred to his conversation with Mr. Griffel, and advised the group that the War Refugee Board, as representing the United States Government, has adopted its 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 Dr. 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. Hirschmann 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 6:15 p.m.

Herbert Katzki

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, especially matters relating to shipping.

6) Mnaachim Bader, Venja Pomeranec 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 Hias-Ica emigration Association (Hicem.)

11) Leon Dehenberg 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, et cetera. in occupied countries.

12) Eri 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 Magnes 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 Mitraah represents the Bulgarian Department of the Jewish Agency.

July 10, 1944

EMIGRATION STATISTICS

Rumania:

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	<u>2</u>	
	1273	persons
(1) n/s <u>Milca</u> (first trip	239	
Railway	<u>13</u>	
Total:	252	
(2) n/s <u>Maritza</u> (first trip	234	
n/x Bellacita	153	including 130 Transnistrian children
n/s <u>Milca</u> (second trip)	272	
Railway	<u>8</u>	
Total:	667	
(3) n/s <u>Maritza</u> (second trip)	318	
Railway	<u>22</u>	
Total:	340	

Paraphrase of telegram sent to
Washington on July 6

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 MARITZA. 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 sailings: The Greek SS SMYRNA 1200 passengers; MAFKURA 150; MARINA 350; KAZBEK 450; BULBUL 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 Mihai 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.

REPRODUCED FROM HOLDINGS AT THE FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT LIBRARY

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 explorations so far have indicated that the proposal outlined is the only immediate means leading to the rescue from the Balkans of refugees in appreciable numbers. A report will shortly be sent to you elaborating upon the above.

Communication received on the 13th of July 1944 from Mr. Al. Cretzianu, Rumanian Minister to Turkey, written on behalf of Mihai 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, Fildermann and Zimmer, the representatives of the Jews of Rumania, 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."

REPRODUCED FROM HOLDINGS AT THE FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT LIBRARY

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. Fildermann, 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. Fildermann'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. Fildermann'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

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.

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. Fildermann can render with skill and effectiveness. Mr. Fildermann 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.

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:

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 Draganoff'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 Balabanoff 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 Balabanoff during Simond's absence in Switzerland.

I. A. HIRSCHMANN

Istanbul, August 1, 1944

Dear Mr. 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.

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 Balabanoff 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 Balabanoff signed. While he wrote somewhat less than he reported to me verbally, his letter is categorical in asserting that (a) the government will ameliorate 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 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 business, 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 Hungary 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 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

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

From BERGEN-BELSEN 222 Persons (72 men and 150 women)

<u>Aged</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> </u>	<u> 2</u>
Total	72	150

Nationality

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

From VITTEL 61 persons.

Persons
who arrived in transit in Istanbul
From Bulgaria

January 1944	32
February	55
March (1)	131
April	17
May	46
June	127
Total:	<u>408</u>

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

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, these 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 Jews, 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 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 25, 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 shop-keepers' 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 not 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, 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.).

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 300 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.

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 these 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 Garany, 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; 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, 4120 Jews already there and 6639 from the surrounding country, that is, 10,759 persons, were crowded together in 123 houses. The floorspace of these 123 houses, counting kitchens and hallways as well, amounted to about 9665 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 Padopuszta, 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 Molnar, 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 Harangodpuszta is beginning to be filled.

May 10. The transportation by Harangodpuszta 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 Simzpuszta, 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 Nyirjes and Harangodpuszta, 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.

Mankacs.

April 20. The Jews from Munkacs, about 15,000 souls, were confined to 12 alleys. The Jews belonging to the Komitat Bereg, about 20,000 of them, were concentrated in the brick-yards 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. The larger camp, where approximately 13,000 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 Satoraljaujhely, 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, Huszt, Nagyszollos are empty. The Jews were all transported away."

Nagyv'arad.

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 16 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, Szacs vay 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 25. 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 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 Kassa. First 4,800 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.

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, Nagyszollós, Huszt, Maramarosziget, Nagyvarad, Nagybanja, Beszterce, Koloszvar, Marosvasarhely, Szatmárnemeti, Matliaszalka, Baja, Bárós, Bacstopolya, Ujvidek, Szabadka, Zenta, Zombor, Murakoz, Gyongyos, Satoraljaujhely, Sarospatak, Szilagysomlyó, Szaszregeñ, Sepsiszentgyorgy, Tecsó, Aknaszlatina, Nagykaroly, Felsoviso, Nagykanizsa, Kassa, Des, Nyiregyhaza, Kiswarda.

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: Komarom, Gyor, Dunaszerdahely, Miskolc, Pezs.

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	"	
Huszt	12,000	"	
Maramarosziget	12,000	"	
Felsoviso	3,500	"	
Tecsó	8,000	"	
Aknaszlatina	3,500	"	
Iza	3,000	"	106,000 souls

Transylvania:

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

Upper Hungary:

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

Upper Teschin:

Nyiregyhaza	18,000	souls	
Kisvarda	12,000	"	
Mateszalka	12,000	"	
Szatmarnemeti	25,000	"	
Nagykaroly	8,000	"	75,000 souls

South Hungary:

Nagykanisza	7,000	souls	
Baja	8,000	"	
Bares	2,000	"	
Bacstopolya	5,000	"	
Ujvidek, Szabad- ka, Zenta, Zom- bor, Murakoz	3,000	"	25,000 souls

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

EXHIBIT M

PART II

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 Szered 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 Harmanse, 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 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 Buna 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 30 grams of bad bread. Working conditions were the worst and hardest imaginable, so that most 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.)

EXHIBIT M

PART III

Report of a Hungarian deported woman
from the extermination 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 45 freight-cars, 75 in a car. We were told in behalf of Dr. Spiegel, who ran the chancery, that the Partfoge Drodaja had set aside a million Pengo 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 Satoraljaiuhely, 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 Krakau. 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 Subcarpathis, one from Bacaska. 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 seen. A smaller group of the Bacaska girls, about 70 in number, were taken away separately. We were hungry and thirsty, and especially the children cried. The Germans told us that we would be bathed first, and then we would get water and bread and jam. We were then led away. We went along by a wire fence. Behind this were houses and we saw there women and girls working, in striped, smeared clothes. Somewhat further on we saw two large chimneys, similar to factory chimneys, from which there shot great flames. They could hardly have belonged to a factory, however, since the buildings belonging to them did not look like a factory. It was said that these were the bathing places. I could not believe this, however.

We went on. After about a quarter of an hour we came to a little wood. We had to sit down in a clearing. The children would not stop crying. We were again told that we were to be bathed, then we would get all we needed. Part of our group was immediately led on a little further.

They had to undress and were led naked to be bathed. Shortly thereafter we saw in the distance a great flame spreading out. I was very frightened and thought only of how I could get away. I no longer believed that we were going to be bathed. The other women did not believe it, either. Many of them repeated the prayer of the dying (Widuj). Then we were ordered to go further to undress. I decided not to go along. I hung back a little, took my child by the hand and ran into the neighboring wood. I looked back, nobody noticed me, so I ran rather from the fire. Meanwhile it had become evening. I went on. It was already late when I came to a swamp, and could go no longer. We sat down and slept a little. The next day I followed a path, and after apparently taking a roundabout way came to a village. I went to the station, it was called Jawisowicza. I had no money and no papers at all. On the way I met a Polish farmer, to whom I sold a tablecloth I had wrapped around myself, and a cushion cover I had with me, for 20 RM. I had to wait a long time at Jawisowicza station. I did not know in which direction I ought to travel. I could speak with no one. The farmer told me in answer to my question as to how I might get to Hungary (naturally I wanted to go back to Hungary) that he didn't know, but anyway I must go in the direction of Bielitz. So I bought myself a ticket. There were German soldiers at the station, who looked at me quizzically, but in the end they did not stop me. In Bielitz I got off the train and waited there another long time. A girl advised me, if I wanted to get to Hungary, that I had to go to Zwardow. So I bought myself a ticket for Zwardow. I arrived in Zwardow toward 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.

EXHIBIT N

Translation

Budapest, July 18, 1944

The Present State of Measures Taken by the
Hungarian Government with regard to Jews is
as follows:

1.

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 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 practicing 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 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.

- - -

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.

- - -

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.

EXHIBIT O

Number of Immigrants
to Palestine from Turkey

January 1944	275
February	181
March	342
April	198
May	14
June	<u>28</u>
Total	938

EXHIBIT P

To American Embassy

Copy of Telegram from British
Embassy, Angora, to Foreign Office, London,
dated 9th August, 1944.

We have now reached agreement with Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the immediate institution of the following comprehensive arrangements which will cover admission into Turkey in transit of Jewish refugees from Hungary, Roumania and Bulgaria.

2. Turkish consuls at Bourgas, Constantza and Budapest are today being instructed by telegram to the following effect: Turkish consul at Budapest is to issue Turkish transit visas on application to any number of Jews who apply for them provided that they hold one or other of the following documents:

(a) an American Immigration Visa issued in circumstances described in my telegram 1375;

(b) a letter from the Jewish Agency in Istanbul certifying that the holder has been granted a Palestinian immigration certificate (a number of these letters have been sent to Hungary by various means);

(c) a certificate issued by the Swiss Legation in the terms set forth in your telegram 2459 to Berne; or an endorsement on a child's passport under the "5000" scheme;

(d) a certificate issued by Kraus, the Jewish Agency representative in Budapest, who now has his office in the Swiss Legation, to the effect that the bearer is a Jew, this last category was included at our request and should mean in practice that all genuine Jews will have the opportunity of leaving Hungary.

These Turkish transit visas will bear an endorsement saying that they are valid only for departure by sea from Bourgas or Constantza. Simultaneously Turkish consuls at Bourgas and Constantza are being authorized to grant, between them, up to 400 visas every ten days to persons bearing one or other of the documents described in paragraph 2. The Bulgarian Government has offered to allow the ships VITA and PIRINE to be used for the transport of refugees and one or other of these ships will make the journey to Istanbul from Bourgas or Constantza every ten days carrying refugees to whom transit visas have been granted by the Turkish consuls. Thus, if a full complement of passengers is not available at Constantza the ship will call at Bourgas.

- 2 -

#3. Ministry of Foreign Affairs are informing the Bulgarian Government of what they are doing.

4. Ministry of Foreign Affairs have undertaken to request Ministry of the Interior tomorrow to admit into Turkey henceforth without delay and without reference to Ankara any persons arriving at Turkey's land frontiers without Turkish visas provided they hold any of the four types of documents described in paragraph 2 above. This should mean in practice that almost every Jew arriving without a Turkish visa will be admitted, and will go a long way towards meeting our wishes. There may be however still a few Jews who are unable to obtain any of the four types of document required and who nevertheless attempt to enter Turkey by land without Turkish visas. Ministry of Foreign Affairs state they are still unable to authorise the entry of such persons unless we undertake formally to admit them into Palestine whether they turn out an examination to be Jews or not. To give such a formal guarantee would involve us in the possibility of having to receive non-Jewish Bulgarian and other refugees. No cases of persons trying to pass themselves off as Jews have actually occurred since the war so I recommend that we give guarantee. Pending receipt of your views on this point I have informed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that in doubtful cases they may refer to this Embassy by telephone and a reply stating whether the person is a Jew or not will be given immediately since the Jewish Agency have complete lists of Jews in occupied Europe to which reference can be made. Turkish difficulty is that once a person has crossed into Turkish territory Bulgarian frontier guards will not allow him to return.

5. These new arrangements will embrace and supersede the system of weekly lists of Veteran Zionists, as well as the scheme whereby groups of 75 children receive visas every ten days.

Istanbul, August 22, 1944

Dear Mr. Pehle:

I am enclosing herewith my preliminary report covering the activities of the Board's program in Turkey from July 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,

I. A. Hirschmann
Special Attache

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

IAH:VH