

WAR REFUGEE BOARD, Volume 3
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55. Memorandum re: Principal Private Organizations Working With War Refugee Board
56. Memorandum to Gen. O'Dwyer from Miss Hodel 1/29/45, re: Brief Summary of Pending Projects and Operations of the Board
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63. Letter, 2/20/45, to Sec. of State, War and Navy, enclosing copy of memorandum re: Rescue & Relief Operations Approved at Bd. Meeting
64. Memorandum to Jonathan Daniels from Mr. O'Dwyer, enclosing Memorandum to the President, and Memorandum to Mr. Pehle. Also memorandum to Sec. of Treasury, State and War, enclosing copy of a memorandum to the President, and the Foreign Board.
65. Memorandum re: Meeting of Mr. Whitney's Office at 10:30 a.m. on 2/24/45, at 10:30 a.m. to discuss the Board's work for the War Refugee Board
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EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
WAR REFUGEE BOARD
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.



OFFICE OF THE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

September 15, 1945

The Honorable The Secretary of State
The Honorable The Secretary of the Treasury
The Honorable The Secretary of War

Sirs:

As Executive Director of the War Refugee Board, I have the honor to submit to you herewith my final summary report of the activities of the Board.

Respectfully,

William C. Dwyer

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FINAL SUMMARY REPORT

OF THE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, WAR REFUGEE BOARD

Washington -- September 15, 1945.

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INTRODUCTION

The Nazis, commencing in 1933, undertook a sinister campaign to exterminate the Jews and other minority groups under their control as a principal means toward the ultimate subjugation of the free peoples of the world. Waged with fury and calculated determination, this campaign reached unprecedented heights in 1943 when systematic mass murder in cold blood, mechanized atrocities, organized brutality and deliberate starvation were the order of the day for millions of innocent people in Nazi Europe. The conscience of democratic peoples everywhere was shocked and offended by such cold and thorough persecution of helpless peoples selected for death because of their race, religion or political belief.

The repulsion, abhorrence and anger aroused in Americans were manifested to the world when President Roosevelt, on January 22, 1944, established a special governmental agency, the War Refugee Board, to rescue as many as possible of these helpless victims, as an integral part of the total war against Nazi principles. The Executive Order creating the Board declared: "It is the policy of this Government to take all measures within its power to rescue the victims of enemy oppression who are in imminent danger of death and otherwise to afford such victims all possible relief and assistance consistent with the successful prosecution of the war." This extraordinary Order not only stated the Government's policy in unmistakable

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terms but provided the Board with the powers and the means necessary to carry it out. This report is a summary of how the Board translated the government's policy into action..

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THE BOARD, ITS FUNCTIONS AND STAFF

The Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Treasury, and the Secretary of War, the top-ranking Cabinet officers, were named the members of the Board, which was directly responsible to the President. High tribute is due Secretary Hull, Secretary Stettinius who succeeded Mr. Hull, Secretary Morgenthau and Secretary Stimson for the close personal attention they gave to the problems of the Board in the midst of their other arduous war duties.

The functions of the Board as prescribed by the President included without limitation "the development of plans and programs and the inauguration of effective measures for (a) the rescue, transportation, maintenance and relief of the victims of enemy oppression, and (b) the establishment of havens of temporary refuge for such victims." The Board was directed to enlist through appropriate channels the cooperation and participation of foreign governments and to cooperate with existing international refugee, relief and rescue organizations in the execution of such plans and programs.

The State, Treasury, and War Departments were directed to execute at the request of the Board such parts of the Board's plans, programs and measures falling within their respective spheres. All agencies and departments were directed to supply or obtain such information, assistance, and facilities as the Board might require in carrying out the provisions of the Order. The Board and the three

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departments named were further authorized to accept the services or contributions of private persons or organizations, state agencies, or the agencies of foreign governments in carrying out the purposes of the Order. The full text of the Board's charter is attached as an exhibit to this report.

Executive Director

John W. Pehle, Assistant to the Secretary of the Treasury and former Director of Treasury's Foreign Funds Control, was appointed Executive Director of the Board. He served most ably in this capacity until January 27, 1945, when he resigned to take charge of the Treasury's Procurement and Surplus Property Division. Under Mr. Pehle's brilliant guidance, the basic programs and policies were established that made possible the saving and protection of thousands of Nazi victims. Under my direction (since January 27, 1945), the basic existing policies and programs were continued to the fullest extent possible. It became my chief task, however, to meet the intensified emergencies that developed in the months immediately preceding the surrender of Germany.

Special Representatives Abroad

Promptly upon the formation of the Board, steps were taken to station Special Representatives of the Board in the strategic areas of Turkey, Switzerland, Sweden, Portugal, Great Britain, Italy and

North Africa. These representatives were accorded diplomatic status and designated as Special Attaches on war refugee matters to the respective United States Missions by the Department of State. War refugee matters in Spain and the Soviet Union were handled through the United States Embassies without special Board representation.

The Board's Special Representatives were not for the most part professional refugee relief workers. They were, however, men of outstanding competence who selflessly and devotedly tackled their difficult assignments of saving helpless people in the enemy's hands. The Board gave them extraordinary authority under the Trading with the enemy Act and instructed them to cut red tape and take bold action wherever necessary. They had the task of handling Board relations with the respective United States Missions in an unprecedented and delicate field. In a few cases, with the consent of the local Mission, they even had to deal directly with representatives of the enemy. The only medium of communication with Washington and other Board offices abroad was by cable. In the coordination and direction of the field operations of private agencies, the Board's representatives were obliged to distinguish between relief groups doing effective and honest work and those groups and individuals of dubious motives. In this difficult work, however, they were fortified by the strength of the full support they constantly received from the Board in Washington.

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Washington Staff

The Board operated with a small staff in Washington composed largely of highly-trained professional people including several refugee specialists. This small staff which never exceeded 30 persons was possible both because of the competence and deep interest of the personnel and because, as authorized in its Executive Order, the Board utilized to the extent possible the personnel, supplies, facilities and services of the State, Treasury and War Departments.

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COOPERATION WITH OTHER GOVERNMENTS AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

The Board from the outset made every effort to enlist the cooperation and participation of other governments and interested international organizations. All United States diplomatic officers abroad were instructed to aid in effectuating the Board's programs. They were directed to urge the governments to which they were accredited to lend every possible assistance to this Government's efforts to save the persecuted minorities in Nazi hands and to take affirmative action similar to that of the United States in creating a special War Refugee Board. Special instructions were sent to the United States Missions in neutral countries to urge those governments to accept all refugees who might succeed in reaching their borders and to make public that they would do so. At the same time, in order to facilitate acceptance of this proposal, the United States Government through the War Refugee Board assured the neutral governments that it would arrange for the maintenance of newly arrived refugees and for their evacuation to other places of safety as soon as possible. The cooperation and help of strategic neutral countries such as Switzerland, Sweden and Turkey were keystones in many of the Board's programs.

The Holy See and the Vatican hierarchy throughout Europe were solicited time and again for special assistance both as a channel.

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of communication to the leaders and people of enemy territory and as a means of rendering direct aid to the suffering victims of Hitler. The Catholic clergy saved and protected many thousands and the Vatican rendered invaluable assistance to the Board and to the persecuted in Nazi hands.

The principal international organizations concerned with the problems of refugee rescue, maintenance, transportation, relief, rehabilitation and resettlement were the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration and the International Committee of the Red Cross. The Intergovernmental Committee was founded in 1938, and included in its membership the United States, Great Britain, Russia, many of our other Allies and some of the neutral countries. The Committee's primary concern was the rehabilitation and resettlement of refugees, and it had found it difficult for political and other reasons to undertake any rescue and relief operations in enemy territory. Shortly after its creation, the Board invited Sir Herbert Emerson, the Committee's director, to come to Washington for consultation. During his visit an agreement concerning working relations between the two organizations was reached. The Board's efforts to save and bring relief to victims inside enemy territory were to be assisted to the extent possible by the Intergovernmental Committee and the latter was to be supported by the Board in any rescue work the Committee might decide to finance or undertake. The two

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organizations also agreed to keep each other advised of their respective programs and operations to prevent duplication and to ensure full support of programs requiring joint or cooperative effort. In addition, the Board obtained an allocation of \$2,000,000 from the President's Emergency Fund for payment to the Committee as the United States Government's share of the Committee's 1944 operational budget. The Committee spent the bulk of these funds for refugee relief operations in France, Hungary and Rumania, using the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee as its agent.

The Board asked for and obtained UNRRA help in connection with the finding of temporary shelters for rescued victims, for their transportation to such havens and their maintenance in transit. UNRRA camps in the Middle East, Italy and North Africa were prepared for the reception of thousands of rescued refugees from Yugoslavia, Italy and Spain.

The services of the neutral International Committee of the Red Cross were solicited and obtained chiefly for official Board relief deliveries inside enemy territory and as a channel of communication to Nazi officials and collaborators. The Board also appealed to the Committee time and time again to take direct and aggressive action to obtain humanitarian treatment for the helpless minorities being persecuted so viciously by the Germans. For many months, however, request after request from the Board met with the answer that the Germans would not permit the proposed action. During the final

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months of the war, the International Red Cross undertook negotiations with the Germans and finally obtained permission to station personnel in the principal German concentration centers. The Committee in these last months also delivered Board food parcels by the thousands on trucks provided by the Board and manned with Red Cross personnel.

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RELATIONS WITH PRIVATE AMERICAN RELIEF AGENCIES

The creation of the Board and the pronouncement of a firm national policy to save the persecuted minorities of Europe immediately placed the full force and prestige of the United States Government behind all efforts to save these innocent people. The established private American relief agencies concerned with refugee problems had for many years before the outbreak of war in Europe tried to save and bring relief to the victims of Nazi persecution. After hostilities commenced, the economic blockade of Europe and the prohibitions against trading or communicating with the enemy made it impossible for these agencies to continue to finance and carry out effective relief and rescue work inside German-controlled areas.

One of the most important functions of the War Refugee Board was to enable these private agencies fully to utilize their resources for rescue and relief work. They had seasoned personnel in the neutral countries, established contacts with underground and resistance workers in enemy territory, deep concern for the problem and quickly available funds. The Board requested all interested private organizations to submit plans and suggestions to the Board and to consult with and advise its staff concerning the development of techniques and programs. The response of the agencies was a

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magnanimous offer to help the Board in all possible ways. The work of the Board became a joint undertaking of government and private agencies and valuable time was gained by making immediate use of all readily available facilities. The Board operated where only a government could operate and the private agencies wherever they could.

The Board obtained for the private agencies governmental permission to send funds into enemy territory, governmental permission to communicate with persons in enemy territory, the help of United States diplomats in dealing with other governments, the use of government communication channels, and the guidance of government officials in developing and organizing programs of rescue and relief in enemy territory.

The private agencies, on their part, rendered invaluable and outstanding service to the Board in the development, financing and execution of plans and projects. No feasible program suffered for lack of funds, because of the generosity of the private agencies. The agencies which worked most closely with the Board were the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, the Vaad Hahatzala Emergency Committee of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis, the World Jewish Congress, the Jewish Labor Committee, the American Jewish Committee, the Emergency Committee to Save the Jewish People, the National Refugee Service, the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid

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Society, the Poale Zionist Organization, the American Friends Service Committee, the Unitarian Service Committee, the National Catholic Welfare Conference, the American Christian Committee for Refugees, the International Rescue and Relief Committee, the A. F. of L. Labor League for Human Rights, the CIO War Relief Committee and the American Relief for Norway. Other organizations too numerous to mention which were interested in the Board's programs made many helpful contributions.

Approximately \$20,000,000 in private funds was licensed by the United States Treasury Department for transfer abroad for private rescue and relief projects, which were coordinated and carried out under the guidance and control of the Board's representatives abroad. Over \$15,000,000 was provided by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, over \$1,000,000 by the Vaad Hahatzala Emergency Committee, and over \$300,000 by the World Jewish Congress.

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GOVERNMENT FUNDS FOR BOARD PURPOSES

The amount of government funds expended for all Board purposes was very small. Initially, arrangements were made with the Bureau of the Budget for the allocation from the President's Emergency Fund of \$1,000,000 for administrative and other expenses of the Board. The Board spent approximately \$465,000 of this amount, the balance being returnable to the President's Emergency Fund as unobligated during the period ending December 31, 1944, or unexpended funds returned from abroad.

In conformity with the provisions of the Russell Amendment requiring Congressional appropriations for the operation beyond one year of agencies created by Executive Order, the Board in December 1944 requested and was granted an allocation by the Congress of the sum of \$150,000 from the President's Emergency Fund, to finance its administration and operations for the last six months of the fiscal year 1945. From the unexpended balance of approximately \$68,000 of this appropriation, the Board sought and obtained in June 1945 permission from the Congress to use \$16,000 for expenses of liquidation in the fiscal year 1946.

The sums of \$1,068,750 and \$1,125,000 from the Congressional Appropriation for Foreign War Relief were directed by the President on September 12, 1944, and January 31, 1945, respectively, to be

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allocated for the purchase, packaging and shipping of War Refugee Board food parcels destined for civilian detainees in German concentration camps.

Private donations totaling \$101,374.00 were received by the government for War Refugee Board purposes. The largest donation of \$100,000 was made on January 27, 1944, by the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society, and contributions of over a thousand dollars were received from individuals. All of these contributions were used for Board projects and not for administrative expenses.

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PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS

The task of saving and bringing aid to innocent and helpless people in the hands of the enemy was complex, hazardous and difficult. The main obstacle which faced the Board was the adamant attitude of the enemy. The Nazis were determined to wipe out innocent minorities and did not regard them as being protected by any law, national or international. They would allow no consideration of conscience, decency or law to relax their grip on any of the peoples under their subjugation. Only considerations of the need for labor in the German war effort and possible advantage in retaining valuable hostages in case of defeat would govern the Nazis in allowing any of these people to live. Nevertheless, the Board, armed with the authority granted in its Executive Order, directly and forcefully attacked the problem within the framework of the successful prosecution of the United Nations war effort. Time was very short and the situation very extreme. The Board took the position from the beginning that precedent and red tape had to be eliminated and bold unprecedented action taken if any lives were to be saved.

The programs planned and developed by the Board were of four kinds. First, were the measures designed to save refugees from persecution and death by effecting their physical evacuation from

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enemy territory, by concealing them from the enemy, or by arranging for their extraordinary acquisition of the status of protected nationalities. Second, were the more widely aimed psychological measures which sought to influence the Hitlerite forces, particularly their subordinates and satellites, not to cooperate in the Nazi policy of persecution and extermination of minorities and in the atrocities against Jews and other civilians. Third, were the means by which the Board attempted to obtain better conditions for the deportees and detainees in German concentration camps and to sustain their lives until their ultimate rescue or liberation. Fourth, were the efforts made to find and establish temporary havens of refuge for those who could escape from enemy control.

1. Rescue

The operations planned and developed by the Board to pull victims out of enemy hands to the safe neutral areas contiguous to Nazi territory involved complex problems of planning, organization, coordination, negotiation and the use of unusual techniques. Full use had to be made of the resourcefulness, ingenuity and contacts of resistance groups and underground operators. Evacuation from German-controlled territory for specially marked victims was not possible on an official and open basis. Funds and supplies were sent in to trusted agents in enemy areas to hide refugees from the

Nazis, maintain and safeguard them and transport them through underground channels to safety. Lesser German officials were bribed. False identification papers were supplied. Food was provided families of the resistance groups who concealed and protected the refugees. Border officials were bribed to pass refugees. Exit and entrance visas were procured and transportation by boat or by rail was provided for evacuation to safe areas. Tens of thousands were rescued from the Nazis by these clandestine means.

The financing of rescue operations by means of funds transferred from the United States was made possible by an important change in policy of the Treasury and State Departments immediately prior to the establishment of the Board. It was decided that the United States Government, in view of military developments favoring the Allied armies and because of the compelling humanitarian considerations, would permit established private agencies to transfer funds from the United States to their representatives in neutral countries to finance the rescue of persecuted peoples under Nazi control. A basic Treasury Department license under the Trading with the enemy Act was devised to cover all such transfers. This license authorized the necessary communication with persons in enemy territory and the financing of rescue operations under specified controls and techniques designed to bring no financial benefit to the enemy. After the establishment of the Board all requests for licenses of this type were channeled through it and issued only upon its

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recommendation, ensuring coordination and government direction of all rescue programs.

The British Government formally objected to our government's new licensing policy taking the position that our licenses afforded the enemy an opportunity to acquire foreign exchange for use in the prosecution of the war. The United States State Department, with the concurrence of the Board and the Treasury Department, replied that our government had concluded that the saving of lives far outweighed any possible danger involved in permitting the enemy to acquire relatively insubstantial quantities of foreign exchange and that we intended to continue the licensing policy we had been pursuing for several months. As a matter of fact, the controls specified in our licenses with respect to the acquisition of local currencies for use in enemy territory were so tight that of the more than twenty million dollars transferred to neutral areas for Board projects only a trickle of free exchange seeped into enemy areas. Most of this went into the hands and private hoards of individual border guards. Throughout the existence of the Board no payment of ransom to the enemy was permitted to be made.

Rescue of Victims in the Balkans. When the Board was created in January 1944, a gateway of escape from the Balkans to Palestine through Turkey was technically open to a small number of refugees

fleeing the Germans. The routes of escape were by boat across the Black Sea from Rumania to Turkey and by rail through Bulgaria. The Board undertook to develop a steady flow of refugees over these routes through Turkey. To do this primarily required Turkish Government cooperation in the entrance and transit of refugees and British cooperation in their reception in Palestine. It also required the expansion and financing of underground operations in the Balkans and the use of indirect pressures to obtain exit from Rumania and Bulgaria.

The Board was fortunate to obtain for its representation in Turkey the services of Mr. Ira A. Hirschmann, a public-spirited New York businessman who had gone to Ankara early in January 1944 for the sole purpose of investigating the possibilities of rendering aid to Nazi victims in the Balkans. With the wholehearted cooperation and assistance of United States Ambassador Laurence A. Steinhardt, Mr. Hirschmann rendered outstanding and unusually successful service to the Board. He returned to the United States in September 1944 and was succeeded by his able assistant, Mr. Herbert Katzki who had spent many years in foreign refugee relief work.

The most serious bottleneck in opening the door of escape from the Balkans lay in the attitude and procedures of the Turkish Government. Representations were therefore made to that government for consent to admit into its territory all refugees from Axis areas who might reach the Turkish border. Assurances were given the Turkish Government that the Board would arrange for maintenance of

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refugees in Turkey as well as for their eventual removal to other places. At the urgent request of the Board's representative, the British Embassy in Ankara assured the Turkish Foreign Office that all Jewish refugees arriving in Turkey would be given Palestine immigration visas. The Turkish Government finally agreed to grant increased numbers of entrance and transit visas and transportation facilities, and generally to cooperate in this Government's program to rescue Nazi victims.

The Board succeeded in developing a sporadic flow of refugees through Turkey. Approximately 7,000 persons were brought out by boat across the Black Sea from Rumania or by rail through Bulgaria, then across Turkey to Palestine. The rescue operations were financed and carried out by private American and Palestinian agencies, under the direction of the Board's representative in Ankara. By far the largest number were rescued by the Jewish Agency for Palestine working with the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee. By means of established underground connections developed with infinite care and the discreet use of funds provided in large measure from America, refugees were collected, concealed from the Nazi-controlled Rumanian officials and placed on small vessels in the port of Constanza. Accommodations on small boats sailing the Black Sea without the protection of safe conducts from the belligerent powers were secured at exorbitant prices. Refugees willing to

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face any hazard to attain safe haven were herded by the hundreds on ships built to carry 20 to 50 passengers. The "Mefkura", carrying 300 refugees from Rumania, was tragically lost when it was sunk by enemy fire just off the Turkish shores.

The Board attempted to develop a supplemental large-scale legal operation. For many months it negotiated with the Turks for the chartering of seaworthy passenger vessels and finally succeeded after assuring the Turks (with the assistance of the War Shipping Administration) that the United States Government would replace any Turkish ship lost in the rescue operations. The Board also attempted to obtain safe conducts for these boats from the belligerent powers. All agreed except the Germans. The Nazis were adamant in refusing to grant safe conduct despite repeated approaches made on behalf of the Board through the governments of Sweden and Switzerland and the International Red Cross. None of the Board's ships ever sailed to rescue refugees.

Rescue from Rumania by sea was supplemented by rail evacuations through Bulgaria to Turkey. 1392 refugees were brought out to final safety in Palestine over this route. Exit permits were obtained through underground connections in Bulgaria and transit visas and facilities for train travel across Turkey from the Turkish Government.

539 refugees were able to escape from Greece by means of small fishing craft and other vessels plying the Aegean Sea to the

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Turkish coast, between January 1944 and February 1945. They were all sent on to Palestine.

Approximately 150,000 Jews had been deported in October 1941 from Bessarabia and Bucovina to Transnistria, a German-controlled area between the Dniester and Bug Rivers. They were housed in deplorable camps in a territory virtually destroyed in the course of the German-Russian fighting. Epidemics broke out and thousands died. At the time of the Board's creation, reports were received that some 50,000 Jews still alive in Transnistria were in the direct line of the retreating German armies. Despite the fact that the United States and Rumania were at war, the Board's representative in Ankara, with the approval of Ambassador Steinhardt, undertook direct negotiations with Alexander Cretzianu, the Rumanian Minister to Turkey, to induce the Rumanian Government to transfer these people from Transnistria to Rumania and later facilitate their emigration from Rumania. Rumania finally agreed, and late in March 1944, 48,000 Jews were moved from Transnistria to Rumania. Many of them, mostly children, were transferred with other refugees from Rumania to Palestine.

The Board's efforts to save the persecuted Jews in Hungary required the use of every resource and technique developed for the rescue of people in the hands of the enemy. Hungary, the last

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remaining refuge for Jews in Axis Europe, had an abnormal population of about one million Jews. When the German army overran Hungary in March 1944, all these Jews were in mortal danger. Reports soon came through of a wave of violent persecutions of the Jews in Hungary and the War Refugee Board geared its programs to the pressing emergency.

Direct rescue was difficult from Hungary which was surrounded by Nazi-controlled territory. Intense psychological pressures were therefore exerted on the authorities and people of Hungary. Strong warnings and condemnations were issued by the President, by the Congress, the Secretary of State, Archbishop Spellman and other prominent American Christians to the people of Hungary.

Appeals were made to the neutral governments to offer safe haven to Hungarian Jews and to inform the Nazis of their willingness to receive these suffering people. The governments of Sweden, Switzerland, Spain and Portugal were urged to issue protective citizenship to Jews in Hungary claiming family or business ties with those countries. Many thousands were granted such special neutral protection.

Raoul Wallenberg, a young Swedish businessman, volunteered to proceed to Hungary for the War Refugee Board to aid in the rescue and relief of the persecuted Jews. The Swedish Government granted him diplomatic status and stationed him in Budapest for the sole purpose of rendering protection to these people. The Board furnished

Wallenberg detailed plans of action, but made it clear that he could not act in Hungary as a representative of the Board. Wallenberg, supplied with funds from the Board and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, carried on a relentless campaign in Hungary in behalf of the Jews. He issued Swedish protective passports by the thousands and hired extra buildings as official Swedish quarters to house several hundred rabbis and communal leaders under the protection of the extraterritoriality which attached to such buildings. He constantly pressed the Hungarian authorities for better treatment of Jews and succeeded in having thousands brought back to Budapest from the forced labor marches. In all, approximately 20,000 Jews received the safety of Swedish protection in Hungary. As a measure of the devotion of Wallenberg and as proof of the risks involved in his activities, the Board received word on April 4, 1945, that he was missing. Despite repeated attempts to trace his whereabouts he was reported dead early in June 1945.

The many warnings and appeals addressed to the Hungarian authorities by the United States and other democratic peoples resulted in the Horthy puppet government sending a message in July 1944 through the medium of the International Red Cross to the Governments of the United States and Great Britain stating that Hungary was willing to permit the emigration of certain categories of Jews. This offer in effect said "we will permit Jews to leave Hungary if

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the United States and Great Britain will take care of them." It was publicly accepted by the United States and at our insistence by the British Government, but no Jews were ever formally released by the German-controlled Horthy government.

Despite the difficulties in effecting direct rescue from Hungary, unremitting efforts were made to assist underground rescue operations by developing avenues of escape and finding havens of refuge in neutral and Allied territories. In addition, funds from America were transferred to Hungary via Switzerland and Sweden to keep Jews in hiding, to sustain them pending rescue or liberation, and to finance the rescue work of resistance groups in Rumania and Slovakia. These groups helped thousands to escape from Hungary through underground channels. Rescues were also developed through Yugoslav Partisan territory which had well established contacts with underground workers in Hungary. The flow of refugees through this channel was accelerated as the result of Board negotiations with Marshal Tito's representatives and the Allied military authorities in Italy. Relief supplies were provided for the maintenance of refugees in Yugoslavia and arrangements were made for evacuation from Yugoslavia to Italy by boat or plane. Approximately 7,000 Jews were enabled to escape from Hungary by this route.

The Gestapo deported and killed the Jews in Hungary until the Russian armies defeated the Germans in that area. At that time there were only 100,000 Jews in all Hungary. Since the end of hostilities

in Europe, however, thousands of Jews have returned to Hungary, either from their hiding places or from German labor camps.

Rescue from Sweden. The Swedish public and governmental authorities had already taken many steps to help the suffering victims in German-controlled Europe. Almost 9,000 Jews had found haven in Sweden after escaping from Denmark in the fall of 1943. By January 1944 private Swedish relief agencies had succeeded in developing some effective relief operations in German-controlled areas, but not much in the way of rescue from those areas. The creation of the War Refugee Board met with instant response in Sweden.

As its representative in Sweden, the Board chose Mr. Iver C. Olsen, who in the fall of 1944 had been sent to Stockholm as Financial Attache of the American Legation. Under his competent direction, the Board undertook to plan, organize and carry out direct rescue operations from Sweden. Reliable and competent groups were organized and financed by the Board to undertake the rescue of oppressed peoples from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. These groups developed underground contacts, obtained boats, fuel and other supplies, competent crews, and forged identification papers for the hazardous rescue of people from the Baltic shores across the Baltic Sea to safety in Sweden. Approximately 1200 persons were brought to Sweden under this program which had many tragedies. One of the

Latvian rescue launches was captured by the Germans in September 1944, and its crew and 50 refugees taken to a German concentration camp. Of the total crew of 24 used in the rescues from Latvia, one third died or are missing. The Lithuanian program encountered the greatest losses. Its key operator was lost on the first trip to establish underground connections and develop the route of escape to Sweden by boat. Five rescue vessels were captured by the Germans and storms endangered others. Nevertheless, the operation continued and 135 Lithuanians were brought to Sweden. These Baltic rescue programs were stopped in October 1944 due to the Russian military advances in the Baltic areas.

The Board's efforts insofar as Finland was concerned were limited exclusively to bringing to safety in Sweden the stateless Jews in Finland who faced mortal danger from the Germans. Evacuation of 150 of these Finnish Jews was accomplished with the help of the Swedish Foreign Office and Swedish Mosaic Community.

Over 15,000 Norwegians were brought to Sweden across the northern Norwegian forests and by boat from Southern Norway. This project was planned and organized by the Board in cooperation with the sponsors of the project, the A. F. of L. Labor League for Human Rights and the CIO War Relief Committee. It was financed by the American Relief for Norway, Inc., from funds obtained from the National War Fund. The Board itself contributed \$50,000. The operations were carried out from Sweden by a group of highly competent

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Norwegian labor leaders working closely with the Board's representative in Stockholm. This project was one of the most successful rescue operations undertaken.

From Sweden, the Board also developed projects for the rescue of persecuted peoples from Denmark and northern Germany, particularly in the last months of the war. These schemes resulted in the evacuation to Sweden of approximately 7,000 persons.

Some of the Board's most productive steps to save the Jews in Hungary were initiated from Sweden. As for the destitute Jews of Bulgaria and Rumania, the Board provided urgently needed relief through Swedish contacts with religious leaders in those countries.

Rescue from Switzerland. At the time of the establishment of the Board in January 1944, approximately 70,000 refugees from the Nazis already had found sanctuary in Switzerland. Switzerland became the most important center of the Board's operations in Europe chiefly because it was contiguous to so much of Nazi-controlled territory. Most of the private American relief agencies, Christian and Jewish alike, concerned with refugee problems had representatives in Switzerland who were in contact with the underground and had established channels of communication to enemy territory. Furthermore, Switzerland was the most practical channel for the large sums of money necessary to support rescue and relief measures. Approximately \$17,000,000 in private funds were remitted to Switzerland to

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finance War Refugee Board programs from that country. The requisite Swiss franc exchange for these transfers was obtained by the private agencies from the United States Treasury Department.

For its representative in Switzerland, the most important Board position abroad, the Board appointed Roswell D. McClelland, representative in Switzerland of the American Friends Service Committee, on the recommendation of all the interested American relief agencies. Substantial funds provided by the Board, including \$250,000 received from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, were transferred to Mr. McClelland to be used at his discretion for emergency rescue and relief. Mr. McClelland's experience in refugee problems, his outstanding ability and selfless devotion to the cause of saving persecuted peoples were responsible in large measure for the success of the Board's operations in Switzerland.

The projects from Switzerland were designed to rescue or protect victims of Hitler's persecution in France, Germany, Italy, Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary. From the time of the Board's creation until VE-Day many thousands of refugees reached safety in Switzerland, the majority as a direct result of the rescue programs organized and instituted by the Board.

The Board and the cooperating private agencies also undertook measures to protect and safeguard those victims who could not escape from enemy territory. Approximately 8,000 orphaned Jewish

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children were kept alive in France by means of American funds sent from Switzerland. These children for the most part were hidden in convents, schools, and private homes by compassionate Christian families. Some of the funds were used to bribe lesser officials and local authorities to prevent deportation of the children to Poland.

Through various French resistance groups the Board's representative aided many persons victimized by the Gestapo in France. Relief supplies were sent to persons imprisoned by the Germans, Jews in danger of deportation were kept in hiding, false papers and ration cards were secured and thousands were passed over the border into Switzerland. French underground workers and their families whose own needs were great were furnished relief to ensure their continued assistance in these hazardous operations. Tens of thousands of Spanish Republican refugees, confined since 1939 to wretched existence in southwestern France, received funds and relief supplies from the Board's representative in Switzerland; some of them were enabled to escape over the Pyrenees into Spain.

Jews and other persecuted groups in northern Italy also received substantial assistance from the Board's representative in Bern. Through Italian resistance groups and religious leaders, large sums were made available for the concealment, maintenance and escape of thousands of endangered minorities.

A large part of the Board's work to save the Jews of Hungary

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was channeled through its representative in Bern, as close to Hungary as it was possible for an American mission to be at that time. Preventative pressures exercised through diplomatic channels and by means of propaganda measures were the principal techniques utilized by the Board in Switzerland. Direct formal warnings to the Hungarian Government and people from the Government of the United States were transmitted through Switzerland. The Swiss Government and the International Red Cross were urged to do their utmost to render assistance to the Hungarian Jews. Protestant and Catholic church groups in Switzerland were regularly supplied with detailed information concerning the inhuman persecutions in Hungary and were urged to press the Swiss Government to do all in its power to alleviate the sufferings of Hungarian Jews.

In Switzerland the Board also aided direct rescue from Hungary. Avenues of escape were planned and vital communication channels were kept open for many critical months by the discreet use of Board funds. Responsible agencies and resistance groups in Hungary, Slovakia, Rumania and Austria were sent substantial financial grants from Switzerland by the Board and the private American agencies. This was a flexible and useful means of rendering rapid relief. These funds enabled many emergency rescue operations undertaken by Jewish organizations in Hungary to save their people from deportation to German labor camps or extermination centers in Poland. These funds were also used to purchase food supplies in

Rumania, medicines and condensed milk in Switzerland, and to pay for steamer passages to Palestine via Turkey for Jewish refugees in Rumania, hundreds of whom escaped from Hungary.

One of the most successful of the measures developed to save victims of enemy oppression who could not escape was the program to protect Jews in Axis territory claiming Latin American nationality or close relationship to United States citizens or residents. The Board's office in Switzerland was the main center for this extraordinary program.

The Jews remaining in Hitler Europe had been deprived of their various European citizenships by Nazi decree and were therefore stateless in the eyes of the Germans. Many of these "stateless" Jews in Nazi hands had been able to obtain identification papers or passports for entry into various Latin American countries. For the most part, these documents were reported to have been bought from Latin American government officials stationed abroad. Accordingly, they were not recognized by the respective governments. The Board undertook to obtain such recognition and in turn protective treatment by the Germans for the Jews holding these documents.

It was known that the Nazis were desirous of repatriating several thousand Germans held by the belligerent powers in the Western Hemisphere. It was felt that the Jews in Europe claiming Latin American nationality might obtain protection from the Germans

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if such Jews were regarded by the Germans as potential exchange material for the Germans interned in the Western Hemisphere. The United States State Department, urged by the Board, finally obtained agreement from the Latin American governments involved to accord their protection to persons in enemy territory holding documents issued in the names of their respective governments, at least as long as the document holders remained in enemy hands. The Latin American governments informed the Germans, through appropriate channels, that these persons were recognized by them as exchangeable. The names of thousands of such document holders were assembled by the Board with the assistance of several private relief agencies and sent to Switzerland and Sweden for transmission to the Germans. Many thousands of Jews were spared deportation and certain death solely by virtue of their Latin American documents and exchange status. The last German-American exchange occurred in February 1945 when approximately 140 persons in this category came out of Germany and were taken to an UNRRA camp in North Africa to await ultimate resettlement.

The United States Government in March 1944 arranged for 5,000 United States immigration visas to be issued to children arriving in Switzerland, Spain and Portugal after January 1, 1944, and for the periodic renewal of such visas until transportation to the United States should become available. This was done to encourage the neutral countries to permit the entry of larger numbers of

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child refugees from France, and later from Hungary. Later, steps were taken to obtain the protected status of United States nationals for persons in enemy control for whom United States immigration visas had been issued or authorized on or after July 1, 1941, and who had been prevented by the war from using such visas. This action was shortly extended to persons in enemy control who were eligible by their close relationship to United States citizens or resident aliens for preference or non-quota visas for the United States. Through the Swiss Government, the Germans were notified that persons in these two categories were entitled to qualify for United States immigration visas upon arrival in a neutral country and therefore were regarded as exchangeable by the United States. The names of several thousand persons in these categories were assembled by the Board and transmitted to the Germans through the Governments of Switzerland and Sweden. The testimony of many who survived until liberated by the Allied armies bears witness to the fact that thousands were saved from deportation for labor service and from other Nazi persecution measures as a result of this program.

During the final months of the war in Europe, rescue activities from Switzerland continued in spite of the physical difficulties created by the chaotic conditions which had developed inside Germany. Early in April 1945, 1400 detainees, largely French women and children including some Jews, were brought to Switzerland from the

terrible camps of Ravensbruck and Mauthausen in returning International Red Cross truck convoys. Several thousand anti-Nazis from northern Italy, including many Jews, were enabled through the Board's efforts to escape to Switzerland during this final period of the war.

Rescue from Spain and Portugal. One of the first avenues of escape which the Board attempted to develop was from France to the Iberian Peninsula. Some underground operations had been established for the escape of small numbers of refugees across the Pyrenees into Spain and the Board hoped that these could be developed into a steady flow. The Board with the assistance of the State Department attempted for many months to convince the American Embassy in Madrid of the desirability of stationing a War Refugee Board representative in Spain to develop and work out various plans of rescue from France into Spain which had been devised in Washington. The Embassy took the position that little effective rescue work could be done through Spain and that what little could be done was being effectively handled by the private agencies in Spain. The Embassy also questioned the advisability of permitting rescue activities to be carried on under the terms of the licenses issued by the United States Treasury Department to the private American agencies ready and willing to increase their operations from Spain.

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The failure to develop an early flow of refugees through the Iberian Peninsula caused considerable concern to the Board in Washington. Accordingly, in May 1944 Mr. James H. Mann, an Assistant Executive Director, was sent on a special mission to Portugal and Spain to investigate this distressing situation. (Mr. Mann later was sent to London as the Board's Special Representative where he handled relations with the British Government and coordinated the rescue work from England of the interested private agencies). Following discussions with Mr. Mann, our Embassy in Madrid agreed to press the Spanish Government for its needed cooperation and to station a Board representative in Madrid. Unfortunately, by this time the war had reached such a stage that large-scale rescues from France were impractical or impossible.

To strengthen its position vis-a-vis the Spanish Government, the United States, through the War Refugee Board, pressed for and obtained the removal from Spain to Camp Lyautey in Casablanca of approximately 630 refugees who had been in Spain for some time. Their continued presence in Spain had been used as an argument by the Spanish Government against admitting additional refugees from German-occupied territory.

There were several hundred Sephardic Jews in Europe claiming Spanish nationality. Their main chance of survival rested with formal Spanish recognition of their claims. The Board finally

succeeded in getting the Spanish Government to recognize these persons as Spanish nationals and to grant them Spanish protection while they remained in German hands. Notification of this fact to the Germans operated to save most of these people from death or deportation to labor camps.

To prepare for the eventuality of numbers of refugees coming to Portugal through Spain, the Board sent Dr. Robert C. Dexter of the Unitarian Service Committee to Lisbon as its representative for Portugal. He rendered helpful service to the private agencies operating in Portugal and handled Board relations with the Portuguese Government and the British Embassy in London.

Portugal agreed to receive refugees coming through Spain upon our Government's assurance that they would be evacuated to other places of safety. Very few refugees, however, ever arrived in Portugal from Spain.

The Board succeeded in obtaining the consent of the Portuguese Government to recognize several hundred Jews in German territory claiming former Portuguese citizenship or relationship to Portuguese nationals. Portugal was an important center for the dissemination of many of the Board's psychological pressure programs; it had available channels of communication to enemy territory, particularly to the satellite countries.

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Special Negotiations for the Release of Jews from the Nazis.

With the defection in Nazi ranks evidenced by the attack on Hitler's life and the mounting successes of the Allied armies in the spring and summer of 1944, the Gestapo showed signs of shifting their interest from the biological aspects of Jewish extermination to the purely military benefits in labor, goods, and money which could be derived from the Jews in their hands. Some German officials, frightened by world reaction to the persecution of Jews in Hungary and by the rapid deterioration of the German military situation, hoped to gain a measure of personal protection through better treatment of Jewish hostages under their control.

These attitudes were typified by a series of German-inspired proposals which came to the attention of the Board commencing in May 1944. The first German proposal was brought out of Hungary by Joel Brandt, a member of the Budapest Jewish Community, who was flown to Istanbul on a German courier plane. He brought with him a German offer to halt the deportations and extermination of the Jews in Hungary in return for 200 tons of tea, 800 tons of coffee, 2 million cakes of soap, and 10,000 trucks. The Board's representative in Turkey, Ira A. Hirschmann, participated in the talks with Brandt with the approval of the Board and the State and War Departments. Brandt revealed during the discussions that the Germans would be willing to agree that the 10,000 trucks would be used only

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on the "Eastern front." The nature of the offer indicated that the Germans were attempting to use the Jews in their hands not only as pawns for possible economic and personal benefit but also as a means to create dissension between the United States and Great Britain, and Russia. The offer was, of course, rejected and the Russian Government fully advised.

There followed overtures by the German authorities through Portugal, Switzerland and Sweden for the discussion of terms for the release of Jews in Nazi hands. The proposal received in Lisbon suggested that discussions be conducted with a representative of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee. The United States Government refused to permit any discussions involving an American citizen. The Germans then attempted to initiate negotiations with Saly Mayer, a Swiss citizen, leader of the Swiss Jewish Community and representative in Switzerland of the Joint Distribution Committee. As proof of their good faith, the Germans agreed to deliver a convoy of 500 Jewish internees from the concentration camp at Bergen-Belsen to Switzerland and to cease deportations from Hungary. The German negotiators were headed by the S.S. commercial representative for Hungary, Kurt Becher, who claimed to be close to Himmler and the notorious Karl Eichmann charged with deporting Jews from Hungary. In view of the rapidly changing military situation and the consideration that any time

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gained might operate in favor of the endangered Jews in Nazi hands, the War Refugee Board, with the approval of the State Department, agreed to interpose no objection to a meeting taking place between Saly Mayer and the Gestapo authorities. The Board made it clear, however, that ransom transactions could not be entered into or authorized by the United States Government and it specified that Saly Mayer could only participate as a Swiss citizen and not as a representative of any American organization.

There followed a protracted series of meetings between Saly Mayer and the German representatives, with the full knowledge of the Board and the State Department. The British and Russian Governments also were kept advised. Through the ingenuity and perseverance of Saly Mayer, every imaginable dilatory tactic was employed and the talks continued for month after month. Mayer finally succeeded in shifting from discussions of ransom to the consideration of his proposal that if the Germans would cease exterminations he would arrange for relief supplies to be sent into Germany through the International Red Cross to keep the Jews alive. The Mayer proposal was purposely so vague that clarification of its terms had not yet been completed when the hostilities in Europe ceased.

At one stage in the negotiations, the Board with the concurrence of the State, War and Treasury Departments permitted the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee to transfer five million dollars

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to a special restricted account in Switzerland solely in order that Saly Mayer have something tangible with which to hold open the negotiations and for the gaining of more precious time. No payments were ever made from the account and the fund was returned to the Joint Distribution Committee at the close of the war.

In addition to obtaining invaluable first-hand information, concerning the progress and plans of Nazi treatment of Jews, there were other more tangible results during the course of the protracted discussions between Saly Mayer and Becher. Two groups of Jews from Hungary totaling 1673 persons were brought to Switzerland from the concentration camp at Bergen-Belsen as a token of good faith on the part of the German negotiators. The deportation to Auschwitz of upwards of 200,000 Jews remaining in Budapest in August 1944 was cancelled, and transports of some 17,000 Hungarian Jews headed for Auschwitz were diverted to Austria. Tacit S.S. agreement was obtained to permit the International Red Cross in Budapest to shelter 3,000 Jewish children, and facilities were obtained for the procurement and distribution of foodstuffs and clothing to some 7,000 Jews in labor camps in the Vienna region. In April 1945, 69 prominent Jews from Slovakia and Hungary reached Switzerland.

A second series of meetings between high Nazi circles and a Swiss citizen for the release of Jewish deportees came to the attention of the Board in December 1944. The negotiations were

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conducted in Germany by Jean-Marie Musy, a former Swiss Federal Counselor, with Himmler and other high S.S. officers. Whatever his motives, Musy, who claimed to be an old personal friend of Himmler, succeeded in obtaining the release to Switzerland of 1200 Jews from the Theresienstadt concentration camp in early February 1945. Shortly before the arrival of these refugees in Switzerland, Musy had approached Isaac Sternbuch, Swiss representative of the American Vaad Hahatzala Emergency Committee, whom Musy had kept advised of his dealings with the Nazis, for a payment of one million dollars. Sternbuch cabled his organization in the United States urging that this sum be transferred to Switzerland at once, stating that the German release of additional convoys of Jews depended upon the receipt of this sum by Musy. The Vaad Hahatzala Emergency Committee, after having arranged to borrow the million dollars from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, immediately requested the Board to recommend that the United States Treasury issue the necessary license permitting the transfer as specified by Sternbuch. A special meeting of the members of the Board was called to consider the matter. The Board unanimously decided that under no circumstances would it authorize the payment of ransom which might result from payment of the sum to Musy. However, since the mere presence of the money in Switzerland might serve to continue the negotiations, the Board agreed to recommend

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that the Treasury issue a license permitting the Vaad Hahatzala to transfer the sum to a joint account in the names of Sternbuch and the Board's representative in Bern, Roswell D. McClelland, and providing that no payments be permitted from the account except as authorized by the Board. The Treasury issued such a license and the transfer was made in early March 1945. The fund was kept intact for the remainder of the war except for a small payment authorized for relief supplies and the maintenance of refugees. The unexpended balance of this fund was returned after hostilities ceased to the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.

Various German proposals concerning the Jews came through Sweden commencing in June 1944. The first approaches were indirect and informal. They were made in discussions with the Board's Stockholm representative, who participated with the knowledge and consent of the United States Minister, the Department of State and the Board. As in Switzerland, these discussions in Sweden purposely were protracted for the sole purpose of gaining time for the Jews remaining in German hands. The German offers at first contained specific ransom proposals and later shifted to humanitarian considerations. The talks in Sweden were conducted by Germans claiming to be close to Ribbentrop, Himmler and other high Nazi officials. In March and April 1945, the presence of the

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German representatives in Sweden and their participation in special discussions leaked out to the press. This resulted in a series of rumors that German peace offers had been received in Sweden. Although the discussions were limited to the question of the treatment of Jews and prisoners of war in Nazi hands, the final German offers had clear marks of surrender feelers.

As a result of these talks in Sweden and contacts established by the Swedish section of the World Jewish Congress, a member of the Swedish Mosaic community flew to Berlin for a meeting with Himmler on April 21, 1945, to discuss the Jewish question. In reporting this incident the Board's Stockholm representative commented:

"Himmler arrived at the meeting at 2:30 a.m. on April 21, having just driven 80 km. from Hitler's birthday party. Probably no more bizarre scene could be staged to record Himmler's unconditional surrender to world opinion -- a two hour drive through wrecked German roads and a conference until dawn with a Jew from Stockholm."

Immediately following this meeting, a few thousand Jewish internees were released from the concentration camp at Ravensbruck, Germany, and transported to Sweden by the Swedish Red Cross. This was another last-minute gesture on the part of German officials who hoped to gain more favorable treatment for themselves from the Allies.

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2. Psychological Warfare

From the beginning it was the opinion of the Board that one of the best, if not the best, means of saving large numbers of victims of enemy oppression from death lay in the possibility of changing the actions and attitudes of the enemy, particularly of Axis satellites, functionaries, and subordinates. Accordingly, an essential feature of its program was the development and use of psychological pressures to convince the governments and people of Germany and the satellite countries that this Government and the other United Nations viewed most seriously the persecutions inflicted by the enemy and were determined to see to it that those responsible would be punished.

When the Board came into existence, it was already apparent that Allied military successes were causing the Nazi collaborators outside Germany to waiver and to fear their fate following Allied victory. The Board commenced at once an organized and concentrated effort to make clear to the Axis satellites the attitude of the United States Government concerning continued collaboration with Hitler's extermination program and to impress upon these satellites their opportunities for assisting in our Government's policy to save the persecuted minorities. Official warnings of this kind were repeatedly conveyed to the Bulgarian, Rumanian and Hungarian governments through Swiss, Swedish, Irish and Portuguese channels and through the Vatican.

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Special direct pressures of a diplomatic nature were also exerted on Axis satellites. In Turkey, the Board's representative, Ira A. Hirschmann, with the approval and assistance of Ambassador Steinhardt, undertook direct negotiations with the Rumanian and Bulgarian Ministers in Turkey for the repeal of anti-Jewish laws and persecution measures then in effect in those countries. In the course of these lengthy discussions, the full force of this Government's attitude toward the persecution of minorities and of the approaching Allied victory was brought to bear upon the Rumanian and Bulgarian diplomats. They eventually agreed to recommend that their respective governments take the nullifying action requested. In Sweden, the Board's representative pressed the Rumanian and Bulgarian Ministers by indirect and unofficial means to urge their governments to cooperate with our efforts to save Jews and similar groups. Bulgaria and Rumania finally in the fall of 1944 abrogated the most notorious of their discriminatory statutes.

The Board made repeated appeals to the International Red Cross, the Vatican and all the European neutrals to enlarge their representations in German-controlled territory on the theory that the presence of foreigners on the spot might have a deterrent effect on

the Nazis and collaborating satellite officials. The requested action was taken by Sweden and the Vatican and later by Switzerland and the International Red Cross. In Hungary and later in Germany the mere presence of these neutral officials and the protective visits made by them helped to save many from death or deportation.

Special efforts were made in the closing months of the war in Europe to exert psychological pressures on the individual concentration camp commanders and lesser officials of the Nazi hierarchy, who were beginning in isolated cases to show signs of being willing to ignore instructions from Berlin. The International Red Cross and the neutral governments were urged to take full advantage of this situation. In addition, the Office of War Information was requested to make a special effort to reach these faltering Nazis in broadcasts and pamphlet appeals.

The most important aspect of the Board's psychological pressure program was its direct and aggressive campaign to convince the Nazis and those under their control of the determination of the United States Government to save minority groups and to punish all those responsible for their persecution. The decision to issue formal and official warnings of any kind to the enemy rested, of course, with the highest war authority. It was the Board's duty, however, continuously to draft and press for warnings against misuse and destruction of enemy persecuted minorities in order that constant

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consideration would be given by the highest war authority to the tactical desirability of issuing such warnings as a part of the over-all Allied psychological warfare program. The record shows that many warnings were issued as the result of the Board's unremitting efforts.

Shortly before the Board was established, the Moscow Declaration of November 1943 on the punishment of atrocities had been issued, but this declaration did not specifically refer to the Nazi atrocities against the Jews. The Board felt that a new declaration mentioning the Nazi treatment of Jews issued at a time when the enemy was beginning to realize that the war had been lost had great potentialities for convincing Hitler and his cohorts of the Allied attitude on their treatment of these people. Such a statement was prepared. It was issued by President Roosevelt on March 24, 1944, as follows:

"The United Nations are fighting to make a world in which tyranny and aggression can not exist; a world based upon freedom, equality and justice; a world in which all persons regardless of race, color or creed may live in peace, honor and dignity.

"In the meantime in most of Europe and in parts of Asia the systematic torture and murder of civilians -- men, women and children -- by the Nazis and the Japanese continue unabated. In areas subjugated by the aggressors innocent Poles, Czechs, Norwegians, Dutch, Danes, French, Greeks, Russians, Chinese, Filipinos -- and many others -- are being starved or frozen to death or murdered in cold blood in a campaign of savagery.

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"The slaughters of Warsaw, Lidice, Kharkov and Nanking -- the brutal torture and murder by the Japanese, not only of civilians but of our own gallant American soldiers and fliers -- these are startling examples of what goes on day by day, year in and year out, wherever the Nazis and the Japs are in military control -- free to follow their barbaric purpose.

"In one of the blackest crimes of all history -- begun by the Nazis in the day of peace and multiplied by them a hundred times in time of war -- the wholesale systematic murder of the Jews of Europe goes on unabated every hour. As a result of the events of the last few days hundreds of thousands of Jews, who while living under persecution have at least found a haven from death in Hungary and the Balkans, are now threatened with annihilation as Hitler's forces descend more heavily upon these lands. That these innocent people, who have already survived a decade of Hitler's fury, should perish on the very eve of triumph over the barbarism which their persecution symbolizes, would be a major tragedy.

"It is therefore fitting that we should again proclaim our determination that none who participate in these acts of savagery shall go unpunished. The United Nations have made it clear that they will pursue the guilty and deliver them up in order that Justice be done. That warning applies not only to the leaders but also to their functionaries and subordinates in Germany and in the satellite countries. All who knowingly take part in the deportation of Jews to their death in Poland or Norwegians and French to their death in Germany are equally guilty with the executioner. All who share the guilt shall share the punishment.

"Hitler is committing these crimes against humanity in the name of the German people. I ask every German and every man everywhere under Nazi domination to show the world by his action that in his heart he does not share these insane criminal desires. Let him hide these pursued victims, help them to get over their borders, and do what he can to save them from the Nazi hangman. I ask him also to keep watch, and to record the evidence that will one day be used to convict the guilty.

"In the meantime, and until the victory that is now assured is won, the United States will persevere in its efforts to rescue the victims of brutality of the Nazis and the Japs. In so far as the necessity of military operations permit this Government will use all means at its command to aid the escape of all

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intended victims of the Nazi and Jap executioner -- regardless of race or religion or color. We call upon the free peoples of Europe and Asia temporarily to open their frontiers to all victims of oppression. We shall find havens of refuge for them, and we shall find the means for their maintenance and support until the tyrant is driven from their homelands and they may return.

"In the name of justice and humanity let all freedom loving people rally to this righteous undertaking."

The widest possible distribution was obtained for this statement. It was relayed to the people and authorities of the German and satellite governments through neutral radio, Office of War Information foreign language broadcasts, European pulpits, underground channels, neutral diplomatic pouches, and even by Allied planes. The Board's representatives abroad also arranged for the statement to be printed in the neutral press which circulated inside Germany.

Shortly afterward, Mr. Anthony Eden, the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, made a strong declaration in the House of Commons on behalf of the British Government in which he stated:

"Evidence continues to reach His Majesty's Government, and I understand, Allied Governments that the Nazi policy of extermination has not been halted. The persecution of the Jews has in particular been of unexampled horror and intensity. On this His Majesty's Government in common with their Allies, now that the hour of Germany's defeat grows ever nearer and more certain, can only repeat their detestation of Germany's crimes and their determination that all those guilty of them shall be brought to Justice. But apart from direct guilt there is still indirect participation in crime. Satellite governments who expel citizens to destinations named by Berlin must know that such actions are tantamount to assisting in inhuman

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persecution and slaughter. This will not be forgotten when the inevitable defeat of the arch enemy of Europe comes about."

Intense psychological warfare was undertaken by the Board in its efforts to save the Jews of Hungary. Arrangements were made for warnings to the Germans to be carried by Office of War Information transmitters in their foreign broadcasts. The British Broadcasting Company at the Board's request also made such broadcasts to Hungary. The Soviet and British governments were urged to use their influence and communication facilities to impress upon the Hungarian Government the desirability of resisting German demands for deportation and persecutions of minority groups.

In May 1944, a statement was addressed to President Roosevelt and to other Allied governments by a group of 73 prominent Christian Americans headed by the late Alfred E. Smith expressing indignation at the Nazi atrocities in Hungary and requesting that all possible measures be taken to protect the Jews. This statement for which the Board arranged wide distribution throughout the world declared:

"***** it is our belief that the people marked for death must be informed that they have friends among the free nations of the world. By word and by concrete act, the American people and their allies must let them know that there are hearts that understand their sufferings and hands that are eager to help them. If they are convinced that the free and democratic peoples recognize them as brothers under God, it will give them hope and the courage to use every means within reach to escape Hitler's torture chambers and death traps."

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A stirring statement addressed to the people of Hungary was issued on May 31, 1944, by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, condemning the persecution of Jews in Hungary and imploring that every means possible be used to protect their lives. This statement was similarly publicized throughout the world.

Archbishop Spellman of New York in an unprecedented move issued a strong statement inspired by the Board for dissemination in Hungary. It was shortwaved by the Office of War Information, widely covered by neutral European stations and the clandestine press, was read from all Catholic pulpits in Switzerland, and dropped from the air over Hungary. It read as follows:

"This announcement [of Hungary's adoption of discriminatory laws against the Jewish people] has shocked all men and women who cherish a sense of justice and of human sympathy. It is in direct contradiction of the doctrines of the Catholic Faith professed by the vast majority of Hungarian people. It is a negation of the noblest pages of Hungarian history and cultural tradition

"It seems incredible, therefore, that a nation which has been so consistently true to the impulses of human kindness and the teachings of the Catholic Church should now yield to a false, pagan code of tyranny because of blood and race. How can men of good will fail to heed those solemn words of Pope Pius XI: 'Abraham is called our patriarch, our ancestor. Anti-semitism is not compatible with the sublime reality of this text. It is a movement in which we Christians cannot share. Spiritually we are Semites.'

"One of the great lessons to be learned from the life of Hungary's king and Patron Saint is that no minority should be oppressed. For injustices of whatever kind can wreck and destroy the integrity of any nation's life.

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"Nearly a thousand years ago, St. Stephen, King of Hungary, received his crown from Pope Sylvester II. He realized that Hungary was destined by the very exigencies of geography to be the crossroads of Europe where diverse racial stocks would necessarily meet. St. Stephen pledged himself and his people to live as common children of a loving mother country.

"The same saintly national hero dreamed always of Hungary as a 'regnum Marianum' as a realm of Mary. To this day, the coinage and the postage stamps of the country bear the figure of Mary, the Mother of Mankind. It would be all the more tragic, therefore, if a people so devoted to Mary, the Jewish Maiden who was the Mother of the Messiah, should freely countenance cruel laws calculated to despoil and annihilate the race from which Jesus and Mary sprang.

"It is incredible that a people with such profound Christian faith, with its glorious history, with the oldest parliamentary tradition on the Continent, would join in a hymn of hatred and willingly submit to the blood lust and brigandage of tyranny.

"No man can love God and hate his brother. No one who hates his brother can be a faithful follower of the gentle Christ."

Members of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, following the appearance of the Board's Executive Director in executive session, issued a statement addressed to all Nazi-controlled territories but to Hungary in particular concerning the treatment of helpless minorities in their midst. This resolution was widely publicized throughout Europe.

In June and July 1944, Secretary of State Cordell Hull issued strong denunciations of the threatened extermination of the Jews in Hungary, and in October 1944, Governor Thomas E. Dewey of New York, Republican candidate for the Presidency, issued a forthright

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condemnation of Nazi atrocities. These were given widest possible dissemination to leave no doubt as to the solidarity of the American people on this question.

The steady progress of the Allied armies caused apprehension for the fate of Jews and other civilians remaining in Nazi hands. A last-minute orgy of persecutions was anticipated. In the belief that a warning by military authorities would carry more weight than a pronouncement which might be interpreted as a political gesture, the Board drafted a statement for issuance by General Eisenhower. This statement was issued by him on November 7, 1944, as follows:

"Germans! You have in your midst a great many men in concentration camps and forced labor battalions.

"Germans! Do not obey any orders, regardless of their source, urging you to molest, harm or persecute them, no matter what their religion or nationality may be.

"The Allies, whose armies have already established a firm foothold in Germany, expect, on their advance, to find these people alive and unharmed. Heavy punishment awaits those who, directly or indirectly, and to whatever extent, bear any responsibility for the mistreatment of these people.

"May this serve as a warning to whoever at present has the power to issue orders."

As Allied troops overran more and more German territory, there were indications that, under the chaotic conditions prevailing in Germany, exterminations might be carried out not only by the Nazi hierarchy, but by roving bands of terrorists or by individual Germans.

The Board therefore urged the State Department early in April 1945 to give serious and immediate consideration to the issuance by the United States Government of a new warning addressed to all groups and individuals in Germany, stating that our Government considered such acts as death caused by starvation and neglect the same as murder in cold blood and punishable as war crimes. On April 23, 1945, such a statement was issued by the Governments of the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union, warning that any German guilty of maltreating detainees or prisoners of war would be "ruthlessly pursued and brought to punishment." This was the strongest and last formal threat issued by the Allies before the military collapse of the Germans on May 8, 1945.

3. Relief

The Nazi plan to wipe out all traces of "inferior" races included killing by starvation and deliberate neglect as well as by other direct means. It was therefore the Board's duty to take vigorous steps to get food and other relief supplies to the starving inmates of German concentration camps. This was a difficult task. It was the established policy of the British-American blockade authorities to permit no food shipments through the blockade to enemy territory other than for prisoners of war and interned civilians of belligerent nations who were recognized as assimilated.

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prisoners by the Geneva Prisoner of War Convention. This Convention contained guarantees of food parcel deliveries to prisoners of war and regular visitations and reports by International Red Cross personnel on the numbers and conditions of prisoners. The Germans would not regard the Geneva Convention as applying to racial deportees or political prisoners who were nationals of countries under German control.

Since assimilation to the status of prisoners of war would have obtained the greatest amount of relief and protection for these internees, the Board undertook to obtain German agreement to accord such status to them. The Board repeatedly submitted its proposal to the Germans through the Vatican, the neutral governments and the International Red Cross. The Nazis, however, presented a stonewall of refusal to such requests. The Jews and political detainees in German hands remained "unassimilated" throughout the war.

A few months before the Board was set up, private American relief agencies had obtained permission to send small quantities of food parcels from neutral areas to specifically named unassimilated internees in German concentration camps, a slight relaxation of the strict policy of the Allied blockade authorities concerning relief shipments to enemy territory. The Board made possible the expansion

of these private programs and the initiation of new ones by obtaining broader licenses and blockade clearances. The food supplies for these programs came solely from neutral countries, and delivery was effected through the International Red Cross.

The War Refugee Board set up a program to supplement these private relief projects for the shipment of food packages from the United States, financed from emergency funds of the President. The British-American blockade authorities at the Board's insistence finally granted the necessary blockade permission in July 1944. For the first time, food could be sent from the United States to the starving inmates of German concentration camps. Through the services of the American Red Cross 300,000 packages were assembled and shipped in October and November of 1944 by the Board to the International Red Cross, which stocked them in Goteberg, Sweden, and Geneva, Switzerland. Deliveries to the concentration camps under the supervision of the International Red Cross were slow. Only 40,000 of these parcels had gone forward to enemy territory by February 1945 owing to the disruption of transportation facilities and the generally chaotic conditions that had developed inside Germany by December 1944.

At that time, the Board received information that the Germans were finding it easier to kill more and more of their victims by starvation and deliberate neglect. At this juncture, the Executive

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Director went before the Board and presented recommendations for a program of accelerated relief deliveries to German concentration camps and of rescue of the physically unfit to safety in Switzerland. The program for an all-out life-saving effort was approved immediately by the Secretaries of State, Treasury and War.

Steps were taken at once to get the Board's food parcels to the oppressed civilian detainees still in enemy hands. Trucks, gasoline, and tires had to be obtained. Trucks were found available in Switzerland, but there was no gasoline or tires to operate them. The Board then turned to the War Department for help. The Secretary of War, in view of the critical situation, authorized the provision of fuel and other transportation equipment from United States Army stocks in France. The Board's representatives in Switzerland and London and a special representative from Washington were ordered to Paris at once to arrange with military officials for two thousand gallons of gasoline a week, lubricating oils, and tires for the trucks waiting to move on from Switzerland.

Within a short time, the United States Army made the necessary transportation supplies available and the trucks operated by International Red Cross personnel started to go forward from Switzerland. A few of the trucks carrying extra supplies of gasoline went north to Luebeck, Germany, where the Board's parcels formerly stocked in

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Sweden had been sent. Out of Luebeck the trucks delivered relief supplies to the concentration camps of northern Germany, including Ravensbruck, Neuengamme, Bergen-Belsen, and Buchenwald. Other trucks went forward from Switzerland to the concentration centers at Dachau, Munich, Theresienstadt, and Mauthausen. The International Red Cross was urged by the Board to use these trucks for the evacuation of aged and ill refugees on the return trips to Switzerland. 1400 refugees came out to safety by this means early in April 1945.

When it became apparent that the supply of War Refugee Board parcels in Europe might be exhausted before the end of the war, the Board obtained additional emergency funds and blockade clearance for another shipment of 300,000 food parcels from the United States. These were to be purchased from and packaged by private American concerns, since the American Red Cross was unable to service the Board as it had on the previous shipment. It became clear, however, that, even under the best circumstances, it would take months to go through the sequence of obtaining food allocations, food priorities, the food itself, and the containers to package the food and to ship the parcels to Europe. Food conditions in this country were exceedingly stringent and restrictive and the Board lost all hope of being able to obtain the food in this country in time. Once again the Board went to the War Department for help and the Army agreed to sell the Board the food contained in 206,000 United States prisoner-

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of-war parcels stockpiled in the Geneva warehouses of the International Red Cross.

When fighting ceased in Europe the Board had exhausted practically all of its regular parcels and would soon have been sending the prisoner-of-war parcels obtained from the United States Army. As it was, on VE-Day the parcels which had been obtained from the Army had not yet been repackaged to remove Red Cross and Army symbols. The Board sold these parcels to the UNRRA for delivery to displaced persons in liberated countries and Germany. In this way, arrangements were made to ensure the delivery of all War Refugee Board food supplies to the intended beneficiaries.

4. Havens of Refuge.

North Africa, Palestine, Italy and the Middle East. The Executive Order establishing the Board directed it to develop and take measures for the establishment of havens of refuge for victims of enemy oppression. The Board immediately undertook to arrange for the establishment of such havens in French North Africa. An earlier proposal for a temporary refuge at Camp Marechal Lyautey near Casablanca, the subject of negotiations by the United States and British Governments with the French Committee of National Liberation, had finally resulted in French agreement on condition that the United States and the United Kingdom assume all financial responsibility

and guarantee postwar repatriation or evacuation. At the time of the Board's formation, however, the camp was still empty, owing to difficulties of transporting refugees, screening them for security purposes and adequately maintaining them at the camp. There was even talk of abandoning the whole project. The Board took steps to remove these obstacles.

Mr. Leonard C. Ackermann, United States Treasury Department attorney who had been stationed in Algiers in September 1943, was designated the Board's Special Representative for North Africa. (He later served as Board Representative for Italy where he handled Board negotiations with the Allied military authorities and Yugoslav Partisans concerning the movement of refugees from Yugoslavia to Italy and other war refugee problems in Italy). Mr. Ackermann's first task in North Africa was to negotiate with the Allied military authorities, the French authorities and the UNRRA for the preparation and opening of Camp Lyautey. These negotiations were successful. Over 600 refugees from Axis oppression who had escaped to Spain were evacuated in June 1944 to Camp Lyautey.

A second refugee camp was later set up at Philippeville in North Africa. It was utilized for other evacuations, including exchanged Latin American passport holders. Eventually the refugees at Lyautey were transferred to Philippeville.

Palestine was a ready haven for Jews escaping the enemy. The

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Board arranged with the British for the reception in Palestine of almost 7,000 Jews who came out of the Axis-controlled Balkans by way of Turkey. Palestine also received many Jewish refugees evacuated from Italy, Spain and Portugal. 700 Jews, mainly Hungarian and Rumanian, who escaped from Theresienstadt and Bergen-Belsen to Switzerland in the fall of 1944 were sent to Palestine in August 1945 under arrangements worked out between the Board and Allied military authorities.

Possible havens in Australia and Cyprus were thoroughly explored by the Board, but found impractical. The Board also undertook to arrange additional refugee centers in Cyrenaica and Tripolitania prior to the establishment of the Philippeville camp. Plans were developed for a haven in Tripolitania under joint financial responsibility with the British, but they were abandoned when North African and other established centers proved to be adequate. With the cooperation of the British Government and the help of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, thousands of refugees were sheltered in refugee camps in the Middle East.

The Board early appealed to the neutral countries of Europe to open their doors to refugees who might escape from the Nazis. The Governments of Switzerland and Sweden provided asylum for many thousands of refugees and Ireland offered to take 500 Jewish children.

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The Latin American countries were urged by the Board to receive refugees from the Nazis, and some of them agreed to do so, specifying the categories of persons acceptable.

Sanctuary was found in a number of camps in Southern Italy for the refugees who streamed across the Adriatic. This avenue of escape was the path to freedom for thousands fleeing from Hungary and many thousands more in Yugoslavia whose only hope of evading the Nazis was to reach Italy. Facilities for the care of refugees in Southern Italy became overtaxed and in May 1944 restrictions were imposed by the Allied military authorities. These restrictions threatened to cut off an important route for rescuing large numbers of endangered persons. The Board took prompt and vigorous action to assure the continued movement of refugees to Italy by finding havens in other Allied territory for some of the refugees already in Italy.

The United States -- Emergency Refugee Shelter, Oswego, New York. To meet the critical situation which had developed in Italy and to strengthen our Government's position vis-a-vis other countries whom we repeatedly had asked to offer refuge to victims of Nazi oppression, President Roosevelt on the Board's recommendation arranged for 1,000 refugees in Southern Italy to be brought immediately to an Emergency Refugee Shelter at Fort Ontario, Oswego, New York, as a token of the willingness of the United States to

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share the burden of caring for war refugees. In advising the Congress on June 12, 1944, of his action, the President stated that these persons would remain in the Shelter under appropriate security restrictions and that "upon the termination of the war, they will be sent back to their homelands." The War Refugee Board was charged with over-all responsibility for the project and the actual administration of the camp was assigned to the War Relocation Authority of the Department of the Interior.

In August 1944, 982 refugees, selected and checked by the Displaced Persons Subcommittee of the Allied Control Commission in Italy and the Board's representative in Italy, were brought to this country on a United States Army transport. The group was composed of many nationalities and a large number of women and children. The largest single category were "stateless" Jews originating in Austria, Germany, and the Balkan countries, and 300 were citizens of Yugoslavia.

These people were brought to the United States outside the immigration laws and under conditions specifying that they remain in the Shelter under appropriate security restrictions. They have been confined to the camp ever since their arrival over a year ago, except in cases where for reasons of health they required hospital treatment elsewhere. Interested private welfare and refugee relief

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agencies in the United States have rendered important and extensive service to the refugees, to the War Relocation Authority in its administration of the Shelter, and to the Board.

Many of the refugees at Oswego, survivors of years of persecution and wandering in Hitler's Europe, have close relatives living in the United States and several have sons or daughters in the American armed services. After the refugees had been here several months, efforts were commenced to obtain modification of the restrictive conditions which kept them confined to the Shelter. Numerous complaints and criticisms were received by the Board from private agencies, members of Congress, private citizens, and the refugees themselves. Studies of conditions at Oswego were conducted by private agencies and the War Relocation Authority. The Board was advised that from the standpoint of health, the trying experiences which many of the refugees had suffered in Europe and their continued inactivity at the Shelter combined to create tensions which threatened to result in numerous mental and physical breakdowns. Newspaper accounts appeared highlighting the inhumanity of keeping these people behind bars and separated from close relatives in the United States.

A thorough study was made by the Board of the possibility of returning the refugees to their homelands at the end of the war in Europe, and of the possibility of alleviating the restrictive

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conditions of their stay in the United States. The results of this study were contained in the following facts and recommendations which the Executive Director submitted to the Board members early in June 1945:

"The great majority of the refugees at Oswego either do not now have 'homelands', in fact or in their own consideration, or do not voluntarily wish to return to their national homes. In my opinion, it would not be in accordance with the President's commitment and our government's political and humanitarian policies, to return 'stateless' Jews arbitrarily to Germany and Austria or unwilling nationals to the countries of their citizenship. Furthermore, conditions in Europe at present preclude the possibility of the immediate return of many of the people at Oswego and, more generally, the resettlement of most displaced persons. Finally our national policies with respect to displaced persons should be determined and developed in proper relation to a United Nations solution of the problem. In the meantime, every effort should be made to settle as many of the refugees in Oswego in permanent homes, anywhere in the world where they can and are willing to go.

"To return these people to Italy on the formal consideration that this was the country from which they were shipped to Oswego, in my opinion, would not be in accordance with the President's commitment. Such action would undoubtedly prejudice the action of other countries with large numbers of refugees, particularly the neutrals whom we urged to accept as many as possible while we were at war with Germany. It would not be in accordance with the objectives and ideals which motivated President Roosevelt to bring these people to a safe haven in the United States. The arbitrary return of these people to Italy would only serve the purpose of getting them out of the United States to some UNRRA camp where they might have to wait for years before final relocation.

"I therefore recommend that, until such time as the United States Government policy with respect to the more general United Nations problem of the ultimate resettlement of permanently displaced persons, including those at Oswego and elsewhere in the United States, is definitely determined, the refugees at

Oswego be allowed to remain in the United States, except in those cases where they are willing and able to return to countries to which repatriation can be effected. *****

"The basic reasons for confining the refugees to a camp were the need for security restrictions during the war; their contemplated return home immediately after the war; and the fact that, since they were here outside the immigration laws, criticism of any permission to leave the camp 'might affect the efforts of this Government to rescue additional groups of refugees and also post war immigration generally' as stated by Attorney General Biddle.

"Security reasons are no longer controlling and it seems unlikely that they can be returned in the immediate future. Furthermore, with the end of the war in Europe, there is no further need to rescue additional refugees. If these people are to remain in this country until they are permanently relocated, it is difficult to see how general policy considerations with respect to post war immigration can withstand the humanitarian considerations underlying the increasing public pressure to grant the Oswego refugees greater freedom while in the United States.

"I therefore recommend that while the refugees at Oswego remain in this country pending solution of their ultimate resettlement, they should be allowed greater freedom, under a general program of sponsored leave consistent with the broad humanitarian ideals that motivated this Government in bringing these people to the United States and with the conditions of American freedom surrounding them. The details and conditions of such a program should be worked out by the Department of the Interior and the Department of Justice.

"Since it is contemplated that the War Refugee Board will be terminated about August 31, 1945, and since the solution of the problems of the people at Oswego requires considerable time beyond that date, it is recommended that over-all responsibility for the Oswego project should be transferred immediately from the War Refugee Board to the Department of the Interior, which has the actual administration of the camp."

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On June 6, 1945, in view of the contemplated early termination of the War Refugee Board and on its own recommendation, President Truman transferred over-all responsibility for the Oswego project from the Board to the Department of the Interior. Following this transfer, Secretary of the Interior Ickes wrote the Executive Director of the Board as follows:

"I want you to know that I am in accord with your recommendations which have as their objective the fair and compassionate treatment of the refugees at Oswego, and the preservation for the United States of the respect of those who are watching our treatment of the unfortunate people at Oswego as a practical test of our benevolence."

During the month of August 1945, 53 refugees at Oswego departed from the United States for Yugoslavia. 13 Yugoslav nationals preceded them in May 1945. The remainder of over 900, however, are still behind the bars of Fort Ontario awaiting more humane treatment from America and a solution of the problem of their ultimate resettlement.

WAR CRIMES

The threat of punishment for all who participated in the Axis persecutions of innocent minorities including Jews and other nationals of Axis countries was a basic point in the Board's psychological warfare programs. Repeated threats of this kind were issued to the Nazis and their cohorts.

The Board learned in the summer of 1944 that the United Nations War Crimes Commission had made no plans for the punishment of persons guilty of crimes against Axis Jews on the theory that there was no precedent under international law for including as war crimes acts committed by an enemy nation or its nationals against its own subjects or the subjects of other enemy nations. The Board therefore strongly urged the State Department for a declaration of United States Government policy which would make it clear that our Government regarded as war criminals those of our enemies who committed crimes against stateless persons and Axis nationals. It pointed out that failure to regard them as war criminals and plan for their punishment would not only discredit those having made previous threats but render it more difficult to deter similar criminal conduct in the future. The Board also urged that the United States representative on the United Nations War Crimes Commission be instructed to insist upon the adoption by that Commission of a program

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designed to effectuate such a policy. This position was finally taken by our Government and incorporated in the program of the United Nations for punishment of war criminals.

Through its representatives abroad and tested contacts in Europe, the Board was kept fully advised concerning the German campaign of extermination and torture. Reports and accounts from these sources accumulated in the files of the Board. They clearly substantiated the fact of the revolting atrocities and, in some cases, named their perpetrators. Two of these reports, eye-witness accounts of events which occurred at the notorious extermination centers established by the Germans at Auschwitz and Birkenau in southwestern Poland, were released to the public in November 1944, in order that the American public might read and understand the frightful happenings in the German concentration camps.

When the war in Europe ended and the cases against Nazi war criminals were being prepared, all such reports in the Board's files were made available to the War Department for study and possible use as evidence in the prosecution of Axis criminals.

THE REMAINING PROBLEM

When the war in Europe ended, the specific task assigned to the War Refugee Board was terminated. The accomplishments of the Board cannot be evaluated in terms of exact statistics, but it is clear, however, that hundreds of thousands of persons as well as the tens of thousands who were rescued through activities organized by the Board, continued to live and resist as a result of its vigorous and unremitting efforts, until the might of the Allied armies finally saved them and the millions of others who survived the Nazi holocaust.

Several million persons, including one million Jews, who were the special subjects of the Nazi persecution campaign, are still alive in Europe. Large numbers of these have been or will soon be repatriated to their countries of origin. But there will be many for whom repatriation will be either impractical or impossible. Many others for valid and compelling reasons cannot remain where they are. Consequently, these people are homeless and permanently displaced. Tremendous efforts were made to save them from Nazi oppression. Now we are faced with the equally important problems of their mental and physical rehabilitation and their permanent resettlement, if they are to live as decent human beings.

Mr. Earl G. Harrison, United States Representative on the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, was sent on a special mission

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by the government in July 1945 to investigate the needs and conditions of displaced persons in Western Europe, particularly the Jews. The War Refugee Board assigned Mr. Herbert Katzki as its representative on this mission. The mission found that important measures had been taken by the Allied military authorities, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, and private relief agencies toward the immediate rehabilitation of these displaced peoples. But glaring inhumanity was found prevailing in many areas. Much remains to be done to prove that these people have been liberated in fact as well as saved from the Gestapo. It must be done at once.

The finding of permanent homes for the non-repatriable displaced peoples is a difficult, complex problem, the ultimate solution of which rests primarily upon international action. I am of the firm conviction, based on my experience with the War Refugee Board, the deep personal concern of large elements of our population and the ideals of the American people, that the United States Government, as a matter of national policy, should initiate aggressive action at once for a United Nations solution of this international humanitarian problem.

One group of the permanently displaced peoples, the "stateless" Jews, presents the most pressing problem. Immediate action can and should be taken for this group. These people cannot return to their

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countries of origin, the scenes of so many years of torture and personal tragedy. The majority of them, as found by the Harrison mission, desire to start life anew in Palestine, the only country which is ready and willing today to receive Jews in large numbers. But admission to Palestine is presently restricted since the White Paper quotas have been virtually exhausted. I therefore urge that the United States Government take all possible steps to effect the opening of Palestine for the immigration of these people. Each day's delay in the opening of the doors of Palestine adds to the tragedy of the Jewish people.

William D. Boyer

Executive Director

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 9417

ESTABLISHING A WAR REFUGEE BOARD

WHEREAS it is the policy of this Government to take all measures within its power to rescue the victims of enemy oppression who are in imminent danger of death and otherwise to afford such victims all possible relief and assistance consistent with the successful prosecution of the war;

NOW, THEREFORE, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the statutes of the United States, as President of the United States and as Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy, and in order to effectuate with all possible speed the rescue and relief of such victims of enemy oppression, it is hereby ordered as follows:

1. There is established in the Executive Office of the President a War Refugee Board (hereinafter referred to as the Board). The Board shall consist of the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Treasury and the Secretary of War. The Board may request the heads of other agencies or departments to participate in its deliberations whenever matters specially affecting such agencies or departments are under consideration.

2. The Board shall be charged with the responsibility for seeing that the policy of the Government, as stated in the Preamble, is carried out. The functions of the Board shall include without limitation the development of plans and programs and the inauguration of effective measures for (a) the rescue, transportation, maintenance and relief of the victims of enemy oppression; and (b) the establishment of havens of temporary refuge for such victims. To this end the Board, through appropriate channels, shall take the necessary steps to enlist the cooperation of foreign governments and obtain their participation in the execution of such plans and programs.

3. It shall be the duty of the State, Treasury and War Departments, within their respective spheres, to execute at the request of the Board, the plans and programs so developed and the measures so inaugurated. It shall be the duty of the heads of all agencies and departments to supply or obtain for the Board such information and to extend to the Board such supplies, shipping and other specified assistance and facilities as the Board may require in carrying out the provisions of this Order. The State Department shall appoint special attaches with diplomatic status, on the recommendation of the Board, to be stationed abroad in places where it is likely that assistance can be rendered to war refugees, the duties and responsibilities of such attaches to be defined by the Board in consultation with the State Department.

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4. The Board and the State, Treasury and War Departments are authorized to accept the services or contributions of any private persons, private organizations, State agencies, or agencies of foreign governments in carrying out the purposes of this Order. The Board shall cooperate with all existing and future international organizations concerned with the problems of refugee rescue, maintenance, transportation, relief, rehabilitation, and resettlement.

5. To the extent possible the Board shall utilize the personnel, supplies, facilities and services of the State, Treasury and War Departments. In addition the Board, within the limits of funds which may be made available, may employ necessary personnel without regard for the Civil Service laws and regulations and the Classification Act of 1923, as amended, and make provisions for supplies, facilities and services necessary to discharge its responsibilities. The Board shall appoint an Executive Director who shall serve as its principal executive officer. It shall be the duty of the Executive Director to arrange for the prompt execution of the plans and programs developed and the measures inaugurated by the Board, to supervise the activities of the special attaches and to submit frequent reports to the Board on the steps taken for the rescue and relief of war refugees.

6. The Board shall be directly responsible to the President in carrying out the policy of this Government, as stated in the Preamble, and the Board shall report to him at frequent intervals concerning the steps taken for the rescue and relief of war refugees and shall make such recommendations as the Board may deem appropriate for further action to overcome any difficulties encountered in the rescue and relief of war refugees.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

THE WHITE HOUSE
January 22, 1944.

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Draft of White House Press Release

President Truman today signed an Executive Order providing for the dissolution of the War Refugee Board. This Board was established on January 22, 1944, to rescue and bring relief to the persecuted minorities of Europe in imminent danger of death at the hands of the Nazis because of race, religion or political belief. The members of the Board were the Secretaries of State, Treasury and War, and the Executive Director was William O'Dwyer. The defeat of Germany and the liberation of Europe by the Allied armies terminated the specific task assigned to the Board.

The President stated that the War Refugee Board, through representatives in various parts of the world and a small staff in Washington, had succeeded in saving the lives of hundreds of thousands of innocent victims of Nazi oppression. He stressed the important part played by private American relief agencies in financing and executing many of the projects of the unique and difficult life-saving mission undertaken by this Government, through the Board, as a part of the total war against Nazi principles. He pointed out, however, that the tremendous effort which went into the saving of these lives will have been in vain unless steps are taken for the immediate rehabilitation of these survivors of Nazi savagery, as well as for a humane, international solution of the problem of their ultimate resettlement.

*Copies sent to
Mrs. Bertha Jones
9/11/45 to be
attached to
Ex. Order.
JH*

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War Ref. Bd.



The National Archives

Washington 25, D. C.
September 12, 1945



Mr. William O'Dwyer
Executive Director
War Refugee Board
Executive Office of the President
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Mr. O'Dwyer:

This will acknowledge your letter of September 10, 1945, wherein you request that the Archivist requisition certain records of the War Refugee Board. This matter, which has been assigned Job No. 446-53, will be given prompt attention.

Very sincerely yours

Philip C. Brooks
Philip C. Brooks
Records Appraisal Officer

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War Ref. Bd.

SEP 10 1945

Dear Mr. Buck:

The War Refugee Board which was established by Executive Order No. 9417 of January 22, 1944, will be dissolved by executive order effective at the close of business on September 15, 1945. The files of the Board, with the exception of those necessary to its final liquidation by the Treasury Department and certain files turned over to the War Department for use in the United Nations war crimes prosecutions, are ready for transfer to the National Archives. It will be appreciated if you will advise me when you desire to take possession of those files which are available for immediate transfer.

It is suggested that State Department clearance be obtained before the Board's files are made available to the public in view of the nature of the activities of the Board. The War Department has been requested to advise the National Archives when it has completed its use of the above-mentioned Board files containing data on war crimes.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) William O'Dwyer

William O'Dwyer
Executive Director

Mr. Solon J. Buck,
Archivist of the United States,
The National Archives,
Washington, D. C.

JM ✓
+ in process, Bureau + Geo. Warren, State
FH:hd 9/4/45

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EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

BUREAU OF THE BUDGET

WASHINGTON, 25, D. C.

August 23, 1945

Miss Florence Hodel
Room 4415, Treasury Building
War Refugee Board
Washington, D. C.

Dear Miss Hodel:

Enclosed is a draft of the short Executive order which we feel is adequate to cover the termination of the War Refugee Board. As you see it gives to the Secretary of the Treasury authority to *complete* ~~keep~~ the liquidation. He is free to designate the organization unit within his Department to perform the necessary functions.

Let me know your views about the order.

Sincerely yours,

Jane D. Highsaw

Jane D. Highsaw

Enclosure

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8-22-45

EXECUTIVE ORDER

TERMINATION OF THE WAR REFUGEE BOARD

By virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and Statutes and as President of the United States it is hereby ordered as follows:

The War Refugee Board established by paragraph 1 of Executive Order No. 9417 of January 22, 1944 is dissolved. The Secretary of the Treasury is authorized and directed to liquidate all of the activities and obligations and wind up all of the affairs of the Board, as rapidly as practicable and not later than June 30, 1946; to utilize therefor such of the personnel, property, records, and unexpended appropriations of the Board as may be necessary; and, consonant with applicable law and regulations and at such times as may be appropriate, to separate the personnel from the service and dispose of the property and records. This order shall become effective at the close of business September 15, 1945.

THE WHITE HOUSE,

August , 1945

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War Ref. Board

AUG 18 1945

Attention: Mrs. Highsaw

Dear Mr. Smith:

There is enclosed for consideration and appropriate clearances a proposed executive order providing for the termination of the War Refugee Board. It will be appreciated if the Bureau of the Budget will consider this matter as soon as possible.

Very truly yours,

(SIGNED) WILLIAM O'DWYER

William O'Dwyer
Executive Director

Mr. Harold D. Smith,
Director,
Bureau of the Budget,
Washington 25, D. C.

Enclosure.

PH — Per request of Mrs. Highsaw
FH:hd 8/18/45

*no attachments when read
in folder*

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War Refugee Board

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
WAR REFUGEE BOARD

*Noted
JAT*

INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION

DATE May 30, 1946

TO Mr. Lennie

FROM Miss Hodel

The Budget Bureau telephoned me today and requested that a meeting be arranged as soon as possible between the War Refugee Board and the Budget Bureau to discuss details of the liquidation of the Board and the preparation of final reports. I have arranged for a meeting on Friday, June 1, at 11 a.m.

JAT

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May 23, 1946.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

/ In January of 1944, President Roosevelt established the War Refugee Board, consisting of the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Treasury and the Secretary of War, for the purpose of taking all possible measures to rescue the persecuted peoples of Europe who were in imminent danger of death at the hands of the Nazis. With a small staff in Washington and representatives in strategic neutral countries, the War Refugee Board put the full prestige and power of the United States Government behind the efforts of private agencies and inter-governmental organizations, particularly the Inter-governmental Committee on Refugees and UNRRA. Although it is impossible to measure the success of the Board in terms of exact statistics, there is no doubt that many thousands of lives were saved as a result of its work. This was accomplished because the problem was recognized and dealt with as one requiring attention by the government at the highest level.

The great humanitarian task assigned to the War Refugee Board is now practically completed. There is left, however, the equally great problem of the resettlement of hundreds of thousands of displaced persons who are unable or unwilling to return to their homelands. The Inter-governmental Committee on Refugees was authorized to arrange for the rehabilitation and resettlement of such displaced persons. However, if the Inter-governmental Committee is to do a successful job, the full force and weight of the United States Government must be placed behind its resettlement activities as was done in the case of its rescue activities.

Since the device of a Cabinet Committee has been so successful in the case of the War Refugee Board, it is my view that every consideration should be given to continuing this device with respect to the problems of the homeless victims of Nazi oppression, whose lives have been saved in large measure as the result of the activities of this Government.

100368

I recommend for your consideration the establishment of a Cabinet Committee to deal specifically with the problem of the permanently displaced and non-repatriable groups in Europe and to handle the relations of this Government with the Inter-governmental Committee on Refugees and the UNRRA. Such a Committee might consist of the Secretaries of State, Interior and Commerce. If you wish, I shall be glad to sound out other interested people concerning this proposal prior to liquidation of the War Refugee Board, which is contemplated for the very near future.

/s/ H. Morgenthau, Jr.

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FH:JED:hd 5/22/45

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May 22, 1945.

MEMORANDUM

The War Refugee Board was established January 22, 1944.

The Board was established by Executive Order of President Roosevelt which set forth a firm statement of national policy to save victims of Nazi oppression in imminent danger of death. The Secretaries of State, Treasury and War were designated the members of the Board and an Executive Director was appointed as its principal executive officer.

The Board cooperated closely with private agencies and international organizations.

The Board undertook to coordinate and facilitate the operations of all interested American private relief agencies, and to cooperate closely with international organizations, particularly the Intergovernmental Committee and the UNRRA, as well as with agencies of foreign governments.

Private American relief agencies with trained personnel and readily available funds did most of the financing and operating in the field. The Board obtained for the private agencies governmental permission to send funds into enemy territory, permission to communicate with persons in enemy territory, the help of United States diplomats, the use of government communication channels and the Board provided the guidance of government officials in developing and organizing private programs of rescue and relief.

The Board's Programs

1. Rescue and Relief. The Board undertook to develop its own program of rescue and relief, and funds plus the necessary authority were given to its representatives abroad to conduct such operations. The Board also undertook an extensive project, financed with government funds, for the development of a feeding program for oppressed victims inside enemy lines. Food packages purchased in the United States were delivered to the International Red Cross for distribution to the starving inmates of German concentration camps.

2. Protective Measures. In addition to relief and rescue operations, the Board developed certain very effective measures to safeguard the lives of oppressed people while still in enemy hands. As the result of the Board's efforts, many thousands of stateless Jews holding questionable identification papers or

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passports for entry into various Latin American countries were kept alive because the countries involved were persuaded to accord the protection of their nationality to the people holding these invalid documents, at least as long as they remained in enemy hands. Special protection was also accorded to persons in enemy control who were close relatives of American citizens or residents. The names of all of these people were transmitted through appropriate channels to the Germans who were notified that such persons were recognized as exchangeable by the countries of the Western Hemisphere. The very fact of their recognized exchange status saved many of them from death by the Germans.

3. Psychological Warfare. A very important and effective phase of War Refugee Board activities was the development of psychological pressures in the form of warnings to the enemy and its satellites, designed to forestall further persecution of Jews and other minorities. The Board secured the cooperation of all interested government agencies in this important work.

4. Havens of Refuge. The Board also undertook to find temporary safe havens for those oppressed victims who could escape from the enemy. As a token of this Government's interest, one haven was established in the United States when 982 refugees were brought from Italy to the Emergency Refugee Shelter at Fort Ontario, Oswego, New York.

JH - FH:JWP:hd 5/22/45

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Meeting held in Mr. White's office on Thursday, April 12, 1945, at 10:30 a.m.

Present: Messrs. Portner and Rifkind, from the National Archives; Mr. White, Mrs. Wills, Mrs. Tunney, Mrs. Cohn, and Miss Rollock.

The subject of the meeting centered around the disposition of the records of the War Refugee Board upon its termination.

Mr. Portner stated that the most important problem was the responsibility of seeing that the records of the Board are retired either to the Archives or to other agencies that want any of the Board's material.

Mr. White indicated that a policy decision will have to be made as to where the records, files, material, etc. will go.

Mr. Portner said that whether the records go to the Archives, Treasury, State, or elsewhere made little difference. In disposing of the records an inventory, by series, must be made. In disposing of the records, which will be done under Federal regulation, forms will be supplied by the Archives or Congress. The Archives will send the necessary forms to the Board. Material must be listed, and if it is of such a nature that many agencies will want it, then it will go to the Archives. If one specific agency desires material, it will be given to that agency.

Mr. Portner stated that an inventory should be started as soon as possible in order that there will be a record of what is in the files.

Mr. Rifkind added that they would supply us with simple forms for single paragraph descriptions of each series of material. These descriptions should contain inclusive dates, quantity, description as to purpose and use, and location of material in the files. Duplicate material can be scheduled for disposal as of the termination of the Board.

Mrs. Cohn suggested that each of the major sections of the "bible" might be used in making the inventory. Mr. Rifkind said that material that has been treated separately should be treated as a separate series and cross-referenced.

All fiscal letters and pertinent documents should go to the General Accounting Office.

Mr. Portner assured us that the Archives would send someone over to aid the Board in taking inventory, making lists, and disposing of the records of the Board.

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War Refugee Board

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON

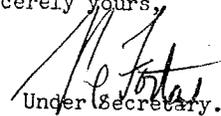
File

March 28, 1945.

Dear Bill:

Thank you for your letter of March 27, enclosing a copy of your memorandum for the President. You are doing a grand job.

Sincerely yours,



Under Secretary.

Hon. William O'Dwyer,
Executive Director,
War Refugee Board,
Executive Office of
the President,
Washington 25, D. C.

000376

March 27, 1945

Dear Abe:

I think you will be interested in the at-
tached memorandum which I sent the President today.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) William O'Dwyer
William O'Dwyer
Executive Director

Attachment

Hon. Abe Fortas,
The Under Secretary,
The Interior Department.

FH:ve
3/27/45

Handwritten note:
The enclosed memorandum was
submitted to me by Mr. O'Dwyer
on 3/27/45

000377

MAR 27 1945

My dear Mr. Secretary:

I send you herewith a copy of a memorandum I sent to the President today, at the request of David Niles. Parts of this story were announced today in the American Jewish press which obtained the information from other than War Refugee Board sources.

Very truly yours,

Signature of William O'Dwyer

William O'Dwyer
Executive Director

The Honorable,
The Secretary of War.

Enclosure.

WO'D:hd 3/27/45

*Autographed copy sent
Rec'd in file 3/27/45*

100378

MAR 27 1945

My dear Mr. Secretary:

I send you herewith a copy of a memorandum I sent to the President today, at the request of David Niles. Parts of this story were announced today in the American Jewish press which obtained the information from other than War Refugee Board sources.

Very truly yours,

WILLIAM O'DWYER
Executive Director

The Honorable,

The Secretary of State.

(with enclosure)

Enclosure.

WO'D:hd 3/27/45

sent to the press 4/1/45
in press 4/1/45

000379

MAR 27

My dear Mr. Secretary:

I send you herewith a copy of a memorandum I sent to the President today, at the request of David Niles. Parts of this story were announced today in the American Jewish press which obtained the information from other than War Refugee Board sources.

Very truly yours,

William O'Dwyer
Executive Director

The Honorable,

The Secretary of the Treasury.
(Mr. Tolson)

Enclosure.

WO'D:hd 3/27/45

Included in file
in file 3/27/45

000380

Jonathan Daniels
The White House

This is the memorandum to
the President, together with the
covering memorandum to David Niles,
which I discussed with you on the
phone.

(Signed) William C. Dwyer

(Delivered by hand (McCormack) 4:20 3/27/45)

000381

March 27, 1945

MEMORANDUM

TO: David Niles

FROM: William O'Dwyer

The following is some background material which may be of assistance in the preparation of a release on the attached memorandum to the President:

"President Roosevelt established the War Refugee Board by Executive Order on January 22, 1944. Its members are the Secretaries of State, Treasury and War. The Board's functions are to 'rescue the victims of enemy oppression who are in imminent danger of death and otherwise to afford such victims all possible relief and assistance consistent with the successful prosecution of the war.'

"In carrying out the President's directive, the War Refugee Board has concentrated its efforts on getting food to these innocent victims and on rescuing as many as possible from enemy territory to safe havens. In addition, the Board has developed other protective measures to safeguard the lives of many of these people.

"The work of the War Refugee Board has constantly been faced with extraordinary difficulties, since its operations are designed for people suffering behind the enemy lines. In spite of the many obstacles, the Board is able to announce substantial success in its operations. Thousands have actually been rescued from enemy territory, in addition to the many more thousands whose lives have been preserved while still in enemy-controlled territory."

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
(Signed) William O'Dwyer

100382

MAR 27 1945

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

On February 20, 1945, the War Refugee Board approved a specific program to (1) bring relief to civilian detainees in Germany in imminent danger of death due to starvation, exposure and deliberate neglect and (2) to remove as many as possible of these people to safety. The exposure and danger to these people increased as a result of conditions inside Germany. The Board has pushed ahead on this program and important results have been obtained in the last few days.

The War Refugee Board, as you know, has shipped several hundred thousand three-kilo parcels from this country to stockpiles in Sweden and Switzerland for delivery by the International Red Cross to civilian detainees, regardless of race, religion or nationality, in German concentration camps. Our best information indicates that the largest concentrations of these people are now in the north of Germany around Hamburg and in the south of Germany near Dachau. There are millions of civilian detainees still under German control and a relatively small number (about 200,000 or 300,000) are Jews.

In recent months, because of disrupted transportation conditions inside Germany, no deliveries of War Refugee Board food parcels have been made.

Recently, as the result of arrangements made between the Board and the International Red Cross, War Refugee Board food packages will go forward on trucks obtained by the Board. These packages are destined for the sick, the disabled, women and children, who, because of their unimportance to the enemy's war program, are in the greatest danger from starvation and exposure.

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Our latest cables from the field report the following developments:

1. The bottleneck on the delivery of War Refugee Board food packages has been broken. Within the last few days, 20,400 parcels have left Goteburg, Sweden, and 6,090 have left Switzerland for enemy territory.
2. The Board's representative in Bern has rented from a private concern in Switzerland six 12 ton trucks which will be available within the next few days. The Y.M.C.A. has agreed to turn over 12 wood-burning trucks now in Germany to the International Red Cross for relief delivery work.
3. With the approval of the Secretary of War, arrangements are now under way with General Eisenhower for the acquisition by the Board of gasoline, tires and trucks to be turned over to the International Red Cross for War Refugee Board operations.
4. Arrangements are being made by the International Red Cross to station personnel in the concentration camps to supervise the distribution of relief parcels.

In addition to the War Refugee Board parcels already in Switzerland and Sweden, the Board is completing arrangements for the procurement of an additional 300,000 packages for early shipment abroad.

It is to be understood that the War Refugee Board feeding program is independent of the delivery of prisoner of war food packages, but it is planned that all trucks operated by the International Red Cross for the delivery of relief in German territory will be utilized to evacuate physically unfit civilian detainees to safety.

UNRRA has agreed to furnish to the International Red Cross, at the request of the War Refugee Board, relief supplies for the maintenance of refugees removed to safety and who are in transit to UNRRA-controlled camps.

(Signed) William O'Dwyer

William O'Dwyer
Executive Director

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FEB 20 1945

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I am enclosing for your files a copy of the memorandum concerning rescue and relief operations approved at the Board meeting this morning.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) William O'Dwyer

William O'Dwyer
Executive Director

The Honorable,
The Secretary of State.

Enclosure.

Ebt EBTowler:inp 2/20/45

100386

FEB 20 1945

My dear Mr. Secretary:

I am enclosing for your files a copy of the memorandum concerning rescue and relief operations approved at the Board meeting this morning.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) William O'Dwyer

William O'Dwyer
Executive Director

The Honorable,
The Secretary of War.

Enclosure.

EBT
EBTowler:inp 2/20/45

100387

FEB 20 1945

My dear Mr. Secretary:

I am enclosing for your files a copy of the memorandum concerning rescue and relief operations approved at the Board meeting this morning.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) William O'Dwyer

William O'Dwyer
Executive Director

The Honorable,

The Secretary of the Treasury.

Enclosure.

EBT
EBTowler:inp 2/20/45

100388

FEB 20 1946

MEMORANDUM TO: Secretary Stettinius
Secretary Morgenthau
Secretary Stimson

Our best information indicates that, while the enemy has abandoned wholesale extermination of detainees, large numbers of the physically unfit are now in imminent danger of death due to starvation, exposure and deliberate neglect. The actual numbers are unknown and are believed to be changing daily.

Food, medicines and clothing must be distributed to such detainees at once if their lives are to be saved. They should be removed, if possible, to safety in Switzerland without unnecessary delay.

The International Red Cross is our only means of direct contact with the enemy. Operations can best be conducted from Switzerland.

The War Refugee Board is requested to authorize its representative to obtain the necessary cooperation of the International Red Cross and of the Swiss Government.

The War Refugee Board is further requested to approve that the necessary food, medicines and transportation equipment be made available to the International Red Cross by the Swiss Government against our promise of repayment or replenishment after the war, and, ~~if this is impossible, by this Government from existing stocks.~~ It is understood that private funds are available for the necessary financing.

(Signed) William O'Dwyer
William O'Dwyer
Executive Director

APPROVED: *J. C. Grew*
Acting Secretary of State

H. H. Morgenthau, Jr.
Secretary of the Treasury

H. L. Stimson
Secretary of War

*original in [unclear] in
file 7*

WC'D:hd 2/23/46

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