

UNION OF ORTHODOX RABBIS OF THE U.S. and CANADA

000802

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000803

Union of Orthodox Rabbis
(New York)

STRICTLY [REDACTED]

OCT 9 1944

Dear Sirs:

The War Refugee Board has recently received the following very confidential information which will be of interest to you.

Our representative in Switzerland is attempting to secure information concerning the camp at Krotzingen and other camps in East Prussia in which Baltic Jews are concentrated. However, he has pointed out that the International Red Cross is not able to exercise supervision considered capable of preserving the inmates of such camps from death, and ability to render effective intervention in their behalf is made doubly difficult by the fact that East Prussia is presently a very active theater of military operations. Our representative in Sweden recently reported that Lithuanian refugees reaching Sweden have stated that on July 1 of this year there were only about 500 Jews in Krotzingen and it was believed that no more than that number are presently in Krotzingen unless there has been a heavy demand for conscript labor in this area. Special efforts are also being made to obtain information concerning camps in Austria by our representative in Switzerland.

Mrs. Sternbuch advised our representative that she has informed your organization of a plan upon which she is working personally for bringing 5,000 Jewish children from Hungary to Switzerland. In this connection, she advised him that a diplomat who recently came to Switzerland from Hungary told her that he had received information from "competent German quarters", indicating that if either the United States or Great Britain gave concrete assurances that these children would be admitted to the United States and to the British Isles, the Germans would permit them to leave Hungary by way of Switzerland. She explained that the question of the Swiss Government regarding as insufficient the guarantees given that such children would be evacuated from Swiss territory did not therefore arise, and that she fully understood that the Swiss Government has in fact received appropriate guarantees to that effect.

While the names and addresses of Mr. Sternbuch's principal confidential agents in Slovakia were said to be already known to the Union of Orthodox Rabbis in the United States, he gave our representative the names of Rabbi Samuel David Ungar, Berthold Donnebaum, and

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72

By R. H. Parks Date SEP 12 1972

000004

M. B. Weissman in Bratislava. His main contacts in Hungary were Julius Link and Philip Freudiger, both of whom fled to Bucharest some weeks ago; Charles Roth, Sch. B. Frey, and Dr. Reiner are his present men in Budapest. Mr. Sternbuch is out of contact with the Rabbi of Neutra at the present time and has received no news concerning any special rescue plan recently evolved by the latter.

The last report from Neutra, which was received early in September, refers to the Rabbi's need of funds primarily for financing the rescue and flight of refugees from Hungary and Poland at an estimated cost of 6,000 Slovakian crowns per person in the case of Hungary and 10,000 Slovakian crowns per person in the case of Poland. Approximately 100 refugees per day were said to be arriving from Hungary. False papers incident to these operations are secured at a cost of 3,000 Slovakian crowns per person and an estimated 4,000 Slovakian crowns per month are required for hiding refugees. Other activities include general maintenance for all such refugees newly arrived as well as Jews "normally" in Slovakia and special relief to Orthodox Jews in camps. It was reported that Slovakian crowns are obtainable at the rate of 20 to 25 per Swiss franc, and that during the period from July 15 to September 15 the sum of 305,000 Swiss francs were sent by Mr. Sternbuch to Slovakia for Jewish relief and rescue operations. In an effort to secure late news from the Rabbi of Neutra, and information concerning the general situation with respect to Jews in Slovakia, Mr. Sternbuch has sent a wire to Bratislava.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) J. W. Pehle

J. W. Pehle
Executive Director

Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the
United States and Canada,
132 Nassau Street,
New York 7, N. Y.

Cleared with Mrs. Pehle
JWP

EBT:PH:hd 10/7/44

000805

My dear Rabbis:

I have received your telegram of July 4 concerning the tragic plight of the Jews in Hungary.

I too am deeply horrified at the reports of the inhuman persecution and slaughter of these people, and I share with you the great sorrow of this tragic hour.

I have discussed your letter with Mr. Fehle, Executive Director of the War Refugee Board, who advises me that the Board has done and is continuing to do everything in its power to carry out the determined policy of our Government to forestall the extermination of these innocent victims of Nazi brutality and to rescue as many as possible to places of safety. I am convinced that the programs evolved and promoted by the Board have been geared to the urgency of the situation in the full knowledge that time is of the essence and I assure you that everything possible is being done to end the cruel destruction of these people.

Sincerely yours,

Secretary of the Treasury

Rabbi Isreal Rosenberg
Rabbi E. L. Silver
Union of Orthodox Rabbis
of the United States,
Rabbi Aaron Catler
Rabbi Abraham Kalmanowitz
Vaad Mahatzala Emergency
Committee,
132 Nassau Street,
New York City.

Handwritten initials: H, JWA
KH:db 7/6/44

000206

JUL 8 1944

My dear Rabbis:

I have received your telegram of July 4, concerning the tragic plight of the Jews in Hungary.

I too am deeply horrified at the reports of the inhuman persecution and slaughter of these people, and I share with you the great sorrow of this tragic hour.

I have discussed your letter with Mr. Mohr, Executive Director of the War Refugee Board, who advises me that the Board has done and is continuing to do everything in its power to carry out the determined policy of our Government to forestall the extermination of these innocent victims of Nazi brutality and to rescue as many as possible to places of safety. I am convinced that the programs evolved and promoted by the Board have been geared to the urgency of the situation in the full knowledge that time is of the essence and I assure you that everything possible is being done to end the cruel destruction of these people.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) H. Mergenthaler, Jr.

Rabbi Israel Rosenberg
Rabbi E. L. Silver
Union of Orthodox Rabbis
of the United States
Rabbi Aaron Catler
Rabbi Abraham Kalmanowitz
Vaad Mahatzala Emergency
Committee,
132 Nassau Street,
New York, New York.

000807



THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY
WASHINGTON

My dear Rabbis:

I have received your telegram of July 4 concerning the tragic plight of the Jews in Hungary.

I too am deeply horrified at the reports of the inhuman persecution and slaughter of these people, and I share with you the great sorrow of this tragic hour.

I have discussed your letter with Mr. Folio, Executive Director of the War Refugee Board, who advises me that the Board has done and is continuing to do everything in its power to carry out the determined policy of our Government to forestall the extermination of these innocent victims of Nazi brutality and to rescue as many as possible to places of safety. I am convinced that the programs evolved and promoted by the Board have been geared to the urgency of the situation in the full knowledge that time is of the essence and I assure you that everything possible is being done to end the cruel destruction of these people.

Sincerely yours,

Secretary of the Treasury

Rabbi Isreal Rosenberg
Rabbi E. L. Silver
Union of Orthodox Rabbis
of the United States,
Rabbi Aaron Catler
Rabbi Abraham Kalmanowitz
Vaad Hahatzala Emergency
Committee,
132 Nassau Street,
New York City.



000208



THE UNDER SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY

WASHINGTON

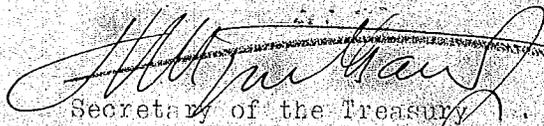
My dear Rebois:

I have received your telegram of July 4, concerning the tragic plight of the Jews in Hungary.

I am deeply horrified at the reports of the inhuman persecution and slaughter of these people, and I share with you the great sorrow of this tragic hour.

I have discussed your letter with Mr. Peale, Executive Director of the War Refugee Board, who advises me that the Board has done and is continuing to do everything in its power to carry out the determined policy of our Government to forestall the extermination of these innocent victims of Nazi brutality and to rescue as many as possible to places of safety. I am convinced that the programs evolved and promoted by the Board have been geared to the urgency of the situation in the full knowledge that time is of the essence and I assure you that everything possible is being done to end the cruel destruction of these people.

Sincerely yours,


Secretary of the Treasury

Rabbi Isreal Rosenberg
Rabbi E. L. Silver
Union of Orthodox Rabbis
of the United States,
Rabbi Aaron Catler
Rabbi Abraham Kalmanowitz
Vaad Hanatzala Emergency
Committee,
132 Nassau Street,
New York City.



100209

THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY
WASHINGTON
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Rabbi Isreal Rosenberg
Rabbi E. L. Silver
Union of Orthodox Rabbis
of the United States,
Rabbi Aaron Cotler
Rabbi Abraham Kalmanowitz
Vaad Hahatzala Emergency Committee,
132 Nassau Street,
New York City.

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 1944 JUL 4 AM 2 41
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THE HONORABLE HENRY MORGANTHAU=
 SECRETARY OF TREASURY WASHDC=

WITH BROKEN HEARTS WE RECEIVED THE TRAGIC REPORTS OF THE BRUTAL SLAYINGS OF HUNGARIAN JEWS THE REMNANTS OF EUROPEAN JEWRY. IN THIS TRAGIC HOUR WE BEG OF YOU IN BEHALF OF THOSE WHO ARE STILL ALIVE THAT YOU WARN THE HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT AS WELL AS THE HUNGARIAN PEOPLE THAT THEY CEASE TO

SLAUGHTER INNOCENT LIVES WE BEESECH YOU IN THE NAME OF HUMANITY THAT EVERYTHING POSSIBLE BE DONE TO RESCUE THESE SOULS. EVERY DELAY MEANS THE DEATH OF THOUSANDS OF LIVES. FOR THIS HUMANITARIAN ACT THE JEWISH PEOPLE WILL BE ETERNALLY GRATEFUL=

RABBI ISREAL ROSENBERG RABBI E L SILVER UNION OF ORTHODOX RABBIS OF UNITED STATES RABBI AARON COTLER RABBI ABRAHAM KALMANOWITZ VAAD HAH ATZALA EMERGENCY COMMITTEE 132 NASSAU ST NEW YORK CITY.

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF TREASURY
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NEW YORK NY JUL 3 1944

HON JOHN W PALEY

DIRECTOR WAR REFUGEE BOARD G TREASURY DEPT

WITH BROKEN HEARTS WE RECEIVED THE TRAGIC REPORTS OF THE BRUTAL
SLAYINGS OF HUNGARIAN JEWS THE REMNANTS OF EUROPEAN JEWRY. IN
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OF THOUSANDS OF LIVES. WE URGE THAT YOU EXPEDITE THE SOUTH
AMERICAN PASSPORT YOU INITIATED TO SAVE AS MANY PEOPLE AS
POSSIBLE

RABBI ISREAL ROSENBERG RABBI E L SILVER UNION OF ORTHODOX
RABBIS OF UNITED STATES RABBI AARON COTLER RABBI
ABRAHAM KALMANOWITZ VAAD HAH ATZALA EMERGENCY
COMMITTEE 132 NASSAU STREET NEW YORK CITY. 945A

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JUN 13 1944

Attention: Rabbis E. L. Silver and
Israel Rosenberg:

Gentlemen:

Ambassador Steinhardt has requested that, in response to your recent cable, you be advised that in addition to exerting his own efforts on behalf of the Jewish victims of Nazi persecution, he has been rendering and will continue to render every possible aid to Messrs. Kastner, Klarner and Grifel and that it is assumed that his continuing efforts are known to them.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) J. W. Pehle

J. W. Pehle
Executive Director

The Union of Orthodox Rabbis
of the United States and Canada,
132 Nassau Street,
New York, New York.

FH:lab 6/13/44 *Jat*

700213

APR 10 1944

Dear Rabbi Kalmanowits:

The following message for you from Messrs. Pines, Sternbuch, Rosenbaum and Rubinfeld was received from the American Legation, Bern, under date of April 7, 1944:

- " 1. To report on the situation a courier has been despatched by me to Hungary. It is my suggestion that the possibility of arranging an exchange of Jews in Hungary against German civilians from Africa or other Allied occupied territory be examined by you with the Government of America.
- " 2. Aid us in obtaining Vatican certificates, number unlimited. Lists of thousands of families in Hungary could be telegraphed to Jerusalem by me. A certificate is useful in occupied countries for obtaining internment against exchange up to the present time.
- " 3. Southern American passports for ten thousand families would be another possibility for rescue. Through the consulates of those countries in Switzerland, passports should be handed to us confidentially. Since the receivers would know that these passports are valid only during war time as a means of saving lives, they (passports) could not be misused. Only to well known Rabbis and other reliable persons would passports be given.
- " 4. Regarding possibilities of rescue I am constantly in touch with Griffel by telegram.

100214

- 2 -

" 5. To all occupied areas I have extended rescue activities. A courier is now en route with instructions to assist 150 Rabbis and prominent persons although since occupation contact with Lithuania has been interrupted."

Very truly yours,

(Signed) J. W. Pehle

J. W. Pehle
Executive Director

Rabbi Abraham Kalmanowitz,
The Vaad Hahatzala Emergency Committee,
132 Nassau Street,
New York 7, New York.

JW
FH:lab 4/10/44

000815

to: files

March 30, 1944

Mr. Lesser

Mr. Akzin

Memorandum of a telephone conversation between
B. Akzin and Rabbi Frankel, of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis.

Rabbi Frankel stated:

1. The International Red Cross is in contact with the concentration camps at Vittel, Libenau, Compiègne, Tittmoning, for citizens and prima-facie citizens of certain countries. The Red Cross is not in contact with the transit camp of the Belsen-Bergen, to which other such persons are taken for an examination of their papers, or with the camp of Bergau, to which they are transferred from Belsen-Bergen, if their papers are found in order.
2. People were taken to these camps in at least three groups of transports: the first about January 1943, the second about May 1943, and the third about September 1943. The first transports consisted mainly of people with foreign passports. In the second transports some had passports, others had merely letters from consuls acknowledging their right to passports and asking for photographs and other data in view of an issuance of passports, and others again had merely collective letters from consuls regarding their claim to foreign citizenship. The third transports consisted mainly of persons in possession of individual or collective consular letters.
3. Conditions in Belsen-Bergen and Bergau are appalling. (This information reached the Rabbi through American repatriates under Gripsholm via some Russian women who have been transferred by the German authorities from these two camps to Vittel.)
4. Some of the Jews in various camps, holding passports of various countries, have Palestine immigration certificates.

BAkzin:jp

000816

MAR 11 1944

In reply please
refer to: 281

Attention: Rabbi Aaron Kotler
and
Rabbi Abraham Kalmanowitz

Dear Sirs:

Thank you for your letter of March 7, 1944, and its enclosure, outlining suggestions and information for the aid of the War Refugee Board in formulating its rescue programs.

We shall give very careful consideration to the suggestions and information which you have advanced.

Your cooperation and good wishes for the success of the Board in this undertaking are greatly appreciated.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) J. W. Pehle

J. W. Pehle
Acting Executive Director

The Union of Orthodox Rabbis of
the United States and Canada,
132 Nassau Street,
Suite 1221,
New York 7, New York.

EST RBHutchison:agr 3-10-44

000217

אגודת הרבנים דארצות הברית וקנדה
THE UNION OF ORTHODOX RABBIS
OF THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA
132 NASSAU STREET
(SUITE 1221)
NEW YORK 7, N. Y.

RECTOR 2 2376
2377

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W. R. B. _____
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To: Files _____
Ans. 3/11/44 _____
No. Ans. Req. _____
Initial _____
Date _____

March 7, 1944

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

Honorable Sir,

In reply to your invitation to submit our proposals to your War Refugee Board in its recently inaugurated rescue program, we are happy to submit the memoranda of the Vaad Mahatzala Emergency Committee, our relief and rescue agency functioning through us and with the expressed approval and recognition of all orthodox Jewish organizations.

We have made our presentation in four sections:-

I- The History and Program of the Vaad Mahatzala Emergency Committee

II- Specific Proposals for Rescue to be considered by the War Refugee Board

III- Our Rescue and Relief Committees in various countries

IV- Presentations of Specific Problems affecting the groups rescued and maintained by the Vaad Mahatzala.

These matters are submitted together with our hopes and prayers, that the War Refugee Board created by the generous gesture of the President in response to the will of the American people, will be most successful in its humane and historic task and effect the rescue of the greatest number of the world's greatest sufferers.

With our expressions of fullest faith,

Very respectfully yours,
UNION OF ORTHODOX RABBIS OF THE
UNITED STATES AND CANADA

A. Kotler

AK:r Rabbi Aaron Kotler

A. Kalmanowitz

Rabbi Abraham Kalmanowitz

000218

Part I- History and Program of Vaad Hahatzala Emergency
Committee

SITUATION OF VAAD HAHATZALA EMERGENCY COMMITTEE-
CREATION, PURPOSE, ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PRESENT
PROGRAM

At the outset of World War II, which in its first impetus threatened to engulf Poland and the Baltic States, the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada, the accepted authoritative Orthodox leadership of America, recognized the imminent danger to the many great Rabbinical Colleges, religious communities and institutions which flourished in those countries. They fully realized that the destruction of these institutions and its deans, Rabbis and scholars would mean the obliteration of an essential part of Jewish religious life, since these great colleges had been the source from which emanated the great Rabbis, scholars and leaders for the Jewish Communities throughout the world. They took immediate action and at an executive session in which participated all the orthodox Jewish organizations of America, organized the Vaad Hahatzala Emergency Committee with these specific purposes:

- 1- Effecting the rescue of the thousands of Rabbis, scholars, religious and lay leaders in these colleges and communities,
 - 2- giving them relief in their temporary refuge sites and
 - 3- reconstructing their lives in countries of final entry.
- The Vaad Hahatzala started to function immediately.

In 1940-41, the work of the Vaad Hahatzala can be detailed as follows:

a- About seven hundred persons were rescued from certain death at the hands of the Nazis and brought to the United States, Palestine and Canada. Many Deans of the Rabbinical Colleges, scholarly Rabbis and distinguished religious leaders were included in this group. These Deans and religious leaders are now active in the work of the Vaad Hahatzala Emergency Committee and are exerting every effort to save others of their unfortunate brethren.

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b- During this period and till the outbreak of the Russo-German War, the Vaad Hahatzala maintained with food, clothing and lodging, more than 4,000 scholars and Rabbis temporarily refugees in Lithuania.

c- 497 persons were rescued from Poland and brought to Japan, where they stayed for a short period until deported to Shanghai. In this group is included the entire renowned Rabbinical College of Mir, units of other great Colleges and a number of distinguished Rabbis and their families.

In this period, the Vaad Hahatzala Emergency Committee, in addition to its actual rescue and relief work, intervened with the governments of various countries and negotiated with governmental agencies for the grant of immigration visas, exit and transmit permits. In this manner rescue was made possible and expedited. Licenses to forward relief funds were requested and granted.

In 1941-42, the relief program of the Vaad Hahatzala was accentuated and help sent to the various groups rescued by it. Especial attention was given to several thousands who were driven, or had voluntarily escaped to Soviet Russia from their temporary refuge in Lithuania. These Rabbis and scholars, formerly included in the great Rabbinical Colleges and religious communities of Poland, sought refuge in Russia after Hitler's march in 1941. Having been trained as Rabbis and scholars, and being extremely devout, they cannot accustom themselves to the conditions which they now experience. Their physical condition and earlier background make them unfit for any gainful employment. Their strict observance of the dietary laws and the Sabbath necessarily work great hardships for them. They are physically and religiously unable to cope with the extreme circumstances. This has definitely been proven by the many fatalities among them.

They are centered in several provinces of the U.S.S.R. from which migration is not too difficult; Turkistan, Kazakstan, Uzbekistan and others. Mexican visas for 500 of them have been apportioned them by the Polish government. In addition, we have been assured by Chief Rabbi Herzog of Palestine and Jewish Agency, that Palestinian certificates would be made available for this entire group.

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The Vaad Hahatzala has maintained the lives of these refugees through the transmission of food and clothing parcels sent from Palestine, Iran, South Africa and from this country. The actual transfer was supervised by a Palestine Committee headed by Chief Rabbi Isaac Herzog, by Rabbi Isaac Levi in Teheran, and by Rabbi Kossowsky in Johannesburg. In addition, to supplement the relief given by the parcels which were oftentimes subject to delay because of inadequate shipping and supply, money transfers were also made via authorized agencies.

The group stranded in Shanghai, was maintained by a credit arrangement whereby they were enabled to borrow funds against future repayment.

Late in 1942, through the initiative of the Vaad Hahatzala, a committee of outstanding Jews in Switzerland organized to give every possible assistance to the victims of Nazi brutality. With funds made available to them, they were enabled at first to send small food parcels to many. Hundreds were saved through procurement of citizenship and passports to other countries. By virtue of these documents, they were given status as prisoners of war and received more humane treatment and sufficient food to keep alive. The Committee is exploring every possible method to rescue the persecuted and hunted and bring them to temporary refuge. In 1943, diplomatic advices were received that the Committee had immediate possibilities to effect the rescue of a considerable number of Polish and Slovakian Jews and to bring them to Hungary. The Vaad Hahatzala Emergency Committee presented the matter to the State and Treasury Departments and received a Federal License to remit the sum of \$100,000.00 to the Committee. This sum was remitted in January of this year.

In November 1943, the Russian government gave permission for the transfer, free of duty, of 1200 parcels monthly to the Rabbis and scholars in the U.S.S.R. This monthly remittance is now an integral part of the Vaad Hahatzala relief aid to the refugee scholars and Rabbis in the U.S.S.R.

MMB 8 1944

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During the years 1942-43, the Vaad Hatzala Emergency Committee endeavored, through diplomatic intervention to effect the release of the two groups stranded in Shanghai and the U.S.S.R. For the group in Shanghai, intervention was made to the governments of the United States, Great Britain, and Poland to consider the especial religious status of this group and its physical danger, and to include all or the maximum possible number in the diplomatic exchanges being made by the governments involved. A number were so exchanged and reached final haven in England and Palestine. The possibility for the outright release of this group was also explored and the Vatican was petitioned to present a request for the release of this religious group. These negotiations for diplomatic exchange or outright release are still being carried on. Presentations were made to the State Department for intercession with the government of the U.S.S.R. that exit permits be granted for this group. Mr Joseph E. Davies, while on special mission, presented the matter to the Russian government. Ambassador Standley, made similar presentations at the request of the State Department which cabled the entire list submitted by us.

Chief Rabbi Isaac Herzog of Palestine and Chief Rabbi Joseph Hertz of England, fully cognizant of the exceptional status of these two religious groups and the need for their rescue, likewise petitioned on their behalf and made similar presentations to the various governments for their release through the above suggested methods.

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The VAAD HAHATZALA EMERGENCY COMMITTEE respectfully submits the following proposals for specific action by the War Refugee Board in the Rescue and Relief of the Victims of Nazi terror.

I-a- To lend the fullest support and encouragement to rescue committees now functioning in neutral countries contiguous to Nazi and Nazi-satellite territory.

b- To assist in the formation of such committees where such committees are as yet not in operation.

The War Refugee Board should assist these committees by:

→ 1- Giving them the political and diplomatic aid they need in the work.

2- Assisting these committees in having funds made available to them most expediently and also assisting these committees with funds at the disposal of the War Refugee Board.

3- Aiding the committees in designating the proper responsible persons in these countries to serve with these committees in the actual work of aiding the escape of the Jewish victims of the Nazis.

c- To take advantage of the offers of neutral countries to receive Jewish children, victims of the Nazis, to extend this phase of the rescue program, and assist the committees in these countries to receive and care for the children admitted.

II- To guarantee to all neutral countries contiguous to all Nazi and Nazi-satellite countries, wherein victims of Nazi terror may escape that;

a- They will not long remain in these countries of refuge but will quickly be transferred to temporary camps arranged elsewhere for them.

b- That these refugees will not become public charges during their stay.

c- That any food supply utilized to keep these refugees alive, will, if necessary, be replaced.

III- That the neutral countries be strongly advised of the deep concern of the Jewish victims of Nazi murder and torture and to urge these countries to remove all difficulties which interfere

000823

Part II- Specific Proposals for Rescue to be Considered by
the War Refugee Board.

with or unnecessarily delay the rescue work; to facilitate entry
into their territories and to be friendly disposed to the actual
rescue work of existing committees; that ~~the War Refugee Board~~,
~~should request the governments of Hungary, Roumania, Bulgaria, Sweden, and Switzerland to be urged~~
~~to request the governments of these countries to make arrangements for the transfer of the~~
~~refugees to their territories and to make~~
~~the necessary arrangements for their transfer to the~~
~~countries of their citizenships.~~

IV- That the government of Turkey be requested to instruct its
consulates in all countries, and especially in Hungary, Roumania,
Bulgaria to issue Turkish visas 1- to the Polish and Slovakian
Jewish refugees in those countries whose lives are in greater
danger, 2- to Jews from Hungary and Bulgaria who can receive
permission to leave, every assurance shall be given that their
entry and stay will be temporary and the refugees expedited to
temporary camps arranged for them.

It is reported that refugees may be taken via the Black Sea
route to Turkey from Roumania. It is suggested that the War Re-
fugee Board by consultation with Turkey, facilitate the entry of
these refugees into Turkey.

V- There are indications that many persons in Nazi-occupied coun-
tries were saved from certain death after citizenships and pass-
ports from a western hemisphere country were made available to
them. By virtue of these passports, the holders thereof have been
accorded status as prisoners of war. As such they receive a more
humane treatment and their lives saved. There are hundreds of
such cases, and it is a definite fact that these lives have been
saved through this medium. 1- We would, therefore, propose that
presentations be made to neutral countries, and especially the
governments of Central and South American countries to make avail-
able the maximum number of such passports or citizenships. 2-
We are aware that it would be impossible to secure such documenta-
tion for all those who must be rescued. We would suggest and urge
this method of rescue for at least the outstanding Rabbis, great

APR 8 1944

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scholars and religious leaders in Europe a list of whom we would submit to the Board. 3- We would unconditionally guarantee that all on this list, on receiving a passport or citizenship, would use it only to save his life and would not claim any constitutional rights from the country of issue.

VI- Many in Nazi and especially Nazi-satellite countries were saved from certain death by the possession of documents such as visas, certificates or entry permits to other lands. It is therefore proposed that the War Refugee Board explore this possibility and endeavor 1- that such documentation be made available through neutral countries and other sources, 2- that inasmuch as such documentation is a priori impossible for all who could make use of them, it is suggested that they be secured for the greatest possible number with priority to the Rabbis, religious leaders and scholars, 3- That the maximum number of certificates for entry be secured by presentation to the Palestine and British governments.

VII- That in the diplomatic exchanges and repatriations being carried on, provision be made for inclusion of at least 1- the maximum number of Rabbis and scholars, 2- That the wives and children of American citizens and of immigrants in this country, be exchanged at the earliest opportunity.

VIII- Since Switzerland, by virtue of her geographical position, has become a center to which many victims of the Nazis, have come and many more desperately attempting to come, it is suggested that Switzerland be urged to increase her already liberal and humane attitude; to facilitate the entry of Jewish refugees. She would be guaranteed that they would be taken out at the first moment technically possible, that funds would be sent for their maintenance and that food utilized for them would be returned. A further request should be addressed to the Swiss government urging their favorable disposition to the rescue committee functioning there.

IX- As the war tends to move towards the West, a greater danger is imminent for the Jews in the Baltic countries of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. Their lives are endangered since the proclivity

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of the Nazis in exterminating all Jews before leaving territories is well known. It is therefore proposed, that a friendly intercession be made with Finland and Sweden in closest proximity to the Baltic States to admit and save as many as will manage to reach their borders.

X- It is known that Hungary, of the satellite nations, has accorded the best treatment to the refugees reaching her borders, and it is most desirable to take full advantage of this favorable situation. We would suggest that Hungary be advised that every consideration and encouragement is being given her desire and willingness to admit refugees from Poland and Slovakia and elsewhere and that she should widen her already humane treatment, 1- to receive those entering her borders, to accord them good treatment, 2- to be friendly disposed to her own Jewish population and 3- to grant permission to those able and willing to leave.

XI- It is also suggested that Roumania be requested to adopt a more liberal policy towards the Jews in her country-to improve their difficult living conditions and to allow them to leave.

XII- The underground movements in countries of occupation offer exceptional opportunity for the rescue of many victims. It is therefore proposed that these movements be encouraged and urged.

XIII- It is known that the French Committee of Liberation is successful in evacuating many citizens from various parts of France to Northern Africa and there are many ways and methods by which she makes possible these rescues. May we propose that the Committee be urged to include in those evacuations the Jewish refugees whose lives are in especial danger and to assist their escape.

XIV- It is suggested that the Russian government be urged to intercede with Bulgaria for

a- to give better and more humane treatment to her own Jewish citizens,

b- to receive the many refugees seeking entry and give them temporary refuge,

c- to permit those who can and desire to leave, to do so

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d- to get a transit to Hungarian, Romanian and other Jews seeking passage through Bulgaria enroute to other destinations.

It is suggested that in addition to the U. S. R. government, neutral countries be urged to make similar intercession with Bulgaria.

a-to hide, aid, feed and clothe ~~and give comforts to~~ these victims,

b-to aid in the transfer and escape of victims to safer territory.

May we suggest that the government-in-exile be advised of the possibilities for rescue inherent in their underground movements and encourage the leaders of these movements to participate in the rescue of the maximum number. The War Refugee Board could encourage the rescue project by making funds available and that funds of organizations be made available for this work. Periodic reports from these sources should be requested to gauge the progress and increasing possibilities for rescue.

XV-That the War Refugee Board assign an attache to North Africa, and that he explore the possibilities of escape and rescue from France and Italy and lend aid to those who do manage to reach Africa.

XVI-That consistent with the successful prosecution of the war, the War Refugee Board utilize the facilities for rescue inherent in the military and naval establishments. Many opportunities will arise where the army or navy can assist on land and sea in the rescue and escape of individuals, and the War Refugee Board should urge these arms of the service to assist in the rescue wherever possible and to work out in detail the program wherein the army and navy can help.

XVII-Shanghai-There are about 20-000 refugees in Shanghai whose existence becomes increasingly imperiled as conditions tend to worsen. It is suggested that the International Red Cross be urged to lend their facilities to the relief program necessary to keep these refugees alive. We are submitting a separate memo in the

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question of the Rabbinical group in Shanghai and the special problems affecting them

XVIII- That Great Britain, as one of the great world powers, be fully appraised of the program of the War Refugee Board, and that it be urged to work in close harmony with this program.

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PROBLEM OF FOOD AND MEDICINE

The problem of food and medicine must be stressed and considered equally important with that of rescue and escape. It is universally known, that the Nazis have determined to destroy by sword and starvation every Jew that will come into their clutches. Our determination to feed these unfortunates, must surmount their evil design. The remnants of Jews in the Nazi and satellite countries are dying from hunger and disease. It is known that Jews receive only a pitiful fraction of the meager ration allowed others. They cannot purchase unrationed foods, nor are they permitted to leave their ghettos or camps to search the countryside for morsels to keep alive. Women and children are denied foods essential to health. The sick are denied medical treatment and medicaments. It is true that starvation has taken as many as the sword. Those that remain alive must receive food to keep alive till rescue is effected.

It is suggested, that every effort be made to supply food and medicine to the Jews in ghettos, work camps, concentration camps and all places where Jews are concentrated in greater number; that the food be sent and distributed through International Red Cross, through neutral countries or agencies; that it be sent in bulk to all or specifically to individuals by parcels went by relatives. That in addition to food, funds be sent through neutral sources for purchase of foods and for rescue; that to the Jews hidden in forests and byways, food be sent in through the underground movements.

We wish to call particular attention to the possibilities of making food available to Jews in these specific localities:

1- Camp at Transinstra-Roume nia has expressed willingness to admit food for the Jews interned in this camp and permit its distribution and supervision.

2-Prison Camp in Teresenstat, Slovakia- A smilar possibility exists to supply food to the Jews interned in this camp. The

International Red Cross, neutral countries and agencies should be fully utilized to send in food to these camps.

3-Ghettos in Lithuania-It is reported that more than 30,000 Jews are in one ghetto, in addition to numbers in other smaller ghettos in Lithuania. Finland and Sweden, in addition to the International Red Cross, should be urged to send food to these ghettos.

4- Vichy France, Holland and Belgium-The growth and activity of the underground in these countries, allows for the use of this force in making food available to the thousands of hunted Jews in these countries.

The War Refugee Board could explore the possibility of sending mercy ships, such as is being done in the case of Greece, with food for the ghettos, to be distributed by Red Cross or other neutral bodies.

To enlist the cooperation of the neutral nations imperatively desired to execute any program of food supply, it would be necessary to give every guarantee to these nations that their own food supplies would not suffer by any transfer they made and that any occurring shortages would be made good. In addition, funds would have to be supplied to the leaders of the underground with specific instructions that it be used for food and rescue of the Jewish victims of the Nazis.

FINANCES- We fully appreciate and believe that the fullest cooperation of every relief agency will be extended to the War Refugees Board program and the measures it will deem most adaptable to effectuate the Executive Order of our President. Jewish organizations will most assuredly lend their fullest financial assistance to the rescue program inaugurated.

However, the program is of such magnitude and proportion, as to make impossible a successful prosecution of every offered and approved measure without additional substantial funds.

May we therefore suggest that

1-The War Refugee Board initiate and secure the necessary

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approval for the use of Lend Lease funds available to countries such as Poland, Czechoslovakia, Belgium, Holland and others-- and that these funds be designated and used for rescue work. The necessary approval from these countries would surely be forthcoming since the rescue measures would directly aid their citizens.

2- The War Refugee Board make use of funds at the disposal of the Intergovernmental Refugee Committee, which under the Executive order of the President, is directly tied in with the expressed purposes of the War Refugee Board for rescue and relief of the distressed.

3- That the Red Cross, Quakers and other agencies, which ordinarily appropriate a portion of their funds for refugee service be urged to designate funds to be placed at the disposal of the War Refugee Board.

4- Should the funds so received still be found inadequate, then a Congressional appropriation should be requested, or an amendment be offered making some of the U.N.R.R.A. funds available to the War Refugee Board. Until the Congressional grant is made, the emergency work of the Board must not cease but must continue with the funds actually in hand or available.

RESCUE THROUGH PROPAGANDA

The Nazis have openly declared and vowed the extermination of the Jews of Europe. To their satellite nations and conquered countries, they have by vicious and insidious propaganda endeavored to implant the unholy thought that their participation in the destruction of the Jews, would be graciously received by the civilized world.

It is primarily necessary to uproot and completely destroy this false conception. It is therefore imperative to immediately take these steps:

1- The Allied Nations must openly declare to the Nazis that the extermination by sword and starvation of the peoples of occupied countries, and especially Jews, will be treated as murder, and those directly responsible, and those participating in any way in these murders, will be dealt with severely and punishment exacted for the guilty.

2- Warning should be given to the satellite nations and Vichy France that deportations of Jews into Nazi hands, the equivalent of death sentences, will be treated as murder and dealt with accordingly.

3- That a special appeal be made to the satellite countries to cease their barbaric treatment and expulsions of the Jews; and they be assured that future consideration for them will be determined by their action and their attempts to assist the persecuted.

4- That by radio, pamphlet and every conceivable means, the great masses of the Axis and satellite nations be made fully aware of the terrible and gruesome facts-that their leaders have been guilty of the mass murder of millions and that this fact be brought home to them incessantly, that it may touch and enflame the humane spark which must exist within them so that they may express their protest and protect and aid those still alive, and help their escape.

That as additional measures in the attempt to rescue by propaganda, the Allied Nations declare as civilian internees all Jews.

citizens of allied countries, now in the hands of the enemy. This is feasible in the light of the oft made declaration by the Axis that they consider the Jews and other peoples "enemies of the Reich". This declaration by Allied Nations would establish the status of these peoples and afford them the treatment due them as such civilian internees.

5- That neutral countries be urged to direct their propaganda to the Axis and satellite nations with a view to a cessation of the cruel persecution of the peoples of occupied nations and a return to the fair and more humane treatment of civilized peoples by civilized peoples.

6- That the governments-in-exile be urged to transmit to their peoples, through the radio, pamphlets and other possible methods, the determination of the Allied Nations to effect the rescue of the victims of Nazi brutality, and that the people themselves under the yoke of the invader, share their bit with their more unfortunate countrymen, hide them, give them aid and assist them to escape whenever possible before sentence of death is passed upon them.

As a further proposal, we suggest that the great religious leaders of the world be urged to direct their appeal in the name of religion and humanity to the peoples of the Nazi and satellite nations to protest the persecution of the innocent, to comfort and succor the victims; feed the hungry, hide and rescue the condemned, and the religious followers of all faiths be urged to utilize every possibility for the rescue and escape of the persecuted.

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VAAD HATZALA REPRESENTATIVES AND COMMITTEES IN
FOREIGN LANDS

The Vaad Hatzala offers the personnel and facilities of its committees and representatives in foreign lands to the service of the War Refugee Board. Instructions will issue to our Committees to place themselves at the disposal of the War Refugee Board attache assigned to their locale and to give him their fullest cooperation in executing the rescue and relief measured adopted.

COMMITTEE IN SWITZERLAND

Our Committee in Switzerland consists of twelve influential Jewish leaders. Mr Sternbuch is considered the head of this committee, and his address is Teufener Strasse 3, St. Gallen, Switzerland.

COMMITTEE IN SWEDEN

Our Committee in Sweden consists of Wilhelm Wolbe, Lehman, Wolfe Jacobson, and Pinkus. The head of this committee is Wilhelm Wolbe whose address is 11 Olefsgatten, Stockholm, Sweden.

COMMITTEE IN TURKEY

Our Committee in Turkey consists of Jacob Griful, Hotel Continental, Beyuglu and Ludwig Kastner, P.O. Box 1008 Istanbul, Turkey.

COMMITTEE IN PALESTINE

Our Committee in Palestine consists of Chief Rabbi Isaac Herzog who is the head of the Committee and whose address is Jerusalem, Palestine and Rabbis Joseph Mishkofski, Lazer Finkel and J. C. Meltzer.

COMMITTEE IN ENGLAND

Our Committee in England consists of Chief Rabbi Joseph Hertz, who is the head of the Committee and whose address is 1 Mulberry Court, London England and Rabbis Abramsky, Sheinfeld, Semiatycki and Mr. Harry Goodman.

REPRESENTATIVE IN IRAN

Our representative in Teheran is Rabbi Isaac Levi, whose address is Hotel Nadari, in Teheran, Irah.

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Part III- Our Rescue and Relief Committees in Various
Countries

COMMITTEE IN SOUTH AFRICA

Our Committee in South Africa is headed by Rabbi Isaac Kossowsky whose address is Rochester Mansion, Johannesburg, So. Africa.

LISBON, PORTUGAL

The Vaad Hahatzala is most anxious to send a delegate or a Committee of two to Lisbon, Portugal which would 1) endeavor to investigate and make an accurate record of all Rabbis, scholars, religious leaders and communal heads presently in Europe, with a view to extend the necessary relief to them; 2) to establish contact with those in neutral countries and if possible with those in countries freed by the armed forces of the United States and those of the United Nations; 3) to accumulate the necessary data for the reconstruction of religious life in Europe.

This work may necessitate extension of the delegates activities to include visits to Turkey, Palestine and Switzerland. We would therefore, request the War Refugee Board to consider the possibility of sending such committee and to advise us.

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Part IV- Presentation of Specific Problems Affecting the
Groups Rescued and Maintained by the
Vaad Hahatzala.

Memoranda in several specific problems of
special and primary concern to the
VAAD HAHATZALA EMERGENCY COMMITTEE

Rabbinical Group in Shanghai, China

The recent reports emanating from Shanghai tend to increase our anxiety for the group of 465 consisting of Rabbis and scholars. This group, composed of the elite that was represented in the religious life of Poland, escaped that country at the outbreak of the war, stayed temporarily in Lithuania, and after a tortuous hejira, beset by dangers at every step, finally reached Shanghai. This group consists of the entire Rabbinical College of Mir, Poland, units of other great Rabbinical Colleges and Rabbis with their families. They represent one unified Rabbinical group under supervision of Dean Rabbi Ch. Szmulewicz of the Mirrer College. Their status as white foreigners and their lack of funds in the face of the rising cost of every commodity, combine to place their lives in jeopardy.

Note:- More recently, we received confidential advices that the danger is imminent and that help is imperative.

The following methods of immediate relief for them are respectfully submitted for consideration by the War Refugee Board:

1- That a Federal License be granted for the Vaad Hahatzala to transfer the sum of \$50,000 to Isaac Sternbuch in Switzerland. That the Department facilitate the transfer of the above sum from Switzerland to Rabbi Chaim Szmulewicz whose address is 21/3 Beikal Road, Shanghai; and that he be instructed in a message to distribute the remitted sum among all the Rabbis and scholars in the group.

2- That we be authorized to pay the War Refugee Board the sum of \$50,000 and the Board arrange by methods at its disposal the transfer of said sum to Rabbi Chaim Szmulewicz for distribution among the Rabbinical group in Shanghai.

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3- That license issue for permissi to send a cable to Isaac Sternbuch in Switzerland via regular cable facilities or through diplomatic channels; that said message be relayed by Mr. Sternbuch to Rabbi Chaim Szmulewicz in Shanghai, China, authorizing him to borrow the sum designated in the cable, and that he in turn, advise us, through Mr. Sternbuch the amounts borrowed and the persons in this country to whom payment is to be made.

RELEASING OF THIS GROUP

Aside from our earnest desire to give the Shanghai group material relief, repeated attempts have been made to effect their release and evacuation to a zone which would afford security. The interest of the Vatican has been elicited in this respect, and a representation has been made by the Vatican to the Japanese Ambassador in the Vatican, for the release of this group of Rabbis and scholars. May we respectfully submit our request that the State Department intercede with the various neutral countries to support the Vatican's request for the release of this group, and to lend support to effect the technical arrangements necessary. It would be considerable aid the release, if temporary visas were granted by the State Department to those included in this group.

Negotiations have also been carried on with the State Department of our government, with the governments of Great Britain and Poland, towards having the entire group, or any number thereof, exchanged diplomatically. As these matters are still pending, we would request the War Refugee Board to present to the governments concerned, and also the government of Switzerland, as the neutral country supervising the exchanges, a request for consideration of this Rabbinical group in the exchanges being made.

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RABBINICAL GROUP IN SIBERIA 1

May we call to your attention the matter of the group of Rabbis and Rabbinical scholars in the U.S.S.R. These Rabbis and scholars, formerly included in the great Rabbinical Colleges and religious communities of Poland, sought refuge in Russia after Hitler's march in 1941. Having been trained as Rabbis and scholars, and being extremely devout, they cannot acclimate themselves to the conditions which they now experience. Their physical condition and earlier background make them unfit for any gainful employment. Their strict observance of the dietary laws and the Sabbath necessarily work great hardships for them. They are physically and religiously unable to cope with the extreme circumstances. This has definitely been proven by the many fatalities among them.

They are centered in several provinces of the U.S.S.R. from which migration is not too difficult; Turkistan, Kazakstan, Uzbekistan and others. Mexican visas for 500 of them have been apportioned them by the Polish government. In addition, we have been assured by Chief Rabbi Herzog of Palestine and the Jewish Agency that Palestinian certificates would be made available for this entire group.

Presentations were made to the State Department for intercession with the government of the U.S.S.R. that exit permits be granted for this group. Mr. Joseph E. Davies, while on special mission, presented the matter to the Russian government. Ambassador Standley, made similar presentations at the request of the State Department which cabled the entire list submitted by us.

We would respectfully submit our request to the War Refugee Board to make a friendly intervention with the government of the U.S.S.R. to grant exit permits for the entire group in the U.S.S.R. and that the government of Iran be requested to make similar intervention for the issuance of such permits and to permit temporary stay in Iran till their migration to places of permanent entry.

More specifically, we would request the issuance by the American government of visitors visas to several hundred of the

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more outstanding of this group. The issuance of these visas would hasten permission by the U.S.S.R. for their exit as has been the case of a number who possessed Australian visas and were permitted to leave the U.S.S.R.

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Switzerland

We again bring the question of the rescue work of the Switzerland Committee to the attention of the War Refugee Board, since it is already functioning with the full approval of the United States Government, and at present offers fertile fields for continued rescue work. The initial sum of \$100,000 was remitted in January of this year, and several messages were communicated to Mr. Isaac Sternbuch through the State Department. It is our intention to lend the fullest financial cooperation to this committee and we are ready to submit our application to the Board for a license to remit an additional sum. We await further advices from Mr. Sternbuch for the expansion of this rescue phase of the program.

Communication through Cable

At times the only possible means of contact with rescue Committees or individuals doing rescue work, would be through cable transmitted thru the State Department or diplomatic channels. We would therefore respectfully suggest that the War Refugee Board assist our attempts to establish contacts through the above medium, and facilitate the sending of such messages, which would at times be in code, but which would be made clear to the minutest detail to the Board.