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THE FOREIGN SERVICE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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AMERICAN LEGATION
Stockholm, Sweden
June 16, 1944

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

Dear Mr. Pehle:

I attach herewith a comprehensive report dealing with the status of Jews in Hungary at the present time. This material includes the various official actions taken against the Jews, as well as the persons involved in framing and carrying out these persecution policies. It includes definite proposals for relief and rescue, some rather visionary, but nevertheless representing what the author considered at least worthy of attempt. As you were previously advised, this material was prepared by Mr. Bohm, who in turn has consulted the most competent authorities available locally.

Due to Mr. Bohm's extremely poor health, we arranged for secretarial assistance so that he could dictate his material in German. We then arranged for outside translating and typing service. Payment was made from the special funds you recently placed at my disposal for use in furthering the interests and activities of the War Refugee Board, such payments totalling 350 Swedish kronor. You will note that the report contains many errors of one type or another, of minor consequence, but we are not undertaking to make the necessary corrections in view of the desirability of providing this material to you as quickly as possible. A summary of this material will be forwarded by cable in a day or so.

Sincerely yours,

Iver C. Olsen
Special Attaché for
War Refugee Board

Enclosure - 1

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Groups and Numbers of People Requiring Protection.

According to official reports issued by the former Hungarian Government and by the Government established after the occupation of Hungary by the Germans on 19/3 1944, the people requiring protection now in Hungary can be divided into 5 groups:

1) The people who are persecuted for political reasons; these are the socialdemocrats, communists, the members of the small Landowner's Party, the leading members of the Liberal Party, some monarchist leaders and the members of various small political circles.

The number of the members of these groups cannot be established, as these people were arrested both by the German Gestapo and the Hungarian authorities. Some of them who succeeded to hide are not yet arrested. If the number of the leading personalities of the Labour Movement is taken as a basis of the estimate, the number of the members of these groups may be put at

2.000 to 3.000.

2) The citizens of the United Nations with whom Hungary is at war. These people were free until 19/3. After the occupation of Hungary by German troops several hundred persons including - Americans, Englishmen and other nationalities were imprisoned.

3) Nonhungarian Jews who had illegally escaped from the neighbouring countries, such as Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Roumania and Croatia to Hungary, without immigration permits. Some of them had been kept by the former government in internment camps, but more than 50% of them who had found some employment or whose maintenance had been secured by assistance from abroad, had been set free.

The Kallay Government has mentioned the figure of about 12.000 socalled "infiltrated" Jews.

The official newspapers of the new government report the number of such Jews amounting to 30.000-40.000. The last figure is certainly exaggerated, but actually there are about

20.000 Jews

who had found refuge in Hungary where until the 19/3 they were not persecuted in the same way as in Germany, Slovakia and Roumania.

The majority of the socalled "infiltrated" Jews had immigrated from Slovakia; they are of Hungarian origin and had become Slovakian citizens. Then they have been persecuted by the Antijewish decrees.

4) Jewish Hungarian citizens, who have become defenceless after the German occupation through measures and decrees that followed. Their property has been confiscated, they were forced to wear the David Star. Hundred thousands of them have been imprisoned in concentration camps and ghettos, they were expelled from their houses; their furniture, household utensils and clothing were confiscated as well as their shops, offices, etc. The number of Jewish Hungarian citizens was

800.000

according to the census of 1940. But as according to the decrees of the Quisling Government the Nuremberg laws came into force, and as the Jews became completely emancipated since 1867, or since 1892, and numerous marriages among Jews and Christians have taken place, the number of the socalled Jews has increased by 200.000. Thus the total figure of Jews is more than

1,000.000.

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5) Polish citizens and Polish soldiers, who had escaped to Hungary after the war against Poland. Only some of them have been interned.

The former Hungarian Government has mentioned the figure of

50,000

Poles, living in Hungary, but according to new reports there are said to have been

12,000, 15,000 or 20,000.

At the present time it cannot be established whether the Germans have murdered several thousands of them.

Actually the Germans have arrested all these Poles. Sometimes even fierce fighting has been going on whereafter the Poles were deported to Germany for hard labour.

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The Illegality of the Persecution of Jews.

The Hungarian constitution has never been really democratic, but there was a Parliament which passed laws. According to the Hungarian constitution, the laws had to be deliberated and passed firstly by the House of Commons and secondly by the House of Lords. They became valid after the agreement on the part of the Chief of State, in this case the Reichsverweser. This basic law had been respected in Hungary despite the lack of real democracy, and when in 1905 the Hungarian Fejervary Government, appointed by the Hungarian King Francis Joseph I, intended to govern without Parliament, the entire nation resisted this attempt, and consequently the Government acts had been declared invalid.

In 1939 and 1941 the House of Commons and the House of Lords issued 2 laws against Jews, which have been sanctioned by the Reichsverweser. Even these laws were an offence against the Hungarian constitution which secures equal rights to all Hungarian citizens. In spite of it these laws were constitutional, as they had been sanctioned by the House of Commons, the House of Lords and the Chief of Government. Though the law permitted only a certain percentage of Jews to do intellectual work, and though Jews have been prejudiced compared with other citizens, the Hungarian Jews have been more tolerated than those in Germany and in all other countries occupied by the Germans.

The evidence as to who was to be considered Jewish, was not so severe as in Germany.

On the 19/3 1944 Hungary was occupied by Germany, the former Government was banished, the Minister of the Interior imprisoned, the Premier Kallay had to flee to the Turkish

Legation, the representatives of the Socialdemocrats, Landowners and Liberals to the House of Commons and the House of Lords, all the members of both the Houses friendly to the Allies, were arrested both by the German Gestapo, that means by a foreign authority, and by the Hungarian Nazi authorities.

By assistance of the Reichsvertreter Horthy, the Germans established a quisling Government on the 23/3. New laws against Jews were issued by the German command. Thus the constitutionally issued laws had been annulled and the laws of Nuremberg came into force at once.

All the laws against Jews, issued by the Sztoja Government are illegal and are an offence against the Hungarian constitution.

The Orders About the Persecution of Jews.

On March the 19th the Germans occupied Hungary and on March the 23th they established the Quisling Government, lead by the former Ambassador in Berlin, Dome Sztojay.

By German command the Government began to persecute Jews immediately. All the laws against Jews published in the official newspaper "Budapesti Hírlap" and in other papers were issued as follows:

On March the 30th it was decreed that all telephones belonging to Jews should be confiscated.

On March the 31st 4 orders were issued, namely:

a/ All Jews, male and female, above the age of 6 had to wear the yellow David Star, size 10 cm, on the left label.

b/ All Jews who were members of actors and film companies, members of press organizations and the emembers of the chamber of lawyers were to be excluded from the register of members, which meant that these people could not continue with their usual work.

c/ All families, containing even one Jewish member had immediately to dismiss their servants, nurses and cooks.

d/ All public and communal institutions and offices at once had to dismiss their Jewish employees.

On the same day an order was issued according to which all banks had to dismiss 50% of their Jewish employees. This was only the first step. On June the 30th all employees of the banks were dismissed.

On April the 6th an order was issued which prohibited the Jews using cars, motorcars as well as trains. Jews could go by railway or by ship only with a special permit, written by the principal official of the community.

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On the same day the evacuation of Budapest was announced, because Budapest had been bombed by English and American pilots.

Jews were ordered to remain in the city, and all the streets and pathways of Budapest were guarded, lest the Jews should flee. Jewish people caught by the Germans were imprisoned instantly.

On the 9th of April the confiscation of Jewish radios had been announced. According to preliminary statistics the Jews of Budapest delivered 60,000 radios. Some 20,000 more in Budapest and 20,000 in the provinces were confiscated afterwards. It has been established in later reports that about 200,000 radios were taken from Jews without compensation.

On the 12th of April the former Vicegovernor of the Pester Komitates, Laszlo Endre, was appointed Secretary of the Ministry of the Interior, authorized to solve the Jewish problem in Hungary.

Laszlo Endre is a wellknown antisemite who has persecuted Jews already before, in his Komitat.

The first measure of the new Secretary of State was the expropriation of 2,000 Jewish households. The Jews had to leave their flats within 24 hours, which it was pretended were to be given to the outbombed. Furniture and household articles had to be left.

The expelled Jews were driven into slums near railway stations and factories. The Germans confessed to have done it to see the Jews killed in case Budapest would be bombed.

On April the 13th all Jews being in possession of apothecary licences were ordered to return them, and their

apothecary shops had to be taken over by Aryans. In this way 190 apothecary shops were expropriated without any compensation.

On April the 15th the most important decree on Jewish persecution was issued, namely the expropriation of Jewish property. Jews were obliged to inform the authorities about their property, in case they had more than 10.000 Pengo. In this amount had to be included all clothing, furniture, household articles, carpets, objects of art, gold and silver, luxury articles, etc., and only if these things together did not reach the amount of 10.000 Pengo, could the registration be omitted. For every member of the family 5.000 Pengo were not subject to registration.

In order to have an idea of the value of 10.000 Pengo, it should be stated what one can nowadays buy in Hungary for the above mentioned amount. The value of the Pengo has been reduced to a tenth of its former value, f.i. one can buy in Stockholm as many Pengo as one likes, at the price of 8 Swedish Crowns for 100 Pengo. In Hungary the prices increased to such an extent, that a reduction of a tenth of its former value is still too high.

Taking this into consideration all Jewish property, including household utensils, clothing and furniture, surpassing the pre-war value of 1.000 Pengo was confiscated.

According to this law all Jewish safe deposits, shares, postsaving books were confiscated and only an amount of 1.000 Pengo monthly - respectively 100 Pengo pre-war value - was paid out.

In the same way all Jewish industrial and commercial enterprises were confiscated. If there was one Jew among the

managers of an enterprise, it had to be considered as Jewish and as such confiscated.

All these enterprises were obliged to pay in to a bank an amount of 3.000 Pengt or 5% of their turnover for last year, and this amount was also confiscated.

On 16th of April. All newspapers published the official appeal of the Secretary of State, Laszlo Baky, in which he asked the population to denounce all Jews, who had not registered the real value of their property, as well as Non-jews who were hiding Jewish property.

The result of this appeal was a series of denunciations and defamations, whereby many thousand Jews were imprisoned in concentration camps.

On the same day all wealthy Jews were called in for labour-service.

On 23rd of April all Jews working in intellectual professions, respectively doing all kinds of non physical work, had to be dismissed instantly. If the leader of an enterprise had dismissed a Jew due to the law mentioned, he also had not the right to give this Jew any physical work.

On the same day the Ministry of the Interior decreed the closing of all Jewish organizations and societies - even if they served charity purposes.

But a Jewish organization was founded and every Jew wearing a David-Star had to be member.

The authorities would not discuss matters with individual Jews, but would give their instructions and orders to this organization.

The leaders of the organization were responsible with their

lives for all orders issued by the authorities to be carried out promptly by the Jews.

Simultaneously the quantity of food for Jews was reduced by general order to:

Sugar: 300 gramm monthly.

Fats: 300 gramm sesam oil monthly. Jews are forbidden to use any other kind of oil or fat.

Meat: 100 gramm beef weekly. Jews are forbidden to buy pork and fowl.

Milk: Only children up to the age of 3 get $\frac{1}{2}$ liter daily. Neither old people nor pregnant women, nor children above 3 years could get milk.

In case there should be a lack of milk in Hungary the Jews would be the first not to get any milk.

28th of April. The authorities were given the right by the Government to confiscate Jewish flats and to give them to other citizens.

All communities containing no more than 10.000 souls (the majority of Hungarian Communities) are given the right to remove all Jews. This law is said to have been carried through at the end of May already.

The Government instructs the authorities to settle all Jews in one part of the town.

This order made possible the arrangement of the ghettos.

All Jews were obliged to deliver their arms and ammunition to the authorities. Jews had to deliver their shooting-guns as well as shooting-ammunition.

Aggravation of the decrees regarding the confiscation of Jewish property. (See decree, of 16/4.)

29/4. All Jewish merchants who were not able to pay the

salary to their Aryan employees at the end of April were imprisoned under various pretexts. (Jewish property such as deposits, post saving books, shares etc. had been confiscated on April the 16th already. Hence many Jews were not able to pay the salary to their employees, and were in such cases put into concentration camps.)

On the same day the leases of all estates rented by Jews were annulled. Instead of the Jewish tenants compulsory administrators were appointed.

But the Jewish tenants nevertheless were obliged to stand by all the financial obligations resulting from the leases.

(It has to be mentioned that the Jews owned 300,000 Joch soil in Hungary /one Joch corresponds to about half a hectare/ and they had rented about 1,5 million Joch. Soil owned by Jews had been confiscated by the Kallay Government already, the right to rent by the above mentioned decree.)

Simultaneously the Institute for the Investigation of the Jewish Problems - which had up to that day been a private institution - was reorganized and extended. A house, former owned by a Jewish organization, was put at its disposal. The new institute was opened by the Secretary of State, Laszlo Endre, and supported by the Government.

On 30/4 a decree was issued whereafter the Minister of the Interior examined all the former decrees in connection with the exceptions to the Jewish regulations. (There existed exceptions for all Jews for merits in both the great wars, for counter revolutionary and scientific achievements.)

Actually in a few days more than 75% of these facilities and exceptions were annulled by the Minister of the Interior.

On the same day it was prohibited to sell books written by Jewish authors and to keep them in libraries. All these books were to be delivered to the authorities to be turned into pulp.

Simultaneously the works of 140 Hungarian and 35 foreign authors were prohibited and turned into pulp.

On the same day the Jewish proprietors were forced to pay the rent received from their tenants to a bank and to inform the authorities about it.

On May the 2nd Jews were prohibited to use public bathing-establishments. The local authorities had to fix place and time for their bathing.

On May the 5th the decrees about the confiscation of Jewish property were completed (see decree of April the 16th.) Jews were forced to pay all their cash into banks and the money was confiscated.

The banks were prohibited from paying out more than 3.000 pengo to creditors, even if the Jews had given a written obligation. (Unclear in original.)

On May the 5th the Government decreed the immediate closing down of all Jewish shops without exceptions. According to reports 18.000 shops were closed in Budapest in one day. It is assumed that about 45.000 Jewish shops were closed all over the country.

It has to be mentioned that among the closed shops were several hundred, that existed already decades, several enterprises had been build up by generations. There were also a number of firms wellknown all over Europe.

On May the 6th Jews possessing profitable licences granted by the Government, district authorities, municipalities, like

the selling of tobacco and spirits, were prohibited to continue making use of these licences.

On the 13th of May the temporary managing Committee of the Union of Hungarian Jews was appointed by the Minister of the Interior. This consisted of:

President Samu Stern, chairman of the Jewish community in
Budapest

Vicepresident Leto Erno, managing member of the community in
Budapest

Members of the council: Karoly Wilhelm

Bela Leread, Chief Rabbi

Samu Mahan Frankl, Rabbi

Filop Obudai Freudinger, President
of the local Jewish community

Sandor Torck, author

Dr. Jozsef Nagy, head physician of
the Jewish hospital

Dr. Janos Gabor, lawyer of the Jewish
community.

On the 17th of May the Government warned the Aryan population against hiding Jewish property. The Aryan citizens had to register such cases immediately. If anybody pleaded guilty within 8 days he would not be punished.

All others the owners as well as the helpers would be severely punished.

On May the 20th Jews were prohibited to visit theatres, cinemas, concerts and other places of entertainments. Jews could use only special bathing-establishments, fixed for them by the authorities and only at a certain hour.

Jews could visit restaurants, inns and coffeehouses assigned by the local authorities.

In these places Jews were prohibited to be served dishes prepared with sugar or fats. Meat, milk and coffee with milk

could not be served either, lest the decree about the reduction of food for Jews should be disobeyed. (See decree of the 23rd of April.)

On May the 20th trade-licences for printing, reproduction and advertisement offices, given to Jews were annulled immediately.

On the same day the properties of those Jews who had special rights, were confiscated, as the former decrees were annulled (see decree of the 30th of April). They were forced to register their property which was confiscated.

Simultaneously Jews were prohibited to enter the air-protection shelters, if these were full up already. In case the shelters were full up the Jews had to leave them instantly.

On the 23rd of May all Jews of conscription age were called in for labour service.

This decree was justified by the explanation that Jews sabotaged the military efforts of the country.

This regulation, resp. this justification is the best proof for the hypocrisy of the Hungarian Government about the persecution of Jews.

The Jews were deprived of their rights, deprived of their property; their shops; their work; they were plundered, imprisoned in concentration camps and ghettos. And then it was discovered that they, defenceless people, sabotaged the military efforts of the country.

On the 24th of May all Jewish members as well as employees of the Stock Exchange had to be dismissed immediately.

Further decrees are not known yet since no Hungarian papers reached Stockholm after the 25th of May.

The Effects of Regulations and Measures.

Ghettos.

1/ The Secretary of State for Jewish problems, Laszlo Andre, made at the beginning of May a circular tour to the Hungarian towns to check personally whether the decrees of the Government had been carried out.

After his return he explained in the paper "Új Magyarug" that he had seen 34 towns and had ascertained that in all these towns Jews had been imprisoned in ghettos. The towns are:

Bassa,
Bánkacs,
Satoraljaújhely,
Beregszász,
Bonyvár,
Nagyszollos,
Buzszt,
Ecső,
Árnaszlatina,
Bármarosziiget,
Nagybánya,
Bzatmarnemeti,
Hateszalka,
Kisvárdá,
Nyíregyháza,
Szilagyósomlyó,
Márosvásárhely,
Bepsziszentgyörgy,
Csikszereá,
Csiksomlyó,
Gyegyószentmiklós,
Gyergyócsászárhegy,
Gyergyóvaslát,
Márosheviz,
Beszterce,
Des,
Szamosújvár,
Nagyvárad,
Kolozsvár,
Nagyszálonta,
Mako,
Szeged,
Szabadka,
Ujpest.

Among the above mentioned towns are the largest in Hungary with the Exception of Budapest.

2/ On the 15th of May the Secretary of State, Laszlo Baký,

explained triumphantly in his speech, that

In the province district East of the Theiss (one third of Hungary) 320.000 Jews had been imprisoned in camps already.

3/ The Jews of the greatest districts of Hungary, the Pest-Filis-Solt-Kiskun provinces, were ordered on the 22nd of May to leave their houses within 3 days. They were imprisoned in camps, established in the following communities:

Abony, Lajosmizse, Rakosca, Budafok, Kalocsa, Godollo, Rakoskeresztur, Nagykuta, Kiskoros, Kecel, Kiskunmajsa, Pestujhely, Pestszentlorinc, Rakosszentmihaly, Sashalom, Soroksar, Kiskoros, Monor, Vecses, Csepel, Bekasmegyer, Vac.

The Jews themselves had to pay the expenses of their removal. "They had the right to take their property with them." This right is nothing but hypocrisy. Firstly the Jews had been plundered and secondly there was no place left for their property in the flats assigned to them.

The camps, or the collective houses were arranged so, that 4 persons had to live in one room. If a room and a kitchen were assigned to Jews, 3 persons had to dwell in them, 4 persons in the room and 4 in the kitchen.

If one knows how tiny the rooms in these districts are, one would realise the barbarity of this decree.

4/ News appeared in succession that the towns, one by one, had taken measures against Jews on their own initiative. These measures widely surpassed the decrees of the Government.

All measures cannot be enumerated, but let us give some examples:

Generally one room was fixed for 4 persons. This decree proves that it has been issued by a central authority, namely the Ministry of the Interior.

5/ The hasty and aspiring Vice Governor of the district Fejer ordered on the 19th of April already to remove all Jews from the province. Thus they were imprisoned in concentration camps in the following places:

Kapolnashyek
Kor
Seregelyes
Erd
Ercsi
Dunapentele
Sarbogard
Eicske.

6/ The chief of the police at Kassa ordered the Jews on the 20th of April to leave the town within one week. Jews seen in the streets on the 27th of April after 5 p.m. were arrested.

7/ The mayor of Lako prohibited the Jews on the 29th of April already to leave their houses from 7 p.m. to 6 a.m.

8/ The Chief Governor of Szeged, Sandor Tukats, ordered all Jews on the 2nd of May to live in a ghetto. This regulation was carried out within 24 hours. Szeged with a population of nearly 200.000 is the second largest city of Hungary.

9/ On May the 6th the Mayor of Budapest reported to have fully carried out the decrees of the Government, and all Jews, resp. people regarded as Jews, who had according to the former decrees still been in service, were dismissed.

Among the dismissed people there are:

117 "pragmatisch" employees
28 workers paid by the month employed temporarily
12 corporals
60 persons of the teaching staff
74 employees of various enterprises of the city
23 employees of the tramway company
altogether 314 people.

10/ On the 19th of May it was reported that only in the Chamber of Lawyers in Budapest so far 1839 lawyers were dismissed. These people could not act in their profession any longer,

longer, their offices were given to Aryan lawyers.

All over the country 3.000 lawyers will be struck off the register.

11/ The Chief Governor of the province Szatmar, Barna Endrody, a former police officer, ordered on the day of his appointment, the 17th of May, to confiscate the "superfluous clothing" of the Jews and to sell them to Aryan people. In the above mentioned province there were especially many Jews. A suit was sold for 30-40 pengő, i.e. 3-6 Swedish Crowns; a pair of shoes for 10-15 pengő, i.e. 1-1½ Swedish Crowns; a shirt for 4-5 pengő, i.e. 40-50 Ore. A real charity on Jewish expense.

When the Chief Governor requisited all Jewish houses and imprisoned the Jews in concentration camps.

12/ On May the 20th the Chief of the Police of Szombathely prohibited the Jews to leave the ghetto on sundays and holidays. On working days Jews were permitted to leave the ghetto only in groups of 50 persons to buy food. That could be done between 12 - 1 o'clock.

Jews were prohibited to use tramways.

The wealthy Jews were imprisoned in concentration camps.

13/ The Chief of the Police of Vecs ordered to encircle the ghetto with barbed wire and to guard it by the police. Jews were not permitted to leave the ghetto. They had to "supply themselves". Food, clothing, hygiene, medical aid, etc., all had to be provided by themselves.

How this could be managed without material, rawmaterial, without the permit to leave the ghetto, that was the Jews' business. The Chief of the Police had no time for these questions.

14/ In Satoraljujhely Jews were imprisoned in concentration camps.

The nationalsocialists of the district overran the camp and slaughtered hundreds of Jews. The guilty people "could not be caught". The only measures taken by the authorities was the replacing of the police by the "Gendarmerie", and the latter was instructed to take up arms if necessary.

Whether arms were to be used against the murderers or against the Jews was not announced...

Pogroms and Internments.

Since the occupation of Hungary only some scanty reports have been received from that country. The reports of the newspapers are being strictly examined. Travellers leave the country very seldom. According to an order by the Germans, one needs, on leaving the country, besides the Hungarian passport and the permission of the Hungarians authorities, a permit of the German military authorities, to be shown on leaving and reentering the country.

Nevertheless several very important statements were obtained.

The police of Budapest prepares monthly reports for the Council of the City, recording the achievements of the police, imprisonments, unnatural deaths, etc..., of the previous month.

On the 15th of May the police gave a report on the events of April, that is about the measures against Jews.

There were 471 unnatural deaths in Budapest only; this figure includes 104 cases of suicide, 34 accidents and 333 cases of various kinds of murder.

The corresponding figures of the previous months, March and February, were on the average 24 cases of suicide, 35 accidents and 11 murders.

All reports from the previous years show on the average the same figures as in February and March.

The striking number of suicides - thrice as much as in the month before - is due to the persecutions. More striking is the figure of "other violent cases of death" - thirty times more than before. This was explained in the reports about the pogroms. 300 Jews were killed only in Budapest.

There are no reports in detail yet on the events in the provinces. But as a matter of fact pogroms there also were

arranged.

Not less detestable is the torture in the concentration camps. It is certainly not less barbaric to torture poor uneducated than rich and educated Jews. But it shows certain sadistic tendencies if intelligent wealthy Jews are imprisoned in concentration camps, tortured, prohibited to shave, photographed and then presented in the newspapers as typical Jews.

A member of the House of Lords and general manager of the greatest enterprises, Jenő Vida, is imprisoned in the camp of Matarcsa and treated there under the most barbaric and unworthy conditions. Like him - in the same camp - is imprisoned the manufacturer Budai Goldberger, the general manager of the largest Hungarian banks, the "Allgemeine Kreditbank" and of the "Escomptebank", Baron Madarassy-Beck and Ullmann; the great industrialists Brachfeld, Salgo, Weiner, Kallos, etc.

They were all photographed together and separately and then presented in the paper "Harc" and some in other papers.

Who is Jewish ?

It has to be mentioned that among the people marked Jews, were not only people of Jewish faith, but all people regarded as Jews, according to the laws of Nuremberg.

Hence the decrees apply to more than a million people.

Is the Aim only to Extirpate the Jewish Spirit?

The Minister of the Interior, Andor Jaross, explained that "the Hungarian Government does not intend to persecute Jews in an unchristian and barbaric manner, but wants only to extirpate the Jewish spirit."

One has only to read the dry report of the decrees and orders to see how hypocritical is the explanation of the Minister of the Interior and that of the Hungarian Governor.

The deprivation, the imprisonment in camps, the treatment in the ghettos, the hundreds of prohibitions have no connection with the extirpation of the Jewish spirit; these are brutal and barbaric prosecutions of bloodthirsty people against more than a million people in the heart of Europe.

Political Police against Opposition and Jews.

On May the 3rd the Hungarian papers announced the appointment of a new Political Police. As Chief of this Police was appointed the former Deputy of the City Council, Detective Inspector Peter Hain, a wellknown persecutor of members of the opposition and Jews.

The new Police was organized after the model of the Gestapo.

According to the papers the task of the Police is to check and persecute the inner opposition and to see whether the decrees against Jews are being carried out, the Jewish fortunes registered and surrendered without exception.

The new police imprisoned the rich Jews, confiscated their flats and found pretexts under which to arrest them.

In this way the fortune of Jews was expropriated at once.

Thousands of Jews were interned, tortured, and many have entirely disappeared.

Thus they have robbed millions from Baron Moritz Kornfeld, Baron Lipot Mor Herzog, Baron Alfons Weiss and from many others.

Press Propaganda against Jews.

It is well known that all liberal and antinazi papers were prohibited after the occupation of Hungary. Up to now 3 daily papers in Budapest, 12 daily papers in the provinces, and more than 150 periodicals were prohibited.

Furthermore the Government ordered that the books of about 140 Hungarian and 35 foreign authors were neither to be sold nor kept in libraries. The books in stock had to be surrendered to the authorities to be turned into pulp.

Among these books are the works of famous foreign authors known all over the world, such as: Franz Werfel, Arthur Schnitzler, Stefan Zweig, Lion Feuchtwanger, Ilja Ehrenburg, Egon Erwin Kisch, Max Nordau, André Maurois, Felix Salten, etc.

The remaining Hungarian papers were making propaganda against the Jews in a way which sooner or later must lead to pogroms. Not even the German papers use such exhorting language the Government papers are. Leading in the press propaganda: "Magyarsag", "Uj Magyarsag", "Függetlenség", and the rest of the papers as well, which are all "gleichgeschaltet" to-day.

In spite of the prohibition and the lack of paper, a new journal under the title "Harc" appeared in Hungary some days ago. The new paper is issued by the so called "Hungarian Institute for the Investigation of Jewish Problems", and it is on the same level as the infamous pogrom paper "Der Stürmer", issued by the German Gauleiter Streicher.

The Urgency of Escape.

Reference must be made to the warning of the leading personalities of the present regime in Hungary, such as the Secretary of State at the Ministry of the Interior, Laszlo Endre, entrusted with measures to be taken against Jews, and the Secretary of State, Laszlo Baky, who said that in case the enemy will set foot on Hungarian soil, no Jew will find mercy.

The paper of the Government "Függetlenség", as well as other papers expressed this warning more distinctly. The representative of the Government, Lajos Marschalko, wrote an article in the "Függetlenség", in which, appealing to Hitler, he stated, that in case Germany would win the war all Jews would be removed from Europe. But in case of the victory of the Allies no living Jew would be found in Europe. Marschalko went on: The Hungarian Jews therefore have a reason not to wait for the victory of the Allies. As the Hungarian Jews were imprisoned in ghettos and camps, and as the Sovietrussian troops stand close to the Hungarian border, wholesale murder is not to be excluded. Measures of protection are therefore very urgent. The speed of such measures can save the lives of many thousands of Jews.

The Measures of the Swedish Foreign Office.

After the occupation of Hungary and the proclamation of the measures against Jews, many Hungarian Jews who have relatives or acquaintances in Sweden were storming the Swedish Legation in Budapest and begging protection. Likewise many Swedish citizens and refugees in Stockholm, who have Jewish relatives in Hungary, begged the "Utrikesdepartment" for protection for their relatives. In the "Utrikesdepartment" these questions are managed by Mr. utrikesrådet Engsell and his collaborator, attaché Hochsted. The "Utrikesdepartment" was very helpful in these matters and nearly in every case measures were taken by wire without any lengthy examination and the Swedish Legation has been instructed to protect the people concerned. Protection was granted in 3 ways:

1/ For relatives of Swedish citizens; irrespective of whether these people are Swedish or not, they were given Swedish passports, and they were protected by the Swedish Legation in Budapest as if they were Swedish citizens. There was about

1 dozen

of such people.

2/ People for whom Swedish citizens also have used their influence, and who have any relations to Swedish enterprises, newspapers, etc., and who have merits for achievements in Sweden, received a letter of protection, which granted them a certain protection by the Swedish Legation and also the right of an entry visum to Sweden.

3/ Finally, for all people who have relatives in Sweden and for whom friends or acquaintances have called upon the "Utrikesdepartment".

The Legation has been instructed, in case these Jews were persecuted, they have the right to explain to the Hungarian authorities, that they are protected by the Swedish Legation and have been promised an entry visum to Sweden.

The Swedish Legation is ready to intervene with the authorities in case the Jews belonging to the above mentioned second or third group would be persecuted.

The extend to which the Hungarian authorities and the German Gestapo respect these interventions varies, but as a matter of fact these interventions were successful in some cases.

The number of people mentioned in the first, second and third group is 700-800. Exact figures could be given only by the "Utrikesdepartement", resp. by the Swedish Legation in Budapest.

Proposals.

When making proposals for protection one should not overlook the immense difficulties. The cause of these difficulties is in the first place the geographic situation of the country, and the immense number of the people requiring protection and safety.

Hungary's neighbour in the West is Germany, in the North Slovakia and countries occupied by Germany; in the East Roumania, where defenceless people are being persecuted as well as in Germany and Hungary; in the South there are Croatia and Serbia, again countries occupied or directed by Germany.

For this reason only a few people succeeded in reaching a foreign country, despite the fact that a German occupation was awaited already before the 19th of March, and people only did not know when it would happen.

A rich manufacturer, Ritter Wahl, arrived in Stockholm just on the day of the occupation of Hungary. Some rich people escaped to Switzerland, such as the leather manufacturer Mauthner. According to reports received hitherto some young people escaped in an adventurous way to the district occupied by Marshall Tito.

Taking into consideration the number of people requiring protection, over one million, the cases mentioned are of great importance to the people who escaped, but generally very insignificant.

The Hungarian Government and the Secretary of State, Laszlo Endre, who is charged by the Government to take measures against the Jews, repeatedly explained that the Jewish problem could be solved only by an evacuation of

Jews on a large scale. This declaration was published in all Hungarian and several leading German papers.

If the Government of the United States wants to take measures for the saving of some groups, such action must be based on the above mentioned declaration. Based on this declaration it is suggested:

1/ A neutral authority, represented in Hungary, such as Sweden, Switzerland or Turkey should discuss matters with the Hungarian Government, to take over a number of Hungarian Jews.

Then the Hungarian Government has to prove whether it is ready to turn into deeds her public declaration.

2/ It is very difficult to fix groups for evacuation. It is absolutely unlikely that the Hungarian Government would be ready to grant the emigration of political prisoners, politically persecuted people and members of the political parties. It is just as unlikely that the Hungarian Government would permit the wealthy Jews to leave Hungary.

But certainly an agreement could be made for the evacuation of a number of American or English citizens, and for some groups of Jews. I think it would be possible for:

- a/ Jews protected by the Swedish Government, mentioned in the above 3 groups.
- b/ Groups protected by Switzerland, Portugal, Spain and Turkey.
- c/ Groups who have all papers prepared for the emigration to Palestine.
- d/ Several groups which could be selected based on an agreement.

The greatest difficulty for these groups would not be the permit to leave Hungary, which should be granted by the Hungarian Government, but the refusal of the Germans.

Proposals for getting over the difficulties are made as follows: The writer cannot judge how far these ideas can be realised. In this difficult situation it is his task to express his opinion which could later on be examined by the protecting power and then possibly realised.

Such an idea could be to offer a compensation to the German and Hungarian authorities for the exchange of Jews.

Objects of compensation could be: prisoners of war, civilians or other people in the hands of the United Nations.

The Hungarian Government would doubtlessly accept this compensation.

The author of this report cannot judge whether the German Government would be interested in compensation, but the success of such an experiment does not seem to be impossible.

The general aim should be to save as many people as possible. Of the groups mentioned it is evident that it is unfortunately impossible to save all of them, since the number of the people, requiring protection exceeds a million. The proposals are adjusted to the possibilities of salvation.

By intercession of the American Government, the Governments of

- 1/ Sweden
- 2/ Switzerland
- 3/ Portugal
- 4/ Turkey

should negotiate with the German Government and the Governments of the occupied countries, the refugees have to pass.

They should be sent in sealed trains over Germany and German occupied countries to Sweden, Switzerland, Portugal and Turkey, where they could live until their further emigration.

It should be taken into consideration that this way of salvation requires immense financial means. As the United States have already taken measures I do not want to discuss this matters. As for Sweden, a great number of people protected by the Swedish Foreign Office have relatives and friends in Sweden who would be ready to help them with their cost of living.

Financial Aid.

It is evident from the report that the Hungarian Jews are in a very bad situation. The rich Jews have lost their fortune. It should be mentioned that the majority of Jews were not rich. Hundred thousands of people are facing absolute poverty.

Financial aid is necessary. It is not sure whether food and clothing could be sent. Help in the form of food and clothing on large scale will be impossible because of the geographical situation of Hungary and the damaged system of transport.

It would be advisable to send medicaments for the ghettos. That is possible.

The transfer of money would be possible as well. It would be preferable to transfer money to the members of the Jewish Central Committee, mentioned in the report.

The office of the Central Committee is in the house of the Jewish Community in Budapest VII Wesselenyu ucca.

It would be preferable to transfer the money from several places, f.i. the Switzerland, Sweden, Portugal and Turkey.

The remitters should be public banks, the Red Cross or other neutral organisations of these countries.

It would be advantageous to establish contact with the Jewish Central Committee in Hungary and to ask what kind of aid they would prefer.

No mention must be made about persecutions of Jews, for this could be dangerous for their lives.

The Attitude of the Population.

It would be unfair to regard the attitude of the Hungarian people against their Jewish fellow-men as inhumane and barbaric, despite the press propaganda and the Government and the Nazi persecution of the Jews. Three facts prove the contrary:

1/ Absolutely reliable reports prove that many thousands Jews had found shelter and protection with Hungarian peasants, in their farms far away from the persecuting authorities. The peasants hide the Jews and support them with food.

2/ A considerable part of Jewish property was taken over and managed by Non Jews on behalf of Jews. All papers, and even the Ministers, warned the non Jews, called them Jewish slaves, but nevertheless these people keep their protecting hands over the persecuted Jews.

3/ The papers of the Government wrote furious articles against Non Jews who brought food and clothing to the internment camps and ghettos despite all warnings by the Government.

No less sharp articles were written in the Government papers against Nonjews who were demonstratively walking arm in arm in the streets of Budapest and were keeping company with the Jews. (The Jews of Budapest were not imprisoned in ghettos yet.)

The papers demand the punishment of all these Nonjewish people keeping company with Jews.

These occurrences were of some use for several Jews but did not ease the sad fate of hundred thousands Jews.

The Guilty People.

On concluding this report it is necessary to mention the names of the people guilty of the horrible persecutions against one million Hungarian Jews.

The Reichsverweser Nikolaus Horthy arranged pogroms against the Jews already in 1919-1920. The present persecutions against Jews would not either had been possible without his permission.

Just as important is the German Ambassador and Plenipotentiary Weesenmeyer, who examines all decrees and regulations of the present Government.

On behalf of the Hungarian Government the following people participate in at the issue of the barbaric decrees:

Sztojay Dome, Premier
Jaross Andor, Minister of the Interior
Baky Laszlo, Secretary of State at the Ministry of the Interior
Endre Laszlo, Minister of Industry
Huszovsky Lajos, " " "
Kolozsvary-Borcsa Mihaly, Dictator of Press and Radio
Ratz Jehö, Deputy Premier

Not less responsible are the leaders of the Antisemite Parties, such as

Imredy Bela, Minister and member of the Party of the
Hungarian Regeneration
Count Pallffy Fidel, the Hungarian nationalsocialist Party
Count Teleki Mihaly, Party of the Hungarian Life
Bocsary Kalman, " " " " "
Marton Bela, " " " " "

The journalistic persecutors prescribe the way of cruelties and invent lies to make mischief against Jews. In the first place are the following:

Milotay Istvan
Virtsologi Rupprecht Oliver
Rattkay R. Kalman
Marothy Karoly
Rajnisz Ferencz

Hubay Kalman
Mattyasovsky Kornel
Vajta Jerencz
Bagyoni Varo Andor
Kálnassi Ödön
Dövényi Nagy Lajos.

Among the higher officials taking part in the persecutions are the following:

Petranyi Kalman, the Chief of the Police of Budapest
Dr. Buocz Bela, the Chief of the Country Police
Hain Peter, the Chief of the new Political Police.

As guilty are further regarded all the newly appointed governors, mayors, chiefs of the police in all districts, towns and municipalities where Jews are being persecuted.

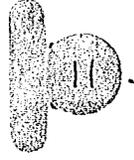
Further-more mention must be made of the fact that we register all the names of people guilty of cruelties. The same is also done by the opposition in Hungary.

minister Szasz on the Emigration of the Jews.

On the 3rd of May the Minister of Industry, Lajos Szasz, said in his speech on the Jewish problem as follows:

"It is not our aim to extirpate the Jews. We should be happy, very happy, if the unfortunate people of Ahasver would find a home where they could establish their own State, far from our borders.

But we should never feel any mercy for the Jews."



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DEPARTMENT
OF
STATE

INCOMING
TELEGRAM

DIVISION OF
COMMUNICATIONS
AND RECORDS

London

ALH-634
Distribution of
true reading only by
special arrangement.
W)

Dated November 9, 1944

Rec'd 8:20 p.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington,

9735, November 9, 5 p.m.
FOR PEHLE FROM MANN.

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

Notwithstanding that I requested materials men-
tioned in your WRB 20 on four separate occasions since
sending my 8133 of September 29, I was successful in
obtaining them only on November 7. They were forwarded
to you by air pouch same day. I have promises of other
materials concerning this project which will be for-
warded when and if received.

GALLMAN

BB

CONTROL COPY

NOV 11 1944

RECEIVED
NOV 10 1944

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72

By R. H. Parks Date SEP 14 1972

1068

November 3, 1944

10 p.m.

AMEMB.SSY

LONDON

9218

X

The following for Mann is WRB 20.

Assume you are forwarding material mentioned in second paragraph of your No. 8133 of September 29. Please advise at once.

STETTINIUS
ACTING
(GLW)

WRB:LLV:KG
11/3/44

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

7 0 0 6 8

Handwritten note: 11/11/44

הסתדרות העולמית, אגודת ישראל
Agudas Israel World Organization
THE UNION OF UNIVERSALLY ORGANIZED ORTHODOX JEWRY
(WORLD-AGUDAH OF ORTHODOX JEWS INC.)

CENTRAL EXECUTIVE: LONDON - BRANCH OFFICES: JERUSALEM AND NEW YORK

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
226 WEST 97TH STREET
NEW YORK 25, N. Y.

Confidential & Personal

SPECIAL DELIVERY

October 23, 1944

NEW ADDRESS
2521 BRIGADWAY

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

Dear Mr. Pehle:

I feel it my duty to submit to you the following suggestion in view of the fact that the city of Hanover is already going to be attacked by Allied bombers and the apprehended mass-murder of the internees in the concentration camp of Belsen-Bergen near Hanover may therefore only be a question of a few days.

Perhaps a confidential approach - through proper private channels - to influential German-American circles here could achieve an intervention of these circles at the Nazi-leaders. If certain American citizens of German origin would be empowered, to assure to the Nazis that an act of mercy in this last minute would not remain unrewarded in the hour of reckoning (notwithstanding military unconditional surrender), a few thousand human beings with no other crime but their being Jews could perhaps be rescued.

Such a delicate step - the procedure must be considered - could of course only be undertaken by private persons or bodies, but with the previous consent and authorization of the State Department.

If you would be prepared to consider the matter with the chiefs of the War Refugee Board, I should be sincerely grateful.

I remain,

Yours faithfully,

Jacob Rosenthal
JACOB ROSENHEIM

Handwritten mark: S

10 15 19

N.Y. Lesser

1944 OCT 16 AM 8 32

WUWU7 180 SER PD 8 EXTRA

PXXECW NEWYORK NY OCT 15 1944 347P

HONORABLE JOHN W PEHLE EXECUTIVE DIR WAR REFUGEE BOARD

TREASURY BLDG

HAVE SENT FOLLOWING TELEGRAM TO HONORABLE ADOLF BERLE QUOTE
 DEEPLY GRATEFUL FOR YOUR PROMPT ACTION IN ISSUING A DIPLOMATIC
 WARNING ON OCTOBER NINTH TO GERMANS STOP THE WARNING BY OUR
 PRESIDENT AND BY THE MILITARY AUTHORITIES WHICH WE UNDERSTAND
 IS PLANNED IS VITALLY NECESSARY STOP SINCE SITUATION IS FURTHER
 AGGRAVATED BY REPORTS THAT SS MEN HAVE ALREADY ARRIVED IN
 BUDAPEST TO CARRY OUT PLANNED EXTERMINATONS IT IS NECESSARY
 THAT IN ADDITION TO THE WARNINGS AND APPEAL SHOULD ISSUE TO
 THE HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE TO RISE AGAINST AND STRONGLY
 PREVENT THE ~~XX~~ PLANNED DEPORTATIONS AND EXECUTIONS STOP IN VIEW
 OF APPROACHING NEGOTIATIONS FOR AN HUNGARIAN ARMISTICE WE
 WOULD RESPECTFULLY URGE THAT BEFORE ANY ARMISTICE BE CONSIDERED
 A CONDITION PRECEDENT BE MADE THAT HUNGARY CEASE AND ALSO
 PREVENT GERMANS IN HER TERRITORIES FROM CARRYING OUT THE
 EXTERMINATIONS AND DEPORTATIONS WE WOULD RESPECTFULLY URGE
 THAT IMMEDIATE PRESENTATIONS IN THE MATTER BE ALSO MADE TO THE
 GOVERNMENTS OF RUSSIA AND ENGLAND UNQUOTE WE RESPECTFULLY
 REQUEST YOU TO TAKE THE NECESSARY STEPS TO EXPEDITE THE PETITIONED
 ACTION.

VAAD HAHATZALA EMERGENCY COMMITTEE IN NAME ALL JEWISH
 ORTHODOX ORGANIZATION RABBIS ARON KOTLER ABRAHAM
 KALAMANOWITZ.

826 AM OCT 16 1944.

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HON JOHN W PEHLE EXEC DIR

WAR REFUGEE BOARD TREAS BLDG

1944 SEP 1 PM 3 45

WE MOST HEARTILY ENDORSE PROPOSALS INCLUDED IN MEMORANDUM
SUBMITTED BY OUR COLLEAGUE RABBI ABRAHAM A KALMANOWITZ ON
BEHALF VAAD HAHTZALA EMERGENCY COMMITTEE STOP TENS OF
THOUSAND UNFORTUNATES CAN STILL BE SAVED IN HOURSE YET
REMAINING FOR RESCUE RESPECTFULLY APPEAL TO YOU GIVE
IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION TO PROPOSALS THAT NECESSARY ACTION
ENSUE THANKFUL FOR REPLY

UNION ORTHODOX RABBIS UNITED STATES AND CANADA
RABBIS ISRAEL ROSENBERG EL SILVER JOINED BY REPRESENTATIVE
JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS.

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1944 SEP 2 AM 8 33

WU7 NL PD

BROOKLYN NY SEP 1 1944

JOHN W PEHLE

WAR REFUGEE BOARD TREASURY DEPT

WE HAVE JUST RECEIVING AN ALARMING REPORT FROM OUR COMMITTEE
ABOUT THE JEWS IN HUNGARY WE CALLED DR BENJAMIN AKZIN AND
GAVE HIM THE DETAILS HE WILL GIVE ALL THE REPORT TO YOU PLEASE
GET IT FROM HIM AND DO ALL IN YOUR POWER TO SAVE STOP WILL
CALL YOU TOMORROW SATURDAY BETWEEN ELEVEN AND TWELVE
VAAD HAHATZALA RABBI A KALAMANOWITZ.

829 AM SEP 2 1944.

10068

EXECUTIVE OFFICE THE PRESIDENT
WAR REPAIR BOARD

10/20

To:

- (1) (Room) (Bldg.)
- (2) (Room) (Bldg.)
- (3) (Room) (Bldg.)

Letter 6/16

From: *Chy Friedman* (Date)
..... (Room) (Bldg.)

10068

DEPARTMENT
OF
STATE

OUTGOING
TELEGRAM

DIVISION OF
COMMUNICATIONS
AND RECORDS

IM
Classification of trans
mission only by special
arrangement. [REDACTED]

October 5, 1944

8 p.m.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DIVISION OF
OCT 7 1944
COMMUNICATIONS
AND RECORDS

EMBASSY

LONDON

CLAS

The cable below for Mann is RB 9.

Proposal referred to in your no. 8132 of September 29
has been presented again to War Department for its con-
sideration.

HULL
(GLW)

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

HRB:RMV:KJ
10/5/44

BC

EE

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 14 1972

100691

*re: g...
II*

OCT 3 1944

Dear Mr. McCloy:

You will recall our conversation some time ago concerning the various proposals placed before the Board that extermination centers in Poland be bombed. I understand that the matter is now in the hands of appropriate theatre commanders.

In this connection, there follows for such consideration as it may be worth, the substance of the pertinent portions of a cable recently received from James Mann, Assistant Executive Director of the Board, who is now in England:

"Members of the Polish Government and groups interested in rescue work report that they have reliable information from the Polish underground that in all Polish concentration camps the Germans are increasing their extermination activities.

"The War Refugee Board is urged by them again to explore with the Army the possibility of bombing the extermination chambers and German barracks at largest Polish concentration camps which, they say, are subject to precision bombing since they are sufficiently detached from the concentration camps. The aforementioned persons have promised to furnish me with recent maps which I will forward to Washington by air-mail, although I assume the Army authorities have maps of such camps."

Very truly yours,

(Signed) J. W. Pehle

J. W. Pehle,
Executive Director.

Mr. John J. McCloy,
Assistant Secretary of War,
War Department,
Washington, D. C.

*Original signed by
Mr. Pehle*

copy to Lesser

LS:lessertan 10-4-44 L.S.L.

10069

DEPARTMENT
OF
STATE

INCOMING
TELEGRAM

DIVISION OF
COMMUNICATIONS
AND RECORDS

For security reasons, this message must be closely guarded.

KD-693
Distribution of true
reading only by special
arrangement. ()-W

London

Dated September 29, 1944

Rec'd 3:45 p.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DIVISION OF
SEP 30 1944
COMMUNICATIONS
AND RECORDS

8133, September 29, 5 p.m.

FOR PEHLE WAR REFUGEE BOARD FROM MANN.

In conversations with members of Polish Government and groups interested in rescue work they report that they have reliable information from the Polish underground to the effect that the Germans are increasing their extermination activities in all Polish concentration camps.

They urge that the WRB again explore with the Army the possibility of bombing the extermination chambers and German barracks at largest Polish concentration camps which, they state, are sufficiently detached from the concentration camps to permit precision bombing. I assume the Army authorities have maps of such camps. However, the above mentioned persons have promised to furnish me with recent maps which I shall transmit to Washington by airmail. I have pointed out that this has been

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 14 1972

700692

-2- #8133, September 29, 5 p.m., from London

has been before the Board before and found impractical. However, at their insistence I am reporting their views.

They also urge again that another warning to those guilty of these atrocities be made. They have reiterated that they are able to furnish the names of persons guilty of atrocities and that the OWI might care to use such names in its broadcasts. In this connection see my letter of September 19.

WINANT

JT

100693

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
WAR REFUGEE BOARD

INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION

DATE September 2, 1944

TO J. W. Pehle

FROM B. Aksia

Subject: Urgent message from Rabbi Kalmanowitz

Last night, Rabbi Kalmanowitz called me at home from New York and asked me to deliver to you the following message:

A cable from Sterabuch, transmitted through the Polish embassy, contains the information that on August 26 deportations of Jews from Budapest have begun. Twelve thousand Jews have already been deported to Oswiecim, in Upper Silesia. Sterabuch, in his own name and on the suggestion of the Rabbi of Neutra suggests that further deportations be interfered with by the immediate bombing of the railroad junctions between Budapest and Silesia, viz: Kaschan Presov - Zilina - Galanta - Leopoldorf - Caca- Rudki, as well as the railroad junction at Graz (Austria.).

The Polish charge d'affaires, M. Kwapiszewski, has promised to Rabbi Kalmanowitz to transmit a copy of the cable to WEB, but in view of possible delays, the Rabbi wanted my assurance that this matter will be placed before you immediately.

While supporting Sterabuch's and the Rabbi of Neutra's request for action, Rabbi Kalmanowitz wishes also to emphasize that the renewal of large-scale deportations from Hungary lends particular urgency to his proposals placed before the Board at yesterday's conference.

The Rabbi intends to telephone you this morning regarding this matter and, is ready, despite the Sabbath, to take a train today to Washington, if this should appear necessary in the interest of insuring immediate action.

To the above, I should like respectfully to add the following:

The thought of bombing the railroad junctions between Hungary and Silesia to interrupt the flow of deportations is indeed elementary. You will recall that the thought has been clearly hinted at by McClelland, in 4041 from Bern, dated June 24.

I am aware of the fact that a somewhat similar idea was rejected some time ago by the Department of War--a rejection which quite likely stems from

000694

the habitual reluctance of the military to act upon civilian suggestions.

It is submitted, however, that the WRB was created precisely in order to overcome the inertia and--in some cases--the insufficient interest of the old-established agencies in regard to the saving of Jewish victims of Nazi Germany. Repeatedly we refused to take a "no" for an answer when it came from the Department of State. There is nothing in the officials of the Department of War that would make them more sacrosanct or freer from error than the officials of the Department of State.

In the matter of the "Free Port" which, whatever its merits, was certainly not a matter of life and death, Mr. Pehle went to the President.

To be faithful to our task, it would appear most appropriate if the Board took the identical course in connection with the Hungarian emergency.

In the light of the present air superiority of the United Nations, I am certain that the President, once acquainted with the facts, would realize the values involved and, cutting through the inertia-motivated objections of the War Department, would order the immediate bombing of the objectives suggested.

Bausis

P.S. I have promised the Rabbi to see to it that you get this message without delay. I therefore take this unconventional way of sending it straight to your office, not through channels. A copy of the memo goes to my Chief, Mr. Lesser.

70069

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM

FROM American Legation, Bern
TO Secretary of State, Washington
DATED June 24, 1944
NUMBER 4041

McClelland reads the following for the War Refugee Board

Reference is made herewith to Legation's message dated June 17 No 3867, paragraph three.

Now there is no doubt that the majority of the Jewish population east of the Danube especially in eastern, northern and north eastern Hungary has been deported to Poland. Further reliable information confirming this fact has come in in the course of the past two weeks from the following independent sources (a) Swiss official employees just returned from Budapest, (b) Railway workers in Czech resistance movement (c) other reliable secret source regard information as to sources as absolutely confidential since any publicity regarding them would endanger lives.

Prior to the deportations, there were two weeks to a month of brutal concentration during which thousands of Jews were crowded together in primitive quarters with insufficient food, clothing and water, regardless of state of health, sex or age. The Hungarian gendarmes on Lasso Andre's orders largely carried out this action.

Apparently the actual large scale deportations began about May 16 and lasted until the middle of June. The movement involved 2,000 persons per day: About 7,000 through sub-Carpathia Russia and 5,000 through Slovakia. Characteristic of such actions, people were deported 60 to 70 per sealed freight wagon for a trip of two to three days without adequate water or food probably resulting in many deaths en route.

Particularly used were the following stretches of rail-road

(1) Gasp-Kaschau-Fresov-Lubotin-Nowytsack in direction of Gasp; (2) Satoraljanjhaly-Leginamich Wlany-Nichalovec-Medzilaborce. Also many thousand troops to and from the Polish front were transported daily over this line; (3) Munkacs-Lavocsa; (4) Galanta-Sered-Leopoldstadt-Novemesto-Francin; (5) Vrutky Zilina.

It is urged by all sources of this information in Slovakia and Hungary that vital sections of these lines especially bridges along ONE be bombed as the only possible means of slowing down or stopping future deportations. (This is submitted by me as a proposal of these agencies and I can venture no opinion on its utility).

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72

At least.....

By R. H. Parks Date SEP 14 1972

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

Approximately 100,000 Jews have already been concentrated in Budapest and environs. This began around June 16 and on the 21st it was to be finished. In the city proper they have been settled in the isolated blocks of human-lure glass board pattern so that they will not escape headquarters.

Approximately 100,000 Jews have already been concentrated in Budapest and environs. This began around June 16 and on the 21st it was to be finished. In the city proper they have been settled in the isolated blocks of human-lure glass board pattern so that they will not escape headquarters.

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The principal individuals in the Száljay Government responsible for this persecution of Jews are as follows: László Salgó, former Subsecretary of Security of Post now in Ministry of Interior; László Bakó, also Interior and Andre Farkas, Minister of Interior.

In an effort to check such continued deportations to Transylvania (*) from the United States, we recommend British and Soviet (*) broadcasts and especially leaflets. If it is possible, the Vatican should be prevailed upon to associate itself with such protest.

There is little doubt that many of these Hungarian Jews are being sent to the extermination camps of Auschwitz (Oświęcim) and Birkenau (Bełżec) in western upper Silesia where according to recent reports, since early summer 1942 at least 1,500,000 Jews have been killed. There is evidence that already in January....

Very little has been done to develop
the program for the year. This is largely
due to the fact that the program is
still in the planning stage.

1944

1944

cc: Barry, Abrahamsen, Akzin, Bernstein, Cohn, DuBois, Friedman, Gaston, Hodel,
Laughlin, Lesser, Luxford, Mann, Mannon, Manka, McCormack, Sargey, Smith, Standish,
Stewart, Weinstein, H. D. White, Fohle, Fillee.

File

WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS
CONGRES JUIF MONDIAL • CONGRESO JUDIO MUNDIAL

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NEW YORK, 23, N. Y.

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JERUSALEM
Vaad Leumi P. O. B. 471

MONTREAL
1121 St. Catherine St. W

MEXICO CITY
Sonora 174-4

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

August 8, 1944

in reply refer
to: No. 209

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

Dear Mr. Pehle:

You were kind enough to forward to me on August 3 a message from Mr. Ernest Frischer of the Czechoslovak State Council dated July 29.

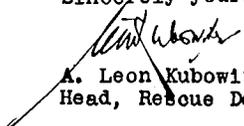
I beg to call your attention to the following passage in the same message:

"I believe that destruction of gas chambers and crematoria in Oswiecim by bombing would have a certain effect now. Germans are now exhuming and burning corpses in an effort to conceal their crimes. This could be prevented by destruction of crematoria and then Germans might possibly stop further mass exterminations especially since so little time is left to them. Bombing of railway communications in this same area would also be of importance and of military interest."

May I remind you at this time of the letter I wrote to you on July 1 on the question of the destruction of the instruments of annihilation used by the Germans in the camps of Oswiecim, Birkenau, and Treblinka.

I should greatly appreciate it if you would inform me whether any action has been taken as a result of our suggestion.

Sincerely yours


A. Leon Kubowitzki
Head, Rescue Department

ALK:dl

10069

WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS
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1834 BROADWAY
NEW YORK, 23, N. Y.

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37 Quai Wilson

BUENOS AIRES
Corrientes 1979

JERUSALEM
Vaad Leumi P. O. B. 471

MONTREAL
1121 St. Catherine St. W

MEXICO CITY
Sonora 1744

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

August 24, 1944

In answer please
refer to: No. 230

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

Dear Mr. Pehle:

The Polish Jewish Representative Committee affiliated with the World Jewish Congress received today from Dr. Ignacy Schwarzbart, member of the Polish National Council, a cable from which the following excerpt is of particular interest:

"Urging again matter liberation remaining camps as foremost task. Urging matter appeal to population because hitherto no results."

We interpret this cable as meaning that, in Dr. Schwarzbart's opinion, an appeal should be addressed to the Christian population in Poland, and in particular to the underground, asking them to attack the extermination camps and to liberate their inmates.

May I observe in this respect that the Russian Army is still at some distance from the most dreaded of these camps, Oswiecim.

I would be extremely obliged to you for informing me of any action you would decide to take in this matter.

Sincerely yours

Leon Kubowitzki
A. Leon Kubowitzki, Head
Rescue Department

ALK:ef

1 phone call
giving him this infor-
mation

B. A.

70070

Handwritten mark

August 5, 1944

MEMORANDUM FOR THE FILES

At Mr. Friedman's suggestion, I called Mr. Warren to clear with him the proposed reply to Mr. Smertenko which had been drafted by Mr. Abrahamson.

Mr. Warren stated that in view of the fact that the original letter had been sent to the Secretary of State the State Department should send the reply to Mr. Smertenko. He asked me to dictate our draft which he proposes to incorporate in the letter which he would send from the Department of State.

JH

S

Stamp

1070

draft by AA

Dear Mr. Smertenko:

President Roosevelt has asked me to reply to your letter of July 24, in which you make several specific suggestions as to steps that might be taken to meet the life-or-death crisis facing the Jews of Europe, particularly in Hungary.

I want to assure you that every specific proposal presented in your letter has received the most earnest consideration of the War Refugee Board and that every practicable step will be taken to meet the situation.

May I also express my appreciation to you and to your Committee for your continued interest in our problems.

Clear with [unclear]

S

10070

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

July 28, 1944

Respectfully referred to the
Executive Director of the War
Refugee Board for attention and
appropriate acknowledgment.

The original letter has been
sent to the Secretary of State.

In the absence of the President.

William D. Hassett
WILLIAM D. HASSETT
Secretary to the President

COPY

EMERGENCY COMMITTEE TO SAVE THE JEWISH PEOPLE OF EUROPE, INC.

25 W. 45th St., New York 19, N. Y.

July 24, 1944

Honorable Franklin D. Roosevelt,
President of the United States,
The White House,
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. President:

In reply to my telegram sent you on July 3, 1944, I have just received a letter from the State Department signed by Mr. George L. Warren, the last paragraph of which states:

Thus, active attention has been given to all means available for combatting these savage practices. In considering the question of applying measures of retaliation, it has been necessary to examine the relation of such measures to the major business of bringing about the early defeat of the Nazi enemy as the really effective way to end the sufferings of the great mass of innocent victims. Anything designed for purposes of retaliation which would divert military energies even momentarily would be inconsistent with the main purpose of defeating the German armies at the earliest possible moment, which must be accomplished if the Jews in Nazi-held territory are to be saved.

The Emergency Committee is in complete accord with your views, as expressed here by Mr. Warren, that nothing be done which will even momentarily divert military energies from the main purpose of defeating the German armies at the earliest possible moment. Nevertheless, I wish to submit most respectfully the view of the Emergency Committee that a number of measures of retaliation can be taken that will be consistent with this purpose and will in fact appreciably aid this purpose.

1. Railways and bridges leading from Nazi-occupied territory to extermination centers in Poland can be destroyed by bombing, specifying that this action is taken in order to prevent the transportation of the Hebrew people of these Axis countries to Hitler's slaughter houses. These railways also serve military purposes and their destruction will be of great benefit to our ally, Soviet Russia.

Honorable Franklin D. Roosevelt

-2-

July 24, 1944

2. The extermination camps themselves can be bombed, destroying the gas chambers where thousands of people are assassinated daily. This would enable the Hebrew people gathered in these camps to escape and offer them an opportunity to join the underground resistance forces where they can be of help in sabotage and resistance activities.

3. In accordance with the reiterated statements of the American and British Governments that the use of poison gas by Germans and Japanese would be followed by retaliation in kind, a specific statement can be issued that the extermination of Hebrew men, women, and children by the continued use of poison gas will be considered a provocation for retaliation in kind. We respectfully call your attention to the fact that authenticated reports from Czechoslovakian and Polish underground sources have disclosed that over a million and a half persons have been murdered in the poison gas chambers of Auschwitz and Birkenau camps and that the threat of widespread use of the same medium upon the German population will contribute to the disaffection of the German people and may result in a speedier collapse of Hitler's home front.

All these are measures that will not require any additional exertion of military forces nor call for any deviation from the successful military campaigns now in progress. On the contrary, they can be of substantial aid to the campaign of psychological warfare that is being waged simultaneously against our enemy.

At the same time, permit us to call your attention to the message the Emergency Committee has just received from the International Red Cross Delegation at Washington which states:

RECEIVED FOLLOWING FROM GENEVA QUOTE FOLLOWING ON THE STEPS TAKEN IN BUDAPEST BY THE ICRC IN GENEVA THE HUNGARIAN AUTHORITIES HAVE GIVEN THE COMMITTEE OFFICIAL ASSURANCES THAT TRANSPORTATION OF JEWS BEYOND THE HUNGARIAN FRONTIERS HAS CEASED AND THAT THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE ARE AUTHORIZED TO FURNISH RELIEF TO JEWS WHO ARE INTERMED OR IN FORCED RESIDENCE IN HUNGARY STOP THE COMMITTEE ARE FURTHERMORE EMPOWERED TO COOPERATE IN THE EVACUATION OF ALL JEWISH CHILDREN UNDER TEN YEARS OF AGE WHO ARE IN POSSESSION OF VISAS TO RECEPTION COUNTRIES AND ALL JEWS IN HUNGARY HOLDING ENTRANCE VISAS TO PALESTINE WILL RECEIVE PERMISSION FROM THE AUTHORITIES TO LEAVE FOR THAT COUNTRY UNQUOTE.

In view of the agreement between the International Red Cross and the Hungarian Government, we enter the most earnest plea that the United States Government issue as many visas as possible to the children in question and

Honorable Franklin D. Roosevelt

-3-

July 24, 1944

instruct the War Refugee Board to utilize every possible means to aid the International Red Cross in evacuating these children immediately from Hungarian territory. For it is obvious that even though the security of these children has been temporarily assured, their lives are still in danger due to the insufficient food and shelter provided for them in Hungary.

We also call your attention to the agreement between the International Red Cross and the Hungarian Government permitting all Jews in Hungary holding entrance visas to Palestine to leave for that country. We plead with you to make the strongest possible representation to the British Government requesting the issuance of such visas in unlimited quantities so that all of the Jews who can possibly be transported to Palestine may be saved. This need not be interpreted as a political act affecting the future status of Palestine. Temporary Emergency Refugee Shelters can be established in that country for the Hungarian Jews. Whether they return to Hungary, remain in Palestine, or are settled in other lands can be decided when the danger is past.

Respectfully yours,

/s/ Johan J. Smertenko

JJS:sb

Executive Vice-Chairman

AUG 3 1944

Dear Dr. Kubowitzki:

The following confidential message for you from Mr. Ernest Frischer of the Czechoslovak State Council was received through the American Embassy, London, under date of July 29, 1944:

"Please add following information to my July 15 message:

"I have been advised that Rabbi of Nitra (Neutra) Slovakia was able to assist Jews who fled from Poland via Slovakia to Hungary. It became necessary for him to discontinue this activity because of change of regime in Hungary.

"I believe that destruction of gas chambers and crematoria in Osicecim by bombing would have a certain effect now. Germans are now exhuming and burning corpses in an effort to conceal their crimes. This could be prevented by destruction of crematoria and then Germans might possibly stop further mass exterminations especially since so little time is left to them. Bombing of railway communications in this same area would also be of importance and of military interest."

Very truly yours,

(Signed) J. W. Pehle

J. W. Pehle
Executive Director

Dr. A. Leon Kubowitzki,
World Jewish Congress,
1834 Broadway,
New York, New York.

FH:lab 8/3/44

FDK -

*J. Ward of Board
Kille*

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Embassy, London
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATE: July 29, 1944
NUMBER: 6037
X

*Message sent
to WJC 8/3/44
JH*

CONTROL COPY

The following message is to War Refugee Board for Mr. Kubowitzky of The World Jewish Congress, New York, from Mr. Ernest Frischer of the Czechoslovak State Council.

Please add following information to my July 15 message:

I have been advised that Rabbi of Nitra (Neutra) Slovakia was able to assist Jews who fled from Poland via Slovakia to Hungary. It became necessary for him to discontinue this activity because of change of regime in Hungary.

I believe that destruction of gas chambers and crematoria in Osiveczim by bombing would have a certain effect now. Germans are now exhuming and burning corpses in an effort to conceal their crimes. This could be prevented by destruction of crematoria and then Germans might possibly stop further mass exterminations especially since so little time is left to them. Bombing of railway communications in this same area would also be of importance and of military interest.

WINANT

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 14 1972

DCR:EBH 7/31/44

100700

WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS

CONGRES JUIF MONDIAL . CONGRESO JUDIO MUNDIAL

330 WEST 42nd STREET

NEW YORK 18, N. Y.

NEW ADDRESS:
1834 BROADWAY
NEW YORK 23 N. Y.
C. 6. 6. 9

LONDON
55 New Cavendish St., W 1

GENEVA
37 Quai Wilson

BUENOS AIRES
Corrientes 2024-9c

JERUSALEM
Vaad Leumi, P. O. B. 471

MONTREAL
1121 St. Catherine St. W

MEXICO CITY
Sonora 174-4

CABLES: CONGRESS, NEW YORK
TELEPHONE: LONGACRE 5-2600

July 5, 1944

In reply refer
to No. 128

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

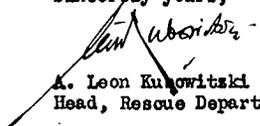
Dear Mr. Pehle:

I want to call to your attention that it appears from a number of underground reports that Jews in the segregation centers which are left in Poland demand weapons urgently.

You will remember that the Jews interned before their extermination in Treblinka and Sobibor revolted and destroyed extermination buildings of these camps in August and October, 1943, respectively.

Now that the pace of the annihilation is being speeded up by the Nazis, it is imperative that those who are sentenced to die be provided with tools which might avert the horrible fate for which they are destined.

Sincerely yours,


A. Leon Kulowitski
Head, Rescue Department

ALK:bg

WAR DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D. C.

4 July 1944

*Noted
JMT*

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

Dear Mr. Pehle:

I refer to your letter of June 29, inclosing a cable from your representative in Bern, Switzerland, proposing that certain sections of railway lines between Hungary and Poland be bombed to interrupt the transportation of Jews from Hungary.

The War Department is of the opinion that the suggested air operation is impracticable. It could be executed only by the diversion of considerable air support essential to the success of our forces now engaged in decisive operations and would in any case be of such very doubtful efficacy that it would not amount to a practical project.

The War Department fully appreciates the humanitarian motives which prompted the suggested operation but for the reasons stated above the operation suggested does not appear justified.

Sincerely,

J. McCloy

John J. McCloy

Retired for Preservation



WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS

CONGRES JUIF MONDIAL .: CONGRESO JUDIO MUNDIAL

330 WEST 42nd STREET
NEW YORK 18, N. Y.

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NEW YORK 23, N. Y.

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MONTREAL
1121 St. Catherine St. W

MEXICO CITY
Sonora 174-4

CABLES: CONGRESS, NEW YORK
TELEPHONE: LONGACRE 5-2600

July 1, 1944

In reply refer
to No. 127

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

Dear Mr. Lesser:

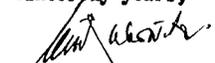
May I be bold enough to submit to you the following request:

If the War Refugee Board has decided to act upon my suggestion with regard to the destruction of the death installations in Oswiecim, Treblinka and Birkenau, may I ask you to kindly have a cable sent in my name to Messrs. Barou and Easterman, 55 New Cavendish Street, London, requesting them to approach the Soviet Ambassador and the Polish and Czechoslovak Governments with a view to having the suggestion carried out.

As I don't know the way in which the suggestion has been accepted, if at all, it is impossible for me to draft such a cable. May I insist that if it is sent, it should stress the fact that we are opposed to bombing the camps for the reasons indicated in my letter to Mr. Pehle.

I hope you will not consider my request too presumptuous.

Sincerely yours,


A. Leon Kubowitzki
Head, Rescue Department

ALK:bg

700711

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
WAR REFUGEE BOARD

INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION

DATE June 29, 1944

TO : Mr. Lessor

FROM : B. Akain

By Cable No. 4041 of June 21, from Bern, McClelland, reporting on the deportation and extermination of Hungarian Jews, states that "there is little doubt that many of these Hungarian Jews are being sent to the extermination camps of AUSCHITZ (OSWIECIM) and BIRKENAU (RAJSKA) in Western Upper Silesia where according to recent reports, since early summer 1942 at least 1,500,000 Jews have been killed. There is evidence that already in January 1944 preparations were being made to receive and exterminate Hungarian Jews in these camps".

In view of the preeminent part evidently played by these two extermination camps in the massacre of Jews, equipped to kill 125,000 people per month, it would seem that the destruction of their physical installations might appreciably slow down the systematic slaughter at least temporarily. The methodical German mind might require some time to rebuild the installations or to evolve elsewhere equally efficient procedures of mass slaughter and of disposing of the bodies. Some saving of lives would therefore be a most likely result of the destruction of the two extermination camps.

Though no exaggerated hopes should be entertained, this saving of lives might even be quite appreciable, since, in the present stage of the war, with German manpower and material resources gravely depleted, German authorities might not be in a position to devote themselves to the task of equipping new large-scale extermination centers.

Aside from the preventive significance of the destruction of the two camps, it would also seem correct to mark them for destruction as a matter of principle, as the most tangible--and perhaps only tangible--evidence of the indignation aroused by the existence of these charnel-houses. It will also be noted that the destruction of the extermination camps would presumably cause many deaths among their personnel--certainly among the most ruthless and despicable of the Nazis.

It is suggested that the foregoing be brought to the attention of the appropriate political and military authorities, with a view to considering the feasibility of a thorough destruction of the two camps by aerial bombardment. It may be of interest, in this connection, that the two camps are situated in the industrial region of Upper Silesia, near the important

mining and manufacturing centers of Katowice and Chorzow (Cswiecin lies about 14 miles southeast of Katowice), which play an important part in the industrial armament of Germany. Therefore, the destruction of these camps could be achieved without deflecting aerial strength from an important zone of military objectives.

Presumably, a large number of Jews in these camps may be killed in the course of such bombings (though some of them may escape in the confusion). But such Jews are doomed to death anyhow. The destruction of the camps would not change their fate, but it would serve as visible retribution on their murderers and it might save the lives of future victims.

It will be noted that the inevitable fate of Jews herded in ghettos near the industrial and railroad installations in Hungary has not caused the United Nations to stop bombing these installations. It is submitted, therefore, that refraining from bombing the extermination centers would be sheer misplaced sentimentality, far more cruel than a decision to destroy these centers.

B.A.

WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS

CONGRES JUIF MONDIAL .: CONGRESO JUDIO MUNDIAL

330 WEST 42nd STREET
NEW YORK 18, N. Y.

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NEW YORK 23, N. Y.
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JERUSALEM
Vaad Leumi, P. O. B. 471

MONTREAL
1121 St. Catherine St. W

MEXICO CITY
Sonora 174-4

CABLES: CONGRESS, NEW YORK
TELEPHONE: LONGACRE 5-2600

July 1, 1944

In reply refer
to No. 126

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

Dear Mr. Pehle:

May I come back to the suggestion I made to Mr. Lesser in the course of the conference I had with him on June 28.

Discussing the apparent determination of the German Government to speed up the extermination of the Jews, I wondered whether the pace of the extermination could not be considerably slowed down if the instruments of annihilation -- the gas chambers, the gas vans, the death baths -- were destroyed. You will remember that in August and October, 1943, respectively, revolting Jews set fire to installations in Treblinka and Sobibor. The revolt culminated in the escape of a large number of Jews from these camps.

Three governments are directly interested in stopping the massacres: the Soviet Government, whose captured soldiers are being exterminated in the Oswiecim gas chambers, according to a cable received by the Polish Information Center on June 22, a copy of which is attached; the Czechoslovak Government, whose citizens are being murdered in Birkenau; and the Polish Government, for obvious reasons.

The destruction of the death installations can not be done by bombing from the air, as the first victims would be the Jews who are gathered in these camps, and such a bombing would be a welcome pretext for the Germans to assert that their Jewish victims have been massacred not by their killers, but by the Allied bombings.

I submitted to Mr. Lesser that the Soviet Government be approached with the request that it should dispatch groups of paratroopers to seize the buildings, to annihilate the squads of murderers, and to free the unfortunate inmates. Also that the Polish Government be requested to instruct the Polish underground to attack these and similar camps to destroy the instruments of death.

Hon. John W. Pehle

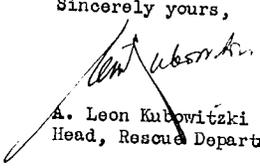
-2-

July 1, 1944

May I add that I think it would be useful to approach also the Czechoslovak Government, so that it may use its influence with the Soviet and Polish Governments to support our request.

May I express the hope that you will consider the suggestion made in this letter as deserving to be acted upon without delay.

Sincerely yours,


A. Leon Kubowitzki
Head, Rescue Department

ALK:bg

P.S. I attach a report, "Three Years in Oswiecim Hell," published by the Polish Jewish Observer on June 16.

100716

JUN 21 1944

TO: Mr. McGloy, Assistant Secretary of War
FROM: J. W. Pehle

In connection with my recent conversation with you, I am attaching a copy of a cable just received from our representative in Bern, Switzerland. I wish to direct your attention particularly to the paragraphs concerning the railway lines being used for the deportation of Jews from Hungary to Poland and the proposal of various agencies that vital sections of these lines be bombed.

(Signed) J.W. Pehle

Attachment:

FH;db 6/21/44

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PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Legation, Bern
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATED: June 24, 1944
NUMBER: 4041



McClelland sends the following for the War Refugee Board.

Reference is made herewith to Legation's message dated June 17, No. 3867, paragraph three.

Now there is no doubt that the majority of the Jewish population east of the Danube especially in eastern northern, and north eastern Hungary has been deported to Poland. Further reliable information confirming this fact has come in in the course of the past two weeks from the following independent sources: (a) Swiss official employee just returned from Budapest, (b) Railway workers in Czech resistance movement, (c) other reliable secret source regard information as to sources as absolutely confidential since any publicity regarding them would endanger lives.

Prior to the deportations, there were two weeks to a month of brutal concentration during which thousands of Jews were crowded together in primitive quarters with insufficient food, clothing and water, regardless of state of health, sex or age. The Hungarian gendarmarie on László Andrá's orders largely carried out this action.

Apparently the actual large scale deportations began about May 15 and lasted until the middle of June. The movement involved 12,000 persons per days about 7,000 through sub-Carpathic-Russia and 5,000 through Slovakia. Characteristic of such actions, people were deported 60 to 70 per sealed freight wagon for a trip of two to three days without adequate water or food probably resulting in many deaths en route.

Particularly used were the following stretches of railroads:

- (1) Gasp-Kaschau-resov-Lubotin-Nowysazs in direction of Oszwincim;
- (2) Satorajaujhaly-Leginamich Klany-Michalovec-Medallaboros.* Also many thousand troops to and from the Polish front were transported daily over this line;
- (3) Munkacs-Layozsne;
- (4) Galanta-Sered-Leopoldstadt-Novomeato-Trencin;
- (5) Vrutyky-Zilina.

It is

(*) Various letters in this group illegible.

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date ~~SEP~~ 14 1972

It is urged by all sources of this information in Slovakia and Hungary that vital sections of these lines especially bridges along ONE be bombed as the only possible means of slowing down or stopping future deportations. (This is submitted by me as a proposal of these agencies and I can venture no opinion on its utility).

At least 335,000 Jews already have been deported from the following regions according to figures received.

Approximately 130,000 in sub-Carpathia and Ruthenia mainly from the towns of Beregassot, Felzoviso, Huezst, Nagyszollos, Maramarosziget, Munkacs, Tecar and Ungvar.

Approximately 90,000 in Transylvania from Beazteres, Des, Koloszar, Karos Vasarhely, Nagybanja, Wagyvarad, Szaszregan, and Szilogy.

In northern Lnkaschau, Gyongyos, Sator Aljaujhely and Sarospatak.

Approximately 75,000 in the Tias region from: Kisvarda, Mateszalka, Wagykaroly, Nyiregyhaza and Szatmar Nemeti.

It is also reported by one source that deportations of approximately 20,000 have taken place from certain towns in southern Hungary such as Baas (*)ya, Baja, Nagykanizsa, Njvidek and Szabadka and further exi (*)tions, also being made deport Jews from towns of Dunaszerdahely, Gyoor, Komarom, Miskels, Pecs and Szombathely where persons are already concentrated.

Some 350,000 Jews have already been concentrated in Budapest and environs. This began around June 16 and on the 21st it was to be finished. In the city proper they have been settled in requisitioned blocks of houses in a chess board pattern so that they will not escape bombardment.

Some 15,000 Jews have been crowded into a ghetto in the factory zone along the Danube in Ujpest near Budapest.

The principal individuals in the Sztrfjay Government responsible for this persecution of Jews are as follows: Laszlo Endre, former sub-prefect of country of Pest now in Ministry of Interior; Laszlo Baky, also Interior and Andre Jaross, Minister of Interior.

In an effort to check such continued deperations Ternanessov (*) from the United States, we recommend British and Soviet (*) broadcasts and especially leaflets. If it is

possible,

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF WAR

20 June 1944

WAR REFUGEE BOARD
Washington 25, D. C.

This letter is forwarded to you as a
matter of primary interest to your
office.

Assistant Secretary of War's Office
Rm. 4E 886
Pentagon Building

Enc.

Ltr. June 18th, 1944 Jacob Rosenheim
to Secretary of War, re aid for
Jewish refugees

10072

June 24, 1944

MEMORANDUM FOR THE FILES:

I saw Assistant Secretary McCloy today on the proposal of the Agudas Israel that arrangements be made to bomb the railroad line between Kassa and Presov being used for the deportation of Jews from Hungary to Poland. I told McCloy that I wanted to mention the matter to him for whatever exploration might be appropriate by the War Department, but that I had several doubts about the matter, namely (1) whether it would be appropriate to use military planes and personnel for this purpose; (2) whether it would be difficult to put the railroad line out of commission for a long enough period to do any good; and (3) even assuming that this railroad line were put out of commission for some period of time, whether it would help the Jews in Hungary.

I made it very clear to Mr. McCloy that I was not, at this point at least, requesting the War Department to take any action on this proposal other than to appropriately explore it. McCloy understood my position and said that he would check into the matter.

J. F. Dulc

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM American Legation, Bern
TO Secretary of State, Washington
DATED June 24, 1944
NUMBER 4041

McGlelland reads the following for the War Refugee Board

Reference is made herewith to Legation's message dated June 17 No. 3867 paragraph three.

How there is no doubt that the majority of the Jewish population east of the Danube especially in eastern, northern, and north eastern Hungary has been deported to Poland. Further reliable information confirming this fact has come in in the course of the past two weeks from the following independent sources (a) Swiss official employee just returned from Budapest. (b) Railway workers in Czech resistance movement (c) other reliable secret source regard information as to sources as absolutely confidential since any publicity regarding them would endanger lives

Prior to the deportations, there were two weeks to a month of brutal concentration during which thousands of Jews were crowded together in primitive quarters with insufficient food, clothing and water, regardless of state of health, sex or age. The Hungarian gendarmes on László Endre's orders largely carried out this action.

Apparently the actual large scale deportations began about May 15 and lasted until the middle of June. The movement involved 12,000 persons per day: About 7,000 through sub-Carpatho Russia and 5,000 through Slovakia. Characteristic of such actions, people were deported 60 to 70 per sealed freight wagon for a trip of two to three days without adequate water or food probably resulting in many deaths en route.

Particularly used were the following stretches of rail-road

(1) Csap-Naschau-Fresov-Úbjetin-Nowyacz in direction of Czecho-Slovakia; (2) Satoraljaujhely-Leginanich Wlany-Michaloves-Medzilaborce. Also many thousand troops to and from the Polish front were transported daily over this line; (3) Munkacs-Lavocsne; (4) Galanta-Sered-Leopoldstadt-Novemesto-Trencin; (5) Vrutky-Bilina.

It is urged by all sources of this information in Slovakia and Hungary that vital sections of these lines especially bridges along ONE be bombed as the only possible means of slowing down or stopping future deportations. (This is submitted by me as a proposal of these agencies and I can venture no opinion on its utility)/

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-73

At least.....

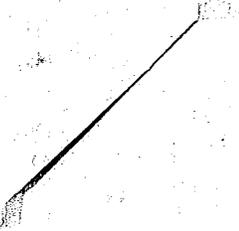
By _____ Parks Date SEP 14 1972

The United States is a country of immigrants and the people of this country are proud of their heritage. They are proud of the freedom and democracy that they have inherited from their forefathers. They are proud of the progress that they have made in the fields of science, industry, and art. They are proud of the peace and stability that they have achieved in the world.

It is the duty of every citizen to contribute to the well-being of his country. This can be done in many ways, such as by working hard, paying taxes, and obeying the laws. It is also the duty of every citizen to respect the rights of others and to live in harmony with them.

There is no doubt that the future of our country is bright. We have the resources and the talent to become an even greater nation. We have the will and the courage to overcome any challenges that we may face. We have the faith and the hope that we can build a better world for ourselves and for our children.

— JIMMY —



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do: Early, Abrahamsen, Akain, Bernstein, Cohn, Kubota, Friedman, Gannon, Hodson,
Laughlin, Lessor, Luskford, Mann, Mannon, Marko, McCormack, Bargey, Smith, Stendish,
Stewart, Weinstein, H. D. White, Fohle, Fiest



1072

JUN 24 1944

Dear Dr. Rosenheim:

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter to me of June 18, 1944, transmitting a copy of a letter which was addressed by you to the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Treasury, and the Secretary of War. Your letter to the Secretary of the Treasury has also been referred to me for reply.

As you know, the situation of the Jews in Hungary and the recent events in that country are of great concern to the War Refugee Board and we are taking every step possible to deal with the situation.

You may rest assured that your suggestions will receive sympathetic and careful consideration by this office and the other interested agencies.

Very truly yours,

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

Dr. Jacob Rosenheim,
President, Agudas Israel World
Organization,
226 West 97th Street,
New York 25, New York.

JWP:mgt 6/24/44

100720

June 23, 1944.

Dear Dr. Rosenheim:

In the absence of the Secretary, who is away from Washington, I am acknowledging your letter of June 18, 1944.

Because of the subject matter, I have taken the liberty of turning this over to Mr. John Pehle, Executive Director of the War Refugee Board. I am sure that Mr. Pehle will give every consideration to the information you give and the suggestions you make.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) H. S. Klotz

H. S. Klotz,
Private Secretary.

Dr. Jacob Rosenheim,
President, Agudas Israel World
Organization,
228 West 97th Street,
New York 25, New York

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BROUGHT IN BY
MEIER SCHENROLEWASKI



הסתדרות העולמית, אגודת ישראל
Agudat Israel World Organization
THE UNION OF UNIVERSALLY ORGANIZED ORTHODOX JEWRY
(WORLD-AGUDAH OF ORTHODOX JEWS INC.)

WAR DEPARTMENT

CENTRAL EXECUTIVE OFFICE - LONDON - BRANCH OFFICES: JERUSALEM AND NEW YORK

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
226 WEST 97TH STREET
NEW YORK 25, N. Y.

June 18th, 1944

Secretary of War /
Mr. Henry L. Stimson
Leader of War Refugee Board
War Department
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Stimson:

I beg to approach you in the name of my organization in the following urgent matter of life and death for thousands of innocent Nazi-victims.

Since April, the deportation of Jews from Hungary to the gas-chambers of Poland is relentlessly going on. About ten thousand to fifteen thousand persons a day are deported, and up to now, about 300,000 Jews are said to have been doomed to destruction in this way.

Our Rescue-Committee in Switzerland, which is in permanent close contact with Hungary by courier, has recently submitted to the American and British Embassies in Berne the idea of taking measures, to slow down, at least, the process of annihilation and thus to preserve a greater number of Jewish lives for the day of liberation.

This slackening of the process of annihilation could be achieved by paralyzing the rail-road traffic from Hungary to Poland, especially by an aereal bombardment of the most important railway junctions of KASCHAU and PRESOV, through which the deportation-trains pass. By such a procedure, precious time would be won and thousands of human lives preserved.

On the other hand, every day of delay means a very heavy responsibility for the human lives at stake.

For this reason, we take the liberty of applying to you directly, imploring you for immediate decisive assistance in this work of life-rescue.

I remain,

Yours respectfully,

Jacob Rosenheim
President



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AND RECORDED
JUN 20 1944

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June 18th, 1944

Secretary of State
Mr. Cordell Hull
Leader of War Refugee Board
Department of State
Washington, D.C.

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Yours respectfully,

JACOB ROSENHEIM
President

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CENTRAL EXECUTIVE: LONDON - BRANCH OFFICES: JERUSALEM AND NEW YORK

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
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June 18th, 1944

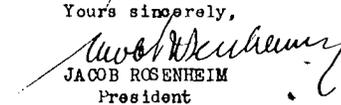
Mr. John W. Pehle
Executive Director
War Refugee Board
U.S. Treasury Building
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Pehle:

I beg to submit to your kind attention copy of a letter, which I have addressed today to the Secretary of State, Mr. Hull, the Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. Morgenthau, and the Secretary of War, Mr. Stimson, and should be deeply grateful, if you would use your decisive influence to have the plan of rescue, discussed in the letter, realized.

At all events, the decision should be taken after thorough consideration, without any loss of time, for every day counts, as you will see, for the destruction of thousands.

Yours sincerely,


JACOB ROSENHEIM
President

encl.

10073