

JEWISH AGENCY FOR PALESTINE

000622

Dobkin's Estimates (Jewish Agency)

(New York Times, February 11, 1945)

Left in Europe

Under Axis
Liberated Areas

300,000 ✓
900,000

1,200,000

Particulars

France	180,000
Bulgaria	45,000
Greece	10,000
Belgium	18,000
Italy (lib.)	30,000
Sweden (ref.)	13,000
Switzerland (ref)	27,000
Hungary	100,000
Poland (lib.)	50,000
Russia (Polish ref.)	200,000

55,000 in Rumania are on charity; 50,000 have registered for Palestine.

Altogether 500,000 need relief, calling for \$75,000,000 for food alone in 1945.

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EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
WAR REFUGEE BOARD

INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION

DATE September 5, 1944

TO Files
FROM Miss Model

I discussed the attached matter with Mr. Pehle today. It was his recommendation that we handle the matter informally with Mr. Warren of the State Department rather than in the form of a memorandum to Mr. Berle. I later called Mr. Warren who stated that he would immediately look into the matter and arrange for appropriate instructions to be sent to the American Consulate in Jerusalem to arrange for air passage priority for Mr. Dobkin's trip to the United States.

JH

000624

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
WAR REFUGEE BOARD

INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION

DATE

TO A. A. Berle
FROM J. W. Pehle

Mr. Eliahu Dobkin, representing the immigration department of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, desires to visit the United States to discuss questions connected with the relief and rescue of refugees. He has requested us to assist him in obtaining air passage priority from Cairo to the United States.

As you are aware, the Jewish Agency for Palestine is cooperating with the Board in rescuing victims of enemy oppression. It is largely instrumental in organizing their rescue from Hungary and Rumania and their transportation through Turkey to Palestine. It is also helpful in organizing their evacuation from temporary shelters in Spain, Portugal and Italy to Palestine.

For these reasons, the Board supports Mr. Dobkin's request and would appreciate it if instructions were cabled to the United States consulate in Cairo instructing it to grant to Mr. Dobkin air passage priority from Egypt to the United States.

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
A. A. Berle

J. W. Pehle

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BAKzin:ar 9/4/44

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Treasury Department

TELEGRAPH OFFICE

RCA

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LISBOA 1616 AUG 5 44

1944 AUG 7 AM 10 02

NLT JAMES MANN WAR REFUGEE BOARD TREASURY BLDG

WASHN

CAN YOU HASTEN PASSPORT AMENDMENTS MUST PROCEED ISTANBUL

CABLE REPLY REGARDS.

BERTRAND JACOBSON

1003A

000627

Mr. Mr. Carmichael
Follow up on this?
John

FROM: American Legation, Lisbon
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATED: July 24, 1944
NUMBER: 2284
X

From E. Dobkin to James Mann, WRB.

Returned yesterday from Spain where all parties reached complete agreement. Committee here held first meeting yesterday cordial spirits. Spanish Authorities and British Ambassadors request favorable reply regarding 1600 transit visas. Intend proceed next week short visit Palestine afterwards to the United States. Kindly intervene United States Consulate Cairo for air passage priority from Cairo to the United States. Regards.

NORWEB

Ask F.H.

000628

JUL 17 1944

Dear Mr. Furmanskyl

I wish to acknowledge with thanks your
letter of July 12, 1944, enclosing copies of two
cables which you received from Mr. Barlas.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) J. W. Pehle

J. W. Pehle
Executive Director

Mr. E. Furmanskyl
The Jewish Agency for Palestine,
Suite 1205,
342 Madison Avenue,
New York 17, New York.

EBT

RBH RBHutchison:agr 7-14-44

JW ✓

000629

הסוכנות היהודית לארץ ישראל

The Jewish Agency for Palestine

New York Office: SUITE 1205, 342 MADISON AVENUE, NEW YORK 17, N. Y., MUrray Hill 2-8803

Washington Office
1720 SIXTEENTH ST., N.W.
Michigan 4480

July 12, 1944

Mr. J.W. Pehle
Executive Office of the President
War Refugee Board
Washington D. C.

Dear Mr. Pehle:

In the absence of Dr. Goldmann, I am sending
you herewith copies of two cables received here
from Mr. Barlas.

Very sincerely yours,

E. Furmansky
E. Furmansky
Secretary to Dr. Goldmann

encl.

000630

C
O
P
Y

Beyoglu

Received July 11, 1944

NLT
NAHUM GOLDMANN
41 EAST 42nd STREET
NEW YORK

2872 EXCHANGE TRANSPORT 283 REFUGEES FROM HOLLAND ARRIVED
INCLUDING 222 FROM CONCENTRATION CAMP BERGENBELSEN AND
61 VITTEL STOP LEAVING TONIGHT BY TRAIN FOR PALESTINE
PLEASE INFORM WAR REFUGEE BOARD MONITOR.

BARLAS

NLT
NAHUM GOLDMANN

2882 MINE YESTERDAY'S 2872 PARTICULARS FOR INFORMATION
ONLY

BARLAS

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הסוכנות היהודית לארץ ישראל

The Jewish Agency for Palestine

WASHINGTON OFFICE: 1720 SIXTEENTH STREET, N. W. • MICHIGAN 4480

June 7, 1944

*File
JWS*

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

Dear Mr. Pehle:

For your information, I am enclosing a copy of a letter I am sending to Mr. Stettinius, relative to the matter we discussed this morning.

Sincerely yours,

Nahum Goldmann
Nahum Goldmann

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June 7, 1944

Mr. Edward R. Stettinius, Jr.
Under-Secretary of State
State Department
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Secretary:

After I left you this morning I gave some further thought to the information you were kind enough to give me, and I would like to make one or two suggestions which I did not think of while we were discussing the matter.

1. I think it would be advisable to inform the Soviet Government about it. It is quite likely they will learn about it through their contacts in Istanbul, and, you know how touchy they are, they may be inclined to be suspicious. I do not believe they will have the slightest objection to the policy you intend to pursue, and it would be much better for them to learn about it through you than through their own channels.
2. I am glad you do not take the line that the offer should be flatly refused, but that the impression should be given that it is being considered. I have been told by Mr. Russell of the British Embassy that the Foreign Office is inclined to take the same line.

It may be necessary to make some counter offers, so as to give the impression of serious consideration. Would it not be possible to offer some financial compensation through funds deposited in Switzerland, if they are ready to let the Jews out?

There may be an even more practicable proposal, in view of all the technical difficulties of moving so large a number of people: that all those Jews be kept where they are in camps under the supervision of the International Red Cross, or a neutral power, which would also assist in feeding them. For German consent to such a scheme, a monetary compensation could be offered. This would remove all the difficulties of transportation, and of getting countries to accept them during the war; moreover, it would guarantee the safety of those Jews who may have to remain where they are for the duration. The main thing is to try to save them and prevent their extermination, and there are indications from past experience that an offer of monetary compensation may be acceptable instead of the demands presented.

I am submitting these proposals for your consideration, so that you may discuss them with the British, as it would be necessary if the contact is to be maintained, to make some counter offers. I am sure that you will receive additional information from Mr. Thertok when he arrives in Istanbul and hope that you will keep me informed and give me an opportunity for further discussion with you.

With many thanks for your courtesy,

Sincerely yours,

Nathan Goldmann

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הסוכנות היהודית לארץ ישראל

The Jewish Agency for Palestine

New York Office: SUITE 1205, 342 MADISON AVENUE, NEW YORK 17, N. Y., MUrray Hill 2-8803

Washington Office
1720 SIXTEENTH ST., N.W.
Michigan 4480

May 23, 1944

Mr. Lawrence S. Lesser,
War Refugee Board,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Lesser:

I know some of your colleagues are interested in the manner in which certificates for Palestine are being distributed. I have received the following cable from Mr. Barlas with reference to this matter:

"NO DISCRIMINATION WHATEVER MADE WITH
REGARD FROM BALKAN COUNTRIES STOP
REPRESENTATIVES AGUDA HAZA COOPERATING
STOP DISTRIBUTION CERTIFICATES DEPENDS
ON TRANSIT TRANSPORTATION ARRANGEMENTS"

Mr. Barlas is probably referring to Aguda Hazach.

It has been the practice of the Jewish Agency all these years, to rescue those people who can be rescued but it is necessary for the Jewish Agency to determine the category of each applicant to whom a certificate is being issued.

Very cordially yours,

Nahum Goldmann
Nahum Goldmann

NG:FR

000634

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
WAR REFUGEE BOARD

INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION

DATE April 21, 1944

TO Mr. Pehle
FROM Mr. Hirschmann

Before leaving Istanbul Mr. Barlas of The Jewish Agency
For Palestine handed me the attached letter and memorandum which he
asked me to present to the War Refugee Board, which I am doing
herewith.

Attachment

000635

Ch. Barlas
Pera Palas

הסוכנות היהודית לארץ ישראל
THE JEWISH AGENCY FOR PALESTINE
Immigration Department
JERUSALEM
P. O. B. 92

Istanbul, April 2, 1944

Mr. Ira A. Hirschmann
American Embassy
Ankara

Dear Mr. Hirschmann,

I am pleased to enclose herewith a copy of a Memorandum of the Executive of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, submitted on behalf of the United Rescue Committee to the War Refugee Board embracing proposals on the intricate problems of rescuing Jewish refugees from the Balkan countries.

I have been instructed by the Executive of the Jewish Agency for Palestine to transmit copies of this Memorandum both to you and to the American Ambassador, Mr. Lawrence A. Steinhardt. I trust that you will study the Memorandum and give me an opportunity, at your earliest free moment prior to your departure from Turkey, to discuss it with you.

Please permit me to convey to you, on behalf of the Executive of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, its grateful appreciation and sincere thanks for your efforts and successful accomplishment in connection with the securing of a Turkish boat for the purpose of transporting refugees to Palestine.

In a cable received from the Executive, I have been directed to convey to you as well as to the Ambassador its grateful thanks and extreme gratitude for all your endeavours. I want to reiterate also personally my sincere appreciation and I am grateful for the opportunity of cooperating with you in this vital piece of rescue work.

With best personal regards,

Yours sincerely,

Ch. Barlas
Ch. Barlas.

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MEMORANDUM

On behalf of the Committee for the Rescue of the Jews in Nazioccupied Europe, which was organised under the auspices of the Jewish Agency for Palestine and is composed of representatives of the Jewish Agency, the National Council of Palestine Jews (Vaad Leumi), the Agudath Israel world Organisation, the New Zionist Organisation and various Palestinian organisations representing settlers from European countries, we have the honour to present the following submissions to the War Refugee Board:

The essential facts about the mass slaughter of Jews in the countries under Nazi control are by now established beyond any shadow of doubt. From the very beginning of the war, the Germans have indulged in a systematic persecution of the Jews who lived in the countries that fell under their sway. At first this persecution took the form of isolated acts of murder, torture, deportation and incarceration in ghettos, labour and concentration camps. In the course of 1940, practically the whole Jewish population of Poland was herded into ghettos in several of the larger cities. Starvation and disease took a fearful toll of them. In the wake of the German conquest of Holland, Belgium and France, the persecution of the Jews was extended to these countries as well. Mass arrests, deportations and murders became the order of the day. When Italy, Hungary and Rumania joined the Axis, and Yugoslavia and Greece were over-run, the position of the Jews in all these countries became similar to that of the Jews in Poland.

In the early stages of the German occupation of Poland, practically right up to Italy's entry into the war, the Germans had not prevented Jews from leaving the country if they were able to obtain visas of admission to Palestine or to other overseas countries. At that time, however, the Allied Governments regarded every Jew who had been in enemy hands as an enemy subject and as suspect of enemy affiliations and they refused to grant them visas of admission. Thus, during the first year of the war, when a great many Jews might still have escaped from German hands, only a very inconsiderable number were rescued.

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The Germans later adopted the policy of locking them up in ghettos and labour camps.

The persecution entered a new phase with the outbreak of the war between Germany and Russia. When the Germans invaded the Russian borderlands, they began a wholesale extermination of the populous Jewish communities of those areas. It was subsequently continued in the old Russian provinces occupied by the German armies. There was simultaneously a further deterioration in the position of the Jews on the countries previously occupied and in the satellite states of the Axis. A policy was initiated of transporting large numbers of Jews from Holland, Belgium, France and the Balkans to Poland. The older people were for the most part massacred outright; the younger people were sent to labour camps, where most of them gradually succumbed to ill-treatment and starvation.

The position became even worse after the entry of the United States into the war. The Germans became completely indifferent to world opinion. Early in 1942, the policy of wholesale annihilation was adopted. "Extermination squads" were formed from the ranks of the Gestapo and local pro-Nazi militias, and a number of camps were set up in various parts of Poland where "special arrangements" were made for the mass slaughter of Jews. These included the establishment of gas chamber electrocution chambers and incinerators where Jews were burned alive. Whole trainloads of Jews were sent to these camps from all parts of occupied Europe. Many died even before they reached their destination, the floors of the hermetically sealed railway carriages being covered with unslaked lime on which water was poured. Tens of thousands are reported to have died from suffocation in these trains. Many others were shot en route to the railway stations, the Nazis taking special pleasure in killing children before the eyes of their parents. In this way the Germans exterminated large sections of the Jews of Poland, Central and Western Europe and the Balkans. Their number is estimated at the

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at the colossal figure of several millions.

It was not until the late summer of 1942 that news began to leak out of this ghastly mass murder. The first official statement on the subject was contained in a diplomatic note addressed in November 1942 by the Polish Government in London to the Governments of the United Nations. It was followed by a joint declaration of the United Nations calling upon the Germans to stop the mass slaughter. The declaration produced no results. In the spring of 1943 a Conference on the refugee problem was convened by the British and the United States Governments at Bermuda. The decisions of the Conference have never been published, but whatever their import, they have not succeeded in the year that has since elapsed, either in halting the mass slaughter or in bringing any measure of relief or rescue to the Jews in Nazi Europe. The Germans meanwhile continued their policy of extermination and hundreds of thousands of additional Jews and Jewesses were murdered in the course of the past year.

It is not yet possible to form an exact estimate of the number of Jews who have escaped the slaughter. It is to be apprehended that in Poland itself only a relatively small number of Jews still survive. Many are wandering about in the forests, fighting in the ranks of the partisans or hiding with Christian friends. Some have succeeded in escaping to Hungary, others are in hiding in Rumania and Slovakia. Substantial Jewish communities, however, are still extant in Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria and Slovakia. There is sufficient evidence to warrant the belief that both in Western and Central Europe, a good many Jews have managed to survive by sheltering with non-Jewish friends. On the basis of the most reliable reports available, it is believed that something like 3,000,000 Jews are still alive in the countries under Nazi occupation.

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The progress of the war is bound to create new dangers for the survivors. It is to be feared that as the Russian Armies proceed further west effective control in the Balkan countries may pass into the hands of the Germans who are likely to adopt there the same methods as in Poland. Recent events in Northern Italy indicate the reality of this danger. Moreover every day the war continues involves fresh dangers for those who are in hiding or sheltering with Christian families. In general, it is to be apprehended that as the German armies are being driven further inland, the Gestapo may make a concerted effort to prevent any Jews from surviving their debacle.

In the light of these facts the salvation of the remnants of European Jewry becomes a matter of extreme urgency. The sands are fast running out. It is in the course of the next few months that the fate of the remainder of the once flourishing Jewish communities of Europe will be decided. The news of the establishment of the War Refugee Board has been received in Palestine with high hope. We trust that the Board may adopt immediate measures of a practical nature towards bringing relief to the Jews in Nazi Europe and rescuing them from certain death. With that end in mind we beg respectfully to submit the following proposals:

1. We would respectfully urge that, in general, speed should be the governing consideration in any steps adopted by the Board. This would apply, in particular, to whatever measure can be taken for halting the slaughter and rescuing Jews from Nazi-occupied territory, seeing that thousands, perhaps tens of thousands, are being done to death every day. Unless this is done the problem of the salvation of the surviving Jews of Europe is likely, in practice, to become restricted to measures of proffering relief to those who have already escaped from Nazi-occupied countries and are no longer exposed to the direct threat of extermination.

2. Although the warnings hitherto addressed to Nazi Germany

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by the Governemnts of the United Nations have proved of no avail, we would submit for the consideration of the War Refugee Board whether, in the light of the changed military situation and the growing realisation of the German people that they cannot escape defeat, a new effort in this direction might not yield some measure of success. It may not make any impression on the leaders of Nazi Germany and their immediate entourage. It is not inconceivable, however, having regard to some recent happenings, that, realising their doom to be impending, many Germans, even in influential circles, possibly even in the ranks of the Gestapo, may be anxious to establish for themselves some sort of personal alibi by dissociating themselves from the slaughter and conceivably even by helping Jews to escape.

It has further been suggested whether a deterrent effect might not possibly be produced on those who organise and execute the mass slaughter of Jews if an outstanding Gestapo official, known to have been ectively associated with these murders, who fell into Allied hands, might be brought to trial.

3. The primary task at the present moment appear to be to obtain facilities of immigration for such Jewish refugees as may escape from Nazi Europe. We hold that in this respect Palestine is called upon to make a major contribution. There is no country in the world where Jewish refugees can be absorbed so effectively and speedily, and with so much good will as in the country of the Jewish National Home. Here they will be received by their own kith and kin and be absorbed in permanent fashion in the economic structure of the country. In the second place it would appear most desirable that the United States, which has taken the present initiative in this matter, should proclaim its readiness to offer a refuge to Jews fleeing from Nazi Europe, a step which would undoubtedly exercise a profound impression on other frees countries. In this connection we would refer to the suggestion recently made by a Committee of Christian Ministers of Religion in America to the effect that a fixed percentage of the American immigration quotes allocated to the various European countries should be ear-marked for Jewish

refugees from those countries. We would, further, suggest that other overseas countries should similarly be approached.

4. Having regard to the present shipping conditions which limit the transport facilities to overseas countries, we would submit that immediate steps be taken to approach the remaining neutral countries in Europe for the admission of whatever refugees are able to cross their frontiers. The main objections of European neutrals to the admission of refugees from Nazi countries have, in the past, been of two-fold character. On the one hand, neutral countries apprehend that their limited food supplies may be seriously affected if they admit any considerable number of refugees. In the second place, they fear that the latter may remain on their hands after the war. We would submit that if the Governments of the United Nations could either jointly or severally give to these neutral states adequate guarantees that the admission of refugees would not become a charge on their food and commodity supplies and that effective help would be rendered from outside and if, furthermore, a pledge were given to them that all refugees would leave after the war, the objection which have hitherto militated against their admission might be overcome. We believe that as far as immediate salvation is concerned, it is absolutely essential that an approach on these lines be made to the principal neutral countries in Europe.

5. We would further submit that the war Refugee Board should urge that Governments of the United Nations the advisability of extending the framework of the existing exchange agreements so as to enable Jews from Nazi Europe being exchanged for German non-combatants from overseas countries. Alternatively, it is suggested whether the Germans could not be made to accord to Jews in Nazi Europe the treatment given to alien enemies of Allied nationality who are being detained in special concentration camps but not subjected to any illtreatment and may receive parcels from their relatives abroad.

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6. We would furthermore suggest that the War Refugee Board may appoint immediately permanent Representatives in Istanbul, Geneva and Madrid to deal with the numerous and pressing refugee problems which constantly arise in these countries. We would submit that in addition to securing transit and transport facilities and rendering immediate aid to those who have managed to escape, these Representatives of the War Refugee Board should be invested with power to organize rescue activities from enemy territory. We would, in this connection, draw attention to the fact that many thousands of young Frenchmen have been brought out of France by Allied Representatives in Spain. From such information as has reached us it would appear that there are many agencies actually available for effecting such rescue activities, and it would appear that their services should be effectively utilized also for the saving of Jewish refugees. We would request that the War Refugee Board should give special consideration to this suggestion which, we believe, may hold out a hope of saving many Jews, particularly from Western Europe, who cannot indefinitely remain in hiding without being sooner or later detected by the Nazis.

7. We would further urge that the War Refugee Board should address itself to the question of the simplification of the procedure for obtaining transit facilities through neutral and other countries. From the reports received from refugees who have reached Palestine, it would appear that invaluable time is lost by applications for visas having to be referred to distant capitals, the result frequently being that before the prescribed authority is obtained the persons concerned have meanwhile been deported to Poland. This is a matter of very pressing concern.

8. In connection with the last mentioned point, it is also suggested that the War Refugee Board should arrange for the Protecting Power or the International Red Cross Committee to nominate special representatives in the Balkan countries and in Hungary to assist Jewish refugees and to allocate to them such visas and

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permits as are made available by the Governments of Palestine and of other countries. The absence of such accredited representatives has in the past frequently militated against speedy use being made of even such migration facilities as were granted by the Allied Governments.

9. One of the principal difficulties in the way of any rescue activities from the Balkan countries has all along been the lack of shipping facilities. We would accordingly submit that efforts be made to obtain as soon as possible several medium-sized vessels sailing under a neutral flag which could carry refugees from ports in Rumania and Bulgaria to Istanbul where they could be reans-shipped to Allied ports. We are convinced that it should not be beyond the powers of the great Allied Nations with their vast fleets to make available a few small boats for this urgent task and thus obviate what is at present one of the main bottlenecks.

10. In conclusion, we would urge that the War Refugee Board may obtain immediate facilities for sending food, medicines and clothes to Jews incarcerated in ghettos and labour camps either in Nazi-occupied territories or in any of the satellite states, and that facilities may also be obtained for private individuals to send such parcels to their relatives in the Balkan countries.

Jerusalem
Feb. 20, 1944

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