

TURKEY

000723

CROSS REFERENCE ON TURKEY

FOR:

- Amendment to this License
- Extension of this License
- Renewal of this License
- Correspondence concerning this application
- Other (Specify)

For relative material -

SEE: EVACUATION OF REFUGEES TO TURKEY

OCT 21 1944

Dear Mr. Katski:

I think you will be interested in the enclosed photostatic copies of several newspaper articles which appeared following Mr. Hirschmann's press conference upon his recent return to the United States.

Very truly yours,

Signed) J. W. Pehle

J. W. Pehle
Executive Director

Mr. Herbert Katski,
United States Embassy,
Ankara, Turkey.

Enclosures.

RBHutchison:hd 10/20/44

000725

OCT 21 1944

My dear Mr. Ambassador:

I think you will be interested in the enclosed photostatic copies of several newspaper articles which appeared following Mr. Hirschmann's press conference upon his recent return to the United States.

Very truly yours,

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

The Honorable
Laurence A. Steinhardt,
The American Ambassador,
Ankara, Turkey.

Enclosures.

Jed RBHutchison:hd 10-20-44

000726

AUG 8 1944

Dear Ira:

I am sending you herewith the third supplement for "War Refugee Board - Projects and Documents".

Included with the material is a set of instructions indicating the order in which the new material is to be inserted and which of the old material is to be deleted.

Sincerely,

(Signed) John

Mr. Ira Hirschmann,
Special Representative of
the War Refugee Board,
United States Embassy,
Ankara, Turkey.

Enclosures.

EST RBH Hutchison:agr 8-5-44

000727

AUG 8 1944

Dear Mr. Katski:

I am sending you herewith the third supplement for "War Refugee Board - Projects and Documents".

Included with the material is a set of instructions indicating the order in which the new material is to be inserted and which of the old material is to be deleted.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) J. W. Pehle

J. W. Pehle
Executive Director

Mr. Herbert Katski,
c/o United States Embassy,
Ankara, Turkey.

Enclosures.

ERT RBH Hutchison:agr 8-5-44 JH -

000728

JUL 4 1944

Dear Mr. Katski:

I am sending you herewith the second supplement for "War Refugee Board - Projects and Documents".

Included with the material is a set of instructions indicating the order in which the new material is to be inserted and which of the old material is to be deleted.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) J. W. Pehle

J. W. Pehle
Executive Director

Mr. Herbert Katski,
c/o United States Embassy,
Ankara, Turkey.

Enclosures.

EST

RBM

RBHutchison:agr 7-1-44

DD -

000729

The Sun

JUN 24 1944

Turkey's Opportunity to Save the Lives of Thousands.

To THE EDITOR OF THE SUN:—
Hundreds of thousands of persecuted Jews can be saved by action of the Turkish government. Across the border from Turkey these people are being murdered, thousands of men, women and children are hiding in cellars and caves, in woods and swamps, waiting for only one thing—the chance to cross that border and escape the murderers who are hunting them down. But this Turkish border is closed to the helpless and desperate people whose only chance for life lies in getting across the frontier. Guaranties that these people will not become permanent residents have been given. Permission to enter the gates of Turkey is still lacking. This cannot—it must not—continue.

We appeal to the government of Turkey to change this policy immediately. We call on the Turkish people to join all other humanitarian nations by demanding that their government heed the dictates of humanity and decency. Turkey can do these things. Opening her frontiers to refugees from murder, she can provide for their safety by establishing temporary emergency refugee shelters for as many people as possible; by giving transit permits to all who wish to pass through that country to other havens of refuge. JOHAN J. SMERTEN,

Vice-Chairman, Emergency Committee to Save the Jewish People of Europe.
New York, June 23.

000730

JUN 21 1944

Dear Herbert:

Mr. Leavitt asked that the following information be forwarded to you pursuant to your request to Mr. Noel Aronovici to furnish you the names indicated to him by Mr. Neuberger of Jewish leaders still in Yugoslavia.

The following two persons are reported to be in Zagreb:

Dr. Robert Gluckstahl;
Klasičky, who until a few months ago was still handling Jewish community matters through an office at Trenkova 9.

Dr. Bukic Piate is reported to be in Belgrade.

Mr. Aronovici states that Dr. Lav Singer and Oto Steiner, the latter being a cousin of Mr. Neuberger, are both reliable persons who are with Marshal Tito's army and can be very useful.

I hope that your trip to Turkey was a pleasant one.

With best regards, I am

Sincerely yours,

J. W. Pehle,
Executive Director.

Mr. Herbert Katski,
Representative of
War Refugee Board,
c/o American Embassy,
Ankara, Turkey.

DECLASSIFIED

State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72

By R. H. Parks Date SEP 12 1972

EJM:bbk - 6/19/44

WJM

SA →

Copy to Mr. Marks 6/21

000731

MEMORANDUM

*Flourish. Could you send
this information on to
Katzki by
airmail?
nwc*

June 13, 1944

From: Noel Ironovici
To: Mr. Moses A. Leavitt

Mr. Herbert Katzki telephone me Friday night at home and insisted again that I give you the names of persons, indicated to me by Mr. Neuberger of the Yugoslavian Group here as Jewish leaders still in Yugoslavia.

Zagreb: DR. ROBERT GLUCKSTAHL;
KISSICKY, who until a few months ago was still handling Jewish community matters through an office at Trenkova 9.

Belgrade: DR. BUKIC PIADÉ

Two reliable persons, who are with Marshal Tito's Army and who can be very useful are: DR. LAV SINGER and
OTO STEINER, the latter being a cousin of Mr. Neuberger.

Mr. Katzki would like to have these names forwarded to him through the War Refugee Board.

NA:ds

NA

000732

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

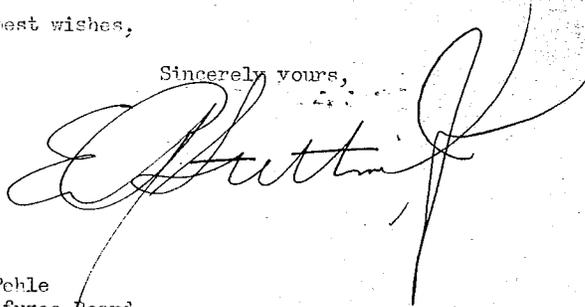
June 12, 1944

Dear Mr. Pehle,

This will acknowledge your memorandum of the 9th, enclosing the proposed cable to Ambassador Steinhardt. This has been sent with the addition of one sentence in which I tell him personally to use his own discretion in the matter of staying there. I added this sentence because I have just had a personal letter from the ambassador telling me how important it is to him to get back to this country by July 1 for several urgent reasons, and I did not want him to feel that I was not taking this into account.

With best wishes,

Sincerely yours,



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

000733

MAY 27 1944

My dear Mr. Steinhardt:

Thank you for your kind letter of May 10, 1944.

I am looking forward with pleasure to meeting you in Washington to congratulate you in person for the magnificent job which you have done and also to discuss with you the many difficult problems confronting the War Refugee Board in Turkey.

While it would have been extremely helpful to have joint discussions in Washington with both you and Mr. Hirschmann, I am sure that you understand clearly my reasons for feeling that Mr. Hirschmann should return to Turkey at once.

It is clear that Mr. Hirschmann's effectiveness will be limited by your absence from the scene, but I am sure that you will make all necessary arrangements for the Embassy staff to assist Mr. Hirschmann in every way possible. In the event that it becomes necessary during your absence to discuss refugee matters with representatives of the Turkish Government, I assume that you will have indicated to the Embassy officer charged with this responsibility the desirability of having Mr. Hirschmann accompany him and participate in the discussions.

I am confident that during your stay in Washington we shall gain from you an even greater understanding of the problems which you have faced in refugee matters and perhaps shall be able to arrive at possible solutions of problems which still confront us in this field.

With kindest regards, I am

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) J. W. Pehle

J. W. Pehle
Executive Director

Ambassador Lawrence G. Steinhardt,
American Embassy,
Ankara, Turkey.

mym
JBF:bbk - 5/24/44

*Original signed by
Mr. Pehle
Copy to:
Mr. Hirschmann*

000734



THE FOREIGN SERVICE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

AMERICAN EMBASSY

Ankara,
May 10, 1944.

Mr. John W. Pehle, Executive Director,
War Refugee Board,
Executive Office of the President,
Washington 25, D. C.

My dear Mr. Pehle:

I am most grateful to you for your kind and thoughtful letter of April 22 and particularly for the time and trouble you took in outlining to me the very considerable achievements of the Board under your direction in the short space of time since its creation.

At the same time may I express to you my appreciation for the generous sentiments to which you have given expression concerning the assistance that it has been my good fortune to have been able to render the Board.

I should be disposed to outline to you what we have been able to accomplish here, as well as the obstacles with which we are confronted, were it not for the fact that you have received a full and detailed report on the subject from Ira Hirschmann whose ability and energy contributed materially to what we have been able to achieve thus far.

Entirely aside from having been able to induce the Turkish Government to increase the number of transit visas being issued to refugees from the Balkans, to simplify their archaic procedure and to charter the SS TARI, I feel that our principal accomplishment has been that of obtaining the continued permission from the Turkish Government for Jewish refugees to transit Turkey, who have arrived here on so-called illegal boats without Turkish visas or Palestine entry certificates. Should the Turkish Government continue to grant transit to so-called illegal refugees, it should be possible to deal with the situation without too great difficulty. On the other hand, the Turkish authorities may find it necessary to take steps to protect their limited transportation facilities. Up to the present time I have no reason to anticipate an influx which will cause us difficulties with the Turkish authorities, and to this extent at least, I am not disposed to worry about crossing this bridge until we get there.

My

000735

My principal concern at the moment is the apparent stubborn unwillingness of the German Government to grant a safe conduct for the SS TARI. Only those of us who have had to deal with the innumerable vexatious problems which have arisen in connection with the chartering of this vessel can fully appreciate our disappointment that, after having overcome every obstacle, the vessel should now be lying in the port of Istanbul ready to sail - subject only to the granting of a German safe conduct. The German Ambassador is returning to Ankara tomorrow and doubtless has the answer with him. If, by the grace of God, it should be in the affirmative, I feel that we will have accomplished something real in the voyage of the SS TARI which will immediately result. If, on the other hand, he brings a negative answer, I shall always feel that we were fully justified in the efforts and money expended in the hope, forlorn though it may have been, that the German Government would evidence a shred of decency.

I would not be frank were I to conceal from you my regret and surprise that the American and British Governments between them have not been able to see their way clear to assigning a single four or five thousand ton vessel for the evacuation of refugees from the Balkans. While I recognize the paramount consideration of military necessity, it is difficult for me to understand why the United States and the British Empire, which together are said to have a monthly production of merchant vessels of over 1,750,000 tons, which lose innumerable vessels as a result of submarine and aerial activity from day to day and which have been able to provide a large number of neutral boats to carry wheat to Greece, have been unable between them to assign a single small vessel for the rescue of refugees from the Balkans. My path has been made particularly difficult with the Turkish Government by reason of the unwillingness or inability of the American and British Governments to assign a single vessel to the rescue of refugees. The officials of the Turkish Government simply cannot understand why they should be called upon to provide one of their six available passenger vessels for this work at the same time that the American and British Governments claim that they cannot assign a single vessel.

In this connection it is important to bear in mind that the entire Turkish merchant marine consists of only two or three hundred thousand tons, that most of the vessels are in bad condition as a result of the inability to obtain spare parts and to make effective repairs since the outbreak of the war, that Turkey is almost completely shut off from both belligerent camps and that, being a maritime country with a long coastline and its only two important cities being ports, the nation is dependent on its limited merchant marine, particularly in view of its one single-track railroad system.

In

000736

In this connection, the Turkish authorities have repeatedly told me that they would assign one or even two of their best vessels permanently to the rescue of refugees from the Balkans provided the American and British Governments would furnish them with a substitute vessel or vessels. The failure of the American or British Governments to respond to this gesture has made it extremely difficult for me to convince the Turkish authorities of the sincerity of our attempts to rescue refugees from the Balkans.

Be that as it may, we have been and will continue to exert our efforts to the utmost with the object of carrying out the purposes for which the Board was constituted.

Insofar as concerns the return of Ira Hirschmann to Turkey, I do not know of any one who would be more welcome in our midst. The assistance he rendered me and his services in general on behalf of the Board were invaluable. On the other hand, the problems here are complex. Anyone who has not had to deal with them in person cannot possibly understand or appreciate them.

For this reason, it seems to me that Mr. Hirschmann's services to the Board are of more value, at least for the time being, in Washington than they would be here, and as I expect to be in Washington during the second half of June for consultation, it would be my suggestion that Mr. Hirschmann not return to Turkey until after I have arrived in Washington. On my arrival there we can discuss the question and you can make your decision as to whether to send him back to Turkey or hold him in Washington on the basis of a consideration of the picture as a whole.

In the meantime, however, it is highly desirable that the War Refugee Board send to Turkey as soon as possible a young man or a young woman of limited administrative ability to relieve me of the innumerable details in connection with refugee work with which I am confronted every day. My staff consists of only four or five officers and a dozen available clerks. I am called upon to service eleven agencies of our Government, and the resultant burden which has required me to work late into the night seven days a week has brought me to the point at which I feel that an energetic young man or woman sent here by the Board could relieve me of innumerable vexatious details and thereby free at least some of my time to pay more attention to matters of policy and approaches to the Turkish Government in respect of serious matters.

While on this subject, I may add, generally speaking, that I have been forceably struck with the large personnel in Washington of all of the agencies of our Government whose principal function is to send requests or instructions for action to a handful of individuals in the field who are not only few in number but carry the burden of trying to accomplish the purposes and desires of 100 times their number in Washington. It seems to me therefore that a

fairer

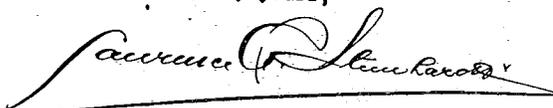
000737

fairer distribution of personnel would be in the interests of all concerned. That is to say, there should be more people in the field for accomplishment and perhaps less people in Washington telling the few in the field what they would like to have done. In other words, we are suffering from a large number of people in Washington who are telling an insufficient number of people in the field what to do, in many cases without appreciating the difficulties of accomplishment. I have made this suggestion in the belief that in the light of your practical experience you will appreciate the desirability of having more people in the field and less in Washington in order that you may achieve the maximum results.

For my part, it is probably unnecessary for me to pledge you my continued cooperation and support to the utmost of my ability.

With every good wish and kindest regards,

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lawrence C. Shulka", with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

MAY 4 1944

Dear Mr. Baerwald:

Ambassador Steinhardt has asked us to inform you that he deeply appreciates your thoughtful message and that you may rely upon him to continue to exert himself to the utmost on behalf of the unfortunate victims of Nazi persecution.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) J. W. Pehle

J. W. Pehle
Executive Director

Mr. Paul Baerwald,
American Jewish Joint
Distribution Committee,
270 Madison Avenue,
New York, New York.

 FH:lab 5/3/44

000739

CONTROL COPY

*4 - w on Ref Bd
(ms Sehle)*

MRE-607

This telegram must be paraphrased before being communicated to anyone other than a Government agency. (BR)

Ankara

Dated April 29, 1944

Rec'd 4:25 a.m., 30th

Secretary of State

Washington

778, April 29, 8 p.m.

FOR THE WRB FROM THE AMBASSADOR

Ankara's 48.

Please inform Paul Baerwald of the American Joint Distribution Committee that I deeply appreciate his thoughtful message and that he may reply upon me to continue to exert myself to the utmost on behalf of the unfortunate victims of Nazi persecution.

STEINHARDT

REP
NPL

*Message
sent to
Baerwald
5/4/44
RH*

000740

CONTROL COPY TELETYPE UNIT

2 - War Refugee Bd (Mr. Cehle)

April 25, 1944

This telegram must be paraphrased before being communicated to anyone other than a government agency. (CRAY)

AMEMBASSY,

ANKARA.

363

FOR THE AMBASSADOR FROM WAR REFUGEE BOARD.

WRB no. 29.

~~Receives the following message from Paul Baerwald of the American Jewish~~
Following

~~Joint Distribution Committee:~~
Joint Distribution Committee:

QUOTE Deeply grateful your sympathetic understanding and cooperation in relief and rescue many unfortunates. Behalf Joint Distribution Committee wish extend to you our appreciation for your kind assistance UNQUOTE.

HULL
(GLW)

WRB:GLW:KG
4/22/44

S/CH

NE

SWP

000741

April 21, 1944

11:00 a.m.

TO: Mr. Warren

FROM: J. W. Pable

It will be appreciated if you will have the attached cable despatched at once to Ambassador Steinhardt, Ankara, from Mr. Paul Saerwald, American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, and bill the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 270 Madison Avenue, New York, N. Y., for the cost of the message and any answer thereto.

Attachment.

PH:lab 4/20/44

000742

CABLE TO ANKARA

Please deliver the following message to Ambassador
Steinhardt from Paul Baerwald of the American Jewish Joint
Distribution Committee:

"Deeply grateful your sympathetic understanding
and cooperation in relief and rescue many unfortunates
Stop Behalf Joint Distribution Committee wish extend
to you our appreciation for your kind assistance"

THIS IS WRB-ANKARA CABLE NO. 29

W *bert*
FH:lab 4/21/44

000743

DAY LETTER	URGENT RATE
SERIAL	DEFERRED
NIGHT LETTER	NIGHT LETTER

Patrons should check class of service desired; otherwise the message will be transmitted as a telegram or ordinary cablegram.

WESTERN UNION

1211

CHECK
ACCOUNTING INFORMATION
TIME FILED

A. N. WILLIAMS
PRESIDENT

NEWCOMB CARLTON
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

J. C. WILLEVER
FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT

Send the following telegram, subject to the terms on back hereof, which are hereby agreed to

APRIL 18, 1944.

AMBASSADOR STEINHARDT
US EMBASSY
ANKARA (TURKEY)

DEEPLY GRATEFUL YOUR SYMPATHETIC UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION YOU EXTENDED
REUBEN RESNIK STOP BEHALF JOINT DISTRIBUTION COMMITTEE WISH EXTEND TO YOU
OUR APPRECIATION FOR YOUR KIND ASSISTANCE

PAUL BAERWALD
JOINT DISTRIBUTION COMMITTEE

Send for receipt

000744

Turkey
APR 22 1944

My dear Ambassador Steinhardt:

I wish to thank you for your letter of April 4. I fully appreciate the good work done in Turkey by Mr. Hirschmann, but I am also more than ever aware that the fine results accomplished are due in very large part to your sympathetic and whole-hearted cooperation with him. I have taken the liberty of indicating to the members of the War Refugee Board the important assistance we have received from you. The Board is also aware of the fact that the work done in Turkey constitutes the greatest success achieved in carrying out the war refugee program. Please accept the thanks of myself and the Board for all that you have done.

Needless to say, I am as disturbed as you are at the possibility of Mr. Hirschmann's severing his connection with the War Refugee Board, for his leaving would be a great loss precisely at a time when our work is commencing to show results. Please be assured that I shall do all in my power to make it possible for him to remain with us.

I think that a brief summary of the work which the War Refugee Board has been doing outside the field of operations with which you are personally familiar may be of interest to you, and may be helpful in further indicating that the Board really means business.

Much of the Board's effort is being devoted to the establishment of temporary havens for refugees who succeed in escaping from the Nazis. One of the programs which the War Refugee Board is seriously considering at this time is a plan to establish temporary havens in the United States for refugees. The purpose of these camps would be to provide a place in the United States where refugees having no other place to go could wait in safety until it becomes possible either to return to their homes or to settle elsewhere. While in such temporary camps the refugees would of course not be permitted to travel to other parts of the United States.

000745

If this proposed plan is approved, we might at the same time make a direct appeal to the German Government requesting it to release all Jews and other persecuted minorities in Nazi territory. In this way the American Government could most effectively demonstrate to the world its desire to take affirmative action toward the solution of this problem.

Ever since the Bermuda conference the American and the British Governments have been considering the possibility of establishing a refugee haven in the Italian colonies of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica. With the approval of the State Department, we are now requesting Ambassador Winant to make a specific proposal to the British Government pursuant to which the American and the British Governments would share responsibility for financing the establishment and maintenance of camps in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, including the cost of transporting refugees to the Italian colonies.

Meanwhile approximately 500 to 600 refugees in Spain are being transferred to Camp Lyautey, which has just been established in French Morocco. The French Committee of National Liberation has agreed to accept a maximum of 2000 refugees at Camp Lyautey, which is soon to be transferred to the administration of UNRRA.

In order to encourage the Spanish, Portuguese and Swiss Governments to receive refugee children who may succeed in escaping from France, our consular officials in Switzerland, Spain and Portugal have been authorized to issue during the present quota year a maximum of 5000 immigration visas to children under 16 who shall have arrived in these countries after January 1, 1944, but before July 1, 1944. These visas are to be granted without regard to religion, nationality or stateless status and also without regard to the question of availability of means of transportation to the United States. Arrangements have also been made for the renewal of these visas in the event that this should prove necessary.

We are also taking steps designed to delay the Nazi program of annihilation. Thus at the present time there is being cleared with the State Department a cable asking the International Red Cross to approach the German and satellite Governments with the request that Jews, and other persons confined because of race, religion or political belief, receive treatment equal to that accorded civilian internees to whom the Geneva Conference relating to prisoners of war is applied by analogy.

Recently we received information to the effect that the German authorities are inquiring through neutral sources into the validity of Latin-American passports held by Jews in certain camps in occupied

Europe. As you know, Jews in this category have thus far been receiving better treatment than their less fortunate brethren who lack such passports. Acting on the assumption that hitherto the German motive in granting such Jews preferential treatment includes some hope that such persons might be considered exchange material for Germans in the Western Hemisphere and also some fear that German ill-treatment of such persons might afford the Latin-American countries a pretext for further limiting the freedom and economic activities of German residents in Latin-American countries, we are requesting the Swiss Government to advise the German Government that the United States is now undertaking discussions with the Latin-American countries for a further exchange of Germans in the Western Hemisphere for persons in German controlled territory. The German Government is being advised further that this Government considers persons holding Latin-American passports as eligible for exchange. In the meantime we are conducting negotiations concerning this matter with the Latin-American countries. Even if no exchange materializes the reopening of exchange negotiations may help stay the executioner's hand.

Since the creation of the War Refugee Board, the Treasury Department upon the Board's recommendation has been licensing remittances to neutral countries to finance relief and rescue operations in enemy or enemy-occupied territory as well as relief for refugees who have already reached neutral territory. Since January of this year relief and evacuation operations of this type costing a total of \$2,125,000 have been licensed. Of the above amount approximately \$1,137,700 is being sent to Switzerland, principally for rescue and relief operations in enemy and enemy-occupied territory. About \$753,000 of the total remittances authorized is being expended for rescue and relief operations in France.

The above description of some of the more significant aspects of the work we are now doing is not intended to be complete. However it should give a picture of how your work has fitted into the general War Refugee Board program. It is suggested that you consider the above information as confidential.

Please accept once again my appreciation and thanks for all that you have done.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) J.W. Pehle

J. W. Pehle
Executive Director

The Honorable,
Laurence A. Steinhardt,
The American Ambassador,
Ankara, Turkey.

MJM:lsk 4/20/44
B.F.

*Original signed
by J. W. Pehle
Sent by air pouch.*

000747

Ankara, April 4, 1944.

Mr. John Pehle,
War Refugee Board,
Washington, D. C.

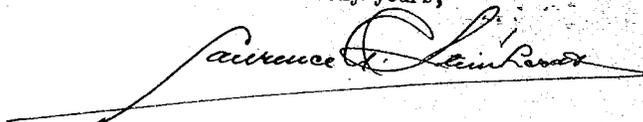
My dear Mr. Pehle:

I am seizing the opportunity presented by Mr. Hirschmann's return to Washington to tell you of the fine job that he has done while in Turkey. His quick grasp of the situation, energy and good judgment have been of invaluable assistance to me and have contributed largely to making effective the work of the War Refugee Board in Turkey.

I am disturbed at intimations from Mr. Hirschmann that his association with Bloomingdale Brothers as Vice President may necessitate his severing his connection with the War Refugee Board. The invaluable experience which he has gained here combined with the excellent judgment he has displayed on behalf of the Board impel me to urge you to take whatever steps may be necessary by enlisting the aid of Mr. Hull or Mr. Stettinius if necessary, to induce the officials of Bloomingdale's to make whatever arrangement may be necessary to permit him to give at least a part if not all of his time to the work of the War Refugee Board either in Turkey or Washington.

With kind personal regards,

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lawrence A. Linn". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name "Sincerely yours,". It features a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left and then curves back under the name.

000748

CONTROL COPY

2. War Refugee
Bill (Mr
Behle)

GAR-20

PLAIN

Ankara

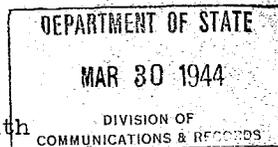
Dated March 28, 1944

Rec'd 5:05 p.m., 29th

Secretary of State

Washington

PRESS 556, twenty-eighth



Remarking that establishment of German military and political control in Hungary and adoption of similar measures in Balkans have aroused great anxiety in both England and America, since all elements (including hundreds of thousands of Jews) who would facilitate Germany's internal collapse and capture of European fortress from within had taken refuge in Hungary and other Central European and Balkan countries. Togac writes in TASVIRI EFKAR of twenty-sixth that it is for foregoing reason that President Roosevelt in his recent address invited nations of world to open their gates to Jews and other refugees and give them all possible assistance.

STEINHARD

WJC

000749

File

JTA DAILY NEWS BULLETIN

Published by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency

106 East 41st Street, New York 17, N.Y.

VOL. XI. NO. 60 (26th year)

Monday, March 13, 1944

U. S. REPRESENTATIVE COMPLETES PLAN FOR EVACUATION OF JEWS FROM BALKAN COUNTRIES

ANKARA, Turkey, March 12. (JTA) — The first steps toward mass evacuation of Jewish refugees from Rumania and Bulgaria have been completed, the Jewish Telegraphic Agency was told today by Ira A. Hirschmann, representative here of the United States War Refugee Board.

Mr. Hirschmann revealed that Turkey has agreed to passage of 5,000 children to Palestine. He added that negotiations for a Turkish ship, capable of carrying 1,000 children at a trip, are shaping up for early settlement. The ship will pick up its passengers at Constanza, Rumanian Black Sea port, and take them to Haifa.

The British authorities, Hirschmann said, will provide Palestine visas and he is hopeful of getting a German safe conduct. At the present time, only about 100 persons weekly are allowed exit from the Axis-controlled Balkan states. They are allowed 24 hours to pass through Turkish territory.

Jewish Children From Bulgaria Reach Palestine

HAIFA, March 12. (JTA) — Fifty Jewish children from Bulgaria arrived here today. They were met by representatives of the Jewish Agency and taken to Jewish settlements where they will reside and be educated. The last group of Rumanian Jews who were held in Cyprus for more than two years also landed in Haifa today.

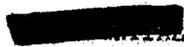
CC - Mr. Pehle, Mr. Luxford, Mr. DuBois, Mr. Friedman, Mr. Lesser, Miss Hodel,
Mr. Abrahamson, Miss Laughlin, Mr. Mann, Mr. Marks, Mr. McCormack,
Mr. Murphy, Mr. Pollak, Mr. Raines, Mr. Standish, Mr. Stewart

000750

wa' Refugee Bd

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Embassy, Ankara
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATED: March 10, 1944
NUMBER: 409



HIRSHY MANN SENDS THE FOLLOWING FOR THE ATTENTION OF
PEOPLE, WAR REFUGEE BOARD.

As ^{regards} respects the individual mentioned in the Department's cable of March 6, 1944, No. 168, I urge you to take no action in the matter unless there is a compelling reason for employing and sending him to Turkey at this time. With respect to the statement made by the applicant that he is familiar with refugee and shipping problems in this area since a portion of his business consisted of carrying refugees from Rumania and elsewhere to Palestine, I would be interested in learning his name so that I may ascertain and report to the Board the nature and scope of his former activities.

*MAN
JAN
1944*

It is recommended by me that pending my return to Washington no action be taken on this application since I count on returning early in April with a detailed report and recommendations concerning the situation here, including the number and type of individuals needed to carry on the Program of the Board in Turkey.

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 12 1972

STEINHARDT

000751

CONTROL COPY

TELEGRAM SENT

This telegram must be paraphrased before being communicated to anyone other than a Governmental agency. (SR)

March 6, 1944

War Refugee Board

RESTRICTED CODE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DIVISION OF
MAR 7 1944
COMMUNICATIONS
AND RECORDS

Jds

EMBASSY,

ANKARA.
168+
FOR HIRSCHMANN FROM WAR REFUGEE BOARD

An applicant has indicated interest in being employed by the War Refugee Board. He is thirty-seven years old, Jewish, born in Jerusalem, and has been a naturalized American citizen for a number of years. Besides English, he says he speaks Turkish, Arabic, French, German, Hebrew, Yiddish, and some Greek. Professes to be familiar with Turkey, Palestine and similar areas and to have carried on a shipping business in the area of Rumania and Palestine for about 5 years ending with the outbreak of war in 1939. He has indicated familiarity with shipping and refugee problems in these areas since part of his business consisted in carrying refugees to Palestine from Rumania and elsewhere. He has been employed by the United States Government for about 2 years.

Subject to your approval we propose to employ him with the thought that he might be sent to Turkey to work there or elsewhere under your direction. From our talks with him he seems to be type of person who could be of value to you on operating level. Please advise as soon as possible.

STETTINIUS
(Acting)
(GLN)

TRB:GLM:KG
3/1/44

NE FSA NEA A-S/3 FA

000752

FEB 29 1944

To : Mr. George L. Warren

From: J. W. Pehle

I should appreciate it if the
attached cable to Ambassador Steinhardt
for our representative, Mr. Hirschmann,
were transmitted at once.

(Signed) J.W. Pehle

J.A.M. 207

J.H. Murphy:dh 2/24/44

000753

JE 147- 3. 14
TO STEINHARDT FOR HIRSCHMANN FROM WAR REFUGEE BOARD.

An applicant has indicated interest in being employed by the War Refugee Board. He is 37 years old, Jewish, born in Jerusalem, and has been a naturalized American citizen for a number of years. Besides English, he says he speaks Turkish, Arabic, French, German, Hebrew, Yiddish, and some Greek. Professes to be familiar with Turkey, Palestine and similar areas and to have carried on a shipping business in the area of Rumania and Palestine for about 5 years ending with the outbreak of war in 1939. He has indicated familiarity with shipping and refugee problems in these areas since part of his business consisted in carrying refugees to Palestine from Rumania and elsewhere. He has been employed by the United States Government for about 2 years.

Subject to your approval we propose to employ him with the thought that he might be sent to Turkey to work there or elsewhere under your direction. From our talks with him he seems to be type of person who could be of value to you on operating level. Please advise as soon as possible.

JH Murphys:dh 2/25/44

F.A.M. JBT

000754

Miss Chauncey
Mr. Paul
Mr. Gaston
Mr. H. D. White
Mr. Peble
Mr. Lunford
Mr. DuBois
Mr. E. N. Bernstein
Mr. Stewart
Mr. Lesser
Mr. Friedman
Miss Hodel
Mr. Pollak
~~Mr. Bundy~~
Mr. Chapman
Miss Laughlin
Mr. Cohn

TELEGRAM SENT

PLAIN

March 2, 1944

AMEMBASSY,

ANKARA:
158^X Second
TO HIRSHMANN FROM THE WAR REFUGEE BOARD.

Bergeon suggests that you contact Joseph Klarmen,
Pala Palace Hotel, Istanbul, as soon as possible.

STETTINIUS
(ACTING)
(GLW)

WRB:GLW:KG
3/1/44

000756

6K
March 1, 1944

TO: Mr. Warren

FROM: Mr. DuBois

It would be appreciated if you would have the attached cable from the War Refugee Board to Hirschmann dispatched as soon as possible.

(signed) J. E. DuBois

cc - Miss Chauncey (for the Secretary); Mr. Paul, Mr. White, Mr. Gaston, Mr. Pehle, Mr. Luxford, Mr. E. M. Bernstein, Mr. Friedman, Mr. Lesser, Miss Hodel, Mr. Stewart, Mr. Pollack and Miss Laughlin.

Attachment.

JEDuBois:ecor
8/1/44

000757

158 - 2/1/44
TO HIRSCHMANN FROM THE WAR REFUGEE BOARD.

Bergson suggests that you contact Joseph
Klarman, Pira Palace Hotel, Istanbul, as soon
as possible.

JEDuBois:ocr
3/1/44

000758

FEB 24 1944

TO: Mr. George Warren,
Department of State

FROM: Mr. Pehle

I would appreciate your sending the attached cable
to Hirschmann in Ankara.

(Signed) J. W. Pehle

For British Embassy letter of 2/14/44
See: British Embassy

EPK
2/23

000759

Justin B. Bandy

TO: STEINHARDT, ANKARA
FOR HIRSCHMAN, FROM PEHLE.

For your information and guidance
/the following is the text of a letter sent to the Secretary of State on September 9, 1943 by the British Embassy in Washington. A copy of this letter has recently been transmitted to me by the Embassy.

"I write to let you know that His Majesty's Government recently decided that in future all Jews, whether adults or children, who may succeed in escaping to Turkey from enemy-controlled territory since the closing of the Bulgarian-Turkish frontier in May last, will be eligible (after a preliminary security check in Turkey) for onward transport to Palestine, where they will be placed in camps, go through a further security check and if found satisfactory will be gradually released as legal immigrants into Palestine against the current half-yearly immigration quotas. By 'onward transport' is meant such transport by sea or rail as may be arranged by His Majesty's Government in cooperation with the appropriate diplomatic mission.

"This policy will also apply to Jews who manage to escape to other neutral countries, but where they have escaped to countries in which they are safe they will normally remain there. Thus the Jews at present in Mauritius, Cyprus and Spain would remain there (unless, as is hoped, arrangements can be made in the case of Spain to remove them for the duration of hostilities to Allied territory in North Africa) and only in very special cases and for very special reasons would authority be given for any onward transport to Palestine.

"The numbers to be admitted under these new proposals will not entail any increase in the total number of immigrants permissible for the period ending the 31st March, 1944.

"I have been asked to emphasize the confidential nature of this letter, as secrecy is essential in the interests of the refugees themselves and His Majesty's Government intend to make no public announcement of the policy described above. They are, however, informing the Jewish Agency for Palestine in confidence of what is proposed.

"I am writing a similar letter to Mr. Myron Taylor."

~~You should regard the British request that their policy in this connection be held confidential in the interests of the refugees themselves.~~

000760

In view of the policy indicated in the letter it is assumed that the Turkish government now has sufficient assurance that refugees entering Turkey will have an ultimate destination open to them and therefore will be willing to lend full cooperation to measures designed to increase the flow of refugees through Turkey. If, however, such is not the case you should advise the Board at once.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

EPR:ds* JNS

000761

TO: STEINHARDT, ANKARA
FOR HIRSCHMANN, FROM PEHLE.

For your information and guidance the following is the text of a letter sent to the Secretary of State on September 9, 1943 by the British Embassy in Washington. A copy of this letter has recently been transmitted to me by the Embassy.

"I write to let you know that His Majesty's Government recently decided that in future all Jews, whether adults or children, who may succeed in escaping to Turkey from enemy-controlled territory since the closing of the Bulgarian-Turkish frontier in May last, will be eligible (after a preliminary security check in Turkey) for onward transport to Palestine, where they will be placed in camps, go through a further security check and if found satisfactory will be gradually released as legal immigrants into Palestine against the current half-yearly immigration quotas. By 'onward transport' is meant such transport by sea or rail as may be arranged by His Majesty's Government in cooperation with the appropriate diplomatic mission.

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"I am writing a similar letter to Mr. Myron Taylor."

000762

In view of the policy indicated in the letter it is assumed that the Turkish government now has sufficient assurance that refugees entering Turkey will have an ultimate destination open to them and therefore will be willing to lend full cooperation to measures designed to increase the flow of refugees through Turkey. If, however, such is not the case you should advise the Board at once.

000763

CONTROL COPY

No. 574
x

Ankara, February 20, 1944

Subject: Evacuation of Jews from Axis Europe.

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington.

Sir:

Referring to the Department's telegrams H. 64 dated January 25, and H. 114 dated February 11, 1944, requesting a report concerning the actual situation as it exists today in Turkey in respect of what is being done to rescue the Jews and other persecuted minorities from Hitler, including particularly (a) the extent to which these war refugees are not permitted to enter Turkey; (b) the extent to which Turkey actually encourages and cooperates in their entry, and (c) the extent to which such refugees are not able to enter Turkey because of Turkey's failure to cooperate in their entry, and requesting my recommendations as to what the United States Government can do to effectuate with all possible speed the rescue and relief of the victims of enemy oppression, including particularly to the extent possible to make the Turkish Government cooperate more fully in carrying out this policy, I have the honor to submit the following information and recommendations:

Over a period of the past two years the Embassy has made every effort to facilitate the transit of Jews from the Axis countries through Turkey en route to Palestine. Its efforts have been hampered by (1) the unwillingness of the Axis countries to permit Jews to depart therefrom, and (2) the difficulties of transportation. Further details with regard to these points are given below:

With reference to the specific points referred to above, under (a), (b) and (c), I say that the Turkish Government has repeatedly given evidence of its willingness to grant a larger number of transit visas to Jewish refugees to pass through Turkey than the number of refugees who have been able to reach the Turkish frontier due to the fact that refugees have been unable to depart from Axis territory. Although willing to grant more visas than have been utilizable, the Turkish Government has thus far declined to authorize the charter of a Turkish boat to be used to bring refugees from Rumanian or Bulgarian ports to Turkey, fearing such vessel would be sunk in the Black Sea.

My recommendations as to what the United States Government can effectively do in this situation are (1) immediately promise the Turkish Government that should the latter permit a Turkish vessel to carry refugees from Rumanian or Bulgarian ports to Istanbul and should such vessel be lost, the vessel will be immediately replaced; and/or (2) arrange immediately to make a

vessel . . .
DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 12 1972

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

vessel available for the purpose in question; and (3) bring to the notice of the Axis governments and peoples, by use of the radio, the issuance of public statements and other means, that they will be held accountable in the final settlement for their mistreatment of the Jews and other minorities. In this connection reference is made to my telegram No. 282 dated February 18, 1944, containing a similar recommendation from Mr. Ira Hirschmann to the Director of the War Refugee Board.

I submit for the Department's further information in connection with the foregoing the following data in respect to the problem of rescuing Jews and other persecuted minorities from the Axis countries:

The movement of Jews into Palestine from Axis countries has been divided in general into two categories: (1) legal immigration into Palestine from the Axis countries; and (2) illegal immigration into Palestine from such countries.

Legal Immigration into Palestine

The British Government at the beginning agreed to admit into Palestine from Axis countries two classes of persons:

(a) Persons who were granted immigration certificates before the rupture of diplomatic relations between Great Britain and Rumania, Hungary and Bulgaria but were unable to depart therefrom for Palestine.

(b) Relatives of persons actually resident in Palestine.

Subsequently, in 1942, a third category was added, namely, 4,500 children plus 500 adults coming from Bulgaria, Rumania and Hungary, whose admission into Palestine was agreed upon. The plan involved the issuance of 5,000 immigration certificates which would be distributed as follows:

	<u>Children</u>	<u>Adults</u>
Bulgaria	1800	200
Rumania	1800	200
Hungary (including Slovakia)	<u>900</u>	<u>100</u>
	4500	500

The proposal also included the issuance by the Swiss Consulates in the three capitals of visas to persons approved by the representative in each capital of the Jewish Agency for Palestine.

Later, in 1945, the British Government announced that 20,000 Jewish refugees from Europe would be admitted into Palestine. This figure was to include the 4,500 children and 500 adults referred to above.

The British Government some time ago agreed to admit into Palestine during the period 1940-44 not in excess of approximately 75,000 Jews; very recently it announced that the period of time during which this number would be admitted would be extended.

In so far as Turkey is concerned, the problem has been one of transit across Turkey en route to Palestine.

In the . . .

discussions between the American and British Embassies with the Turkish authorities concerning the transit of refugees across Turkey to Palestine, the Turkish Government declined to permit the proposed refugees to be carried on Turkish vessels (by reason of lack of coal and space, and other technical reasons). It agreed, however, to permit a limited movement by rail across Turkey. The question of the refugees being carried on other Turkish flag vessels was also raised but no definite decision has been reached due to the total lack of such vessels.

In April 1943 the Turkish authorities agreed to attach every ten days to a train from Haydar Pasa (Istanbul) to Aleppo one coach, on which a group of 75 refugees would be carried. It was stipulated that each such group must have departed from Turkey before the second group could be admitted. Subsequently, as the result of a conference between the American Ambassador and the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs, this stipulation was withdrawn. However, under this arrangement no single group of 75 persons has to date reached Haydar Pasa, because it has been impossible to arrange for the refugees to be released from Axis territory.

Indicative work subsequently made, through the Swiss authorities, to arrange for the emigration from Bulgaria and Rumania of a considerable number of Jews who were about to be expelled to Poland. Since the collapse of Italy there has been a diminution in the movement to Poland.

Since late 1940, a system has been in force whereby lists of names of immigrants in the approved categories mentioned under (a) and (b) above are submitted to the Turkish Government with the request that transit visas be granted to these persons in Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria. The Turks have made a restrictive limit of nine "persons" per country per week in order not to overload the Turkish trains, but this restriction has been so liberally interpreted as to constitute each "person" a family of not more than five individuals, or a total of 45 persons. The Hungarian and Rumanian Governments have allowed out a modest number of families under this scheme, but very few have come out of Bulgaria, the Bulgarian Government having, in April 1943, prohibited the exit from or transit through that country of Jews, thus bringing to an almost complete stop the emigration of Jews from Axis Europe, in view of the fact that the only means of exit by land to Turkey from Axis countries north of Bulgaria is through that country.

At the present time two groups of 75 children each in Rumania are being prevented from starting their journey because of the refusal of the Bulgarian authorities to allow them to transit Bulgaria. Consequently, efforts are now being made to have these two groups sent to Istanbul by boat from Rumania. The International Red Cross is working on this matter. Palestine has agreed to accept them. The Turkish authorities have assured the Embassy that they will furnish two railway cars if these children succeed in reaching Istanbul. The S.S.L. GATA, now at Constanza, is being considered as a vessel on which these children might be brought to Istanbul.

There is also under consideration a proposal for the departure of 300 children from Hungary under the Turkish transit scheme of 75 people every 10 days but their departure is also being prevented by Bulgarian transit difficulties.

The Turkish . . .

The Turkish Ministry of Communications has recently agreed with the Embassy to furnish two cars per week over a limited period of time to transport a limited number of refugees through Turkey.

In general, the German authorities have prevented the departure of large groups although small groups leave either with their consent or by means of bribery.

Illegal Immigration into Palestine

The illegal immigration began about 1940 when the Palestine immigration quota was very small. Bulgarian and Rumanian promoters obtained the use of unseaworthy vessels and sold space on them at extortionate prices. The boats would start out for Palestine, passing through the Straits, which they could do without interference by the Turkish authorities. If the vessels succeeded in reaching Palestine, the passengers, not being admissible under the quota, were destined to be deported to the Island of Mauritius. One of the vessels, the S.S. STILAS, was sunk in the harbor of Haifa. The cause was never determined. A number of the ships which started from Bulgaria and Rumania for Palestine were wrecked on the Turkish European coast of the Black Sea. Others were wrecked in the vicinity of Persin.

At this time the British Legations in Rumania and Bulgaria asked the respective governments to put a stop to the immigration but the governments in question refused or failed to do so. The British authorities threatened to return to the country of origin such of the refugees as had landed in Turkey. The British Government requested the Turkish authorities to delay such action. Eventually many of the refugees were sent to Cyprus where some are still living; however, the absorptive capacity of Cyprus was soon exhausted and it soon became impossible to send more there.

This illegal immigration ceased some time ago. It is possible it may be resumed, particularly should the procedure for legal immigration break down. Confidential information indicates the possible use for semi-illegal immigration of the following vessels: the S.S. STILAS, now understood to be at Varna, which can carry about 300 passengers; and the S.S. STILAS, now understood to be at Constantza, which can carry about 250 passengers. These vessels are of about 200 and 250 tons, respectively, and would, of course, be very overcrowded, were the number of passengers indicated taken aboard. Furthermore, their seaworthiness is in doubt.

In this connection, I may add parenthetically that as a result of the STILAS disaster (February 24, 1942), I have approached with caution any proposals for the use of questionable vessels for the further evacuation of refugees from Rumanian or Bulgarian ports and have insisted as a condition non that any vessel in Turkish waters which might be available must receive the prior clearance of the American or British naval authorities in Istanbul as to its seaworthiness.

Number of persons actually moved

Late in 1942 two groups of children transited Turkey en route to Palestine, 50 from Hungary and 50 from Rumania.

According to information furnished by Mr. Darlus, the representative in Turkey of the Jewish Agency from Palestine, the total number of Jews to transit Turkey in 1943 en route from

ends Europe . . .

his Europe to Palestine was 1,165. Details as to points of origin are set forth below:

January-September 1943

Children up to 16 years of age and accompanying adults from Hungary	125
Children up to 16 years of age and accompanying adults from Rumania	74
	<u>199</u>
Refugees from Bulgaria	<u>150</u>
Total	149

October-December 1943

Individually from Budapest	125
" " Bucharest	50
" " Sofia	82
" " Athens	<u>312</u>
Total	564

Refugees sent to Cyprus from:

Rumania	150
Bulgaria	<u>72</u>
Total	<u>222</u>

1,165

The Jews listed above as coming from Athens consisted of persons who had escaped from Greece in small boats, most of which landed their passengers at Izmir where they were able to obtain visas for Palestine under the Schedule of the Jewish Agency and to cross into Syria en route to Palestine.

In addition to this movement of Jews in transit through Turkey, 2,138 Jews left Turkey for Palestine during 1943, according to information supplied by Mr. Karlas.

The situation appears to be that the German control over the exit of Jews from the various countries in southeastern Europe is more stringently exercised in respect of the countries more remote from Germany than those nearer to Germany. Thus at the present time there are practically no Jews permitted to leave Greece, although a few escape illegally. Occasionally, despite the general prohibition, a few are permitted to depart from or transit Bulgaria (53 Jews arrived in Istanbul on or about February 13 from France); the Rumanian authorities appear to be willing to allow Jews to depart from Rumania in some numbers; and the Hungarian Government's attitude appears from here to be more liberal than that of the Rumanian Government (although transit to Turkey from both Rumania and Hungary is hampered by the Bulgarian attitude and the lack of transport).

According to . . .

According to information furnished me by Mr. Harlas, the number of Jews in the Balkan countries at the beginning of the war is estimated as follows:

- Bulgaria - 88,000 (of whom about 40,000 still remain in Bulgaria);
- Rumania - 800,000 (of whom about 266,000 are still living in "Old Rumania");
- Yugoslavia - 75,000;
- Greece - about 72,000 (of whom the vast majority were deported to Poland).

With further reference to the Jews in Rumania, it is understood that of the 180,000 who were expelled to Transnistria (mostly from Bessarabia and Bukovina) only 75,000 remain alive. The present distribution of the balance of the 266,000 mentioned above is estimated as follows:

Bucharest	100,000
Galatz	25,000
Jassy	25,000
Bukovina	16,000
Elsewhere	25,000

Various efforts made by the Embassy to assist in the matter

On April 25, 1942, I received the Department's telegram no. 164, April 22, 4 p.m., requesting, at the solicitation of an interested organization in the United States, that I endeavor to obtain permission from the Turkish authorities for certain Jewish refugees who had arrived in Istanbul from Rumania on the SS MICHAEL on March 18 to land in Turkey in order to obtain visas to enter Palestine. I ascertained, as reported to the Department in my telegram 326, April 27, 12 noon, that the vessel mentioned had already sailed from Istanbul for Haifa with her refugee passengers on board and all her papers in order. I subsequently telegraphed that it had been impracticable to comply with the Department's request, contained in its telegram above referred to, that the Embassy inform it of the names of the refugees in question, as the names were unknown at Istanbul (Embassy's 327, April 27).

In February 1943 the Department telegraphed to me regarding a story which had appeared in The New York Times of February 13 to the effect that the Rumanian Government had, according to neutral sources, advised officials of the United Nations that it was prepared to cooperate in transferring 70,000 Rumanian Jews from Transnistria to any Mediterranean ports selected by the Allies. (Department's 145, February 17.) I replied to the Department on February 27 (my 337) that a representative of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, Mr. Joseph Golden, had informed me that the New York Times despatch above mentioned was based upon the following:

Mr. Golden was visited on December 6, 1942, by a Dutchman who resided in Bucharest and who was temporarily visiting in Istanbul. This Dutchman, whose name was Schmitt and who was the Balkan and Turkish Director-in-Chief for Philip's Radio, had stated that he brought a proposal from a person named Lecca who was said to be the Rumanian Government official in charge of Jewish matters in Rumania. This proposal was to the effect that the Rumanian Government was prepared to consent to the departure of and provide ships

For the . . .

for the transportation to Palestine or other allied ports of the 72,000 Rumanian Jews who remained from those previously transported to Transnistria, provided that the American and British Governments agreed to a safe conduct for the vessels and to issue the necessary visas. According to Schmitt, the representative of the Jewish community in Bucharest who was appointed by the Gestapo, was familiar with this proposal and favored it. Schmitt also stated that the Catholic Bishop of Bucharest had expressed his readiness to permit the use of the Vatican flag on the ships and would endeavor to obtain permission to use the International Red Cross emblem. Golden forwarded the proposal on December 6 to the Jewish Agency for Palestine in Jerusalem.

I reported subsequently (my 382, March 2, 1 a.m.) that I questioned the bona fides of the proposal described if for no other reason than that the Rumanian Government obviously did not possess the shipping facilities with which to transport 72,000 individuals.

On April 5, 1945, I called upon the Minister for Foreign Affairs and informed him that the American and British diplomatic representatives in Ankara had been requested by their governments, in view of the reported persecution of the Jews in Bulgaria and the intention of the Bulgarian Government to deport them to Poland, to address an urgent appeal to the Turkish Government to permit approximately 80,000 Jews to enter Turkey provided the Bulgarian authorities would permit them to leave Bulgaria. These Jews, the Minister was informed, represented that part of the Jewish population of Bulgaria which was concentrated in towns and it was suggested that they be accommodated in temporary camps in a suitable area in Turkey, acquired and set aside for the purpose. The Minister was informed that the American and British Governments were ready to assure the Turkish Government that all costs connected with the entrance of these refugees and their maintenance in Turkey would be defrayed by the two governments, which, in addition, would supply to Turkey any additional food required to feed them. It was stated further that the two governments also would undertake to repatriate the refugees upon the conclusion of the war.

On July 17, 1945, I telegraphed to the Department (my telegram No. 1245, July 17, 3 p.m.) that a representative of the Embassy had contacted Mr. Jacob Griffel who stated that he was an official representative of the World Jewish Organization in Palestine and also the representative of that organization in the Associated Jewish Rescue Committee. Mr. Griffel informed the Embassy representative that the main purpose of his mission was to rescue Jews from Europe; he added that he was interested in two projects:

(1) To locate 200 Jews, families of persons already in Palestine for whom the organization which he represented had received a blanket visa for Palestine. He stated he intended to work through the Swiss Government and the International Red Cross with a view to locating these families and endeavoring to bring them to Palestine;

(2) To assist about 20,000 Jewish families concentrated in Transnistria. He thought that the best way to help these people was to send them money. He said that his organization in New York would like to send funds to Switzerland either for the purchase of food and clothing to be sent to Transnistria or for the obtaining of money to be sent there.

In October . . .

In October 1943 the Embassy received information from the American Embassy in London of a rumor indicating that a ransom traffic in refugee children through Turkey existed. Upon investigation of this rumor it was ascertained that there was no foundation for it. I had confirmation of the lack of foundation for this rumor from Dr. Golden of Istanbul, head of the Jewish Relief Organization charged with assisting all Jewish refugees who enter Turkey. Dr. Golden suggested that this rumor might be the result of certain exasperating delays which were being experienced in negotiations with the Bulgarian authorities for permission for Jewish children to leave Bulgaria.

Turkish Jews in France

Another category of Jews in whom the Department and the Embassy have been interested is the large number of Turkish Jews in France.

It appears that Mr. Barlas, local representative of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, received about the middle of December, 1943, a telegram from Mr. Weizman, Jewish Agency representative in Lisbon, stating that 10,000 Jews of Turkish origin in France, having lost their nationality owing to the provisions of Turkish law, were in danger of deportation to Poland. Mr. Barlas was asked to appeal to the Turkish authorities not to withdraw recognition from these Jews. Mr. Barlas stated, upon going onto the matter, that the Jews in France fall into two categories:

(A) Jews whose Turkish nationality is uncontested; these Jews have been given full Turkish protection and have either been repatriated to Turkey or have escaped persecution.

(B) Jews descended from Jews who emigrated from Turkey several generations ago and whose Turkish nationality has been annulled as a result of the provisions of a Turkish law adopted in 1928 providing that Turkish nationals residing abroad who fail to register with the Turkish consulates for a period exceeding five years may be deprived of their citizenship by the Turkish Government (see NATIONALITY LAWS by Flournoy and Hudson, Oxford University Press, New York 1929, page 571).

This second category of Jews (B) to whom it is understood Turkish representatives in France have so far accorded a certain measure of protection, is now threatened with deportation to Poland.

In view of the fact that these Jews no longer have Turkish nationality and in view of the Department's recognition (Department's telegram No. 67 dated January 25, 1944) of the fact that as a consequence the Turkish Government is in no position to extend protection to them, it is not to be expected that the Turkish Government can officially make representations to the Vichy Government on their behalf. It is understood, however, that an official appeal is being made to the Vichy authorities by the Turkish Ambassador to Vichy France, Sevki Berker, who has shown himself sympathetically disposed in the past in regard to Jewish matters. Possibly as the result of Mr. Berker's representations a party of 83 Jews arrived in Istanbul on or about February 16th from France, having travelled by rail by way of Milan, Vienna, Nish and Belgrade.

On January 10, 1944, the Department was informed (my telegram No. 49, January 10, 3 p.m.) of an informal conversation

which . . .

which I just had with the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs regarding several thousand Jews of Turkish origin reported to be in jeopardy in France. The Minister informed me that he would take whatever steps he found possible to afford protection to those Jews and that, in so far as concerns those who were able to establish Turkish citizenship, he would demand the same treatment for them as is accorded other Turkish citizens. With respect to those who were unable to establish Turkish citizenship, he said that he was doubtful that the Vichy authorities would recognize his right to intervene on their behalf.

In compliance with the Department's instructions of January 25, 1944 (Department's telegram 67, January 25, 11 a.m.) that I express to the appropriate Turkish officials the Department's hope that for humanitarian reasons they could be able to afford protection to as many as possible of these Jews of Turkish origin in France and would be liberal in defining their citizenship status, I discussed this matter with the Minister of Foreign Affairs (as reported in my telegram No. 151, January 18, 10 p.m.) and urged him to extend to them the maximum protection of the Turkish Government. He assured me that on humanitarian grounds the Turkish Government would exert itself to the utmost to afford protection in these cases.

It may be mentioned in this connection that the American Consulate General at Istanbul received an inquiry from the Department in December 1943 (Department's 319, December 29, 10 p.m.) regarding reports that Paraguayan Jews confined in the concentration camp at Vitte, France, were threatened with deportation to Poland because of a report that the Paraguayan Government had revoked their citizenship. In reply the Consulate General telegraphed (its telegram No. 4, January 4, 1944) that the usual Jewish representatives of Agudas Israel and of the Jewish Agency had been notified that the Paraguayan Government had agreed not to revoke the citizenship of Paraguayan internees in this concentration camp.

Unavailability of vessels to carry
refugees from Rumanian or Bulgarian ports

As has been indicated above, one of the principal obstacles to the movement of Jews from the Axis countries to Turkey has been the problem of transport.

The Bulgarian authorities since April 1943 have practically prohibited the departure of Jews across the Bulgarian-Turkish frontier, presumably as the result of German action. As a consequence efforts have been made to arrange for the transportation of Jews from the Rumanian port of Constanza, to Turkey by boat. Efforts which have been made in this direction have to date been without result. Two Rumanian flag vessels, the S.S. TRANSYLVANIA and the S.S. Bessarabia, which have been lying idle in the harbor of Istanbul for nearly three years, have been considered in this connection but to date their use has been precluded either by the attitude of the Rumanian Government--in fact, the German Government--or more recently by the unavailability of funds to effect the proposed purchase.

As a result of a request made of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs by the British Ambassador and myself, the Turkish Government took up with the Rumanian Government the matter of obtaining these two vessels on charter for the purpose indicated. In due course the reply was received that the Rumanian Government

was not . . .

was not willing to permit the vessels to be chartered for this purpose and the Embassy was given to understand that the refusal was the result of action by German authorities in Rumania.

I have recently been informed by Mr. G. E. Simond, International Red Cross delegate in Turkey, that Colonel Teodorescu, Rumanian Military, Naval and Air Attaché in Ankara, came to see him early in February 1944 to propose that the International Red Cross purchase for the sum of 1,700,000 pounds sterling the two Rumanian vessels in Istanbul, the SS TRANSYLVANIA and SS Bessarabia; that he had submitted the matter to the International Red Cross Headquarters in Geneva by telegraph and that he has subsequently received a reply stating that funds for their purchase are not available.

The question of obtaining ships from the Anglo-American shipping pool, possibly by transfer to the UNRRA for donation to the International Red Cross which could man the ships with neutral crews, has been raised and Mr. Murray Gurfein of the Office of Strategic Services cabled from Istanbul the suggestion, as a personal one, to Mr. Edwin Goldwasser, New York, at the end of January 1944. He suggested that such ships, the property of the International Red Cross under Swiss registry, could perform many errands of mercy in addition to the specific one of assisting in the proposal to evacuate 5,000 Jews, principally children, from Rumania, Hungary and Bulgaria.

It may be pointed out in this connection that the question of the nationality of the crews of vessels proceeding to a Rumanian or Bulgarian port to evacuate Jews is likely to present difficulties unless the crews of such vessels are citizens of neutral countries. The British authorities, for example, might object to a Rumanian crew bringing a vessel into Palestinian waters and it is to be expected that the Rumanian and Bulgarian authorities would similarly object to a crew of Allied nationality entering their waters.

On January 29, 1944 (my telegram No. 153) I advised the Department of receipt of information from the representative of the Jewish Agency for Palestine in Turkey, Mr. Ch. Barlas, that a Portuguese flag vessel under charter to the Joint Distribution Committee was then en route from Lisbon to Palestine with approximately 700 Jewish refugees and I suggested that the Department might wish, in view of the fact that the principal difficulty in rescuing more than a limited number of Jews from Transnistria is being occasioned by the lack of transportation, to suggest to the Joint Distribution Committee that efforts might be made to continue the charter of the vessel with a view to its proceeding from Palestine to Constanza in order to evacuate from Transnistria the Jewish refugees there.

Recently there has also been under consideration a proposal to obtain the use of a Turkish vessel for the purpose indicated. The vessel under consideration has been the SS VATAN. The possibility of obtaining the use of this vessel was discussed with me on February 8, 1944, by Dr. Isaac Herzog, Chief Rabbi of Palestine, Dr. Mordecai Eliash, who accompanied him from Palestine, and Mr. Barlas, the representative in Turkey of the Jewish Agency for Palestine. I suggested to them that they attempt to see both the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Communications with a view to obtaining the use of the boat,

stating . . .

stating that I thought the most feasible means of obtaining the use of the boat for a limited period would be to start with a request that it be made available for only one trip to Constanza. The Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs was unwilling to see the Chief Rabbi, stating that as a matter of principle he could not receive him or any other ecclesiastical dignitary. The Foreign Minister suggested, however, that a call be made on Mr. Feridun Cemal Erkin, Assistant Secretary General of the Ministry, upon whom Mr. Eliash and Mr. Barlas called on February 11. When they first broached the matter of obtaining the use of a Turkish vessel for this purpose, Mr. Erkin's attitude was negative, the gentlemen named informed me, on the ground of the transport difficulties with which the Turkish Government is faced, and he suggested that they seek to obtain the use of a suitable vessel used by the Red Cross. Mr. Erkin's attitude was, however, somewhat more favorable when the proposal was made to him that the vessel be made available merely for one trip and he then promised to give a definite decision on this matter on February 15. In the course of his discussion with these gentlemen Mr. Erkin indicated, they informed me, that he is worried by the delays at Istanbul of refugees in transit because of a failure on the part of the British authorities there to issue promptly the necessary entry visas for Palestine. The Embassy has checked on this point and found that there have been very few cases of delay at Istanbul and these few have been for purely personal reasons on the part of the individuals concerned. Nevertheless, as a result of the statement made by Mr. Erkin to Mr. Eliash and Mr. Barlas and his suggestion that the British Embassy inform the Ministry for Foreign Affairs that visas for Palestine would be granted within 24 hours on arrival at Istanbul, an officer of the British Embassy has subsequently informed me that an oral statement to the effect indicated would be made to the appropriate official of the Ministry. As a result, it is expected that the number of visas granted by Turkish consular officers in Bulgaria, Rumania and Hungary will be increased and that the number arriving in Turkey will consequently increase, provided the Bulgarian bottleneck can be broken or provided evacuation by sea can be effected.

On February 14, 1944, a member of my staff interviewed the official in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs who is handling this whole question and, in the course of their conversation, informed him of the Embassy's interest in a Turkish vessel being made available--the VATAN was mentioned--for this purpose. The official in question said he thought, in view of the shipping shortage and the risk of loss involved, it was unlikely that a Turkish vessel could be made available. He raised the question of whether the American Government or Allied Governments could not make a vessel available to some international relief organization to carry out the proposed voyages.

The Turkish decision in the matter was in the negative.

The Department will recall from my telegram No. 159 dated January 31, 1944, that a lack of transportation facilities rather than an unwillingness on the part of the Turkish authorities to cooperate was the chief difficulty in effecting the rescue of Jews from the Axis countries. The statement was also made in the telegram under reference that in my opinion unless the transportation facilities were augmented by vessels especially chartered for the purpose it was most unlikely that in present conditions the rail facilities could be materially increased. I reported also that the Turkish authorities had repeatedly assured me of their desire to cooperate but that they insisted that under existing conditions they were unable to increase rail facilities.

It will . . .

It will be seen from the foregoing that despite the most strenuous and continuous efforts on the part of the Embassy to facilitate the movement of oppressed Jews from the Axis countries to Palestine, these efforts have to date met with only limited success, primarily because the persons whom it is desired to move are on territory controlled by the enemy who does not permit them to leave for abroad, and secondarily because of transportation difficulties. With regard to this second factor it may be remarked again that the Turkish authorities have been willing to grant more visas for persons to transit Turkey than have been utilized by persons able to leave enemy territory. Approximately three-fourths of the Jews arriving in Turkey from enemy territory have come by rail; the remainder have escaped from Greece by boat. (See page 6, supra.) If a vessel or vessels become available for the transportation of Jews by water from Rumanian or Bulgarian ports to Turkey, it is not improbable that last minute difficulties will arise in connection with their actual departure from enemy territory, since as yet there is no guarantee that they will be allowed to depart from such territory for Turkey.

It is to be remembered, in considering the Turkish attitude with regard to this matter, that Turkey's transportation system has never been adequate from the western viewpoint and is far from being adequate in the present situation when Turkey's entry into the war has until very recently been increasingly imminent. There is only one through single track main line from Haydar Pasa (Istanbul) to Aleppo via Ankara and this line has been overburdened with British and American (mostly Lend-Lease) shipments, consisting largely of war materials, moving in a northerly direction and of Turkish exports, consisting largely of Turkish products bought by the United States and the British Empire both for supply and pre-emptive reasons, moving in a southerly direction. The load which the locomotives have been carrying through the Taurus mountains, through which this line runs, has consistently been the maximum possible, with the result that the addition of even one extra car filled with refugees to a particular train has presented a difficult mechanical problem. Notwithstanding, as has been pointed out before, the Turkish authorities have actually agreed to furnish one car every 10 days to transport 75 children and accompanying adults from Haydar Pasa to Aleppo. With all rolling stock burdened to the maximum, it has been impossible--and in fact unnecessary since the small number of refugees arriving in Turkey has been readily handled--to increase the number of trains to haul refugees.

Should it become possible to move a large number of refugees from Rumanian or Bulgarian Black Sea ports to Istanbul their further transit beyond Istanbul will, of course, present difficulties but it is hoped that such difficulties can be overcome either by providing transportation by vessel beyond Istanbul to a Palestinian port or by moving them gradually by rail from Istanbul via Adana and Aleppo to Palestine.

If some scheme is eventually worked out by which the refugees can be moved by water from the ports in question, it may be found desirable to discharge them from the vessels at Haifa, rather than at Istanbul, thereby avoiding the difficulties which would arise out of a stay in Istanbul and the necessity of arranging rail or water transport beyond Istanbul. Any plans that may be drawn up for the use of vessels only as far as Istanbul should include provision for furnishing the refugees food and shelter while in Turkey.

Aside from . . .

Aside from the Jews who have managed to reach Turkey from Axis countries (some legally and some illegally as set forth above) a considerable number of Greeks have succeeded in reaching Turkey from nearby Greek islands. The exact number is not known but it is considerable. Most of them have proceeded from Turkey to Syria. The movement of persons of this category is more or less continuous, although the number moving at any one time is small. The number of refugees of other national or racial groups reaching Turkey is negligible.

In the many discussions which I have had on this subject with the present Prime Minister and former Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Saracoglu; with the present Foreign Minister and former Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Menemencoglu; and with other high Turkish officials, I have invariably endeavored to persuade them to lend every possible assistance to achieve the desired end, emphasizing the vital humanitarian principles involved and referring to the self-interest involved (in that any assistance granted would tend to present Turkey in a favorable light abroad). The expressions and attitude of these officials have invariably been one of the desire to cooperate and aid in every way, despite the many and unavoidable difficulties with which their country has seen and is faced.

As I informed the Department in my telegram No. 270 of February 16, 1944, I am delighted with the assignment to my staff in the capacity of attaché of Mr. Ira Hirschmann for the special purpose of handling matters pertaining to these refugees. I am most favorably impressed with his initiative and quick grasp of the situation, as well as with his general qualifications and personality. I shall of course extend every possible assistance to him in this work.

Respectfully yours,

Laurence A. Steinhardt

File No. 840.1
LIS/mp

To Department in original and hectograph.

FEB 18 1944

TO: Mr. Stettinius

FROM: Mr. Pehle

Attention: Mr. Warren

Attached hereto is a proposed cable from the War Refugee Board to Ambassador Steinhardt and Mr. Hirschman in Ankara requesting confirmation of a press report that Turkey is prepared to cooperate in assisting Jewish refugees to leave the Balkans.

It will be appreciated if this cable is dispatched at once.

(Signed) J. A. Pehle

per J. E. D.

Enclosure.

JED
JEDuBois:ecr
2/18/44

000777

C A B L E

CABLE TO AMBASSADOR STEINHARDT IN ANKARA.

TO STEINHARDT AND HIRSCHMAN FROM THE WAR REFUGEE BOARD.

It is reported here in the papers that a high government official in Turkey told the Associated Press on February 13 that Turkey was willing to cooperate with the Palestine Commission and Allied diplomats in assisting Jewish refugees to leave the Balkans. We would appreciate immediate confirmation of this report. Please give us full information at once on the present position of the Turkish Government on this matter.

The War Refugee Board is desirous of making public the cooperative attitude of neutral countries on this matter, and unless you perceive some objection, we would like to be in a position to publicize at once the attitude of Turkey.

It is extremely important that we be kept currently informed of all developments in Turkey relating to the activities of the Board. We have received numerous inquiries from private agencies concerning the above mentioned press report and have been awaiting advice from you as to its accuracy.

JEDuBois:ecr
2/18/44

000778

FEB 16 1944

TO: Mr. Travers
FROM: J. W. Pehle

Will you please arrange to have the attached
cable to Ira Hirschmann dispatched today.

(Signed) J.W. Pehle

Attachment.

(Sent by Special Messenger - 3:20 P.M.)

CC - Mr. Pehle, Mr. Luxford, Mr. DuBois, Mr. Lesser, Mr. Friedman,
Miss Hodol, Mr. Pollak

JW - Cleared
with *JWB*
RHodol:hd 2/16/44

000779

CABLE TO IRA HIRSCHMAN, ANKARA

Received your cable of February 12 from Cairo. Pleased to hear of your early arrival in Ankara. Keep me fully advised as to developments in Turkey and as to any and all possibilities for immediate action which can be hastened by action of the War Refugee Board. J. W. Pehle, Acting Executive Director.

000780

Prepared

EGC-987
This telegram must be
paraphrased before being
communicated to anyone
other than a Government
agency. (BR)

Cairo

Dated February 12, 1944

Rec'd 7:53 p.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

317, February 12, 2 p.m.

FOR JOHN H. PEMELLE DIRECTOR WAR REFUGEE BOARD

FROM HIRSCHMANN:

Just returned from Palestine and arrive Ankara
Monday. Your statements have aroused excited hopes
in desperate situation. Essential you give Steinhardt
top Washington backing and necessity for immediate
resultful action as now I know Turkey is bottleneck
crux. Halifax should be simultaneously pressed to
give similar instructions his representatives there
as this will help Steinhardt and vice versa. SEE
possibilities for immediate action but tempo exasperat-
ingly slow. Get ready for concrete cables from Ankara.

KIRK

EDA

000781

CONTROL COPY

GM-531

This telegram must be paraphrased before being communicated to anyone other than a Governmental agency. (BR)

Ankara ✓

Dated February 14, 1944

Rec'd 9:20 a.m., 15th.

Secretary of State,

Washington.

262, February 14, 5 p.m.

The presence in Ankara of Dr. Herzog, Chief Rabbi of Palestine and Dr. Mordecai Eliash, who accompanied him, the expected arrival tonight of Ira Hirschmann from New York and the consequent day-to-day discussions with the Turkish authorities are necessarily delaying my report. (Department's 118, February 11) I am hopeful that it will be possible to forward a detailed report by the pouch leaving Ankara on February 21.

STEINHARDT

BB

000782