

GERMAN EXTERRINATION CAMPS
(Folder 2 of 2)

100476



000477

Hon. A. W. Bennett
Rm. 439
Old House Office
Building
Washington, D.C.

Sent
1/6/45
RH

000478

DEC 5 1944

My dear Mr. Bloom:

Pursuant to our conversation of this morning,
I am sending you herewith two copies of the report
on German extermination centers at Auschwitz and
Birkenau, which were recently issued by the War
Refugee Board.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) J. W. Pehle
J. W. Pehle
Executive Director

Honorable Sol Bloom,
House of Representatives,
House Office Building,
Washington, D. C.

Enclosures.

FHodel:rd 12/5/44

261

000479

NOV 20 1944

My dear Mr. Cannon:

At the hearing held today on the War Refugee Board appropriation, several members of the Deficiency Subcommittee of the House Committee on Appropriations expressed an interest in obtaining copies of the War Refugee Board release on German extermination camps.

A copy of this release is transmitted herewith. It contains eye-witness accounts of events which took place at Auschwitz and Birkenau in Southwestern Poland. This report is being released to the public on Sunday, November 26, 1944.

Very truly yours,

(Signed J. W. Pehle

J. W. Pehle
Executive Director.

Honorable Clarence Cannon,
House of Representatives.

Enclosure

JWP JWPehle:lhk 11-20-44

000480

FROM: MR. SHAEFFER'S OFFICE

TO: MISS HODEL 2410

Another request for atrocity stories filled by
V. M. M.:

Dr. Benjamin Kautch
Room 231
1775 Broadway
New York, N. Y.

Sent at request of Congressman Celler

000481

FROM: MR. SHAFFER'S OFFICE

TO: MISS HODEL 2410

Since I have no more copies of the atrocity report up here, will you please have the girls send a copy to

Representative Samuel Dickstein
Room 1719, House Office Building

This was a telephoned request.

V. M. M.

*Sent
7/20/44*

000482

FROM: MR. SHAEFFER'S OFFICE

TO: ~~MR. PETHE~~ *Miss Hodel 240*

Congressman Hadwen Fuller of N. Y. called for the report. Also Dr. Frank S. Bernard who is going to use it for the basis of a talk before the Medical Assn.

V. M. M.

000483

FROM: MR. SHAEFFER'S OFFICE

TO: ~~MR. PERL~~

Miss Hodel

2418

Congressman Gamble of New York requested that 2 copies of the atrocity reports be sent to one of his constituents. He is Alfred A. Knopf, the publisher. Wouldn't it be nice if Mr. Knopf "bit?"

V. M. M.

000484

Hon. Robert a
Giant

Room 1706

House Office Bldg.
(2 copies)

Sent
2/13/45
R.H.

000485

Congressman

E. V. Izac

Room 240

Old House

Office Bldg

David K. Hill

White House

Sent
12/2/67

000486

NOV 20 1944

My dear Mr. Johnson:

At the hearing held today on the War Refugee Board appropriation, several members of the Deficiency Subcommittee of the House Committee on Appropriations expressed an interest in obtaining copies of the War Refugee Board release on German extermination camps.

A copy of this release is transmitted herewith. It contains eye-witness accounts of events which took place at Auschwitz and Birkenau in Southwestern Poland. This report is being released to the public on Sunday, November 26, 1944.

Very truly yours,

signed J. W. Pehle
J. W. Pehle
Executive Director

Honorable Jed Johnson,
House of Representatives.

Enclosure

JWP JWPEHLE:1hh 11-20-44

000487

NOV 20 1944

My dear Mr. Ludlow:

At the hearing held today on the War Refugee Board appropriation, several members of the Deficiency Subcommittee of the House Committee on Appropriations expressed an interest in obtaining copies of the War Refugee Board release on German extermination camps.

A copy of this release is transmitted herewith. It contains eye-witness accounts of events which took place at Auschwitz and Birkenau in Southwestern Poland. This report is being released to the public on Sunday, November 26, 1944.

Very truly yours,

(Signed J. W. Pehle

J. W. Pehle
Executive Director.

Honorable Louis Ludlow,

House of Representatives.

Enclosure

JWP JWPehle:1hh 11-20-44

000488

~~Congressman~~
Jas. W. Mott
1532 House St.
Officer Bldg.

~~12~~

Two copies of report

Sent
1/12/45
AM

000489

EMMET O'NEAL
3d DIST. KENTUCKY

9-18-44
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

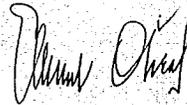
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C.
November 21, 1944

Honorable J. W. Pehle
Executive Director
War Refugee Board
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Mr. Pehle:

It was very kind of you to send
me a copy of the War Refugee Board release
on German extermination camps. I shall
read it with interest.

Sincerely yours,



EO'N:W

*You always do a fine job before our
Committees.*

000490

NOV 20 1944

My dear Mr. O'Neal:

At the hearing held today on the War Refugee Board appropriation, several members of the Deficiency Subcommittee of the House Committee on Appropriations expressed an interest in obtaining copies of the War Refugee Board release on German extermination camps.

A copy of this release is transmitted herewith. It contains eye-witness accounts of events which took place at Auschwitz and Birkenau in Southwestern Poland. This report is being released to the public on Sunday, November 26, 1944.

Very truly yours,

(Signed J. W. Pehle

J. W. Pehle
Executive Director

Honorable Emmet O'Neal,
House of Representatives.

Enclosure

JWP JWPehle:1hh 11-20-44

000491

NOV 20 1944

My dear Mr. Rabaut:

At the hearing held today on the War Refugee Board appropriation, several members of the Deficiency Subcommittee of the House Committee on Appropriations expressed an interest in obtaining copies of the War Refugee Board release on German extermination camps.

A copy of this release is transmitted herewith. It contains eye-witness accounts of events which took place at Auschwitz and Birkenau in Southwestern Poland. This report is being released to the public on Sunday, November 26, 1944.

Very truly yours,

(Signed J. W. Pehle

J. W. Pehle
Executive Director.

Honorable Louis C. Rabaut,
House of Representatives.

Enclosure

JWP
JWPehle:lh 11-20-44

000492

Hon. Richard M.
Simpson
Rm 1405
House Office Bldg
2 copies

Sent
1/31/45
RH

(Hon). Simpson Richard
M.

000493

Hon. Frederic
C Smith
Rm 341
House Office Bldg
Washington DC
(6 copies)

Sent

12/8/44

RH

000494

NOV 20 1944

My dear Mr. Snyder:

At the hearing held today on the War Refugee Board appropriation, several members of the Deficiency Subcommittee of the House Committee on Appropriations expressed an interest in obtaining copies of the War Refugee Board release on German extermination camps.

A copy of this release is transmitted herewith. It contains eye-witness accounts of events which took place at Auschwitz and Birkenau in Southwestern Poland. This report is being released to the public on Sunday, November 26, 1944.

Very truly yours,

Signed J. W. Pehle
J. W. Pehle
Executive Director

Honorable J. Buell Snyder,
House of Representatives.

Enclosure

 JWPehle:lh 11-20-44

000495

Congressman Frank Starkey
Room 505
House Office Bldg.

Sent
1/26/65
RHT

2 copies

000496

November 21, 1944.

My dear Mr. Stefan:

Transmitted herewith per your request are two copies of the release entitled "German Extermination Camps - Auschwitz and Birkenau". You will note that this report is for release Sunday, November 26, 1944.

Very truly yours,

(Signed J. W. Pehle

J. W. Pehle
Executive Director

Honorable Karl Stefan,
House of Representatives.

Enclosure

 JWPehle:lhk 11-21-44

000497

NOV 20 1944

My dear Mr. Taber:

At the hearing held today on the War Refugee Board appropriation, several members of the Deficiency Subcommittee of the House Committee on Appropriations expressed an interest in obtaining copies of the War Refugee Board release on German extermination camps.

A copy of this release is transmitted herewith. It contains eye-witness accounts of events which took place at Auschwitz and Birkenau in Southwestern Poland. This report is being released to the public on Sunday, November 26, 1944.

Very truly yours,

(Signed J. W. Pehle)

J. W. Pehle
Executive Director

Honorable John Taber,
House of Representatives

Enclosure

JWP JWPehle:lh 11-20-44

100498

DEC 4 1944

My dear Senator:

Receipt is acknowledged of your letter of December 1, 1944, concerning a request you received from Mr. W. W. Nairn, Sr., of Wheaton, Maryland, for a copy of the reports recently issued by the War Refugee Board on the German extermination camps at Auschwitz and Birkenau.

Pursuant to your request, we have sent a copy direct to Mr. Nairn. An additional copy is enclosed herewith for your information.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) J. W. Pehle
J. W. Pehle
Executive Director

Honorable Millard E. Tydings,
United States Senate,
Washington, D. C.

Enclosure.

FH:hd 12/2/44

Jed —

100499

MILLARD E. TYDINGS, MD., CHAIRMAN
CARL HAYDEN, ARIZ.
SIDNEY CHAMP CLARK, MO.
ROBERT W. REYNOLDS, N. C.
HOMER T. BONE, WASH.
BURTON K. WHEELER, MONT.
PETER G. DERRY, R. I.
DENNIS CHAVEZ, N. MEX.
ABE MURDOCK, UTAH
ALLEN J. ELLENDER, LA.

MISS CORINNE BARGER, CLERK

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
TERRITORIES AND INSULAR AFFAIRS

December 1, 1944

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

Dear Mr. Pehle:

I have received a request from
Mr. W. W. Nairn, Sr., Wheaton, Silver Spring
Post Office, Maryland, for a copy of a document
on German atrocities in internment camps.

If your office should have any
information on this subject, I shall greatly
appreciate your sending such available material
direct to Mr. Nairn.

Thanking you for your cooperation in
this matter, and with best wishes, I am

Sincerely yours,

M. E. Tydings

100500

House of Representatives U.S.

PUBLIC DOCUMENT

FREE

Francis E. Walter
M. C.

HON. FRANCIS E. WALTER
ROOM 349, OLD HOUSE OFFICE BLDG.
WASHINGTON, D.C.

*Sent
12/1/44*

PENNSYLVANIA

000501

2 copies
Congressman Thad Wasielewski
Room 1323 - House of Reps

Sept
15
1945

000502

NOV 20 1944

My dear Mr. Woodrum:

At the hearing held today on the War Refugee Board appropriation, several members of the Deficiency Subcommittee of the House Committee on Appropriations expressed an interest in obtaining copies of the War Refugee Board release on German extermination camps.

A copy of this release is transmitted herewith. It contains eye-witness accounts of events which took place at Auschwitz and Birkenau in Southwestern Poland. This report is being released to the public on Sunday, November 26, 1944.

Very truly yours,

(Signed J. W. Pehle

J. W. Pehle
Executive Director.

Honorable Clifton A. Woodrum,
House of Representatives.

Enclosure

JWP JWPehle:1hh 11-20-44

000503

NOV 20 1944

My dear Mr. Wigglesworth:

At the hearing held today on the War Refugee Board appropriation, several members of the Deficiency Subcommittee of the House Committee on Appropriations expressed an interest in obtaining copies of the War Refugee Board release on German extermination camps.

A copy of this release is transmitted herewith. It contains eye-witness accounts of events which took place at Auschwitz and Birkenau in Southwestern Poland. This report is being released to the public on Sunday, November 26, 1944.

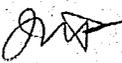
Very truly yours,

(Signed J. W. Pehle

J. W. Pehle
Executive Director

Honorable Richard B. Wigglesworth,
House of Representatives.

Enclosure

 JWPehle:1hh 11-20-44

000504

RICHARD B. WIGGLESWORTH
13TH DIST. MASSACHUSETTS

74
COMMITTEE ON
APPROPRIATIONS

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C.

November 21, 1944.

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

Dear Mr. Pehle:

Many thanks for your letter of the
twentieth and for the enclosure which I am glad to have
at hand.

Sincerely yours,



000505

Nov. 28

A4879

War Refugee Report on Atrocities

EXTENSION OF REMARKS

OF

HON. EMANUEL CELLER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 28, 1944

Mr. CELLER. Mr. Speaker, under leave to extend my remarks in the Record, I include the following statement:

COMMENT ON WAR REFUGEE REPORT ON ATROCITIES—RELUCTANCE ON PART OF CERTAIN OFFICIAL CIRCLES TO PUBLISH REPORT

The report of two young Slovakian Jews and the report of a non-Jewish Polish major, made public by the War Refugee Board, on the German extermination camps at Auschwitz and Birkenau are authentic revelations of such horror and foulness as the world has never before known.

The deliberate and systematic murder of millions of Jews and non-Jews by the Germans and the unrestrained bestiality that is in command of the German Reich place a responsibility on the War Crimes Commission, now functioning in London, that must not be blunted by the polite exchange of legalistic theorizing.

There was some hesitancy in some Washington official circles to publish this report. It would have been a grave error not to have done so. John W. Fehle, Director of the War Refugee Board, has performed splendidly in releasing it to the public.

In these eyewitness reports, horror upon horror is disclosed and when detailed knowledge is brought home to the people of America, assuredly, there will come to them the complete realization of the fearful lot that has befallen the peoples of Europe.

But where do we go from here?

The War Crimes Commission has been meeting for over a year, and the results of its deliberations can be placed in a tiny capsule: What is the matter with it? What is it hesitating about? Reports come forth that it is entangled in the search for precedents and in minute disputes of jurisdictional responsibility and procedure. The Nazis are guilty of unprecedented degrees of criminality. The inadequacy of national tribunals is apparent. Justice will not be done unless international tribunals are established to try the war guilty and mete out the appropriate punishment.

We remember with much misgiving the attempts to try to punish the war guilty of the last war. After 2 years of deliberation, a list of 900 was permitted to dwindle down to 12. The big fish got out of the net. The Kaiser was allowed to "suffer" a comfortable exile as the Squire of Doorn. Von Tirpitz, Von Ludendorff, Von Bismarck, Von Hindenburg, and hundreds of such "vons" were free to begin all over again to plot once more for world domination. Shall Hitler, Himmler, Goebbels, Goering, Antonescu, Quisling, and their ilk escape this time? They will if the War Crimes Commission continues to strain at a gnat and swallow a camel.

The Axis criminals will get justice in accordance with civilized concepts, but justice does not mean it is permitted to escape because of disputes over jurisdiction and procedure. Such injustice would dishonor the martyred.

Herbert C. Fell, our representative on the War Crimes Commission, has been vigorous in his demands that justice be done and that the Axis sadists be brought to book. He is having his troubles, I am afraid, and public opinion must now express itself in favor of immediate and forthright action.

Law and order must prevail in the trials of the war guilty, but there should not be any delay in the implementation and appli-

100506

cation of that law and order. The War Crimes Commission should immediately make pronouncements without any "ifs," "ands" or "buts" that the war guilty will be punished. Delay is fatal. On the plains of hesitation lie the countless bones of millions.

Families of Seabees To Get Original Yule Gift

EXTENSION OF REMARKS

OF

HON. HOMER D. ANGELL

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 27, 1944

Mr. ANGELL. Mr. Speaker, Mrs. Forrest Fisher, of my district, is doing a noteworthy service for our Seabees overseas and their relatives at home. Some 300 families of this outstanding organization of our service forces, through the work of Mrs. Fisher, will receive copies of 100 pictures showing South Sea war scenes. Mrs. Fisher's son, Lewis Fisher, is a member of the Seabees and is in the South Pacific. I include as a part of my remarks an article appearing in the Oregonian of November 22, 1944, describing the noteworthy effort Mrs. Fisher is making. The article follows:

FAMILIES OF 300 SEABEES TO GET ORIGINAL YULE GIFT

The families of 300 embattled Seabees are due for a pleasant surprise when Christmas rolls around this year, thanks to the ingenuity of members of the Navy Construction Battalion, now in the Philippines, and the hard work of the mother of one of them, Mrs. Forrest Fisher, 2675 Southwest Montgomery Drive.

The surprise—probably the most original idea yet to come from a unit of servicemen on a fighting front—will be a neat package containing 100 pictures of the southwest Pacific islands, including Guadalcanal, Bougainville, New Caledonia, New Guinea and the Philippines, islands of bitterly fought campaigns against the Japs.

MRS. FISHER "HERO"

With each package, now being painstakingly assembled for mailing by Mrs. Fisher, will go a small booklet called "Touring the Pacific With the Seabees of the Navy." It will contain a brief description of the scene on each card—candid camera "shots" of war, mountains and beaches, and Seabees and natives at work and play.

But real "hero" of the Christmas present which will reach the wives or parents of each of the 300 Seabees before sleighbells start ringing is Mrs. Fisher, mother of Chief Petty Officer Lewis B. Fisher, now serving with the Navy Construction Battalion.

THIRTY THOUSAND PRINTS SORTED

Her job—one which probably would scare most people away—is to assemble the 100 snaps for each family into a neat package for delivery by this Friday. In any man's arithmetic, 300 times 100 photo prints is 30,000 prints—now spread out over tables, shelves, beds, and bureaus in her Montgomery Drive home. Mrs. Fisher, voluntarily doing the difficult task at the request of her son, admits that she loves it, tough as it is.

The "mass distribution" Christmas present was the idea of her son, Chief Lewis, an amateur photographer and camera enthusiast who has been on duty in the Pacific for the

000507

ties," says the W. R. B., "that the minds of civilized people find it difficult to believe that they have actually taken place. But the governments of the United States and of other countries have evidence which clearly substantiates the facts." The facts are really quite simple, although perhaps somewhat difficult to grasp: In Birkenau, between April 1942 and April 1944, approximately 1,765,000 Jews were put to death by poison gas in ingeniously constructed chambers; their bodies were then burned in specially designed furnaces; their ashes were distributed as fertilizer. This process of extermination by gassing was carried on in other camps besides Birkenau; in the main, it was applied only to Jews. "Aryans" were generally exterminated by shooting or by injections of phenol. After their bodies had been shoveled into the furnaces, however, the "Aryan" and Jewish ashes were probably indistinguishable.

It is a mistake, perhaps, to call these killings "atrocities." An atrocity is a wanton brutality. There were unspokeable atrocities at Auschwitz and Birkenau. But the point about these killings is that they were systematic and purposeful. The gas chambers and furnaces were not improvisations; they were scientifically designed instruments for the extermination of an entire ethnic group. On the scale practiced by the Germans, this is something new. And it is this purpose which human beings find it difficult to believe or understand. Yet it is a purpose which Hitler has openly avowed.

We have never even had a word for it until now. But one has been recently coined by a noted Polish scholar and attorney, Professor Raphael Lemkin, now on the faculty of Duke University. He has devised the term *genocide* (made out of the ancient Greek word *genos* (race, ~~type~~) and the Latin *cide* (killing)). "Genocide," he says in a volume, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, recently published by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, "is directed against the national group as an entity, and the actions involved are directed against individuals, not in their individual capacity, but as members of the national group." Thus Jews were gassed at Birkenau and Aryan Poles and Russians and Slovenes were otherwise butchered, not for any crime or any resistance to Axis authority, but because the Nazis wished to terminate the ethnic groups to which they belonged.

Generally speaking, says Professor Lemkin, "genocide" does not necessarily mean the immediate destruction of a nation, except when accomplished by mass killings of all members of a nation. It is intended rather to signify a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves. In this sense the Germans have committed genocide in virtually all the countries of Europe which they occupied. They have struck deliberately at the culture, language, religious, and political institutions and at the economic existence of the peoples they conquered—all with a view to undermining their national identity and weakening them, physically and morally, so that they would become subservient to German rule.

As long ago as 1933 Professor Lemkin proposed the recognition of genocide as a crime under international law. Had his proposal been adopted, Sir Cecil Hurst and his United Nations War Crimes Commission

A5003

Nazi Mass Killings

EXTENSION OF REMARKS

OF

HON. ROBERT F. WAGNER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Thursday, December 7 (legislative day of Tuesday, November 21), 1944

Mr. WAGNER. Mr. President, I ask to have printed in the Appendix of the RECORD a brilliant and very important editorial published in the December 3, 1944, issue of the Washington Post. I hope it will be widely read. The editorial is entitled "Genocide" a word coined by a Polish scholar of Duke University, meaning race killing. The editorial relates to the report of the War Refugee Board which tells a most tragic story of the mass killing of all members of a nation.

There being no objection, the editorial was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

GENOCIDE

No human creature can read the report of the War Refugee Board released last Sunday without a sense of shock and shame. The report presents eyewitness accounts of events which occurred at the German extermination camps of Auschwitz and Birkenau. "So revolting and diabolical are the German atroc-

100500

000909

BLOOMINGDALE'S
NEW YORK 22

*File
JST*

EXECUTIVE OFFICES

November 29, 1944

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

Dear John:

I should be interested in your opinion
regarding the attached.

I will be glad to talk with the New York
Times people on this point if you feel
that it is desirable and justified.

Cordially yours



I. A. Hirschmann

lah:ret

000510

American Zionist Emergency Council

CONSTITUENT ORGANIZATIONS
Hadassah, Women's Zionist Organization of America
Mizrachi Organization of America
Poale Zion-Zeire Zion of America
Zionist Organization of America

342 MADISON AVENUE
NEW YORK 17, N. Y.
Murray Hill 2-1160

November 28, 1944

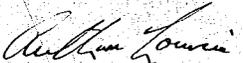
Mr. Ira Hirschmann
Bloomingdale Bros., Inc.
Lexington Ave. at 59th Street
New York, New York

Dear Mr. Hirschmann:

You will probably have noticed in the New York Times report (November 26th) of the announcement by the War Refugee Board of the horrors perpetrated by the Nazis in Poland, that considerable prominence was given in the body of the report to a statement by Peter Bergson on behalf of the "Hebrew Committee for National Liberation". I enclose a copy of the report in case it has escaped your attention.

The prominence thus accorded Mr. Bergson's statement, particularly in that context, is, to say the least, a little surprising and I am wondering whether you would not feel it worthwhile to draw the attention of some responsible person on the Times to the importance thus attached to Bergson's committee by linking its statement with the announcement of the War Refugee Board. One feels that the Times "ought to know better" and that if the fault is that of their Washington correspondent, it is time that he were enlightened on the true facts with regard to the "Hebrew Committee for National Liberation".

Sincerely yours


Arthur Lourie

AL:CK
Enc.

000511

U. S. Board Bares Atrocity Details Told by Witnesses at Polish Camps

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Nov. 25.—In the first detailed report by a United States Government Agency offering eyewitness proof of mass murder by the Germans, the War Refugee Board made public today accounts by three persons of organized atrocities at Birkenau and Oswiecim [Auschwitz] in southwestern Poland that transcend the horrors of Lublin. The accounts were vouched for by the WRP.

While at Lublin 1,500,000 persons were said to have been killed in three years, 1,500,000 to 1,765,000 persons were murdered in the torture chambers of Birkenau from April, 1942, to April, 1944, according to these Government-verified reports. Many thousands of other deaths by phenol injection, brutal beatings, starvation, shooting, etc., also are recounted.

"It is a fact beyond denial that the Germans have deliberately and systematically murdered millions of innocent civilians—Jews and Christians alike—all over Europe," the WRB declared.

"This campaign of terror and brutality, which is unprecedented in all history and which even now continues unabated, is part of the German plan to subjugate the free peoples of the world," it added.

"So revolting and diabolical are the German atrocities that the minds of civilized people find it difficult to believe that they have actually taken place," the board stated. "But the Governments of the United States and of other countries have evidence which

Food Billmanat Read Margaret Pettigrew on the Woman's Page of the Brooklyn Eagle.—Adv.

Continued on Page 24, Column 3

000512

U. S. BOARD BARES ATROCITY DETAILS

Continued From Page 1

clearly substantiates the facts." After describing the nature of the reports now made public, the WRB added:

"The board has every reason to believe that these reports present a true picture of the frightful happenings in these camps. It is making the reports public in the firm conviction that they should be read and understood by all Americans."

Simultaneously with Government publication of the narrative from two young Slovak Jews, who escaped last April 7—being the only Jews to have escaped from Birkenau—and a non-Jewish Polish major—the only survivor of sixty Poles moved to Birkenau from Lublin—Peter H. Bergson, chairman of the Hebrew Committee for National Liberation, announced at a news conference that the United Nations War Crimes Commission had "refused to take into consideration any acts committed against persons other than nationals of the United Nations."

German atrocities against Jews and others of nationalities included in the German sphere of influence have not been recognized by the commission, Mr. Bergson said.

He added that his committee was recommending the following action to the United Nations concerned:

"1. That they issue a joint declaration proclaiming that crimes committed against Hebrews in Europe, irrespective of the territory on which the crime was committed or the citizenship or lack of citizenship of the victim at the time of death, be considered as a war crime and punished as such."

"2. That the Governments of the United Nations concerned instruct their representatives on the War Crimes Commission to see to it that the abovementioned declaration is put into effect."

"3. That representatives of the Hebrew people be given membership on the War Crimes Commission and that temporarily, until such time as a Hebrew national sovereignty be re-established, the Hebrew Committee of National Liberation be authorized to constitute the Hebrew representation on the War Crimes Commission."

So low did the value of human life sink in the death camps and so frightful was the terror and tragedy, the document indicated, that some of the prisoners turned murderers and informers, hoping for some slight favor rendered their Nazi slave-masters to escape the execution wall or gas chamber. Few, if any, did.

The Polish major escaped from Oswiecim, where more than 1,500,000 persons were systematically murdered or tortured to death after it was turned into an execution camp some time in 1941.

The names of those telling the stories, their present whereabouts and the circumstances under which they came to the board's attention were not disclosed. Commenting upon the accuracy of their stories, however, the board asserted:

"The declarations tally with all the trustworthy yet fragmentary reports hitherto received, and the dates given with regard to transports to various camps agree with the official records. These statements can, therefore, be considered entirely credible."

How cheaply the prisoners themselves came to regard human life was reflected in the account by the two Jews of a "special squad" of 200 other Slovak Jews who were employed in gassing and burning the condemned at Birkenau before they themselves were similarly executed after planning a mutiny and escape.

"The men belonging to the 'special squad' lived separately," one of the eyewitnesses said. "On account of the dreadful smell spread by them, people had but little contact with them."

"Change? Excites Squad

"Besides, they were always filthy, destitute, half wild and extraordinarily brutal and ruthless.

It was not uncommon to see one of them kill another. This was considered by the others a sensation, a change. One simply recorded that number so-and-so had died.

"Once I was an eyewitness when a young Polish Jew named Jossel demonstrated scientific murder on a Jew in the presence of an SS [Elite] guard. He used no weapon, merely his bare hands, to kill his victim."

Oswiecim was the administrative headquarters and reception center for prisoners coming to both camps. Here they received numbers corresponding to the number of prisoners actually in the camp, which, the eyewitness said, at the time of their escape had risen to 180,000.

BLOOMINGDALE'S
NEW YORK

EXECUTIVE OFFICES

November 27, 1944.

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

Dear John:

That report that you managed to have released, I understand over the "dead bodies" of some of your "colleagues" *in the statement* is a powerful piece of propaganda. Even the New York Sunday News, Patterson's paper, which is not noted for its sympathetic interest towards the problems to which you have devoted yourself in the last year, ran it in full. I believe it made a deep impression.

Without knowing under what circumstances the story was released, but having been around a bit in the last few years, I am of the impression that you and you alone could have pushed a story like that through. The people of this country deserve to be informed and to know the truth, especially where human life and the principles involved in their security and freedom are concerned, and what you have done by making a sharp instrument of the War Refugee Board rather than a piece of blunt opportunism is something that should not be forgotten -- and I think will not be lost on the consciences of the American people.

000514

- 2 -

The War Refugee Board it seems came in for rather a good proportion of Page One of the Herald Tribune yesterday. I made an informal talk at a Convention which seemed so important to me that I almost forgot to be there, and I found the report of it on Page One. The interesting part of my story coming under your great blast I think is unique in journalism.

But this letter was designed to take my hat off to you again, and here it goes.

Cordially yours,



I. A. Hirschmann

iah.em

000515

November 28, 1944.

Dear Ira,

Thank you for your letter about our atrocity story which is getting a big play in the press throughout the country. We did run into some opposition on this report although not from the State Department as far as I can tell. I will give you the story on it when I see you next. However, "unfortunately" the opposition didn't develop until the story had been released to the press for publication a week later, so nothing could be done to stop it.

I hope the story does some good. To me, it is convincing in a way in which other reports have not been. As you know it is not easy to believe that such things take place but after reading these accounts one cannot refute the conclusion that such things do happen and are happening.

With personal regards,

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) John

J. W. Pehle

Mr. Ira A. Hirschmann,
Vice President,
Bloomingdale's,
New York, New York.

JWP JWP:1hh 11-28-44

100516



000517

Handwritten note:
The name
is not to be
used



THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF WAR
WASHINGTON

4 December 1944

Files
JJ37

Mr. J. B. Friedman
War Refugee Board
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Friedman:

Thank you for the draft reply to Mr. Schuette's letter to Secretary Stimson. I thought it was a very good job.

Sincerely,

John J. McCloy
JOHN J. MCCLOY
Assistant Secretary of War

000518

DEC 2 1944

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mr. McGloy
FROM: Mr. Friedman

Pursuant to your request of yesterday, I send you herewith a suggested draft of reply which you may wish to use in answering the letter received by Secretary Stimson from Mr. Oswald F. Schuette under date of November 28, 1944. Mr. Schuette's letter is returned herewith.

Attachments.

Dispatched to Mr. Clay by messenger, 1:50 p.m.

JH DB7

RH:hd 12/2/44

000519

Dear Mr. Schuette:

Reference is made to your letter of November 28, 1944, in which you inquire about a report recently issued by the War Refugee Board and entitled "German Extermination Camps - Auschwitz and Birkenau."

I understand fully your skepticism concerning atrocity stories which undoubtedly arises from the fact that during and after the First World War some of the stories which were published were later proved without foundation. It is precisely because of this regrettable experience in the past that all of us have been reluctant to believe the stories of incredible German brutality which have come to light in the last few years. I regret to state, however, that the evidence supporting these accounts is all too abundant.

The decision that the report referred to in your letter is authentic is based upon the opinion of trusted and trained officials of the War Refugee Board, both here and overseas, and upon the considered judgment of experts in refugee and related matters in neutral countries. The report contains only material about which there is no uncertainty either in the minds of the narrators or among the many qualified people who examined them in person. The report was also checked against other unpublished material on the same subject and against the testimony of other eye-witnesses of similar or related incidents.

I can assure you that every available device was used to establish the accuracy of this testimony. As a result, and as you will notice in the enclosed copy of the report, the following statement is made in the foreword: "The Board has every reason to believe that these reports present a true picture of the frightful happenings in these camps."

Very truly yours,

Secretary of War.

Mr. Oswald F. Schuette,
National Press Building,
Washington, D. C.

7007

000520



THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF WAR
WASHINGTON

1 December 1944

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. FRIEDMAN:

Herewith letter to the Secretary of War from Oswald F. Schuette of November 28, 1944 regarding the War Refugee Board's press release last Sunday on the subject of German extermination camps.

In accordance with our telephone conversation of this morning, will you please draft a suggested reply for the Secretary's signature. Kindly also return Mr. Schuette's letter.

J. J. McC.
JM

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C
O
P
Y

OSWALD F. SCHUETTE
National Press Building
Washington

November 28, 1944

Hon. Henry L. Stimson
Secretary of War
Pentagon Building
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Secretary:

The War Refugee Board--of which you are a member--has just made public a voluminous and detailed account of the murder of 1,765,000 prisoners, by the Germans, in what it calls the "German Extermination Camps, Auschwitz and Birkenau."

"The Board," says the official statement, "has every reason to believe that these reports present a true picture of the frightful happenings in these camps. It is making the reports public in the firm conviction that they should be read and understood by all Americans."

Your membership on this board gives this publication its chief claim to public acceptance. As Secretary Hull was ill for many months, prior to his resignation, it is not to be assumed that he had an opportunity to make a critical examination. Although the only remaining member, Secretary Morgenthau, is a lawyer, he has no background of experience that would warrant the assumption that he was able to make the critical analysis necessary to determine the credibility of the report.

You, however, have such an outstanding reputation as a lawyer, and as a conscientious public official in two of the highest executive posts in the nation, that your name on the document gives it an overwhelming authenticity.

That fact places upon you a serious responsibility. Atrocity stories are nothing new in war propaganda. I was an American War Correspondent for three and one half years in the last war, and know something of what was done in that field.

So I am writing this letter to ask you three simple questions:

1. Did you read the reports of the three unnamed witnesses, before they were accepted as true by your board?
2. Did you examine them critically to see that they bore on their face the evidence of truth?
3. Did you make any further investigation of the signers, or of the circumstances which led to the preparation of the detailed accounts?

As a lawyer, I am sure you realize, even more than a layman, that the value of any anonymous testimony is only so good as the care with which the lawyer, who vouches for its truth, has tested its veracity and integrity.

I shall appreciate the courtesy of your reply.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ Oswald F. Schuette

OFS:K

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Re. discussion with J. M. ...

EXCERPTS FROM REPORT OF POLISH MAJOR

Pages 2 & 3

"During 1940, 1941, and 1942 the roll call was usually expected to last at least an hour in all weather conditions - frost, rain, or snow - the prisoners having to wait patiently with bare heads. If an escape was reported, which resulted in a "manco" at evening roll call, all those assembled had to wait outside until the result of the search was known. The search parties usually returned three or four hours later and with disastrous consequences for all the prisoners' health. In 1940, for example, one escape cost the lives of a hundred inmates. It was during severe winter weather and the prisoners were forced to stand out of doors from 3:30 in the afternoon until 11 o'clock the next morning, as a result of which a hundred totally or half-frozen men were counted."

Pages 11 & 12

"Originally, the camp of AUSCHWITZ was intended only for Poles. It was guarded by a group of Germans (no more than 30 at the beginning) who had been transferred from a German concentration camp. They were prisoners as well but "camp veterans," if such an expression may be used. Most of them had been imprisoned as far back as 1934 and were all more or less professional criminals. But as time went on AUSCHWITZ became more and more of an international camp and the first Jews started to arrive in 1941. They were immediately separated from the "Aryans" and quartered in special "blocks." Although at the time systematic executions were not an established rule, it can be stated that as a result of bad treatment by SS men, Capos and foremen (the majority of German origin but often Poles who were enlisted by force), a Jew - irrespective of his physical condition - could not last more than two weeks. A young Jew, for instance, who was robust enough to be able to do his work "on the double" (for example pushing a heavily laden wheelbarrow) would most probably be unable to keep it up in the long run. If he should show signs of holding out, he would inevitably be killed sooner or later by such mistreatment as being beaten with a shovel or pick handle.

In those days all the Jews had to work in the "quarry squad." At a trot they had to bring gravel on wheelbarrows from a pit about 15 to 20 meters deep up a steep slope. At the top, SS men and Capos checked their work and the speed at which it was carried out, and anyone considered as "loafing" was simply pushed over backwards when he arrived at the top so that he crashed back down the incline

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with his fully laden barrow. This was one of the guards' favourite pastimes. Such treatment of Jewish prisoners prevailed from the time the first Jews arrived at the camp until the spring of 1942, when the first large transports of Jews (tens of thousands) began to arrive and the extermination campaign was getting underway."

Pages 14, 15 & 16

"Until the summer of 1941 AUSCHWITZ was mainly a concentration camp in which no executions had taken place so far. The first executions came as a surprise for the majority of the camp's inmates. They began in the summer of 1941 when one evening after roll call, various numbers were called up (I well remember there were 18 men from Cracow alone). The men whose numbers had been called were ordered to the stock room, where they had to give up their clothes and were given old rags (a shirt and pants) in exchange. Then they were taken to the gravel pit and shot with pistols at point blank range. The other prisoners were not allowed to be present at the shooting, but the execution was so arranged that practically the whole camp could witness the proceedings. After the execution a special commando was designated to bury the bodies. This incident caused a great deal of unrest within the camp, as we had assumed until then that deportation to a concentration camp excluded the death penalty for offences against the security of the German State. From this day on executions were carried out at more less regular intervals, the victims being called up on Tuesdays and Fridays. Later a special place of execution was set up within the camp's boundary, an open space between "Blocks 10 and 11" where executions took place generally in the morning."

Conclusion

The three excerpts quoted above are clearly historical and background material which the Polish Major inserted with no pretense that they are eye-witness accounts. This is clear from the statements themselves, and if there were any doubt from the reading of this material it disappears when we note that the first excerpt appears on the second page of the report which began by stating that on March 24, 1942 the Major was taken to Auschwitz. If he were purporting to fabricate an "eye-witness" account, it is difficult to imagine that he would not have done it a little more cleverly.

In construing the third excerpt as purporting to be an "eye-witness" account emphasis is placed upon the words "I well remember there were 18 men from Cracow alone". Aside from the fact that it is impossible to determine whether this is an accurate translation of the Polish original, it should be noted that the Major stated in the first sentence of his report that prior to his being taken to Auschwitz he was imprisoned in Cracow. This would seem to give him a reason for having heard of the fate of people who may have been his fellow prisoners at one time in Cracow.

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000526

TREASURY DEPARTMENT

INTER OFFICE COMMUNICATION

DATE

Handwritten signature

December 15, 1944

TO: Mr. Pehle

FROM: Virginia M. Mannon

Regarding: Authenticity of atrocity reports

You will remember that following John Crider's questioning of the authenticity of the reports on Auschwitz and Birkenau, publicized by the Board, you asked me to ask the Czech Minister if he had received similar reports.

Dr. Cervenka, the Czech Minister, was most cooperative and, although he had received no similar reports, volunteered to cable his Government in London in an effort to help us establish the exactness of the reports.

This morning Dr. Cervenka telephoned me to say that he had received a cable in reply from the Czech Minister of Foreign Affairs, saying that Dr. Kopecky in Switzerland "confirms absolute reliability of the reports."

Dr. Cervenka said further that Dr. Frischer, a member of the Czech State Council in London (which is similar to Parliament) had brought the same reports to this country recently when he came for the meeting of the World Jewish Congress. Dr. Frischer called here yesterday and also mentioned that he had brought the same reports with him. He, too, expressed himself as convinced that the reports were entirely true.

For the record, Mr. Crider is a reporter for the N. Y. Times.

Dr. Cervenka said he was ready and eager to be of help to the Board at any time.

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Report on Press and Public Reaction to War Refugee Board
Release of Accounts of Auschwitz and Birkenau

I. Domestic Press

a. News dispatches - 83 newspapers

United Press - 13 newspapers
International News Service - 4 newspapers
Associated Press - 51 newspapers
Independent coverage - 13 newspapers

b. Editorials - carried in 23 newspapers

Main reaction was argument for hard peace and
punishment of war criminals.

c. Special Articles

- (1) Lowell Mellett - syndicated column - discussed authenticity.
- (2) Gallup Poll - majority of Americans believe accounts of
Nazi mass murders but underestimated numbers killed -
average belief that 100,000 involved.
- (3) St. Louis Post Dispatch - full page Sunday supplement
with 9 drawings by staff artist.

d. Radio Broadcasts

- (1) Drew Pearson, November 26th.
- (2) Quincy Howe (C.B.S.), November 27th.

II. Foreign Press

- a. Russia - "Izvestiya" carried 15 inch spread on WRB release.
Press reports that American reports were introduced into
record in recent Lublin trial of war criminals.
- b. Great Britain - WRB representative Mann reports wide press
comment in England. O.W.I. confirms this.

III. O.W.I.

Copies sent to O.W.I. outposts all over world.

IV. Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs

Sent copies to all South American countries.

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V. Congressional Interest

About 25 Congressmen have received copies. Congressman Celler commented on the report in the House. Requests for copies have been received from 10 Congressmen. No unfavorable Congressional comment.

VI. Requests from the Public

Approximately 450 organizations, government agencies and private individuals requested copies of the report. The majority of these requests came from unidentified individuals. However, numerous requests were received from publishers, lawyers, doctors, churchmen, teachers and libraries.

VII. Impact on Bond Drive

O.W.I. had feared adverse criticism because of timing of release so close to Sixth War Bond Drive. No such criticism has appeared in the press. On the contrary, two dispatches (Birmingham Alabama Age-Herald and St. Louis Globe-Democrat) highlighted the purchase of war bonds as a means whereby Americans could wreak vengeance against the Nazis for atrocities such as those described in the War Refugee Board reports.

VIII. Authenticity Questioned

- a. John Crider, New York Times, claimed inconsistencies in several dates.
- b. Oswald Schuette (Washington, D. C., attorney) questioned authenticity in letter to Secretary Stimson.

12/9/44 JH.

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BOOK OF THE MONTH CLUB



385 Madison Avenue NEW YORK

Editorial Board DOROTHY CANFIELD • CHRISTOPHER MORLEY • WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE • HENRY SEIDEL CANNY *Chairman*

December 13, 1944

Mr. J. W. Pehle
War Refugee Board
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Mr. Pehle:

I am sending back herewith the photostat copy of your document about the German extermination camps. To my regret, I have finally become persuaded that there is not much that can be done in further dissemination of this horrifying report.

I think you should know, however, what has been happening here, with regard to it. After our judges decided that (in view of the Karski book which included some similar material), it wasn't advisable to send this to our own subscribers, it seemed to me that a good plan would be to have an organization like the Council for Democracy distribute it.

I talked with Ernest Angell, the president of that outfit, about the matter, and told him that if they would agree to send it out to a selected list of opinion-makers of all varieties, we would donate the pamphlets and stand all other costs. I sent him the document and after some discussion with his executive committee, he turned down the proposal. His committee didn't think it was within their line of activity. I don't agree, but of course they're the doctors.

I then took up the matter with Clifton Fadiman and Rex Stout of the War Writers Board. It seems that in the meantime they had been having some discussion with an OWI representative about this very matter, and reported that there appeared to be some doubt in Washington (just where it is centered, I don't know) that the distribution of such a pamphlet would not be 100% advisable.

Fadiman and I talked of other means of disseminating the report, through some other organization than the Council for Democracy, and he was of the opinion that an organization in which he is active, The Society For Prevention Of World War III, would be interested in accepting my offer.

However, he and Rex Stout felt that the report is not one that is likely to be read by any large number of people. It is just not readable enough. They felt that the only effectual thing that could be done with it was to have it get to a selected list of opinion-makers, consisting of editors, radio commentators, clergymen, and so forth. With this I agree.

The question at once arose as to whether you haven't already done this job pretty thoroughly. Certainly the coverage you got in the newspapers was exceptionally good. You might let me know how far you did go,

See folder with other copies.

000532

Mr. J. W. Fehle

-2-

December 13, 1944

in the distribution of the report, and if there was any good-sized field uncovered, then Fadiman's group can step in and do the job there.

I am sorry about the delay in reporting to you on this matter, but I have been ears under on a lot of things, and only today have I been able to get at this and other extra-curricular matters.

Cordially yours,

Harry Sherman

Harry Sherman

HS:PC

100533

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



OFFICE OF THE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Personal

Dear Mr. Scherman:

I wish to thank you for your letter of December 13, 1944, and for the careful consideration which you have given to the problem of further dissemination of the reports on the German extermination camps at Auschwitz and Birkenau. Your comments and the views of those with whom you discussed the matter are sincerely appreciated and have been noted with interest.

As you know the reports have received excellent press and radio coverage, both in this country and abroad. For the present at least, we believe this coverage has been adequate. Particularly in view of all the other reports that have recently reached the public on other extermination centers. If there should be occasion in the future to raise the problem of wider distribution of our report through Fadiman's group, I shall let you know.

May I again thank you for your prompt and personal interest in this matter.

Sincerely,

J. W. Pehle
Executive Director

I suppose we might not push this matter further at this time

delegated basis.

Mr. Harry Scherman,
Book-of-the-Month Club
385 Madison Avenue,
New York, N. Y.

With regard to the negative reaction to O.W.F., I hesitate to express my own view as it can be said it has no

000934

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



OFFICE OF THE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

November 3, 1944.

Dear Mr. Sherman:

Pursuant to our telephone conversation this morning I am sending to you herewith a photostat of a report received from Roswell D. McClelland, War Refugee Board representative in Bern, Switzerland, transmitting the reports referred to therein.

I shall appreciate very much your help and suggestions with regard to this material.

Please regard this matter as confidential for the time being.

Very truly yours,


J. W. Pehle
Executive Director.

Mr. Harry Sherman,
Book-of-the Month Club,
385 Madison Avenue,
New York, New York.

Enclosure

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

000535

DEC 19 1944

Personal

Dear Mr. Scherman:

I wish to thank you for your letter of December 13, 1944, and for the careful consideration which you have given to the problem of further dissemination of the reports on the German extermination camps at Auschwitz and Birkenau. Your comments and the views of those with whom you discussed the matter are sincerely appreciated and have been noted with interest.

As you know the reports have received excellent press and radio coverage, both in this country and abroad. Particularly in view of all the other reports that have recently reached the public on other extermination centers, I suppose we might not push this matter further at this time. If there should be occasion in the future to raise the problem of wider distribution of our report through Fadiman's group, I shall let you know.

With regard to the negative reaction of O.W.I., I hesitate to express myself in writing. You can be sure it has no adequate basis.

May I again thank you for your prompt and personal interest in this matter.

Sincerely,

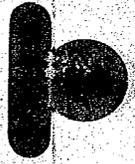
(Signed) J. W. Pehle

J. W. Pehle
Executive Director

Mr. Harry Scherman,
Book-of-the-Month Club,
385 Madison Avenue,
New York, N. Y.

*JW - cleared with
+ rewritten by
JWP.*
FH:JWP:hd 12/19/44

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*To be - Jones
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✓
WAR DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D. C.

27 December 1944

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

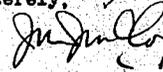
Dear Mr. Pehle:

I am sending you a copy of the reply of Oswald Schuette
to Mr. Stimson. ✓

You will recall that Mr. Schuette wrote to Mr. Stimson
after the publication of the last report of the War Refugee
Board. Mr. Stimson also sent me a memorandum which reads as
follows:

"I should be very grateful if you could get hold
of Pehle and tell him that he must be extraordinarily
careful. I have read the report on the atrocities and
it is so horrible that it will be sure to invite further
inquiry by readers as to the care which we have taken to
authenticate it."

Sincerely,



Incl.

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COPY

OSWALD F. SCHUETTE
National Press Building

Washington, D. C.

December 18, 1944

Hon. Henry L. Stimson
Secretary of War
Pentagon Building
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Stimson:

I appreciate greatly the courtesy of your reply of December 13 to my letter of November 28, concerning the War Refugee Board's report on German Atrocities, made public November 28, 1944. I know how busy you are with more important matters.

But you are the one member of that Board whose judgment in matters of this kind is entitled to the respect of the public. And your name was used to induce the public to accept as authentic the anonymous "eye-witness" reports of the happenings at the "German Extermination Camps - Auschwitz and Birkenau."

Your letter leaves unanswered my question as to whether you had critically examined these reports before they were given to the public, with your endorsement and with the statement of your Board that "it is making the reports public in the firm conviction that they should be read and understood by all Americans." You say in your letter that the decision that the report is authentic is "based upon the opinion of trusted and trained officials of the board" and "upon the considered judgment of experts in neutral countries."

I doubt whether, as a lawyer, you would have submitted to a court, on far less weighty matters, any anonymous testimony merely authenticated by "the opinion of trusted and trained officials" or "the considered judgment of experts." Yet that is not the real issue. The main point is that the public, your public, whom the Board has urged to read this document, is entitled to know that you too have read it -- and carefully.

I am sure that you have not done this. For if you had, I am confident you would have hesitated to vouch for its truthfulness. Please remember that this document is not offered by your Board as an indictment or as a compilation of general charges. It is offered in proof of such charges, as the detailed account of the personal

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experiences of three eye-witnesses. Two of these were themselves participants -- even though under coercion -- in the revolting crimes they report. The principal one of these unnamed eye-witnesses testifies that from May, 1942 to January, 1943, he was the "chief attendant and later administrator" of the "sick building" (Krankenbau) which was the "much dreaded Block 7" of the Birkenau prison.

"This building", he says (pg. 9), "was nothing else than an assembly center for death candidates. *** Twice weekly, Mondays and Thursdays, the camp doctor indicated the number of prisoners who were to be gassed and burned ***. The weekly 'draft' in dead from Block 7, was about 2,000 of whom 1,200 died of 'natural death' and about 800 through 'selection.' *** Until January 15, 1943, up to which time I was administrator of 'Block 7' and therefore in a position to directly observe happenings, some 50,000 prisoners died of 'natural death' or by 'selection'."

Although his own report does not tell what he did after he gave up his post as "administrator" in January 1943, the document issued by your Board says (pg. 34) that when he and his companion -- one of your other witnesses -- escaped from Birkenau, April 7, 1944, the two had held posts as "block recorders", and that as a result of their escapes all Jews exercising such functions were removed. The "block recorders", the statement explains (pg. 25) were the "right hand" of the "block eldest" who was responsible for order in each block and had power over life and death. "Until February 1944," adds the statement, "nearly 50 percent were Jews".

So the main portion of the testimony which your Board asks the public to read, on your guarantee of its truthfulness, is the statement of a man who was himself a trusted prisoner charged with grave responsibilities in the administration of this house of murder.

Each day, according to his report, the march of death was mobilized under his eyes. Each day he was a part of its heartrending, bestial brutality. After almost two years of this experience, he escapes. Not as a raving maniac. No. He writes -- or underwrites -- thirty pages of single spaced typewriting, filled with the horrible details. Names, dates, places, pages of complicated serial numbers, gruesome incidents and trivial facts, fill these carefully phrased pages.

An official reporter, without a conscience or a heart, with nerves of iron and a mind of steel, plus a ream of notebooks and high authority to take them out of prison with him, could not have compiled so precise a record of everything that was done in those two terrible years. Yet we are asked to believe this man did so under the vigilant eyes of the prison keepers who murdered, he says, 1,765,000 prisoners while he was one of them.

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It may be true - God in His Mercy forbid! But it is difficult to believe that this particular witness could have written, - as we are supposed to believe that he did- with such detail, the day by day story of two such horrible years.

Please read it yourself, Mr. Secretary, and calmly if you can, as a lawyer and a judge, and then decide whether you would vouch for it to a jury in a court.

Sincerely yours,

(Sgd.) Oswald F. Schuette

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000542

DEC 30 1944

Secretary Morgenthau

J. W. Pehle

For your information.

In connection with our recent release to the public of the two eye-witness accounts of the German extermination camps at Auschwitz and Birkenau, you will be interested to know that no one has seriously questioned their authenticity except a Mr. Oswald F. Schuette of Washington, D. C., who wrote to Secretary Stimson on November 28th. Apparently skeptical of atrocity stories as war propaganda, Mr. Schuette questioned the value of the anonymous reports released by us and asked Secretary Stimson as a lawyer to vouch for their truth. He specifically asked Mr. Stimson if he had read the reports before they were accepted as true by the Board, if he had examined them critically to see that they bore evidence of truth and whether any investigation was made of the narrators or circumstances which led to the preparation of the accounts. This letter from Mr. Schuette to Secretary Stimson was sent to us for preparation of an appropriate reply which we immediately drafted and sent to McCloy. Our draft contained the following paragraph:

"The decision that the report referred to in your letter is authentic is based upon the opinion of trusted and trained officials of the War Refugee Board, both here and overseas, and upon the considered judgment of experts in refugee and related matters in neutral countries. The report contains only material about which there is no uncertainty either in the minds of the narrators or among the many qualified people who examined them in person. The report was also checked against other unpublished material on the same subject and against the testimony of other eye-witnesses of similar or related incidents."

McCloy later advised us that he thought our proposed reply was "a very good job."

I have now received a letter from McCloy transmitting a copy of another letter which Mr. Schuette has written to Secretary Stimson. Schuette still questions the veracity of the two reports

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and calls upon Stimson to read them carefully and, as a lawyer and a judge, decide whether he would "vouch for them to a jury in a court." McGloy's letter to me ends as follows:

"Mr. Stimson also sent me a memorandum which reads as follows:

'I should be very grateful if you could get hold of Pehle and tell him that he must be extraordinarily careful. I have read the report on the atrocities and it is so horrible that it will be sure to invite further inquiry by readers as to the care which we have taken to authenticate it'."

Copies of all of the above-mentioned letters are attached.

(Signed) J.W. Pehle

Attachments.

JA FH:hd 12/29/44

000544

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WAR DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY
WASHINGTON

27 December 1944

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

Dear Mr. Pehle:

I am sending you a copy of the reply of Oswald
Schuette to Mr. Stimson.

You will recall that Mr. Schuette wrote to
Mr. Stimson after the publication of the last report
of the War Refugee Board. Mr. Stimson also sent me
a memorandum which reads as follows:

"I should be very grateful if you could
get hold of Pehle and tell him that he must
be extraordinarily careful. I have read the
report on the atrocities and it is so horrible
that it will be sure to invite further inquiry
by readers as to the care which we have taken
to authenticate it."

Sincerely,

/s/ John J. McCloy

000545

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OSWALD F. SCHUETTE
National Press Building
Washington, D.C.

December 18, 1944

Hon. Henry L. Stimson
Secretary of War
Pentagon Building
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Stimson:

I appreciate greatly the courtesy of your reply of December 13 to my letter of November 28, concerning the War Refugee Board's report on German Atrocities, made public November 26, 1944. I know how busy you are with more important matters.

But you are the one member of that Board whose judgment in matters of this kind is entitled to the respect of the public. And your name was used to induce the public to accept as authentic the anonymous "eye-witness" reports of the happenings at the "German Extermination Camps - Auschwitz and Birkenau."

Your letter leaves unanswered my question as to whether you had critically examined these reports before they were given to the public, with your endorsement and with the statement of your Board that "it is making the reports public in the firm conviction that they should be read and understood by all Americans." You say in your letter that the decision that the report is authentic is "based upon the opinion of trusted and trained officials of the board" and "upon the considered judgment of experts in neutral countries."

I doubt whether, as a lawyer, you would have submitted to a court, on far less weighty matters, any anonymous testimony merely authenticated by "the opinion of trusted and trained officials" or "the considered judgment of experts." Yet that is not the real issue. The main point is that the public, your public, whom the Board has urged to read this document, is entitled to know that you too have read it -- and carefully.

I am sure that you have not done this. For if you had, I am confident you would have hesitated to vouch for its truthfulness. Please remember that this document is not offered by your Board as an indictment or as a compilation of general charges. It is offered in proof of such charges, as the detailed account of the personal experiences of three eye-witnesses. Two of these were themselves participants -- even though under coercion -- in the revolting crimes they report. The principal one of these unnamed eye-witnesses testifies that from May 1942 to January, 1943, he

100546

was the "chief attendant and later administrator" of the "sick building" (Krankenbau) which was the "much dreaded Block 7" of the Birkenau prison.

"This building", he says (pg. 9), "was nothing else than an assembly center for death candidates. *** Twice weekly, Mondays and Thursdays, the camp doctor indicated the number of prisoners who were to be gassed and burned ***. The weekly 'draft' in dead from Block 7, was about 2,000 of whom 1,200 died of 'natural death' and about 800 through 'selection.' *** Until January 15, 1943, up to which time I was administrator of 'Block 7' and therefore in a position to directly observe happenings, some 50,000 prisoners died of 'natural death' or by 'selection'."

Although his own report does not tell what he did after he gave up his post as "administrator" in January 1943, the document issued by your Board says (pg. 34) that when he and his companion - one of your other witnesses -- escaped from Birkenau, April 7, 1944, the two had held posts as "block recorders", and that as a result of their escapes all Jews exercising such functions were removed. The "block recorders", the statement explains (pg. 25) were the "right hand" of the "block eldest" who was responsible for order in each block and had power over life and death. "Until February 1944," adds the statement, "nearly 50 percent were Jews".

So the main portion of the testimony which your Board asks the public to read, on your guarantee of its truthfulness, is the statement of a man who was himself a trusted prisoner charged with grave responsibilities in the administration of this house of murder.

Each day, according to his report, the march of death was mobilized under his eyes. Each day he was a part of its heart-rending, bestial brutality. After almost two years of this experience, he escapes. Not as a raving maniac. No. He writes - or underwrites - thirty pages of single spaced typewriting, filled with the horrible details. Names, dates, places, pages of complicated serial numbers, gruesome incidents and trivial facts, fill these carefully phrased pages.

An official reporter, without a conscience or a heart, with nerves of iron and a mind of steel, plus a ream of notebooks and high authority to take them out prison with him, could not have compiled so precise a record of everything that was done in those two terrible years. Yet we are asked to believe this man did so under the vigilant eyes of the prison keepers who murdered, he says, 1,765,000 prisoners while he was one of them.

It may be true - God in His Mercy forbid! But it is difficult to believe that this particular witness could have written, -

000547

-3-

as we are supposed to believe that he did - with such detail, the day by day story of two such horrible years.

Please read it yourself, Mr. Secretary, and calmly if you can, as a lawyer and a judge, and then decide whether you would vouch for it to a jury in a court.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ Oswald F. Schuette

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O
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THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF WAR
WASHINGTON

4 December 1944

Mr. J. B. Friedman
War Refugee Board
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Friedman:

Thank you for the draft reply to
Mr. Schuette's letter to Secretary Stimson.
I thought it was a very good job.

Sincerely,

/s/ John J. McCloy

JOHN J. McCLOY
Assistant Secretary of War

000549

COPY

December 2, 1944

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mr. McGloy
FROM: Mr. Friedman

Pursuant to your request of yesterday, I send you herewith a suggested draft of reply which you may wish to use in answering the letter received by Secretary Stimson from Mr. Oswald F. Schuette under date of November 28, 1944. Mr. Schuette's letter is returned herewith.

Attachments.

000550

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Dear Mr. Schuette:

Reference is made to your letter of November 28, 1944, in which you inquire about a report recently issued by the War Refugee Board and entitled "German Extermination Camps - Auschwitz and Birkenau."

I understand fully your skepticism concerning atrocity stories which undoubtedly arises from the fact that during and after the First World War some of the stories which were published were later proved without foundation. It is precisely because of this regrettable experience in the past that all of us have been reluctant to believe the stories of incredible German brutality which have come to light in the last few years. I regret to state, however, that the evidence supporting these accounts is all too abundant.

The decision that the report referred to in your letter is authentic is based upon the opinion of trusted and trained officials of the War Refugee Board, both here and overseas, and upon the considered judgment of experts in refugee and related matters in neutral countries. The report contains only material about which there is no uncertainty either in the minds of the narrators or among the many qualified people who examined them in person. The report was also checked against other unpublished material on the same subject and against the testimony of other eye-witnesses of similar or related incidents.

I can assure you that every available device was used to establish the accuracy of this testimony. As a result, and as you will notice in the enclosed copy of the report, the following statement is made in the foreword: "The Board has every reason to believe that these reports present a true picture of the frightful happenings in these camps."

Very truly yours,

Secretary of War.

Mr. Oswald F. Schuette,
National Press Building,
Washington, D. C.

000551

COPY

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF WAR
WASHINGTON

1 December 1944

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. FRIEDMAN:

Herewith letter to the Secretary of War from Oswald F. Schuette of November 28, 1944 regarding the War Refugee Board's press release last Sunday on the subject of German extermination camps.

In accordance with our telephone conversation of this morning, will you please draft a suggested reply for the Secretary's signature. Kindly also return Mr. Schuette's letter.

J. J. McC.

000552

COPY

OSWALD F. SCHUETTE
National Press Building
Washington

November 28, 1944

Hon. Henry L. Stimson
Secretary of War
Pentagon Building
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Secretary:

The War Refugee Board--of which you are a member--has just made public a voluminous and detailed account of the murder of 1,765,000 prisoners, by the Germans, in what it calls the "German Extermination Camps, Auschwitz and Birkenau."

"The Board," says the official statement, "has every reason to believe that these reports present a true picture of the frightful happenings in these camps. It is making the reports public in the firm conviction that they should be read and understood by all Americans."

Your membership on this board gives this publication its chief claim to public acceptance. As Secretary Hull was ill for many months, prior to his resignation, it is not to be assumed that he had an opportunity to make a critical examination. Although the only remaining member, Secretary Morgenthau, is a lawyer, he has no background of experience that would warrant the assumption that he was able to make the critical analysis necessary to determine the credibility of the report.

You, however, have such an outstanding reputation as a lawyer, and as a conscientious public official in two of the highest executive posts in the nation, that your name on the document gives it an overwhelming authenticity.

That fact places upon you a serious responsibility. Atrocity stories are nothing new in war propaganda. I was an American War Correspondent for three and one half years in the last war, and know something of what was done in that field.

So I am writing this letter to ask you three simple questions:

1. Did you read the reports of the three unnamed witnesses, before they were accepted as true by your Board?
2. Did you examine them critically to see that they bore on their face the evidence of truth?
3. Did you make any further investigation of the signers,

100553

-2-

or of the circumstances which led to the preparation of the detailed accounts?

As a lawyer, I am sure you realize, even more than a layman, that the value of any anonymous testimony is only so good as the care with which the lawyer, who vouches for its truth, has tested its veracity and integrity.

I shall appreciate the courtesy of your reply.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ Oswald F. Schuette

OFS:K

000554



000555

*War Ref. Bd
(Pahh)*

ORIGINAL TEXT OF TELEGRAM SENT

FROM: Secretary of State, Washington
TO: ✓ American Legation, Dublin
DATED: January 13, 1945
NUMBER: 12 X

CONTROL COPY

War Refugee Board informed that Robert Briscoe, member of Dail, stated on the authority of the Irish Department of External Affairs that German authorities stated that the rumor that they intend to exterminate Jews in Oswiecim and Birkenau camps is a pure invention devoid of all foundation and that if camps should be abandoned, inmates will be evacuated.

Please investigate truth of this information and report results.

GRLW
(ACTING)

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-79
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 1 1972

000556

CABLE TO MINISTER GRAY, DUBLIN, IRELAND

War Refugee Board informed that Robert Briscoe, member of Dail, stated on the authority of the Irish Department of External Affairs that German authorities stated that the rumor that they intend to exterminate Jews in Oswiecim and Birkenau camps is a pure invention devoid of all foundation and that if camps should be abandoned, inmates will be evacuated.

Please investigate truth of this information and report results.

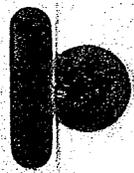
12:45 p.m.
January 12, 1945

Miss Chauncey (for the Sec'y): Ackermann, Akzin, Cohn, Drury, DuBois, Gaston, Hodel, Marks, McCormack, Pehle, Files

Bakzin:ar 1/11/45

BA. *[Handwritten initials]*

000557



00058

DEPARTMENT
OF
STATE

OUTGOING
TELEGRAM

DIVISION OF
CENTRAL SERVICES
TELEGRAPH SECTION

His Distribution of Department of State
reading only by special arrangement.
[REDACTED] DIVISION OF STATE
January 17 1945 1 p.m.

*Wm. R. [unclear]
[unclear]*

1945 JAN 15 PM 4 11

COMMUNICATIONS
AND RECORDS
(LIAISON)

CONTROL COPY

✓ AMLEGATION

BERN

192 ✓

The following for McClelland is WRB 380.

Information said to originate with Irish Department of External Relations reached the Board to the effect that German authorities stated that the rumor that they intend to exterminate Jews in Oswiecim and Birkenau camps is a pure invention devoid of all foundation and that if camps should be abandoned, inmates will be evacuated.

Please investigate truth of this information and report results.

GREW
(Acting)
(S.W.)

[REDACTED]
For security reasons the text of this message must be closely guarded.

WRB:MMV:KG
1/12/45

WE

BO

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

000559

CABLE TO AMLEGATION, BERN, SWITZERLAND, FOR MCCLELLAND

Information said to originate with Irish Department of External Relations reached the Board to the effect that German authorities stated that the rumor that they intend to exterminate Jews in Oswiecim and Birkenau camps is a pure invention devoid of all foundation and that if camps should be abandoned, inmates will be evacuated.

Please investigate truth of this information and report results.

THIS IS WRB BERN CABLE NO. 360.

12:45 p.m.
January 12, 1945

Miss Chauncey (for the Sec'y) Ackermann, Akzin, Cohn, Drury, DuBois, Gaston,
Hodel, Marks, McCormack, Pehle, Files
BAkzin:ar 1/11/45

Ba. JH -

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*was not red
pkh*

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: ✓ American Legation, Dublin.
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATED: January 17, 1945
NUMBER: 9x

Files

CONTROL COPY

In connection with the following message please refer to Department's message of January 13, No. 12.

I am informed by External Affairs that in response to the inquiry made by Briscoe regarding the rumor that the Germans intended to liquidate the inmates of the two camps in question, they addressed inquiry to the Government of Germany and then replied as follows to Briscoe.

Reply from the German authorities to our inquiries about the two camps, Oswiecim, and Hoss and Birkenau, has now been received by us. The Germans state that the rumor that it is their intention to exterminate the Jews in these camps is devoid of all foundation, is pure invention, and that the inmates of these camps would be evacuated if the camps were to be abandoned.

I am informed by Briscoe that he made no public statement and that he made no statement on his own authority, but that he merely forwarded the above to London to the Jewish agencies there. For this reason it seems that the statement in question is merely the reply of the Government of Germany to the inquiry of the Government of Ireland, which is vouched for by neither Briscoe nor the Irish Government.

LCRC
DC/L:LCW:MLM 1-19-45

GRAY

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

100562



000563

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

OUTGOING TELEGRAM

DIVISION OF CENTRAL SERVICES TELEGRAPH SECTION

January 22, 1945

Distribution of true reading only by special arrangement.

10 p.m.

*Wm R. Kelly
Pelle*

US URGENT AMLEGATION

BEHN X 568

CONTROL COPY

For security reasons the text of this message must be classified as secret.

The following for Huddle and McClelland is from Department and War Refugee Board.

Reference Department's 192 of January 13, Irish Department of External Affairs confirms that it inquired of German authorities concerning the rumor that Germans intended to liquidate the inmates of camps Oswiecim, Hoes and Birkenau, and that the Germans replied that the rumor that it is their intention to exterminate the Jews in these camps is pure invention devoid of all foundation and that if the camps were to be abandoned their inmates would be evacuated.

Please request Swiss Political Department to inform German Government that the above reply of German authorities to Ireland has been noted by the Government of the United States, and that this Government accordingly expects that Jewish and other survivors of these and other concentration, detention and labor camps in Germany and German-controlled territory will be kept alive by German authorities.

In view of the nearness of Oswiecim and Birkenau to the front, it is urgent that the above communication reach German authorities with the greatest possible speed.

WRB:MMV:RG
1/22/45

STETTINIUS DECLASSIFIED (GHW) State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72

WE

By R. H. Parks Date SEP 1 1972

000564

368 - 1/22/45

①

CABLE TO MR. HUDDLE AND MR. MCCLELLAND, AMLEGATION BERN, SWITZERLAND, FROM DEPARTMENT AND WAR REFUGEE BOARD

URGENT

Reference Department's 192 of January 13, Irish Department of External Affairs confirms that it inquired of German authorities concerning the rumor that Germans intended to liquidate the inmates of camps Oswiecim, Hoss and Birkenau, and that the Germans replied that the rumor that it is their intention to exterminate the Jews in these camps is pure invention devoid of all foundation and that if the camps were to be abandoned their inmates would be evacuated.

Please request Swiss Political Department to inform German Government that the above reply of German authorities to Ireland has been noted by the Government of the United States, and that this Government accordingly expects that Jewish and other survivors of these and other concentration, detention and labor camps in Germany and German-controlled territory will be kept alive by German authorities.

In view of the nearness of Oswiecim and Birkenau to the front, it is urgent that the above communication reach German authorities with the greatest possible speed.

THIS IS WRB BERN CABLE NO. 222-282.

~~January 22, 1945~~ 22
10:30 a.m. January 25, 1945
Miss Chauncey (for the Sec'y) Ackermann, Akzin, Cohn, Drury, DuBois, Gaston,
Hodel, Marks, McCormack, ~~Wahle~~, Files
BAkzin:ar 1/22/45

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DEPARTMENT
OF
STATE

INCOMING
TELEGRAM

DIVISION OF
CENTRAL SERVICES
TELEGRAPH SECTION

AVH-736

Distribution of true reading
only by special arrangement

9 42 Bern

Dated January 20, 1945

Rec'd 11 p.m.

Secretary of States,
Washington.

416, January 20, 3 p.m.

FOR WRB FROM McCLELLAND. Department's 192

January 13 WRB'S 360.

As reported in Legation's 6818 October 12
Germans issued press denial of any intention to
exterminate inmates of Tulecim and Birkenau follow-
ing contrary report brought out by Polish circles
in London that time.

I have never been able receive reliable con-
firmation of reports circulated that general orders
have gone out to S S controlling Jewish camps to
kill all internees who cannot be evacuated in face
of Allied advance.

Based on a great deal of fragmentary informa-
tion collected during past several months regard-
ing course of Nazi policy toward Jewish deportees
in camps and more particularly on very recent
statements

statements

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Lettbr, (1-11-72)

By R. H. Park (Date) SEP 1 1972

For security reasons the
text of this message must
be closely guarded.

CONTROL COPY

000567

-2- #416, January 20, 3 p.m. from Bern

statements of two intelligent Jewish women who reached Switzerland during late December having spent three months in Auschwitz (Oswiecim) August through October 1944 where they were deported from Drancy late July 1944. I think it can be reliably stated that Nazis have abandoned extermination of Jews as a general policy and certainly of those capable of working. On other hand they show tendency continue doing away on small scale with elderly people and children.

(2) Women from Auschwitz reported that sizeable convoys (from three to six thousand souls each) of Jewish women - they were unable to observe movements in men's camps - were transferred from Warsaw, Radom, Lodz and Kielce to Auschwitz and thence on to Germany proper as labor during early fall of 1944 in apparent effort on part of Germans to remove them from chance of capture in case of Russian advance.

Present rapid Russian advance will undoubtedly reveal whether SS exterminates Jewish internees they

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-3- #416, January 20, 3 p.m. from Bern

they can't evacuate since whole upper Silesian industrial region of Katowice, Beuthen and Gliwicz is apparently honeycombed with work camps of Jews deported from all occupied or formerly occupied countries.

These women themselves were transferred along with some 200 other Hungarian and 300 French and Dutch Jewish women from Auschwitz on October 31 to a work camp at Weisskirchen near Kratzay, Sudenland. This camp was part of another complex of Jewish work camps administered from concentration camp of Grossrosen near Breslau.

Transfer of similar group of 3500 Hungarian and Slovak Jewish women from Auschwitz to Bergenbelsen (reported Legation's 223, January 12) during late September 1944 constitutes further fragmentary evidence of this movement of Jewish deportees into Germany as labor.

Our two women reported that no indiscriminate shooting of internees occurred in Auschwitz, that they observed there as little wanton brutality in "selection" of ill for extermination and even some

slight

000569

-4- #416, January 20, 3 p.m. from Bern

slight effort on party of camp authorities allow them to recover. Naturally mortality rate in all such work camps is high due mainly to under nourishment unhygienic conditions and especially to exposure for lack of sufficient clothing.

I shall continue to report any further reliable findings along this line which I can make.

HUDDLE

WSB

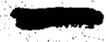
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000571

2 War Ref. Bd.
(Reber)

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM SENT

FROM: The Secretary of State, Washington
TO: The American Embassy, Moscow
DATED: January 22, 1945
NUMBER: 134



CONTROL COPY

URGENT

From the Department and War Refugee Board.

It is feared that, in line with the record of their past cruelties, Germans will massacre Jewish and other survivors in camps Auschwitz (Oswiecim) and Birkenau near Kattowitz and other camps in that area prior to retreat. Please suggest to Soviet authorities the urgency of addressing suitable warnings by radio and pamphlets to Germans in those localities. In view of nearness of Soviet forces it is felt that such warnings by them would be helpful and effective. Please also raise with Soviet authorities the feasibility of their taking direct measures for the protection of camp inmates.

As indication whether Germans continue their policy of exterminating remaining Jews previous to retreat, WRB is anxious to hear whether 60,000 to 80,000 Jews reported in Lodz a few months ago were found alive. Please inquire and report to Department and WRB.

STETTINIUS
JAN 23 1945
RECEIVED
STATE DEPT.

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

100572

134 - 1/22/45
①

CABLE TO AMBASSADOR HARRIMAN, MOSCOW, FROM DEPARTMENT AND WAR REFUGEE BOARD

URGENT

1. It is feared that, in line with the record of their past cruelties, Germans will massacre Jewish and other survivors in camps Auschwitz (Oswiecim) and Birkenau near Kattowitz and other camps in that area prior to retreat. Please suggest to Soviet authorities the urgency of addressing suitable warnings by radio and pamphlets to Germans in those localities. In view of nearness of Soviet forces it is felt that such warnings by them would be helpful and effective. Please also raise with Soviet authorities the feasibility of their taking direct measures for the protection of the camp inmates.

2. As indication whether Germans continue their policy of exterminating remaining Jews previous to retreat, WRB is anxious to hear whether 60,000 to 80,000 Jews reported in Loda a few months ago were found alive. Please inquire and report to Department and WRB.

January 22, 1945

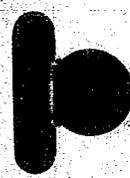
Miss Chauncey (for the Sec'y) Ackermann, Akzin, Cohn, Drury, DuBois, Gaston, Hodel, Marks, McCormack, Pehle, Files

BAKzin:ar 1/22/45

See JEL - action cleared with Pehle

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DEPARTMENT
OF
STATE

INCOMING
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
TELEGRAM

DIVISION OF
CENTRAL SERVICES
TELEGRAPH SECTION

MH-1904

Distribution of true
reading only by special
arrangement

1945 JAN 26 AM 9 49

Dated January 25, 1945

Rec'd 10:10 a.m.

Man Ref 3rd
Peble

COMMUNICATIONS
AND RECORDS
(LIAISON)

Secretary of State,

Washington.

520, January 25, noon.

FOR WRB FROM MCCLELLAND

Substance Department's 368, January 22, was
delivered in an urgent note to Federal Political
Department on January 24.

CONTROL COPY

HUDDLE

RR

For security reasons the
text of this message must
be closely guarded.

RECEIVED
JAN 26 10 10 AM '45

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

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2 War Ref Bd.
(Parker)

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM SENT

FROM: Secretary of State, Washington
TO: American Legation, Dublin
DATED: January 22, 1945
NUMBER: 20

CONTROL COPY

URGENT

From Department and War Refugee Board
Reference your 9 of January 17.

Please express to Irish authorities this Government's appreciation of their humane initiative in the matter of threatened Jewish inmates of German camps.

In this connection, Department and WRB would greatly appreciate it if Irish government could inform German Government that the reply of German authorities to Ireland has been noted by the Government of the United States, and this Government accordingly expects that Jewish and other survivors of these and other concentration, detention and labor camps in Germany and German-controlled territory will be kept alive by German authorities.

In view of the nearness of Oswiecim and Birkenau to the front, it is urgent that the above communication reach German authorities with the greatest possible speed.

SPETTINIUS

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

000577

20 - 1/22/45

①

CABLE TO AMLEGATION DUBLIN, IRELAND, FROM DEPARTMENT AND WAR REFUGEE BOARD

URGENT

Reference your 9 of January 17.

Please express to Irish authorities this Government's appreciation of their humane initiative in the matter of threatened Jewish inmates of German camps.

In this connection, Department and WRB would greatly appreciate it if Irish government could inform German Government that the reply of German authorities to Ireland has been noted by the Government of the United States, and that this Government accordingly expects that Jewish and other survivors of these and other concentration, detention and labor camps in Germany and German-controlled territory will be kept alive by German authorities.

In view of the nearness of Oswiecim and Birkenau to the front, it is urgent that the above communication reach German authorities with the greatest possible speed.

January 22, 1945

Miss Chauncey (for the Sec'y) Ackermann, Akzin, Cohn, Drury, DuBois, Gaston, Hodel, Marks, McCormack, Pehle, Files

BAKzin:ar 1/22/45

BA JCA -

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000579

2 War Ref. Bd.
(Reber)

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

Files

FROM: American Legation, Dublin
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATED: January 29, 1945
NUMBER: 19

CONTROL COPY

I have received a letter this morning from Walshe saying that immediately upon receipt of my letter he wired Irish Charge in Berlin instructing him to make representations in the wished for sense. Refer to your cable of January 22, no. 20, reservised and received on January 25 and paraphrased at once and delivered with covering letter requesting appropriate action to External Affairs. I have thanked Walshe for his prompt action, in your name.

GRAY

DC/L:VAG 1/31/45

FEB 1 11 10 AM '45

FEB 1 11 10 AM '45

RECEIVED
LEGATION OF
STATE DEPT
WASHINGTON

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

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000581

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Embassy, Moscow
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATED: January 26, 1945
NUMBER: 238

I have reminded the Foreign Office, in conformity with the desires express in message of January 22 from the Department, No. 134, that these concentration camps exist and that it is possible that they may contain victims of Nazi persecution still. The interest of the War Refugee Board in the welfare of these people and in such measures as can be taken for their protection has been expressed by me. No information with regard to the civilian populations of the areas covered by the recent advances of the Soviets has as yet been released by the Soviet Government and the fact that this question is looked upon as a military secret for the time being is obvious. Furthermore, the Soviet Foreign Office has not been willing in any case to divulge information of this kind to my knowledge. It is doubtful whether the Soviet military authorities discriminate at all between Jews and other people in such records as they may make of the civilians which their advance has liberated. In addition, when we inquired last September about the Jews in Lodz, the Foreign Office made reply that it was not able to furnish us any information on that matter and referred us to the Polish National Committee of Liberation; a similar attitude will be taken in the present instance, I have no doubt.

The Embassy has made every effort to secure information on the fate of the Jews in Russian controlled territories, as the Department will notice from the message dated December 9 from the Embassy, No. 4730 and the one dated December 30, No. 5059. We will not fail, as soon as the Polish authorities have had an opportunity to establish their administration in the territories recently liberated and to find out what has transpired there, to exploit every possibility for securing information with regard to those territories which is similar to that secured from Russian controlled territories.

DC/L:LCW:AM
1-29-45

KENNAN

Miss Chauncey (for the Sec'y) Ackermann, Akzin, Cohn, Drury, DuBois, Gaston, Hodel, McCormack, O'Dwyer, Files

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

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DEPARTMENT
OF
STATE

**INCOMING
TELEGRAM**

DIVISION OF
CENTRAL SERVICES
TELEGRAPH SECTION

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DIVISION OF

Amer Legation
Dublin
Dated February 6, 1945
Rec'd 5:25 p.m.
Ref Rd.
Refile
Files

DCG-1651

FEB 7 PM 1 55

Secretary of State,

Washington.

X
26, February 6, 2 p.m.

CONTROL COPY

I have just received from External Affairs (reference my 19, January 29, the following information. Irish Charge in Berlin made inquiry as instructed and was informed that inmates of the two camps in question had been evacuated to points in the interior. Irish representative, of course, makes no suggestion as to truth or falsehood of this reply.

GRAY

JMS

000584

11-11

11-11-11



00585

2 War Ref Bd.
(O Sluizer)

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

Files

FROM: American Embassy, Moscow via Army
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATED: February 6, 1945
NUMBER: 342

CONTROL COPY

The following message for the War Refugee Board and for the Department is transmitted.

In connection therewith please see Department's telegram of January 22, No. 134.

There have appeared in the press of Russia since capture of the city by Soviet troops two items with regard to the Oswiecim concentration camp. A former inmate of this camp from Veronezh Oblast is quoted in an official communique for January 31 to the effect that the number of prisoners varied between 15 and 30 thousand at this camp. Women and men who were incapable of work and invalids were killed by gas and in special furnaces their bodies were burned. Those prisoners who were fit for labor were forced to work in mines and the Germans killed those who grew weak from hunger, heavy labor, and beatings. Over a period of four years many thousands of people were tortured and killed by the Germans in the camp.

A special article by a front correspondent in Oswiecim published in PRAVDA for February 2 describes in considerable detail the

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

000586

detail the arrangements and organization for the mass murder of prisoners at this camp. The size of the camp particularly impressed the correspondent. It is reported that local inhabitants relate that in 1941, 1942, and the early part of 1943 five to eight trains loaded to capacity arrived at the camp each day from the occupied areas of Czechoslovakia, Poland, the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and France. Special crews ran the trains into the camp and no train was ever seen to return with passengers on board. Following disclosure of the secrets of the Majdanek concentration camp near Lublin during the past year the Germans are reported to have dismantled many of their installations at Oswiecim and to have made an effort to efface the traces of their crimes at this camp. In conclusion the correspondent states that he has seen thousands of tortured inmates of the camp who were saved by the Red army's rapid advance. They are described by him as being people whose age it is impossible to guess and as being exhausted to the point where they swayed like shadows in the wind. There is no indication as to what proportion of these survivors were Jews, in this article.

Regarding the inquiry made by the War Refugee Board concerning the number of Jews surviving in Lodz, an American correspondent returning yesterday from a visit there states that he was informed that there were only 829 Jews surviving from a
Statistics population of

100587

-3-

population of 250,000 before the war. About 150 Germans remained behind in Lodz, he stated in addition.

KENNAN

2/8/45
DC/L:LCW:HEEM

2/8/45

000588



000589

3 - War Refugee Board
(Mr. Pehle)

Paraphrase of Telegram Received

FROM: American Embassy, London
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATED: January 20, 1945
NUMBER: 715^X

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

US URGENT

Czech Government and various Jewish groups have approached the Russian Embassy and pointed out possibility that Germans will make last minute effort to exterminate every one in the camps at Bischwitz and Birkenau as the Russian armies approach. Already they have requested the Russian Government to reach camps at earliest moment possible and to endeavor to provide every available means to protect persons from slaughter at the last minute by Germans. Russian Embassy has promised to forward such request to Moscow I am informed. The same groups in approaching me have insisted I communicate anxiety to the War Refugee Board and request that attention of Soviet authorities be directed to matter in cable to Moscow. In view of the fact that the Russians have long been aware of the situation and aware of their request in the matter I have advised them I doubted any useful purpose would be served but that their wishes would be communicated to you by me.

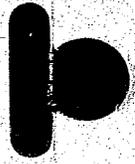
FROM MANN TO PEHLE.

WINANT

DC/L:ALC:MEM
1/21/45

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

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000591

DEPARTMENT
OF
STATE

COPY: DC/L: A. H.
**INCOMING
TELEGRAM**

DIVISION OF
CENTRAL SERVICES
TELEGRAPH SECTION

*War Charge Dept
(New Berlin)*

KEM-724

PLAIN

Bern

Dated October 12, 1944

Rec'd 4:05 p.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.
6818, Twelfth.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

JAN 24 1945

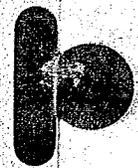
DIVISION OF
COMMUNICATIONS & RECORDS

Berlin despatch, 11th, states official circles there declare reports circulated by Polish Government at London that Germans had carried out mass executions at Auschwitz and Birkenau concentration camps were devoid of any foundation as were similar reports circulated recently regarding Pruschkow camp.

HARRISON

CONTROL COPY

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00093

german extermination camps.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

INCOMING TELEGRAM DEPARTMENT OF STATE DIVISION OF

DIVISION OF CENTRAL SERVICES TELEGRAPH SECTION

Handwritten signature/initials

1945 FEB 10 PM 1 35 Bern

JMP-592 Distribution of true reading only by special arrangement. COMMUNICATIONS DATED February 9, 1945 (LIAISON) Rec'd noon

Secretary of State Washington.

CONTROL COPY

911, February 9, noon

WRB FROM MCCLELLAND

Department's 368, January 22 and Legation's 520, January 25.

For security... text of this message must be closely guarded.

Legation has received following reply to its urgent note of January 24 from federal political department, Division of Foreign Interests: "Pertinent portions of the Legation note verbale of January 24 concerning the fate of Jews interned in camps in Upper Silesia were brought to attention of German Foreign Office on January 27.

In the message containing this information, the Swiss Legation at Berlin adds that, according to information supplied by persons who had witnessed these events, an attempt was made to evacuate the internees from Auschwitz on foot under deplorable conditions.

It has not been possible to obtain further information concerning this exodus." End of Swiss answer.

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

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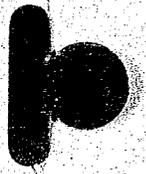
-2-, #911, February 9, noon, from Bern

Fact that greater part of internees remaining in Auschwitz at moment of Russian advance were evacuated on foot has been confirmed to me from other sources. Reports (unconfirmed) here in Switzerland have it that only 2 to 3000 souls were found in Auschwitz at time of Russian occupation.

HUDDLE

WMB

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000596

2 War Ref Bd
(O' Sawyer)

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Embassy, Moscow via War
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATED: February 9, 1945
NUMBER: 378

Files

CONTROL COPY

With reference to Department's message No. 134 of January 22 and Embassy's cable No. 238 of January 26, the following information was given the NEW YORK TIMES Moscow correspondent when he requested the Polish Press Agency recently for information which it had with regard to the Oswiecim death camp which the Soviet Army has recently liberated.

State Dept

There were Czech, Yugoslav, Dutch, French and Belgian nationals among the approximately 4,000 prisoners who were liberated from the camp. Due to suffering, overwork and hunger survivors were exhausted. Steps were taken immediately by the Government of Poland to alleviate the condition of those who were nationals of the United Nations. Two shipments of the more urgently needed supplies were sent by the Provisional Government on February 7th for these liberated individuals, despite the shortage in Poland of necessary goods. Flour, fats, meal, soap and medicines comprised the shipments.

KENNAN

DC/L:GPW:MEM
2/10/45

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

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000598

2. War Ref Bd
(O'Deary)

RECEIVED BY THE GRAM RECEIVED

Files

FROM: American Embassy, Moscow via Army
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATE: February 17, 1945
NUMBER: 451

CONTROL COPY

The following is for War Refugee Board's information.

You are again referred to my message No. 378, dated February 9, with regard to conditions at Oswiecim (German concentration camp). The Polish information service has given me a report from a Polish correspondent which says that the Germans began to evacuate prisoners from the camp on February 22 of last year. 160,000 persons were imprisoned at Oswiecim at that time, according to this report. Only 60,000 remained by January 1 of this year and the final liquidation began on January 18. Those persons unable to walk at that time were shot and only 6,000 remained there January 21. Only the Red Army's first advance saved these. Women, children and old men from Warsaw in addition to citizens of all European nations were included among the inmates. In addition there was a barracks for the mentally ill. The Germans murdered four million persons of twenty-eight nationalities at the camp, according to statements of prisoners there.

A space of more than fifty square kilometers was covered by the camp and a number of factories were built in the area. Gasoline and synthetic rubber factories as well as factories of

the German

DECLASSIFIED

State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72

By R. H. Parks Date SEP 1 1972

000599

the German Farben Industrie were among these. No wages were paid to prison labor and persons who became exhausted were cremated. There was set up at Oswiecim an experimental laboratory using prisoners. Experiments on artificial insemination were conducted by two German doctors, Schuman and Klombert. When these doctors were through with the persons used for experimentation, the persons were cremated.

A description of systems of torture used on prisoners was then given in the report.

The Red Army found only 4,500 prisoners in the Braszinski camp which is a few kilometers from Oswiecim, according to the report. There were 900 men, 200 old women and 500 orphans deported from Warsaw following the uprising among this group. On January 21 a total of 983 women comprised the female population at Braszinski. 29 Yugoslavs, 618 Jews, 20 French, 314 Russians, 2 Belgians, 29 Germans and 22 Italians were among these.

HARRISMAN

DC/L:GPT:IAN
2-19-45

000100



000601

WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS
CONGRES JUIF MONDIAL • CONGRESO JUDIO MUNDIAL

1834 BROADWAY

NEW YORK, 23, N. Y.

LONDON
55 New Cavendish St., W 1

GENEVA
37 Quai Wilson

BUENOS AIRES
Corrientes 1979

JERUSALEM
Vaad Leumi P. O. B. 471

MONTREAL
1121 St. Catherine St. W

MEXICO CITY
Sonora 1744

In reply refer
to No. 300

War Refugee Board
Treasury Building
Washington, D.C.

Attention: Dr. Benjamin Akzin

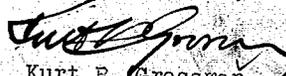
Dear Dr. Akzin:

We would be very grateful if you would give us your reaction to a cable we received several days ago from London, according to which the German authorities say that the rumor that it is their intention to exterminate the Jews in Oswiecim and Birkenau camps is a pure invention and devoid of all foundation. According to the cable, if camps are to be abandoned, inmates will be evacuated.

I believe that this rumor is of the greatest importance, and I am sure that you will be able, through your channels, to investigate its foundations.

As soon as I receive a fuller report regarding the above, I will not fail to inform you about it.

Sincerely yours,


Kurt R. Grossman
Rescue Department

KRG:t1

114



100603

DEPARTMENT
OF
STATE

INCOMING
TELEGRAM

DIVISION OF
CENTRAL SERVICES
TELEGRAPH SECTION

ELP-444
Distribution of true
reading only by special
arrangement. [REDACTED]

BERN

Dated February 2, 1945

Rec'd 1:15 p.m.

Secretary of State
Washington.

744, February 2, 1 p.m.
X
FOR WRB FROM MCCLELLAND



In line with Legation's 416, January 20, exchangees
from Bergen Belsen (BB) recently in Switzerland.

Reported that upwards of 25,000 men and women
(Jewish) deportees arrived in BB early in January from
Auschwitz and adjoining upper Silesian camps. They were
"housed" under most primitive conditions in tents in BB
and will, it appears, be transferred progressively to
other parts of Germany as labor.

Exchangees from BB were in state of acute under-
nourishment, three having died during their stay here.
I have every reason to believe this situation is far from
confined to BB but common to all German concentration
camps and deportee work companies. Fact that tens of
thousands of internees in similar or worse physical con-
dition are liable to be found as Germany is occupied by
Allied forces should be drawn to attention of competent
military authorities and UNRRA anew.

BB Exchangees

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72

By R. H. Parks Date SEP 1 1972

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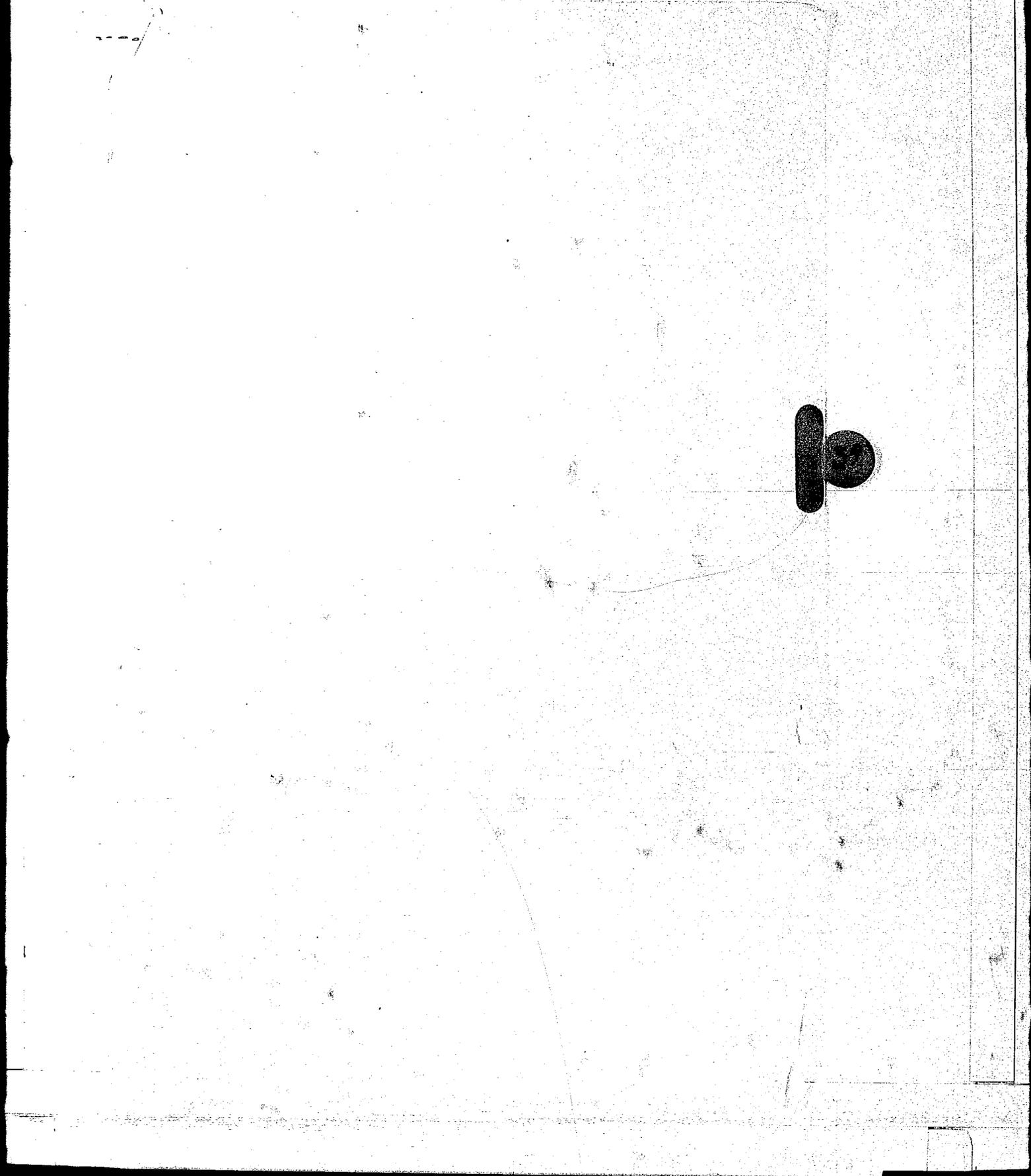
-2- #744, February 2, 1 p.m. from Bern

BE exchanges further reported although parcels reaching camp were properly delivered to them number was pitifully inadequate to need. According to all available information this due to deterioration in land transport in Germany rather than to any withholding of packages, which are generally distributed if they actually reach a camp. Any favorable action, accordingly, which could be taken on basis of Legation's 455, January 22, would be of greatest value.

HUDDLE

JT

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DEPARTMENT
OF
STATE

OUTGOING
~~TELEGRAM~~
DIVISION OF
CENTRAL SERVICES

DIVISION OF
CENTRAL SERVICES
TELEGRAPH SECTION

1945 APR 30 AM 9 48

*War Ref. Bd
C. O. Sawyer*

PLAIN

April 27, 1945

CC

DC/L
LIAISON

AMLEGATION

CONTROL COPY

BERN

1601, twenty-seventh

Please request McClelland deliver the following message (WRB 508) to Gerhard Riegner, 37 Quai Wilson, Geneva, from Kurt Grossman of World Jewish Congress:

NOTE Read that transport of 3,000 Czechoslovak Jews from Oswiecim arrived in Kosice. Can you secure report on survivors Oswiecim Birkenau and list 3,000 Jews. UNQUOTE

GREW
(Acting)
(GAW)

WRB:MMV:BR
4/27/45

ME

000607

CABLE TO AMERICAN LEGATION, BERN, FOR MCCLELLAND, FROM WAR REFUGEE BOARD

Please deliver the following message to Gerhard Riegner, 37

Qui Wilson, Geneva, from Kurt Grossman of World Jewish Congress:

QUOTE READ THAT TRANSPORT OF 3,000 CZECHOSLOVAK JEWS
FROM OSWIECIM ARRIVED IN ROSTOK. CAN YOU SECURE REPORT
ON SURVIVORS OSWIECIM BIRKENAU AND LIST 3,000 JEWS.
UNQUOTE

THIS IS WRB BERN CABLE NO. 508

copy sent to W.J.C. 4/25/45
9:45 a.m.
April 25, 1945

Miss Chauncey (for the Sec'y), Cohn, DuBois, Gaston, Hodel, Hutchison,
McCormack, O'Dwyer, Files.

RBH: 4/23/45

WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS
CONGRES JUIF MONDIAL • CONGRESO JUDIO MUNDIAL

1834 BROADWAY
NEW YORK, 23, N. Y.

CABLES: CONGRESS, NEW YORK
TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 6-1900

LONDON
55 New Cavendish St., W 1

GENEVA
37 Quai Wilson

BUENOS AIRES
Corrientes 2024-9C

JERUSALEM
Vaad Leumi P. O. B. 471

MONTREAL
1121 St. Catherine St. W

MEXICO CITY
Sonora 1744

In reply refer to:
No. 395

April 20, 1945

Brig. Gen. William O'Dwyer, Executive Director
War Refugee Board
Treasury Building
Washington, D. C.

Dear General O'Dwyer:

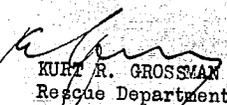
May I ask you to be good enough to have the following
message transmitted through the facilities of the De-
partment of State:

"To: Gerhard Riegner, 37 Quai Wilson, Geneva
From: Kurt Grossman

Read that transport of 3,000 Czechoslovak Jews
from Oswiecim arrived in Kosice. Can you se-
cure report on survivors Oswiecim Birkenau and
list 3,000 Jews."

Thank you for giving this matter your kind attention.

Sincerely yours,


KURT R. GROSSMAN
Rescue Department

KRG:bm

000609