

Measures Derived from the ... Bulgaria, Folder 2

MEMO OF TELEGRAM S T

July 31, 1944

WAB

Subject: Group of 40 children who arrived by rail July 30.

Rousse Jewish community to concern itself with emigration.

MEMORANDUM

on the 40 Bulgarian Children

On July 30, 40 children arrived in Istanbul from Bulgaria en route to Palestine. They comprised 12 girls and 28 boys, accompanied by two adult escorts, and were between the ages of 12 and 17. These children were part of a larger group of 100, whose names had been included on lists for emigration to Palestine many months ago. Some of the children have waited two years for the completion of their documents for emigration.

Inquiry among the children brought out the following matters of interest. They have to be considered with some reserve, however, considering the fact that they came from children who are not necessarily well-informed about the conditions of Jews in Bulgaria.

1. Within the past few days, a Colonel Radjer, a Jewish personality in Bulgaria, had been chosen by the government to be president of a central Bulgarian consistoire, which has been ordered to organize. Colonel Radjer is said to have excellent governmental contacts, and was a personal friend of the two former Bulgarian kings. The central consistoire is now in process of formation.

2. There seems to be some feeling on the part of Bulgarian Jewry that conditions for them will improve. I did not secure any specific indications that this is so, and upon further questioning the children with whom I spoke said that this may be based only upon the general hope that any time a change in Bulgarian government takes place, pressure upon Jewish people will be relaxed.

3. Emigration from Bulgaria from the technical viewpoint is still difficult, because of the great number of documents which Jewish people are required to present prior to their departure, and the difficulties attendant upon the obtention thereof. Prohibitions upon travel are an important contributing factor. According to the children, any Jew can emigrate from Bulgaria, provided he can get his documents in order. Up to the present time, these matters have been handled by a Bulgarian attorney, no -Jewish, by the name of Boris (Apostolov).

4. Two more Jewish children in Bulgaria have their documentation for emigration to Palestine in varying stages of completion. According to the children, all that is yet required is certain confirmations from the Swiss Legation in Sofia (I suppose this probably has to do with the authentication of passports by the Swiss Legation in behalf of the British Embassy in Turkey concerning which new affirmative instructions have recently been despatched from Bern, according to Mr. Barlas).

5. According to the children, Mr. Apostolov asked them to advise the Jewish organizations in Istanbul that the Turkish consul in Sofia has been authorized to issue 20 Turkish transit visas weekly instead of nine. He is now authorized to issue them himself without referral to and authorization from Ankara. (The question here is whether or not the children were reporting as accomplished facts those things which had been under discussion in Ankara, and which may have come to the attention of people in Sofia.)

6. The children advised me that they had to secure individually

a large number of documents, and that there had been no relaxation of these requirements insofar as they were concerned, even though they were children.

7. According to the children, there are no concentration camps at the present time in Bulgaria to which the Jews are being sent. There was one near Slaven, where 800 people were held, but they have been liberated. There are, however, 150 Jewish people in this camp who are parents or close relatives of Jewish men who had joined the Partisans. Among the 150 there are also men who at one time had joined the Partisans, but had since returned from the mountains. This camp is being used as one of similar camps to which relatives of non-Jewish Partisans have been sent. There is, then, only this segregation of Jewish people from non-Jewish people for internment purposes, and it has nothing to do with anti-Jewish regulations.

In considering whatever restrictive measures are outlined above, it must be recalled that these children left Bulgaria on July 29, which was but a few days after Mr. Mirschmann had received certain assurances from the Bulgarian government through Mr. Balabanoff regarding the treatment of Jews, and that whatever ameliorations were contemplated could not yet have been put into effect, or their influence felt, prior to the departure of the children.

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Inquiry among the children brought out the following matters of interest. They have to be considered with some reserve, however, considering the fact that they came from children who are not necessarily well-informed about the conditions of Jews in Bulgaria.

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10069

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4. Two hundred Jewish children in Bulgaria have their documentation for emigration to Palestine in varying stages of completion. According to the children, all that is yet required is certain confirmations from the Swiss Legation in Sofia (I suppose this probably has to do with the authentication of passports by the Swiss Legation in behalf of the British Embassy in Turkey concerning which new affirmative instructions have recently been despatched from Bern, according to Mr. Barlas).

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EXCEPT BY AUTHORITY OF THE DIRECTOR
OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES
REF ID: A66000

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M

SECRET
T-1000

PARAPHRASE OF TEL RECD RECEIVED

July 28, 1944

WRB 86

Subject: Efforts in Bulgaria through Stockholm.

1069

San 29 July 29
Mr. Stueckmann role on
Interview with Dr. Black

File
Bulgaria

we are going to act PLIACIL
on the basis of this letter
I intend to hold the
makes 2 - Poneg. Govt. responsible
prints - for what Bal. signed
con line may be for. While he said
Satisfactory finally little less than he said
by
relocation
(a) - ameliorate the situation
(b) - arrange facilitate transport
Kama was a name
to Poneg - related

YARNA
BULGARIFT

I am going ahead acting
on this -

45,000

① facilitate passage
people from
Other Countries

never Satisfactory until
these laws are revoked -

The Govt. can be done in their enforcement

Absence of
Bombing
of Sofia
since March 30
Civil bombing

that led to the recall of Dr Escobar. The issue is thus joined. But it is obvious, in view of the form of our policy of nonrecognition or upon its intended purpose, that we cannot stop there. Are we prepared to go further? There is no sign in the Hull statement that we are prepared to do so. Yet the nearer the war in Europe approaches its end, the greater the necessity to taking action to prevent the perpetuation on the soil of this hemisphere of the kind of a system we are fighting in Europe. There is a very real danger that the first nazi regime to be established in the Americas will also be the last refuge of the German militarists. This neither we nor the other pro-allied republics of this hemisphere can permit."

BALTIMORE SUN. July 27.

"The statement on Argentina which was issued by the State Department yesterday goes about as far as words can go.....The document minces no words. It sets forth in considerable detail the story of Argentinas noncooperation in hemisphere defense, and of her assistance, both active and passive, to the enemy. It recommends that the policy of nonrecognition toward the Argentine government of president Farrell should continue. Thus Argentina stands in almost complete diplomatic isolation, the one holdout in the patiently constructed edifice of hemisphere solidarity. She has persisted in following a course which has impeded the war effort of the United Nations and affects adversely the security of her sister republics. For this she has been snubbed, and will continue to be snubbed, on a grand scale. Now the question is, what will Argentina do about it? And if she does nothing, what will we do about it? There are those who don't mind being snubbed. Doubtlessly it is disagreeable to the Argentinians. But will it persuade them to mend their ways and return to the panamerican fold? This question is raised in the hope that the State Department has already thought its way through to the next step.

Length of sked:
1 hour 40 minutes.

NOTE: (.....-is change in theme)

V-V-V-V-V

MEMORANDUM

July 27, 1944

7/27/44
Bulgarian
Kelley
Memo

At my request, Mr. Kelley visited Saracoglu, the Turkish Prime Minister, today, and discussed with him the subject of the Turkish authority to release the Bulgarian boats, the SS Vita and SS Pirin, now immobilized in Burgas. Saracoglu agreed to permit the boats to sail with refugees to Istanbul and to be transported by Turkish railroad to Palestine under similar conditions to those arranged for the refugees arriving from Constanza.

Saracoglu, as reported by Kelley, agreed wholeheartedly to assist in permitting refugees from Bulgaria to arrive by sea, but urged that a regular system of transport be established in order to give the Turkish railroad system a sufficient routine and advance notice consistently to assist in the mechanism of these operations. He suggested that we concentrate on the sea transport rather than the rail, in view of the present congestion on the rail system. Saracoglu asserted that he could not ascertain the reasons for the delay in the embarkation of the small Turkish ships now in Constanza, as he stated that they had been requested to return to Istanbul at once. It was his impression that some "technicalities" relating to money paid to individuals or concerned with those who are to be transported are probably delaying the voyages.

Saracoglu further stated that, because of the torpedoing of Turkish ships in the Black Sea during the last week, no Turkish passenger vessels would be permitted to sail in these waters for the present; that a meeting is being held by the

July 27, 1944

Turkish Parliament on August 2, to air the circumstances surrounding the torpedoing, and to determine the policy of the Turkish government relating thereto. It was therefore considered desirable that no further efforts on our part would be made to press for the sailings of the Anadolu and the SS Tari. Mr. Kelley, however, will at the proper moment urge the release of these boats.

CONFIDENTIAL

July 27, 1944

WAB 108

Subject: authorization for vita and Lirin to leave Lurgas.

10070

HEAD OF TELEGRAM SENT

July 26, 1:44

HRB

Subject: Letter from Balabanoff to Simons, July 25.

July 25, 1944

Memorandum for Mr. Kelley:

There are now tied up in the Bulgarian port of Burgas two Bulgarian ships, the S.S. Vita and the S.S. Pirine, each capable of carrying approximately 400 refugees (or 200 passengers). These boats have been immobilized due to the alleged inability of the Bulgarians to secure authority from the Turkish officials to release the boats for a Turkish port. We should request of the Turkish Foreign Office that instructions be sent to the Turkish Consul in Sofia that the boats may be released and the passengers permitted to proceed through Turkey to Palestine in the same way in which passengers from Constanza to Palestine are permitted and assisted by the Turks to enter Turkey. The Bulgarian officials in Sofia should be so informed.

I. A. Hirschmann

IAH:VH

MEMO OF TRANSMISSION

July 25, 1944

WAB

Subject: Official representations of Bulgarian Government,
authorized for transmission by Salabenoff (re anti-Jewish
laws); Dr. Tari.

100700

125 (44)
12 10 11

Translation of Draft I; copy and translation of Draft II; letter of Balabanoff to Simond (See Balabanoff file). Schedule of alterations attached.

Received August 18, 1944

"Translation"

THE MINISTER OF BULGARIA

Dear Monsieur Simon,

In regard to the question you raised, relative to a Turkish vessel which could go to any Bulgarian port to embark Jewish children from Rumania, and possibly also Jewish children from Bulgaria, I am able to communicate to you the following:

In principle, the Bulgarian Government would have no objection to this. But for a settlement of this question I would suggest that you address the Bulgarian Red Cross which, on its part, will submit the question to the Government in order to obtain the latter's decision.

I take advantage of this opportunity to share with you the impressions which I bringback from my last short visit in Bulgaria.

There is no doubt that the new Bulgarian Government regrets exceedingly all the measures which have been taken regarding Jews in our country, and that it does not in the least approve these measures. This Government intends to mitigate the situation of the Jews. But, for reasons that will be readily understood, it could not proceed to annul immediately the law concerning the Jews. However, it is firmly decided to avoid all arbitrary action in the application of this law, as well as all restrictive measures not provided for by the law. In the second place, the Bulgarian Government has decided to

facilitate the emigration of Jews desiring to leave the country, by reducing, for this purpose, the administrative formalities to a strict minimum and by removing all obstacles.

The President of the Bulgarian Council of Ministers has invited the Jewish Consistory in Bulgaria to come to see him and he has had a long conversation with its members concerning the situation of the Jews in the country. He has spoken to them of the steps which he intended to take to mitigate their situation and to facilitate the departure of those who might desire to leave the country. At Sofia I was able to ascertain that the members of the Consistory came away from the conversation, very well satisfied and pleased with their visit to the Bulgarian Prime Minister to whom, I understand, they expressed their thanks and gratitude for his plans for the Jews.

In general, I consider that the policy of the new Bulgarian Government toward the Jews will be based on principles of equity and humanitarianism. Likewise, I do not exclude the possibility of reaching gradually and quickly a completely normal state in the situation of the Jews in our country.

Please accept, dear Monsieur Simon, the assurance of my best sentiments.

(signed) BALABANOFF

Ankara, July 25, 1944

EXTRACTED AND SO FACILITATE THE GATHERING
OF INFORMATION CONCERNING THE
ACTS OF THE BULGARIAN GOVERNMENT
IN THE BULGARIAN CONSTITUTIONAL
COURTS IN THE BULGARIAN GOVERNMENT
THE BULGARIAN GOVERNMENT
RECOMMENDS ALL OPERATIONS
FOR THE BULGARIAN GOVERNMENT
IN THE BULGARIAN GOVERNMENT

COPY

Cher Monsieur Simon,

Au sujet de la question soulevée par vous et relative à un bateau ture qui puisse aller prendre d'un port quelconque bulgare des enfants de juifs de Roumanie, eventuellement des enfants de juifs de Bulgarie, je suis en état de vous communiquer ce qui suit:

Par principe, le Gouvernement bulgare n'y aurait rien contre. Mais, pour le reglement de cette question, je vous aurais recommandé de vous adresser à la Croix Rouge bulgare, laquelle, de son coté, la soumettra aux fins d'une decision de la part du Gouvernement.

Je profite, de la presente occasion pour partager avec vous les impressions que j'apporte de mon dernier court séjour en Bulgarie.

Il n'y a aucun doute que le nouveau Gouvernement bulgare regrette bien toutes les mesures qui avaient été prises à l'endroit des juifs chez nous et qu'il n'approuve aucunement. Ce Gouvernement à l'intention d'alléger largement le regime des juifs. J'ai même l'impression que la Gouvernement a l'intention d'abroger à un moment opportun les lois concernant les juifs. Toutefois, dès maintenant, il est fermement décidé d'écarter tout arbitraire dans l'application de ces lois, de même que toutes les mesures restrictives non prévues par elles. En second lieu, le Gouvernement bulgare a décidé de faciliter l'emigration des juifs desirant quitter le pays, en réduisant, dans cette intention, au stricte minimum les formalités et en écartant tous obstacles.

Le President du Conseil des Ministres bulgare a invité chez lui le consistoire juif de Bulgarie et a eu un long entretien avec ses membres au sujet de la situation des juifs dans le pays. Il leur a parlé des mesures qu'il avait l'intention de prendre pour alléger leur situation et pour faciliter l'émigration de ceux qui l'auraient désirée.

115

Le sommaire sur...
ce sont adresser à la Croix Rouge
Monsieur, bonjour. Je réjouis de cette
est brucide, le Gouvernement
l'Etat de Bulgarie, le fait en e
des enfants de l'Etat de Roumanie
personne plus est bruce aller b
un sujet de la direction
par Monsieur Simon.

A Sofia, j'ai pu m'enquerir que les membres du consistoire seraient tout à fait d'accord avec les intentions du Président du Conseil et seraient partis très satisfaits et très contents de cette audience. Ils auraient exprimé leurs remerciements et gratitude pour ses dispositions.

En général, je considère que la politique du nouveau Gouvernement bulgare à l'égard des juifs sera empreinté d'un sentiment d'équité et d'humanité. Je n'exclus même pas, comme je l'ai déjà dit, la possibilité d'arriver prochainement à l'état complètement normal dans la situation des juifs chez nous.

Veuillez agréer, cher Monsieur Simon, l'assurance de mes meilleurs sentiments.

Ankara, le 25 juillet 1944

(S) BALABANOFF

En General le conseil
d'administration
de la Banque
de Constantinople
a l'honneur
de vous adresser
ce document
en vue de
la situation
des Juifs
en Bulgarie
et de leur
émigration.

Dear Mr. Simon:

Regarding the subject mentioned by you relative to a Turkish boat which could go and get from a certain Bulgarian port Jewish children from Rumania, and eventually Jewish children from Bulgaria, I am now able to inform you of the following:

In principle, the Bulgarian Government is not contrary to this. But for the settlement of this question I would refer you to the Bulgarian Red Cross which will subsequently submit the question to the decision of the Government.

I take this occasion to inform you of my impressions which I bring from my last short visit to Bulgaria.

There is no doubt whatever that the new Bulgarian Government regrets the measures which were taken with regard to the Jews at home and does not approve of them at all. This Government intends substantially to mitigate the situation of the Jews. I even have the impression that the Government has the intention to abrogate at an opportune moment the laws concerning the Jews. However, at the present moment it is firmly decided to do away with any arbitration in the application of these laws as well as with all restrictive measures not provided by such laws. Secondly, the Bulgarian Government has decided to facilitate the emigration of Jews desiring to leave the country, by reducing to the strict minimum the usual formalities and by doing away with all obstacles.

The President of the Bulgarian Council of Ministers has invited to his house the Jewish "consistoire" of Bulgaria and has had a long interview with its members on the subject of the situation of the Jews in the country. He spoke to them of the measures which he intended to take to improve their situation and to facilitate the emigration of those who desired to emigrate.

In principle, the
I am now able to inform you of
difficulties from humanity, and every
possibility which could be set
regarding the subject
Dear Mr. Simon:

At Sofia, I was able to ascertain that the members of the "consistoire" must have been in complete accord with the intentions of the President of the Council and must have left very satisfied and pleased with this conference. They must have expressed their thanks and gratitude for his intentions.

In general, I consider that the policy of the new Bulgarian Government with regard to the Jews will be of a sentiment of justice and humanity. I do not exclude from my opinion, as I have already mentioned, the possibility of reaching soon a completely normal state in the situation of the Jews at home.

Accept, dear Mr. Simon, the assurance of my best sentiments.

(S) BALABANOFF

Ankara, July 25, 1944

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very satisfied and pleased at
intentions of the treatment
"consistories must have been
of Sofia. I was able to

Paragraph 4 (original letter of July 25, 1944, addressed to

Simond by Balabanoff):

"* * * Ce gouvernement a l'intention d'alléger la situation des juifs. Mais, pour des raisons bien compréhensibles, il ne pourrait pas procéder à l'abrogation/^{immédiate} de la loi concernant les juifs."

"* * * This Government intends to mitigate the situation of the Jews. But, for reasons that will be readily understood, it could not proceed to annul immediately the law concerning the Jews."

Paragraph 4 (revised letter of July 25, 1944, addressed to

Simond by Balabanoff):

"* * * Ce Gouvernement a l'intention d'alléger largement le régime des juifs. J'ai même l'impression que le Gouvernement a l'intention d'abroger à un moment opportun les lois concernant les juifs."

"* * * This Government intends substantially to mitigate the situation of the Jews. I even have the impression that the Government has the intention to abrogate at an opportune moment the laws concerning the Jews."

Paragraph 5 (original letter)

"* * * A Sofia, j'ai pu m'enquérir que les membres du Consistoire seraient partis très satisfaits et très contents de cette audience etc."

"* * * At Sofia I was able to ascertain that the members of the Consistory came away from the conversation very well satisfied and pleased etc."

Paragraph 5 (revised letter)

"* * * A Sofia, j'ai pu m'enquérir que les membres du consistoire seraient tout à fait d'accord avec les intentions du Président du Conseil et seraient partis très satisfaits et très contents etc."

"* * * At Sofia I was able to ascertain that the Consistory must have been in complete accord with the intentions of the President of the Council and must have left very satisfied and pleased, etc."

Not Proceed to submit immediate
lema. But. for reasons of
" * * * This Government
has proceeded & I hope
will. But, both the
" * * * Ce Gouvernement & I
aimons à l'avenir

Last sentence, body of original letter of July 25

"* * * Je n'exclus de même pas la possibilité d'arriver graduellement et promptement à l'état complètement normal etc."

"I do not exclude the possibility of reaching gradually and quickly a completely normal state etc."

Last sentence, body of revised letter of July 25

"* * * Je n'exclus même pas, comme je l'ai déjà dit, la possibilité d'arriver prochainement à l'état complètement normal etc."

"* * * I do not exclude, as I have already said, the possibility of reaching soon a completely normal state etc."

TELEGRAM SENT

July 24, 1944

From: Barlas to Kubowitzki

Subject: Reportations from Bulgaria.

MEMO OF TELEGRAM SENT

July 21, 1944

WRB

Subject: Promising developments in refugee movement from
Bulgaria to Istanbul. Interview with Balabanoff,
Vita and Pirin.



7/21/44
Bulgarie

DÉLÉGATION DU COMITÉ INTERNATIONAL
DE LA CROIX ROUGE EN TURQUIE

file
Rappeler dans la réponse:

Ankara, le 21 juillet 1944.

Monsieur Louis Jaquinet
P.N. 2117

ISTANBUL

Mon cher Jaquinet,

A la demande de M. Schwartz, je viens de téléphoner ce matin à M. Hirschmann, pour lui signifier mon accord au sujet de l'entrevue qu'il sollicite avec le Ministre de Bulgarie, M. Balabanoff.

Je profite du départ de M. Barlas pour lui remettre ce petit mot qui vous confirme mon acceptation.

Je ne saurais assez insister encore, mon cher Jaquinet, d'user de tout votre tact et discrétion à l'occasion de cette réunion. Bien entendu, elle devra se passer dans les mêmes conditions que celle que vous aurez eue avec S.E. M. Cretzlanu. Cette entrevue devra avoir lieu dans vos "appartements".

Merci vivement de votre précieux concours, et croyez-moi, mon cher Jaquinet, votre bien cordialement dévoué.

Bien à vous

Albert Simond

G.E. Simond

Délégué du Comité International
de la Croix-Rouge en Turquie

P.S. Veuillez donner à ce mot le même sort qu'à ma précédente lettre.

7/21/44
Belgium
Balabanoff

July 21, 1944

Memorandum of conversation held at 12:15 P.M.,
July 21, 1944, with Dr. Black.

Pursuant to my previous conversation with Dr. Black and the memorandum dated July 13, 1944 which I handed to him covering the background of the successful liaison between Cretzianu for the Rumanian Government and myself, and the request for similar assistance of the Bulgarian Government for the release of Jewish refugees, Dr. Black visited me and reported as follows:

1. He had reason to know that I would be given favorable news through Balabanoff, the Bulgarian Minister, when I meet him within the next few days;
2. That B. has made the request to see me;
3. That in his recent visit to Sofia he was informed of a reversal of the policy of the Bulgarian Government with regard to minorities and Jews and that he would seek every possible means of winning our goodwill through efforts connected with the release of refugees.

I was informed that the head of the police in Bulgaria issued a statement (not public) in which he stated that the Government will facilitate all police permits necessary for the release of refugees.

In the latter connection it is important to remember that while the Bulgarian Government may approve the release of refugees from Bulgaria, enormous complexities of a technical nature will interfere. Six different types of permits are required before a person may leave the country. (They are tax, military, police, etc

In normal times these permits were available at Government headquarters which were centered in Sofia. Since the severe bombing of Sofia the Government offices have been moved to various cities and it is necessary for a citizen to travel considerably to secure the certificates. In addition, many of the forms have been lost in the bombing and the moving. There will be much obstruction and delay in any authorization for citizens to leave the country. In addition, transportation facilities are strained to the utmost, also due to the bombing, and it will be a difficult matter for evacuees to reach Burgas, the one possible port of debarkation.

The best possible solution is for children to be given priority and placed on the boats and trains. They will not require certificates of release. It is possible in this connection that parents may not be willing to separate themselves from the children, especially since the announcement has been made that no further personal or physical persecutions will take place in Bulgaria. There are, however, hundreds of children who are without parents or homes who should be corraled and sent by boat and rail to Istanbul and Palestine.

In my proposed conversation with B. I am to request of him that:

1. He should give me in writing a statement of the present attitude of the Bulgarian Government on the question of minorities and Jews;
2. Information concerning Draganoff's recent meeting with the Jewish authorities and his statement.

file
audrey
My understanding is that they are to be treated like all Bulgarian citizens within the framework of the Bulgarian law which still contains the two anti-Jewish laws which are severe and which reduce the Jews to economic pariahs;

3. He will state the position of the Bulgarian Government regarding its willingness to permit Jewish refugees to leave the country.

I will request of B. that he authorize me to send a specific telegram with his own quotation on the above suggestions, and also inform him of my intention to utilize this for goodwill for the present Bulgarian Government in our own Government and for publicity to our people in the United States.

I will also ask B. if there will be any tobacco available for American buyers when the war is concluded, and possibly at this time.

Arrangements should be made for me to see B. during Simond's absence in Switzerland.

JH

*14, York
Chul Green*

to conduct for
to get to go from
a May post

Human trikes agreed of
to can give get.
a safe conduct
from Bulgarian
Russia
to agree to send
in Bulgarian waters

at port

to get in ships
to agree in Black Sea

BULGARIA: Political
Treatment of Jews
B-3
20 July 44

file
begin

Sub-source heard from a high official in Burgas that the Jews can expect a "favorable change" in their situation in August.

In an address to an economic conference in Burgas, Hristo Vasilev, Minister of Commerce, declared that the elimination of the Jews from the economic life of the country was to a large extent responsible for the "catastrophic" position of Bulgarian economy. This statement got by the censors and was printed in a Burgas paper read by sub-source.

Sub-source states, nevertheless, that the economic situation of the Jews is as bad as it has ever been. Food rations, in some instances, are lower than for the gypsies. The newly appointed chief of the Jewish Commissariat, said to be Bogomil Protich, is alleged by sub-source and other Jews who have had dealings with him to be much more strongly anti-Semitic than Stomanyakov, the retiring chief.

Sub-source heard from official mentioned in paragraph 1 that due to the fact that Bulgarians no longer volunteer for work in Germany, Berlin has asked that Bulgarian Jews be provided for forced labor. The Bagryanov government was said to have refused the request. All restrictions on Jews are still in force.

1072

July 14, 1944

NOTES ON BULGARIA

Bagryanov, the new Prime Minister is essentially ~~of~~ an agriculturist ~~was~~ of wealth connected with King Boris' ^{palace} ~~house~~. When the previous Bulgarian Government got into difficulties there was trouble in forming a new government. Finally Bagryanoff was brought in to form what might be called a Government of National Preservation. They know that Bulgaria bound to Germany will lose. At the same time, they remain inside the Axis rim. Their policy is to save Bulgaria from complete collapse and destitution.

It is significant that in the first statement made by Bagryanov after forming the government no reference was made to Hitler. He sounded a note: "Bulgaria's fate is now in Bulgaria's hands". It is to be emphasized that the capital of Bulgaria, Sofia, is almost completely destroyed. While the head of the government is still in Sofia the departments of the government are scattered throughout the country. The institutions, schools, the regular life of Bulgaria has ceased.

There has been no bombings since March 30 and it is felt by some here that the bombing of Sofia was a mistake. Economically Bulgaria is supported by the Perink Coal Mines which is the great center of fuel production in Bulgaria. Without these mines all industry would cease. Everyone expected the Allies to bomb and destroy all the mines, the nerve center of the nation. They were never touched. The bombing of Sofia made a terrible impression on the people and created a situation not in our favor. At the same time the bombing did succeed in deteriorating the economic position of Bulgaria.

It is of course, known that Germany pays only in goods and owes Bulgaria 40 million Levas. The total expenditure of the Bulgarian government for one year is 35 million Levas. Bulgaria knows this debt can never be paid. In the meanwhile business has grown worse and worse. The country supports a large army; its farm animals have been greatly reduced; the high price of meat has led to their slaughter; there is a serious shortage of draft animals.

Politically it is unquestionably true that this new government had to be one that the Germans would approve and all the members are pro-German for the primary policy of Bulgarian politics was to gain Macedonia and an outlet to the Aegean Sea.

What we can learn of Bulgaria from here now is not too accurate for we have only little windows into that country. We do know that Bulgarian leaders had serious conferences with the Russian Revolution some months ago; that the Archbishop in Sofia is an important figure and is active; that Russia is carrying on a close relationship with the Bulgarians which is indicated by the easing off of Russian pressure all of which seems to indicate that this regime looks favorable to the Russian eyes.

Eventually Bulgaria and Russia will have to come to an understanding. The Balkans as a whole form as strategic a position for the Russians as the Caribbean does for us. We can not assume that Russia will permit the Balkans to break-up. Bulgaria being a Black Sea state must hinge its fate on Russia.

It is surmised that the present Bulgarian rulers are hoping that Russia will help Bulgaria secure an outlet to the Aegean.

Regarding the refugee situation the present government has not indicated its position. But there is reason to believe that it will be seeking some means of making a gesture of good will towards Great Britain and the United States. This means must be found. Today the few refugees that have come by rail to Istanbul have been subjected to a barrage of questioning which results in the disclosure of valuable information concerning the interior affairs of Bulgaria. For example, the extent to which the Danube is mined and the lack of shipping, lack of transportation et cetera.

It is felt that the organizations who have interrogated these few refugees at public stations have been very unwise specially in view of the fact that there are German agents present.

The way is suggested now for the present Bulgarian government to win some measure of good will from the Allies by permitting in a regular way the release of refugees by boat and rail from Bulgaria.

See attached memorandum to Dr. Black.

I.A. Hirschmann

*I am to phone
Pol. on my return
and to get the
Trans. folder back*

Istanbul, Turkey, July 17, 1944

Dear Dr. Black:

Enclosed is a memorandum which you requested. I trust that it is comprehensive. I understand that Mr. Tolabanoff is now in Sofia and it occurs to me that if this information can reach Sofia while he is there, it would be possible for him to have discussions regarding it and to bring a decision when he returns to Istanbul. I shall await further word from you.

May I add that I was heartened by our meeting yesterday and wish to thank you for your gracious hospitality in your "paradise".

Cordially yours,

I. W. Hirschmann

Enclosure:
As stated.

P.S.

I found in my files a folder of some of the publicity in connection with the Transnistrian emancipation connected with the release of refugees from Transnistria.

Dr. Floyd H. Black,
Robert College,
Istanbul.

Handwritten notes at the top of the page, including the word "good" and other illegible scribbles.

Handwritten notes in the middle section, possibly starting with "The..."

Handwritten notes in the lower middle section, including the phrase "not a..." and "a..."

Handwritten notes at the bottom of the page, including the phrase "will be eliminated" and "have..."

1 20 OF TELEGRAM T

July 13, 1944

WMB

Subject: illegal admission into Turkey of persons from Bulgaria.

From I. A. Hirschmann to War Refugee Board

Reference is made to your No. in which
you request information dealing with reports that the
Turkish Consul in Sofia is charging T.L. 1,000 for a
single visa. I am informed here that if the foregoing
is true the above mentioned figure is in the category
of unofficial compensation and is consequently not a
fee the reduction of which can be requested through
official Turkish channels. Obviously, in the
circumstances there is no way of determining any
fixed figure.

COPY OF TEL GRAM RECEIVED

July 1, 1944

WMB 69

Subject: Crossing of Turkish border by Bulgarian refugees without
visas.

M E M O R A N D U M

Land Traffic from Bulgaria to Turkey

I mentioned to you the possibility of inducing the Turkish Government to allow refugees arriving by land from Bulgaria without Turkish transit visas to pass through Turkey to Palestine, in the same way as refugees arriving without papers on the Milka, etc. I realize the difficulty of obtaining Turkish approval of this proposal but think it should be tried. We have already suggested the idea to Steinhardt in No. 499 of June 2, (WRB Cable to Ankara No. 49). The fact that the Turks apparently are permitting this kind of traffic through Turkey from Greece might be used as an argument.

C O P Y

File Bulgaria (1/14/44)

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

WAR REFUGEE BOARD

WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

June 1, 1944

Dear Mr. Seckel:

As you know, Mr. Ira Hirschmann, Special Representative of the War Refugee Board at the American Embassy at Ankara, is about to return to his post.

You have suggested that Mr. Hirschmann might receive substantial assistance in his efforts to save the lives of victims of enemy persecution if he were to secure the cooperation of Turkish governmental agencies who have trade relationships with American tobacco concerns. In view of your extensive experience in Turkey and in the tobacco business, we cannot take your suggestion lightly. For this reason, we would appreciate it very much if you would undertake to arrange to secure for Mr. Hirschmann several letters of introduction from American tobacco companies, signed by appropriate persons, addressed to such agencies in Turkey, and requesting that they extend all possible assistance to Mr. Hirschmann.

Very truly yours,

(signed) J.W. Pehle
Executive Director

Mr. F. W. Seckel
40 Central Park South
New York City

ds

31144
Bulgaria
Orcus

MEMORANDUM

From: Floyd H. Black.
To: Burton Y. Berry.
Subject: A Speculation about Bulgaria.

Since the founding of the present Bulgarian Kingdom in 1878-79, Bulgaria has always been to a large extent an isolationist country unwilling either to subordinate herself to, or collaborate closely with her neighbor or any great power. There are two reasons for this: the first is the independent and stubborn character of the Bulgarian people, a characteristic which makes it difficult for Bulgarians to collaborate closely with others or to compromise, and second, the fact that Bulgaria from the beginning has had one great primary objective in foreign policy, namely, the unification of all Bulgarians under one flag. They can not collaborate closely with any nation that does not recognize this policy. The second of these factors was forced upon Bulgaria by the substitution of the Treaty of Berlin (July 1878) for the Treaty of San Stefano (March 3, 1878). Although the boundaries assigned Bulgaria in the Treaty of San Stefano were considerably inflated, due in part to the lack of complete statistical knowledge of the population and in part to the desire of Tsarist Russia, for purposes of her own, to establish a large Bulgaria, yet from the ethnographical point of view these boundaries were not far wrong at that time.

Thus at the very beginning of its history the Third Bulgarian Kingdom was presented with a problem of foreign

policy

policy which received the support of all classes of the population, a policy which to a Bulgarian has always seemed altogether just and desirable of attainment. Ever since that date all Bulgarian governments have followed this policy in foreign affairs. It was always in the background in Bulgaria's negotiations and relations either with her neighbors or with the Great Powers. This has given a unity and continuity to Bulgarian foreign policy which few nations have been so fortunate as to have. Disagreements in foreign policy have centered in the methods of achieving this desirable and rather than in the end itself.

The great political struggles which have occurred in Bulgaria have been over internal problems, as in the conflict between the peasant population and the town population, a conflict which has many ramifications in Bulgarian history, or in the conflict between the so-called conservative and liberal elements in political philosophy.

We have then in Bulgarian history the phenomenon of a foreign policy which tended to draw the whole nation together, unifying public opinion on one great aim, and at the same time internal political and economic problems which caused great controversies, tending at times to the verge of armed conflict.

This same general situation prevails today. No Bulgarian questions the desirability of unifying all Bulgarian-speaking people under one flag, although many

question

question the methods of attaining unification pursued by the present régime. Few Bulgarians would willingly give up all the territories now annexed. At the same time a great internal conflict is going on which is primarily economic. This struggle is represented by the communists and by the agrarians who desire and resort to political means to bring about the desired change. The financial and governing classes on the whole desire to maintain the present political system, while at the same time making as many concessions as possible to the agricultural and working classes in the way of reforms, increased wages, social insurance and other means, which, it is hoped, will so much improve the economic conditions of the working classes generally as to appease them, thus preventing a radical political upheaval.

In view of this general situation, so briefly and inadequately stated, is it possible to make any prediction about the course of political events in Bulgaria under the changing circumstances of a rapidly developing military situation? On this point no one can do anything but speculate because nobody knows or can know how events will develop, but one can not avoid conjuring up various possibilities. One of these possibilities is stated below.

When the Bulgarian revolutionary movement was developing in the period between 1835 and 1876, Bulgarians turned more and more to Russia. A great many Bulgarians, including a number of the principal leaders of the Bulgarian revolutionary movement, studied in Russia. Bulgaria was bound to Russia by ties of language, religion,

customs

customs and by a common political interest - the struggle against Turkey. These facts, however, did not make the Bulgarian revolutionary leaders pro-Russian to the extent that they desired to make Bulgaria an appendage of Russia or desired that Bulgaria should be governed or controlled by Russia. They were glad to accept Russian military aid, and were grateful for it, but they did not want Russia or the Russians to stay in Bulgaria. They wanted to govern their own liberated country, and so proceeded very soon after the liberation to eliminate Russian political control while maintaining Russian cultural influence, which was inevitable. Thus the fears of the Great Powers, particularly England, which led to the tearing up of the Treaty of San Stefano and the substitution therefor of the Treaty of Berlin, were proved groundless. Bulgaria did not intend to be a mere Russian outpost in the Balkans. This was in conformity with Bulgarian character as much as it was in conformity with Bulgarian national interests.

A somewhat similar situation exists today. Bulgaria is still attempting to achieve the old national ideal of unification, although the problem is much more difficult now than it was in 1878, because of ethnographical and political changes which have occurred in the Balkans since that date. In 1941 Bulgaria joined the Axis not because she loved the Axis or loved the Germans or the Italians, or had anything particular in common with them except trade, but primarily because she believed that in this way the old policy of unification could be finally achieved. It was a risk and a gamble, but the leaders took it, and in 1941 they

had

had the whole-hearted and unanimous support of public opinion. Now the success of this policy is jeopardized. A large proportion of the population has come to believe that the governments of Filov and Bozhilov have led the country to the brink of catastrophe, but this does not mean that the overwhelming majority of the people do not believe in and desire the completion of unification.

Under these circumstances, and in view of the fact that German power is rapidly decreasing, while the power of Soviet Russia is as rapidly increasing, it can be only natural that Bulgarians will again look toward Russia as once more a possible source of assistance in achieving national unification. Bulgaria is not at war with Russia, although many of the acts of the Bulgarian Government have worked military harm to Russia, as has the granting of bases to the Germans on Bulgaria's Black Sea coast, especially at Varna. Bulgaria's aid to Germany in the form of food supplies and raw materials of many kinds has also helped Germany carry on her war against Russia. Large numbers of German wounded have been brought from the Russian front for treatment in Bulgaria. But the Soviet Government could square all these acts by eliminating the Bulgarian governing régime which is responsible for them without being offended by the conduct of the Bulgarian people as a whole, who have steadfastly refused to take an active part in Germany's war against Russia.

All Bulgarians know that their country has no hope of realizing its unification through any kind of negotiations

with

with the Anglo-Americans, because the latter are committed to the support of Greece and Yugoslavia. While this support does not involve the extension of the frontiers of Greece and Yugoslavia at Bulgaria's expense, it probably would involve the maintenance of frontiers as of April 1941. Hence Bulgaria has nothing to hope for in this respect from the Anglo-Americans. Thus the waning of German power and the hostility of the Anglo-Americans force Bulgaria to look to Soviet Russia for some kind of assistance just as she did at the time of her struggle for liberation.

The Soviet negotiations with Finland are very encouraging to Bulgarians, for the latter reason that if Soviet Russia is thus generous with regard to Finland, a nation at war with the Soviets, there is no reason to suppose that Moscow would not be equally generous with regard to a settlement in the Balkans. A strong and friendly Bulgaria may be just as useful to Soviet Russia as a strong and friendly Bulgaria was expected to be useful to Tsarist Russia in 1878. If Bulgarians believe that they can win the support of Soviet Russia in helping them achieve at least a considerable part of their policy of unification, they are likely to turn to Russia when the time comes. It now appears that at some date in the near future the Soviet armies will reach the frontiers of Rumania. With sufficient encouragement from Moscow, the Bulgarians will be strongly moved to throw in their lot with Russia in return for Russian aid looking toward the fulfilment, of their traditional policy of unification. In such case the

internal

internal situation in Bulgaria and the political leadership could doubtless be quickly adjusted to meet the new requirements.

FHB:sa

March 11, 1944.

MEMORANDUM

February 25, 1944.

I. SS BELLA CITA

In June 1943 the Turks told Mr. Barlas that they would provide visas for 75 children every ten days to be divided among three countries: (a) Bulgaria, (b) Rumania, and (c) Hungary. It was first suggested that the 5,000 children, from which are to be drawn 2,000 from Bulgaria, 2,000 from Rumania, and 1,000 from Hungary, be permitted to enter, but concentrate on one country at a time. This was later changed.

Late in September or October the proposition of sending 150 children on the SS BELLA CITA, under the Bulgarian flag, was presented to the Turkish Government which agreed to give them special permission to come by sea. The instructions to their consuls was to permit the group of 150 to come without approving any individual names here although specific names of the evacuees would be provided at Bucharest. Due to difficulties in securing safe conduct and other reasons for delay the boat could not depart. The plan was then changed. The International Red Cross asked to transfer this permission from

SECRET
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DATE 11-14-2001 BY 60322 UCBAW/STP/STP

On January 25th I called upon Mr. Maby at the British Embassy to discuss the matter of cooperation between the representatives of our two governments in expediting the routine for the evacuation of refugees. In a previous memorandum I noted that no refugees had entered Istanbul in the last two weeks. (Since then 20 people arrived in Istanbul). I told him that in my presence Mr. Barlas had called Kemal Aziz and asked him why the visas for the 150 children from Rumania were being held up on his desk. He stated that he was waiting for a letter from the English which would authorize the issuing of visas to Palestine within 24 hours of arrival in Istanbul. I reported this fact to Mr. Maby who stated that he had seen K. A. only 48 hours ago to discuss the reasons for the delay of the general visas and no reference was made to a letter. Mr. Maby suggested that I go to see K. A. but I contended that in view of the fact that it was a matter directly between the English and the Turkish authorities that I could do little or no good as an intermediary at this point. He agreed to either call or see K. A. on Saturday morning.

Today (Saturday) Mr. Maby telephoned to K. A. and reported to me thereafter by phone the following: that the delay was not caused by the absence of a letter but by the new order which required authorization from Ankara for the entry of any foreigners into Istanbul; that this had now

TO THE DIRECTOR OF THE FBI
FROM THE CONSUL GENERAL, IZMIR
RE: REFUGEE TRAFFIC
I am pleased to advise you that the
24-hour guarantee for the entry of
5,000 Jewish children into Turkey has
been secured. The Turkish Government
has agreed to issue visas for these
children within 24 hours of their
arrival in Turkey. This is a
very important step in the
refugee problem.

been cleared and that from this point on the refugee traffic would be opened up satisfactorily. K. A. also stated that he had managed to locate a previous letter dated January 29, 1944 from the English giving the 24-hour guarantee. Mr. Maby had said that he had reason to believe that the traffic now would begin to flow. I asked him if he would have occasion to call during the week and check up on it and to call me in Istanbul if there was any further delay. Mr. Maby stated that Mr. Barlas was in the Foreign Office at the time of his call and that the coordination seemed complete.

Mr. Barlas visited me subsequently and gave me the following information: (1) In his talk with K. A. that he had ferreted out the letter of January 29, 1944 from the English authorizing the granting of the visas within 24 hours of the 5,000 children - (a) the letter included the fact that the representative of the Jewish Agency would be responsible for the maintenance and fares of the 5,000 children during their stay in Turkey, and (b) that the children will enter Turkey in groups of 75 every 10 days; (2) Mr. Barlas suggested that this covering letter which referred only to the 5,000 children should refer as well to any Jewish refugees arriving in Turkey. K. A. agreed to this, according to Mr. Barlas; (3) K. A. agreed that telegraphic instructions would be given to his Legation in Bucharest to issue visas for 150 children in two groups of 75 each; (4) K. A. also informed Mr. Barlas that refugees

074

Bulgaria

MEMORANDUM

on the situation of the Jews in
Bulgaria and on their emigration.

I - Situation.

Statistics:

According to unofficial statistics approx. 40 000 to 43 000 Jews are living now in Bulgaria. The largest Jewish agglomeration was in Sofia, with approx. 25 000 persons. Now there are only about 500 Jews living there, (converted Jews not to be included in this number). The Jews of this city were dispersed in the provincial towns (Rousse, Plevan, Vidin, Kustendil, Pazarjik, Shoumen, Haskovo, etc.) so that the population of these cities amounts to 2 000 - 4 000 persons. There are also some other small communities. The largest agglomeration is now in Plovdiv (approx. 8 000).

Juridical situation:

The Office (Commissariat) of Jewish Affairs has unlimited powers towards the Jews. Jews are excluded from all professions or any economical activity, this with the exception of an insignificant percentage only. Those who can work are: The manual labourers, the pedlars and the artisans who had already been doing this before 1940. In fact different other limitations reduce a lot the number of Jews who can earn their living. The buildings are taken by the State and all their money is blocked in the Banks. Jews can only travel with a special permission of the Office of Jewish Affairs. It takes a long time to obtain same which is also rarely granted. They do not have the right to use the telephone and to cross the principal streets. Since lately they are allowed to leave their house for only 2 hours during the day and this applies only to the head of the family.

Economical situation:

Theoretically the rich receive, with the special permission of the Office of Jewish Affairs (permission which must be requested and which is granted separately for each month), a sum deducted from their blocked accounts for their living. Even in the best cases this sum does not exceed 6 000 Levas, sum which is not even sufficient for a family of the middle class and it also happens that the permission is given with a delay of 3-4 months. Besides, the rich also have to face money-extortions on part of the Bulgarian Authorities. In fact they live on their hidden money, on sales of jewels, etc. The poor could work for their living but the supplementary limitations deprive them of this possibility. The middle class lives by selling furniture and they have reached the end. Soon it will mean black misery for them. The Jewish Communities keep up popular kitchens with the money sent by the Office of Jewish Affairs, but same refuses any sum for other charity works or social help and consequently people in need remain without clothes, heating, etc.

The Jewish Communities and the Central Consistory (central representation):

In fact the Central Consistory does not exist any more since the evacuation of the Jews from Sofia. A delegate of the Office of Jewish Affairs is at the head of each community and has unlimited powers. The buildings and the incomes of the communities are transferred to a central fund, which provides to the needs of each community according to a budget which is approved by the Commissioner of Jewish Affairs. In fact he only approves a minimal budget which sometimes is lower than the incomes of the community.

Moral situation:

There is general panic because of:

- a) the uncertainty concerning the final aim of the anti-Jewish policy of the Government. Last year Jews were on the point of being sent to Poland (the revocation of this decision is generally attributed to the intervention of the Church) and now they live in a constant fear that this might happen again.
- b) The means of living are exhausted.

II - Emigration.

There is a huge wish to immigrate to Palestine, wish which develops into a real psychose. The Bulgarian Government (since the last change of Government, i.e. 4-5 months) grants exit-permissions to every Jews who wants to leave Bulgaria, provided he has the necessary foreign visas. A few months ago during a debate at the Chamber of Deputies, when the Minister of the Interior, indicated the number of emigration permits granted to Jews (a few hundred at that time), the deputies shouted "not enough". A characteristic fact is that the censorship admitted the publication of this incident. It is said that there is almost nobody to whom the granting of the exit permit was refused by the Minister. Why then have Bulgarian Jews emigrated in such a small number till now ? Because only a small number of certificates were sent to Bulgaria and the procedure to receive same as well as the Turkish visas is terribly slow and complicated.

Measures which will have to be taken:

It is necessary to use all available influences to simplify and accelerate the mass obtention of Palestinian certificates and especially the obtention of Turkish transit visas.

Possibly send a boat sailing under neutral flag, to a Bulgarian port to enable a mass emigration.

Albert Romany

Persons
who arrived in transit in Istanbul
from Bulgaria

January 1944	32
February	55
March (1)	131
April	17
May	46
June	<u>127</u>
Total:	408

(1) Group of children under children's emigration scheme: 46
Number of families: 85
Total: 131

TRANSLATION.

Bulgaria

BULGARIA.

Subject of this memorandum is the question of a quick and widespread action to save the Bulgarian Jewry, and especially the Jewish youth of Bulgaria. I point out that it has to be quick; for in the next month the situation might become similarly tragic to the one in Hungary. Even today it does happen more than in exceptional cases that young Jews are suddenly lost and gone.

The question of a large styled emigration of people without means cannot be solved by the slow emigration by land via Svilengrad. The question of mass emigration of the Bulgarian Jewry is before all a political one, and therefore means for its solution are of a political nature. There are three political factors which have to be taken into account :-

- 1- the tendency of the political development of Bulgarian Jewry;
- 2- today's actual political interests of the Bulgarian state; and
- 3- financial and political help that the first two factors may get from outside, i.e. from foreign political powers.

The tendency of the political development of the Bulgarian Jewry unquestionably and unavoidably such that especially the Jewish youth is falling into a state of deep despair, which leads them to join the so-called "Communist illegal Schumzi". The Schumzi are the illegal communist partisans on the Balkans. Such a perspective is catastrophic for the Jews themselves; for it gives new impetus to the already strong antisemitism in Bulgaria. At the same time it is disagreeable for the Bulgarian Government, who fight the partisans in every possible manner.

On the other hand, Bulgaria's political interests today demand imperatively that Bulgaria - even if she may not find friendship - at least may find sympathy and understanding on the part of the Allies for her former and present politic. One of the means to achieve this, and perhaps one of the most important means to save Bulgaria, is the help that she may now give to an action of mass emigration of her Jews. Something can be done in this connection by official Bulgarian representatives in neutral countries.

In connection with items 1 and 2 will have to come the third factor: political and financial help from outside, that is from the Allied and their friends.

At the present, there exist two difficulties in the way of emigration from Bulgaria :- it is difficult to get the exit permit from Bulgaria, and it is even more difficult to get the Turkish transit visas. Twenty transit visas per week do not help much, if at all. For either several thousand families will be able to emigrate from Rumania in the course of the next months, or it may be too late as

./.

file ready
February 24, 1944

BULGARIAN PERSONALITIES

ASSEF POBOENKOV: Bulgarian nationality; Greek Orthodox religion; born in the village of Korkina; about 48 years old. Graduated from high school in Kustendil and studied at the University of Sofia. He was never a politician. He became an officer in a transportation firm. He advanced rapidly and founded his own firm, EXPRESS, which became the largest transportation firm in the country. He has very good connections to the Palace through his brother who, for many years, was an Adjutant to King Boris. Most of the important officials of the Palace are his friends. Because of his very good character, he has many friends of great importance in Bulgarian economy and policy. All the Ministers and the important officials of the different Ministries; all important officers in the National Bank, Agrar Bank, ^{and} Union of Savings Bank, are intimate friends of his. For this reason he can be very useful as a mediator. Despite the fact that he is working with the Germans, he has no pro-German sympathies. He had great sympathy for Czechoslovakia, Poland and Yugoslavia. He is married and has two children. He speaks German and a little ~~German~~ French.

BULGARIAN PERSONALITIES

2-7-44

NIKOLA BALABANOV: Bulgarian nationality; Greek Orthodox religion; born in Sofia; about 58 years old. Graduated from high school in Sofia and studied at the University of Sofia and Paris. He became a judge, and as such used to work in many different parts of the country. After the Democratic Union took over the power in the country, he entered the State Department, where he advanced rapidly, and was appointed Director of the Bulgarian Telegraphic Agency, which is the most important press institution in the country. Later, he was appointed Minister to Czechoslovakia, and he remained in Prague until the occupation of Czechoslovakia by the Germans. He was then sent to Paris as Minister of the Bulgarian Government. As such, he did everything in his power to alienate Bulgaria from Germany's influence, but he was not able to do much as the political development was already in an advanced stage. After the collapse of France he went to Vichy, where he remained until September 1943. After the death of King Boris when the former Bulgarian Minister in Ankara, Sava Kirov, was appointed Foreign Minister, Balabanov replaced him as Minister in Ankara. At the present time he is working for a closer relationship between Turkey and Bulgaria. He is also working in another direction - he wants Bulgaria to get out of the alliance with Germany and to become strictly neutral. It is very doubtful that he will succeed in this aim, because Germany has many forces at work in Bulgaria and the Balkans and does everything possible in order that Bulgaria remains in the same position. Balabanov is known as a very good Democrat, very sincere and honest. Despite the fact that his name is Balabanov, he is not related to the old, rich and powerful Balabanov family which is known as pro-German. He speaks very well French and German. He is married.

SECRET
NOVEMBER 1944
MILITARY DIVISION
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
HEADQUARTERS U.S. ARMY
WASHINGTON, D.C.

BULGARIAN PERSONALITIES

BAGRIANOV: Bulgarian nationality; Greek Orthodox religion; born in Lovech, about 51 years old. Son of one of the biggest farmers in the country. Bagrianov graduated from High School in Lovech and from Military School in Sofia. He took part in the two wars, and after the War he was appointed Adjutant at the King's Court. In this position he gained the favour of the King, but after some years was dismissed or resigned. At first no one could understand why this had happened, because it was known that the King was very fond of him. But shortly afterwards there were rumors that the sister of the King, Princess Rudecia, had fallen in love with him, and that he had been dismissed in order to get him out of the way. He returned to his father's estate and married. He entered the Agrarian Party of Stambulsky, without taking an active part in this movement. For many years nobody heard anything about him, but in 1934 he was unexpectedly appointed Minister of Agriculture. As such, he made many reforms in favour of the farmers. After two years of cooperation with Minister President Kiosseivanov, he disagreed with Kiosseivanov's internal policy, and resigned. Soon after Bagrianov's resignation, the King asked for the resignation of Kiosseivanov. Bagrianov is known as a very cultured man, very intelligent, sincere and fearless. At the beginning, he was for an understanding with Yugoslavia and the other Balkan countries, but after entering the Kiosseivanov Cabinet he changed his opinion and began to work together with the pro-German elements in the country. He speaks German and French. ^{P.S.} The beginning of June 1944 Mr. Bagrianov was appointed Minister President of Bulgaria. My opinion is that he will not last very long.

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MAY 10 1944

BULGARIAN PERSONALITIES

DIMITER SAVOV: Bulgarian nationality; born in Vraza; about 55 years old. Graduated from the High School of Vraza and afterwards studied commerce in Germany. Sadov is now President of the Chamber of Commerce in Sofia. He is known as an important manufacturer. Politically, he belongs to Zankov's National Movement. In 1934 he was elected as Deputy in the Bulgarian Parliament. Sadov is known as one of the trusted men of the Nazis in Bulgaria. After the introduction of racial laws in Bulgaria he profited from this situation to take away for himself the representation of the most important German rubber and chemical industries from those who formerly represented them. As President of the Chamber of Commerce in Sofia, he does everything possible to help the Germans. During the last seven or eight years he has become one of the richest men in the country. He speaks German and French. Mrs. Davov was born in Kostindin and is the daughter of a prominent family in that city. They have no children.

P.S. Mr. Savov became in the beginning of June 1944, Minister of Finance of Bulgaria. Despite his being pro-german, he was never considered an Anti-Semit. He used to do business with Jews gladly and one of his partners was Jewish too.

1075

BULGARIA

M. HALABNOFF - BULGARIAN MINISTER TO TURKEY

2

The General Office

Washington

1864

C O P Y

LEGATION ROYALE DE BULGARIE
EN TURKIE

Ankara, le 25 septembre 1944

Messieurs les Représentants de
l'Agence Juive en Palestine

A n k a r a

Toujours en rapport avec notre dernier entretien, j'ai l'honneur de vous communiquer ce dont le Gouvernement Bulgare vient de m'informer:

1.-Les Autorités de frontière Bulgares ont été avisées de l'autorisation du Gouvernement Turc au passage du territoire turc des juifs émigrants ne possédant pas le visa de transit respectif, à condition d'être munis d'un certificat établissant qu'ils obtiendraient le visa d'entrée en Palestine.

2.-Le Gouvernement Bulgare a prescrit à la Légation Royale de Bulgarie en Roumanie d'accorder le visa de transit bulgare aux juifs de Hongrie, Pologne et Roumanie qui se rendent en Palestine.

3.-Le Gouvernement Bulgare accueille avec sympathie la création et la consolidation de l'état Juif.

Quant aux juifs de Bulgarie le Gouvernement Bulgare a abrogé toutes les lois restrictive concernant les juifs. Il a rétabli tout les droits et libertés des juifs en Bulgarie. Il leur rendra tous leurs biens qui leur ont été expropriés par les autorités de l'ancien régime et les dédommagera de tous les dégats et pertes qu'ils ont subis. Le Gouvernement autorisera l'ouverture de toutes les écoles juives et subviendra à leur entretien, ainsi qu'il accordera pleine liberté aux juifs quant au choix de la langue d'enseignement dans ces écoles.

L'émigration des juifs de Bulgarie pour la Palestine sera libre pour les juifs qui en ce moment ne sont pas soumis aux dispositions de mobilisation en vigueur actuellement en Bulgarie.

Le Gouvernement rétablira toutes les institutions sociales juives, comme hôpitaux, orphelinats, asiles pour vieillards, réfectoires etc. qui auraient subi des endommagements à la suite des bombardements et ce au même titre d'égalité que les institutions similaires bulgares.

Veuillez agréer, Messieurs, l'expression de mes sentiments distingués

ss: BALABANOFF

000750

Translation

C O P Y

ROYAL LEGATION OF BULGARIA
IN TURKEY

Ankara, September 25, 1944

Messieurs the Representatives of the
Jewish Agency of Palestine

A n k a r a

Always in connection with our last conversation, I have the honor to communicate to you that which the Bulgarian Government has just informed me:

1.-The frontier authorities of Bulgaria have been advised of the authorization of the Turkish Government for the passage into Turkish territory of Jewish emigrants not in possession of respective transit visas, on condition that they bear a certificate establishing that they would obtain Palestine entry visas.

2.-The Bulgarian Government has instructed the Royal Legation of Bulgaria in Rumania to accord transit visas through Bulgaria for Jews of Hungary, Poland and Rumania who are going to Palestine.

3.-The Bulgarian Government views with sympathy the creation and consolidation of the Jewish state.

As for the Bulgarian Jews, the Bulgarian Government has abrogated all the restrictive laws concerning the Jews. It has restored all the rights and liberties of the Jews in Bulgaria. It will return to them all of their goods which were expropriated by the authorities of the former regime, and will recompense them for all damages and losses which they have sustained. The Government will authorize the opening of all Jewish schools, and will provide for their maintenance, as well as giving full liberty to the Jews to choose the language of instruction in these schools.

The emigration of Jews from Bulgaria to Palestine shall be free for the Jews who at this moment are not subject to the dispositions for mobilization at present in force in Bulgaria.

The Government will re-establish all Jewish social institutions, such as hospitals, orphanages, old-age asylums, refectories etc. which have sustained damage as a result of the bombardments, and this under equal conditions with similar Bulgarian institutions.

Kindly accept, Messieurs, the expression of my high esteem,

ss: BALABANOFF

000759

TELEGRAM SENT

8/24/44
E. L. ...
August 22, 1944

WRB 137

Subject: Authorization of Balabnoff to publish his letter
of July 25. Quotations from this letter.

076

Istanbul, August 21, 1944

Dear Dr. Black:

I am enclosing a revised letter of Balabanoff which he has authorized for publication. As you say, a step is being made in the right direction, but I do trust, with Parliament in session, that the opportunity will not be lost to make these steps decisive so they may be interpreted in Washington in terms of the desired good will.

With all good wishes,

Cordially yours,

I. A. Hirschmann

Dr. Floyd H. Black, President
Robert College
Hisar

IAH:VH

Istanbul, August 13, 1944

Dear Earl:

As suggested by M. Simon, in your note of August 13, M. Jacquinet attempted to communicate with No. 2. His reply was that he is still in Ankara, and intends to remain there. I should be grateful if you would telephone Simon about this for me.

As I understand that Simon is leaving for Istanbul on Friday, it is important for him to determine so far as it is possible to do so when No. 2 is planning to return to Istanbul, in order that I may convey a message to him and to see him, also approximately how long Simon intends to remain in Istanbul.

With kind personal wishes,

Cordially yours,

I. A. Firschmann

H. L. Packer, Esquire
First Secretary of Embassy
American Embassy
Ankara

IAH/b

-2-

be glad to give him a copy of the above, if he cares to have it, and will send it to him through you. You may ask him this.

Thank you for your kindness. I should appreciate your communicating with me, giving me his reaction to the above, immediately after seeing him.

I expect to see you on Wednesday, August 16, at 3 P.M. at the Park Hotel.

Cordially yours,

I. A. Mirschmann
Social Attache

M. Louis Jacquinet
Khalil Palas, Apt. 3
Aboulhassan Said Cadossi
Taksim, Istanbul

12/5

Istanbul, August 12, 1944

Dear Earl:

Thanks for the letter today from Mr. Simond and your other communications. I should be grateful if Simond could be telephoned, in order to determine when he is due to arrive in Istanbul. I understood from him that he planned to arrive some time during the week of August 14. Also it would be helpful if he could press for the release of the letter and a response from No. 2.

Cordially yours,

I. A. Hirschmann

Earl Packer, Esquire
First Secretary
American Embassy
Ankara

IAH:VH

00076

Istanbul, August 12, 1944

Dear John :

I am enclosing a copy of a letter addressed to Monsieur Simond, Ankara representative of the International Red Cross, which he is handing to Monsieur Balabanoff, Bulgarian Minister to Turkey. The letter covers the points enumerated in my telegrams No. 1414, August 2, and 1446, August 7, 1944.

Attached is a clipping from the Istanbul "Journal d'Orient" of August 6. In the last several weeks the Turkish papers suddenly and consistently began to publish news regarding refugees.

With kind personal regards,

Cordially yours,

I. A. Hirschmann
Special Attache

J. W. Pehle, Esquire
Executive Director
War Refugee Board
Treasury Building
Washington, D. C.

Encls.

IAH:VH

100760

MEMO OF TELEGRAM SENT

August 8, 1944

WRB

Subject: information for Harriman re abolition of anti-Jewish laws.

1076

TELEGRAM SENT

August 7, 1944

WRB 123

Subject: Interview with Balabenoff, August 5.

076

No. 3333 (R-3055)

AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL
Istanbul, Turkey, August 5, 1944

2/5/44
Balabanov
Bulgaria
cc

SUBJECT: The Jewish Situation in Bulgaria

THE HONORABLE
THE SECRETARY OF STATE,
WASHINGTON.

SIR:

I have the honor to present below a summary of the latest information received by this office on the Jewish situation in Bulgaria. The sources are an informant close to the Bulgarian Government whose wife is a Jewess, and other informed persons. The attached letter from Mr. Balabanov, Bulgarian Minister to Turkey to Mr. Simon of the International Red Cross, is important documentary evidence of the new situation.

In making this report, I am probably not mentioning any facts that are not known and reported by the special representative of the War Refugee Board now in Turkey working on the Jewish question in Bulgaria and other Balkan countries. In fact every effort has been made to keep him advised of information reaching this office concerning the Jews and he has acted in the same manner towards us. The conclusions and opinions in this despatch, however, are those of the Consulate General and its sources. Moreover, it seems wise to report this important matter in the usual way in order to keep the information flowing into the Department from the reporting section of the Consulate General as complete as possible.

A member of this office presented a Bulgarian source close to the Bulgarian Government with a statement of the attitude of the American Government upon the Jewish question, based upon telegrams received from the Department. The source, who, on account of his wife, is sensitive to and well informed upon the Jewish question in Bulgaria, then sent a strongly worded statement to his Government in Sofia. He told me that Balabanov would carry his statement to Sofia when he went there in mid-July and would probably bring back some reply.

The reply Balabanov brought back was more than we expected. The message was first delivered to me by my source who saw Balabanov on his return to Istanbul on July 21st. A few days later, it was given to the special

representative

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 15 1972

representative of the War Refugee Board in Ankara by Balabanov himself both verbally and - what is most remarkable of all - in the form of a signed copy of a letter from Balabanov to Simon.

The importance of this letter and its contents can hardly be over-estimated. A Balkan diplomat is rarely willing to put himself on record in writing. To do so in this instance, speaking officially for his Government, indicates that Balabanov was not only willing but anxious to show the new direction his Government is taking with regard to questions of importance to the Allies.

A free translation of the letter is attached herewith. Its main points may be summarized as follows: 1) the new Bulgarian Government intends to alleviate the condition of the Jews as soon as practicable; 2) it will facilitate the emigration of the Jews to places of safety; 3) the Prime Minister saw the Jewish consistorium in Sofia and reassured them as to future treatment of Bulgarian Jews, for which they express their gratitude.

This indicates a basic change of policy. The rest of this despatch contains views and amplifications upon this important letter.

First Interpretations:

At first glance the Bulgarian willingness to allow the Jews to emigrate is a very great concession. It must be added, however, that there is no practical means of getting them out within a reasonable time. There are 45,000 Jews in Bulgaria. If a train load of them were to come out every week, only 500 persons would thus be transported weekly. Shipping is also inadequate and hard to come by. Moreover, if the war is ending, many Jews would no doubt prefer to stay where they are.

Persons interested in the Jewish question want to get the Bulgarian Government to acknowledge the difficulty of getting the Jews out of Bulgaria. Then, they want to urge the Government to take steps towards restoring their citizenship, i.e. to repeal the two anti-Jewish laws that deprive them of it. And finally, as some authorities believe a growing number of the Jews are in danger of starvation and entirely destitute, they think the Bulgarian Government should be asked to agree that if the United Nations can get food to Bulgaria, it will be allowed to be given to the Jews.

Views of my Informant:

My confidential informant, holds other views. He remembers that he spent one night until 4 o'clock in the morning in conversation with Gabrovski, chief of police in Sofia, who finally convinced him that if the Jews had not been expelled from Sofia the Germans would have compelled their expulsion to Poland. It was intolerable for Germans in Sofia to be confronted with Jews in their daily affairs. So, by expelling them from Sofia, the Government saved the lives of the Jews, although their property was lost. This, the informant said, was no more

than

than had been experienced by many Bulgarians as a result of the Allied bombings.

The informant went on to say that there is no reason why Jews should starve in Bulgaria since they are now allowed to work. This was confirmed to me by a Jew in Istanbul, who said they are allowed to work to a certain extent, as in harvesting, but are not generally allowed to take jobs. They are well paid for harvest work, the wage being 200 to 250 leva (comparable to 4 or 5 dollars in America) a day.

Moreover, the informant said, information reaching Bulgaria from Palestine is that Jews who go there now have a hard time to find work, except at farm labor which is not suited to school-leavers, doctors, scientists and the like. Many loaf in cafes for months. The informant is, therefore, sure that few Jews now want to leave Bulgaria for Palestine. This is all the more true because they no longer fear persecution in Bulgaria because of the terms of the two existing anti-Jewish laws. They have been assured by the Bagrymov Government of more lenient treatment, for one thing, that the yellow discs they now wear on their arms will soon be removed by decree. Finally, Bulgarian Jews do not want to send out their children. Most families would prefer to take their chances together, unless they are confronted with the fear of expulsion to Poland or execution.

Returning to the question of food for the Jews in Bulgaria, the informant said he saw no reason in the world why food should be sent to Bulgaria. He said the country is now enjoying one of its best crops in a long time. Under such circumstances, the Bulgarian Government would not permit the importation of food if it were sent. He suggested that the Jewish consistorium buy food on the Bulgarian market. Germany will be getting very little of the present crop. If the consistorium needs money, let it be sent to them. It should be remembered that each village has a kazan - soup kettle - where the poorest Jews are fed. Probably the reason many of the Jews are in a sad plight is that even before the war two-thirds of the Jews of Bulgaria were poor people living at a bare subsistence level. There were few wealthy Jews. The rest of the remaining one-third might be called well-to-do.

Both my informant and Balabanov indicated that nothing can be done immediately by the Bulgarian Government to repeal existing laws against the Jews in view of the reaction this would be certain to provoke from the Germans. The Council of Ministers cannot under the constitution repeal acts of Parliament by decree. Parliament must act upon such matters and would be unlikely to do so now in the face of German opposition.

Respectfully yours,

Burton Y. Barry
American Consul General

Enclosure:
As stated.

To Department in original and hectograph
File No. 891 WNF/bb.

August 4, 1944

2/19/44
Balabanoff
Bulgarian
2074

M E M O R A N D U M

To Mr. Hirschmann from Mr. Katzki

Subject: Conversation with Dr. Black, August 4, 1944

Dr. Black had carefully gone over Mr. Hirschmann's letter, and made the following observations:

(1) For physical and technical reasons, it probably will not be possible for a large number of Jewish people to leave Bulgaria. This is a result of difficulties in securing necessary records, documents, etc. In addition, it is to be expected that, with the changing situation in Bulgaria and the possibility that the condition of Jewish people will improve, not many will want to leave. In his opinion, should the condition of Jewish people be ameliorated, the major proportion of Jewish people would prefer to remain in Bulgaria where they know the language, customs, etc., to re-establish themselves there rather than to seek a new homeland which would be entirely strange to them, and where efforts for rehabilitation would be much more difficult. Dr. Black believes that the Jewish people in Bulgaria are not as badly off as are those in Hungary, and that, if emigration projects are in view, emphasis should be placed upon the emigration of people from Hungary rather than from Bulgaria. He thinks, then, that emphasis should be laid upon the obtention of transit facilities through Bulgaria in behalf of Jewish people in Hungary, rather than upon the emigration of the Bulgarians themselves. Emigration of the latter should be regarded as a voluntary matter, and not as a problem of evacuation. The Bulgarian Jews relatively are not so badly off. Dr. Black laid

great stress upon the concept of assisting the Bulgarian Jews to remain where they are and rehabilitate themselves there.

(2) In Dr. Black's opinion, should there be an amelioration of the situation of the Jews in Bulgaria, not many families will be willing to have their children emigrate. Before the promulgation of the two anti-Jewish laws, Bulgarian Jewish children, with one or two exceptions, were in practically the same position as were non-Jewish Bulgarian children. They could attend schools, and possibilities for their futures were little different from those of other Bulgarians. Naturally, this view is predicated upon the abrogation of the anti-Jewish laws and the restoration of Bulgarian Jews to their citizenship and other rights as they existed during earlier years.

(3) The 25,000 Jewish people who formerly lived in Sofia and were required to leave that city and take up residences elsewhere today are relatively no worse off than are other former inhabitants of Sofia. It is true that Bulgarian Jews had to leave the city. For the most part, they moved in on relatives elsewhere, and were sheltered by them. As a result of the bombardment and destruction of Sofia a very large proportion of the population has since likewise been compelled to leave the city and move to other quarters. Thus, in terms of present housing, Bulgarian Jews and non-Jews from Sofia are on the same footing, and the Jews are at least as well housed as the non-Jews. What is important, then, is full restoration of the citizenship of Jews so that they will be able to resume that same full free status which they had prior to 1940. In addition, although it is a very complex matter and subject to many legal difficulties,

the question of indemnification of Jewish people for economic losses may be considered. Of course, it may be difficult to do things where properties have been expropriated, or where Jewish people were forced to dispose of assets at a fraction of their value. Complications would arise from a legal viewpoint where title was passed for a consideration, even though the consideration may have been disproportionately small. On the other hand, should the government, for example, determine to indemnify in some fashion former residents of Sofia to compensate them for property losses arising out of the bombardment of the city, Jewish people should receive the same consideration as anyone else, whatever the compensation might be.

Perhaps in this connection something could be done to give Jewish people free access to their bank accounts, into which they had to deposit their cash and proceeds of the forced sale of their assets, and which are now blocked. Jewish people are now permitted to draw down only 6,000 levas per month for their maintenance requirements. H. K. 7

(4) Food today is not a problem in Bulgaria, according to Dr. Black. His information is that crops this year are extraordinarily good, to such an extent that most Bulgarian-grown vegetables and bread are free, and not even subject to rationing. Meat is scarce, but this affects everyone in Bulgaria. Therefore, it would not be so important to send food to Bulgaria as it would be to place the Jewish people in funds so that they can purchase their food requirements in the open market. Dr. Black thinks that this is the approach which should be taken, namely, that

funds could be made available to Jewish people provided the Bulgarian authorities would guarantee that the Jewish people would be able to purchase their fair share of available supplies in the same manner as do other sections of the Bulgarian population. Dr. Black recognized, of course, that there may be some complications in terms of Bulgarian fiscal regulations, and those of the United States, should the Bulgarians want to be paid in foreign exchange. He thinks that the argument of the making available of foreign exchange should be of sufficient interest to the Bulgarians to secure their interest in such a proposal.

I told Dr. Black that, from the American point of view in my opinion the foreign exchange control regulations would not be insurmountable.

Dr. Black mentioned the name of a Mr. Gunov, who is director of the Bulgarian national bank, and who is anti-Nazi and anti-Fascist, and who probably would be friendly disposed toward assisting in finding local currency in Bulgaria should it be necessary to find Bulgarian levas to be made available to the Jewish people for purposes of food purchase.

(5) Dr. Black thought it important that an unprejudiced and unbiased survey of the conditions of Jewish people in Bulgaria today be made, touching on such questions as: the distribution of Jews and where they are; their financial situation; in broad terms, the extent of hardship which prevails; the kinds of assistance which are necessary; the degree of relaxation, if any, in the enforcement of measures directed against the Jewish people, etc. He recognized, of course, that there may be some opposition on the part of the Bulgarian authorities to

permitting one or more individuals freely to circulate about the country for purposes of such survey, opposition arising out of military and defense considerations. Dr. Black mentions specifically, however, cities such as Pleven, Raskovo, Plovdiv, and Pazardjik, where large numbers of Jewish people now live, and which are directly on the main railroad lines. Other centers may be similarly located geographically, that is, on main lines of communication which have nothing to do with military matters. Dr. Black suggested that perhaps the International Red Cross could undertake such an objective survey, which would be important as a basis for any scheme which may be contemplated for assisting the rehabilitation of Jewish people in Bulgaria where they now are.

I showed Dr. Black the short memorandum regarding the treatment of Jewish people in Bulgaria, of which Mrs. Henderson brought you a copy. His observations were as follows:

As to the first paragraph, he thinks this is probably true, but that it will happen in the near future, against setting the definite month of August.

As to the second paragraph, he agrees that the elimination of Jewish people from Bulgarian economic life is recognized, even in Bulgaria, to have caused disruption in the economic structure of the country.

As to the third paragraph, Dr. Black did not know the name of Protich, but expressed a doubt as to whether in the light of present developments a Commissar characterized as he would be appointed. He did not think that an attitude in the administration of Jewish affairs such as is implied by the third

paragraph would be in agreement with present trends.

As to the fourth paragraph, Dr. Black said that no Bulgarian Jew to the present time has been deported from the country. Those who may have been forced to leave the country were the 12,000 from Thrace and Macedonia, which came under Bulgarian control during the war. These people were not Bulgarians.

In connection with Dr. Black's suggestion mentioned above that Bulgarian transit facilities be secured in behalf of Jewish emigrants from Hungary, I mentioned to him the information contained in the telegram received by Nesnik to the effect that the Rumanian and Bulgarian governments have offered all facilities to Swiss legations in their countries in behalf of Jewish people emigrating from Hungary.

I have informed Dr. Black that I passed his suggestions along to you, and advised him of your suggestion that it would be most helpful if he, collaterally with you, could undertake his own steps through channels available to him.

3.11.44
2.11.44

August 2, 1944

Mr. Simond called at the office today and received the following documents:

Carbon copy of letter (in French) addressed to Mr. Simond by M. Balabanoff on July 25, 1944, re intentions of Bulgarian Government regarding refugee situation.

Mr. Hirschmann's memorandum of July 25 regarding his conversation of July 24 with Messieurs Balabanoff and Simond at the home of M. Simond, with respect to proposals of Bulgarian Government in relation of Jewish citizens of that country

8/2/44
Mr. Hirschmann
delivered to
Simond personally
M

MEMO OF TELEGRAMS

August 1, 1944

Embassy's 1414 (?)

Subject: note transmitted to Bulgarian Government, August 1.

10077

21741
Balabanoff
Bulgaria
D. Black

Istanbul, August 1, 1944

Dear Dr. Black:

Pursuant to our conversations I am confirming several of the points which were concurred in by you and me in our discussions relating to efforts to rescue victims of persecution and oppression in Bulgaria.

The conversation with and reports from Balabanoff for his government were encouraging as first possible steps. His letter written to Simons for our government, which has been transmitted to Washington, is confirmatory of the above. But I believe that you will agree with me that the Bulgarian Government is not going far enough at this crucial hour on these matters. I am thoroughly convinced that the government will take whatever possible steps are available to expedite the release, within technical possibilities, of their citizens who happen to be Jews. From information at hand, confirmed by you and Balabanoff, these steps at this time can result in only a pitifully small emancipation.

I am bothered by two aspects of this problem: a) that few refugees will be able to leave Bulgaria in the next important weeks and months; b) that the United States Government, watching daily for specific acts of large refugee movements out of Bulgaria, will have no choice but to interpret these negative results as a breach of faith by the Bulgarian Government in the face of its verbal and written representations by Balabanoff.

Considering the acute political situation today, the desire expressed by Balabanoff for his government to make such moves which would win the good will of the United States Government and its people, we stand today in a position where the fortuitous first steps in a program which could be productive of good on all sides could be unwittingly misconstrued. I therefore made to you today the proposal which I believe is the only solid and satisfactory move that should be offered by the Bulgarian Government without delay; namely, concrete steps to revoke and abolish forthwith the two notorious anti-Jewish laws on its books. In asserting the above I am not unaware of certain technical and political obstacles which the government in Bulgaria today may find it necessary to overcome. But these are days when I presume to suggest that governments will persist only by bold and forthright steps, especially with relation to the onward sweep of Allied victory, and if they wish to find themselves in some measure of good grace at the Peace Table.

As you know, I have no authority to speak in connection with the latter, but I am charged with a special responsibility and can offer now a specific opening for the good will that

will result from broad strokes in the direction of humanitarianism, especially as related to refugees, which will not promise but fulfill a policy which will negate that of a former government in ruthlessly corrupting a helpless minority of its own people, and which will be designed concretely to rehabilitate these victimized members of its own citizenry.

The Bulgarian Government stands today in the position where it can create a priceless measure of good will without, as I see it, giving up anything fundamental, by taking the essential steps without delay to abrogate the scandalous anti-Jewish laws and to permit us to announce it forthrightly to the world. Whatever sacrifice on its own part is necessary at this time for it to do so, I am confident that the scales will weigh heavily in its own favor after the decision is announced.

I have promised Balabanoff and you that such a step would be heralded with the widest publicity throughout the United States (and Britain), which I shall take it as my especial task to discharge. The evidence in the instance of the abolition of the camp in Transnistria by the Rumanians is with you. The step I am suggesting would elicit publicity and good will of a manifold nature and scope.

There is another aspect of the subject which we discussed and which should be re-inforced with the Bulgarians. It is my sense that this may well be no time for planning large-scale emigration movements out of a country like Bulgaria if the present government of Bulgaria is as sound and forward-looking in its determination to reconstruct its country as is indicated. The Jews who have been reduced by these two laws to complete deprivation and inability to carry on any legitimate work must be put on their feet, not for themselves alone as Bulgarian citizens, but for the enormous contribution that they will make in helping build the new Bulgaria. It is a strange paradox which history relates that the depressed and depleted Jewish populations have without exception rebounded in the countries where they found themselves and become valuable citizens in building the wealth and culture of their communities. Considering the history of Bulgaria, the Jews as an indigenous part of that nation, received relatively fair treatment which they enjoyed until recently when this latter record was smudged by one of the blackest pages in Bulgarian history. With any fair chance at economic assistance, rehabilitation and sustenance, the Jewish people should quickly become essential and useful participants in building the new nation.

Why send them in lost groups to strange lands if, as the Minister of their country asserts, they will "gradually" find themselves back in the position of respect and responsibility where they were before the war. It may even be that the Bulgarian Government some months hence may find itself in the position of beckoning for the return of these self-same citizens

whom they helped to deport to Palestine at great expense and inconvenience. I trust that you are not burdened by my over-emphasis of the point, but I insist that the step we are suggesting will be of even greater advantage to Bulgaria than to those who will be saved.

One more point: I think the leaders of the Bulgarian Government should know that I shall expect to hold them responsible for that which Palabanoff signed. While he wrote somewhat less than he reported to me verbally, his letter is categorical in asserting that (a) the government will ameliorate the situation of the Jews and cease all forms of persecution without delay; (b) transport will be facilitated within all possible technical means. The latter goes further in its implications, but speaking for the Government of the United States of America I repeat that we shall never be satisfied with these conversations and representations until these two laws are revoked. In the meanwhile the government can be completely lax in its enforcement of them.

How will this be sufficient? Reports coming currently from Bulgaria indicate a state of economic depravity on the part of its Jewish citizens resulting from these laws. What is the food of permitting people freely to leave their homes if they have nowhere to go, nor means of securing funds except by immoral and illegal means; if there are no possible available methods of reconstructing their lot or their dignity as human beings? Measures must be found at once to supply them with food, the necessary means of living as decent citizens, and economic assistance to rehabilitate their businesses, their families and their homes.

I propose to offer through the assistance of existing relief agencies, now represented in Turkey, along with that of our government, such means to rehabilitate this population as possibilities permit. Obviously it is not too much to ask that the Bulgarian Government permit this and assist it in every possible reasonable way. They have decimated the population. We do not ask them to revive it but only to permit others to do so without let or hindrance so that they may contribute towards the wellbeing of their own country.

I hope to hear that the forthright and sincere steps suggested herein have been taken by the Bulgarian Government in order to fortify its position among the humane nations of the world and to win back the respect and good will of our people which they had so scrupulously built in the last half-century and which they have so sorely lost in the last black war-years.

With thanks for your kindness and friendship,

Cordially yours,

I. A. Hirschmann
Special Attache

MEMO OF TELEGRAPH T

July 26, 1944

WRB

Subject: Letter from Balabanoff to Simons, July 25.

075

MEMO OF TELEGRAM NT

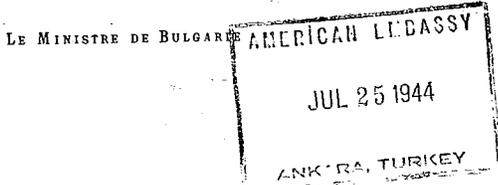
July 25, 1944

WRB

Subject: Official representations of Bulgarian Government,
authorized for transmission by Balabanoff (re anti-Jewish
laws); SS Tari.

Two drafts, with translations attached,
of letter from Balabanoff addressed to
Simond; schedule of alterations.

Handwritten:
Balabanoff
Simond



Cher Monsieur Simon,

Au sujet de la question soulevée par vous et relative à un bateau turc qui puisse aller prendre à un port quelconque bulgare des enfants de juifs de Roumanie, éventuellement des enfants de juifs de Bulgarie aussi, je suis en état de vous communiquer ce qui suit:

Par principe le Gouvernement bulgare n'y aurait rien contre. Mais, pour le règlement de cette question, je vous aurais recommandé de vous adresser à la Croix rouge bulgare, laquelle, de son côté, la soumettra aux fins d'une décision de la part du Gouvernement.

Je profite de la présente occasion pour partager avec vous les impressions que j'apporte de mon dernier court séjour en Bulgarie.

Il n'y a aucun doute que le nouveau Gouvernement bulgare regrette bien toutes les mesures qui avaient été prises à l'endroit des juifs chez nous et qu'il n'approuve aucunement. Ce gouvernement a l'intention d'alléger la situation des juifs. Mais, pour des raisons bien compréhensibles, il ne pourrait pas procéder à l'abrogation immédiate de la loi concernant les juifs. Toutefois, il est fermement décidé d'écarter tout arbitraire dans l'application de cette loi de même que toutes les mesures restrictives non prévues par elle. En second lieu le Gouvernement bulgare a décidé de faciliter l'émigration des juifs désirant quitter le pays en réduisant,

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I

dans cette intention, au strict minimum les formalités et en écartant tous obstacles.

Le Président du Conseil des ministres bulgare a invité chez lui le consistoire juif en Bulgarie et a eu un long entretien avec ses membres au sujet de la situation des juifs dans le pays. Il leur a parlé des mesures qu'il avait l'intention de prendre pour alléger leur situation et pour faciliter l'émigration de ceux qui l'auraient désiré. A Sofia, j'ai pu m'enquérir que les membres du Consistoire seraient partis très satisfaits et très contents de cette audience chez le Premier ministre bulgare auquel ils auraient exprimé leurs remerciements et gratitude pour ses dispositions.

En général, je considère que la politique du nouveau Gouvernement bulgare à l'égard des juifs sera empreinte d'un sentiment d'équité et d'humanité. Je n'exclus de même pas la possibilité d'arriver graduellement et promptement à l'état complètement normal dans la situation des juifs chez nous.

Veuillez agréer, cher Monsieur Simon, l'assurance de mes meilleurs sentiments.

Ankara, le 25 juillet 1941.

Batahou

100788

Monsieur S I M O N

Delogue de la Croix Rouge internationale

Ankara.

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"Translation"

THE MINISTER OF BULGARIA

Dear Monsieur Simon,

In regard to the question you raised, relative to a Turkish vessel which could go to any Bulgarian port to embark Jewish children from Rumania, and possibly also Jewish children from Bulgaria, I am able to communicate to you the following:

In principle, the Bulgarian Government would have no objection to this.

But for a settlement of this question I would suggest that you address the Bulgarian Red Cross which, on its part, will submit the question to the Government in order to obtain the latter's decision.

I take advantage of this opportunity to share with you the impressions which I bring back from my last short visit in Bulgaria.

There is no doubt that the new Bulgarian Government regrets exceedingly all the measures which have been taken regarding Jews in our country, and that it does not in the least approve these measures. This Government intends to mitigate the situation of the Jews. But, for reasons that will be readily understood, it could not proceed to annul immediately the law concerning the Jews. However, it is firmly decided to avoid all arbitrary action in the application of this law, as well as all restrictive measures not provided for by the law. In the second place, the Bulgarian Government has decided to

facilitate the emigration of Jews desiring to leave the country, by reducing, for this purpose, the administrative formalities to a strict minimum and by removing all obstacles.

The President of the Bulgarian Council of Ministers has invited the Jewish Consistory in Bulgaria to come to see him and he has had a long conversation with its members concerning the situation of the Jews in the country. He has spoken to them of the steps which he intended to take to mitigate their situation and to facilitate the departure of those who might desire to leave the country. At Sofia I was able to ascertain that the members of the Consistory came away from the conversation, very well satisfied and pleased with their visit to the Bulgarian Prime Minister to whom, I understand, they expressed their thanks and gratitude for his plans for the Jews.

In general, I consider that the policy of the new Bulgarian Government toward the Jews will be based on principles of equity and humanitarianism. Likewise, I do not exclude the possibility of reaching gradually and quickly a completely normal state in the situation of the Jews in our country.

Please accept, dear Monsieur Simon, the assurance of my best sentiments.

(signed) BALABANOFF

Ankara, July 25, 1944

En général, je considère que la politique du nouveau Gouvernement bulgare à l'égard des juifs sera empreinte d'un sentiment d'équité et d'humanité. Je n'exclus même pas, comme je l'ai déjà dit, la possibilité d'arriver prochainement à l'état complètement normal dans la situation des juifs chez nous.

Veillez agréer, cher Monsieur Simon, l'assurance de mes meilleurs sentiments

Ankara, le 25 juillet 1944.

Bataillon

Dear Mr. Simon:

Regarding the subject mentioned by you relative to a Turkish boat which could go and get from a certain Bulgarian port Jewish children from Rumania, and eventually Jewish children from Bulgaria, I am now able to inform you of the following:

In principle, the Bulgarian Government is not contrary to this. But for the settlement of this question I would refer you to the Bulgarian Red Cross which will subsequently submit the question to the decision of the Government.

I take this occasion to inform you of my impressions which I bring from my last short visit to Bulgaria.

There is no doubt whatever that the new Bulgarian Government regrets the measures which were taken with regard to the Jews at home and does not approve of them at all. This Government intends substantially to mitigate the situation of the Jews. I even have the impression that the Government has the intention to abrogate at an opportune moment the laws concerning the Jews. However, at the present moment it is firmly decided to do away with any arbitration in the application of these laws as well as with all restrictive measures not provided by such laws. Secondly, the Bulgarian Government has decided to facilitate the emigration of Jews desiring to leave the country, by reducing to the strict minimum the usual formalities and by doing away with all obstacles.

The President of the Bulgarian Council of Ministers has invited to his house the Jewish "consistoire" of Bulgaria and has had a long interview with its members on the subject of the situation of the Jews in the country. He spoke to them of the measures which he intended to take to improve their situation and to facilitate the emigration of those who desired to emigrate.

At Sofia, I was able to ascertain that the members of the "consistoire" must have been in complete accord with the intentions of the President of the Council and must have left very satisfied and pleased with this conference. They must have expressed their thanks and gratitude for his intentions.

In general, I consider that the policy of the new Bulgarian Government with regard to the Jews will be of a sentiment of justice and humanity. I do not exclude from my opinion, as I have already mentioned, the possibility of reaching soon a completely normal state in the situation of the Jews at home.

Accept, dear Mr. Simon, the assurance of my best sentiments.

(S) SALABANOFF

Ankara, July 25, 1944

Dear Mr. Siamont

Regarding the subject mentioned by you relative to a Turkish boat which could go and get from a certain Bulgarian port Jewish children from Rumania, and eventually Jewish children from Bulgaria, I am now able to inform you of the following:

In principle, the Bulgarian Government is not contrary to this. But for the settlement of this question I would refer you to the Bulgarian Red Cross which will subsequently submit the question to the decision of the Government.

I take this occasion to inform you of my impressions which I bring from my last short visit to Bulgaria.

There is no doubt whatever that the new Bulgarian Government regrets the measures which were taken with regard to the Jews at home and does not approve of them at all. This Government ^{intends substantially} ~~has the intention~~ ^{to mitigate the situation} ~~to improve to a large extent the regime of the Jews.~~ I even have the impression that the Government has the intention ^{abrogate} ~~to abolish at the an~~ opportune moment the ~~present~~ laws concerning the Jews. However, at ~~the~~ ^{the} present moment it is firmly decided to do away with any arbitration in the application of these laws as well as with all restrictive measures not provided by such laws. Secondly, the Bulgarian Government has decided to facilitate the emigration of Jews desiring to leave the country, by reducing to the strict minimum the usual formalities and by doing away with all obstacles.

The President of the Bulgarian Council of Ministers has invited to his house the Jewish "consistoire" of Bulgaria and has had a long interview with its members on the subject of the situation of the Jews in the country. He spoke to them of the measures which he intended to take to improve their situation and to facilitate the emigration of those who desired to emigrate.

At Sofia, I was able to ^{ascertain} learn that the members of the "consistoire" ^{must} have been in complete accord absolutely agree with the intentions of the President of the Council and ^{most} have and left very satisfied and ^{pleased} contented with this conference. They expressed their thanks and gratitude for his intentions.

In general, I consider that the policy of the new Bulgarian Government with regard to the Jews will be of a sentiment of justice and humanity. I do not exclude from my opinion as I have already mentioned, the possibility of arriving at an early date to a state of complete normality in the situation of the Jews at home.

Accept, dear Mr. Simon, the assurance of my best sentiments.

/S/ BALABANOFF

Ankara, July 25, 1944

Paragraph 4 (original letter of July 25, 1944, addressed to Simond by Balabanoff):

"* * * Ce gouvernement a l'intention d'alléger la situation des juifs. Mais, pour des raisons bien compréhensibles, il ne pourrait pas procéder à l'abrogation/^{immédiate} de la loi concernant les juifs."

"* * * This Government intends to mitigate the situation of the Jews. But, for reasons that will be readily understood, it could not proceed to annul immediately the law concerning the Jews."

Paragraph 4 (revised letter of July 25, 1944, addressed to Simond by Balabanoff):

"* * * Ce Gouvernement a l'intention d'alléger largement le régime des juifs. J'ai même l'impression que le Gouvernement a l'intention d'abroger à un moment opportun les lois concernant les juifs."

"* * * This Government intends substantially to mitigate the situation of the Jews. I even have the impression that the Government has the intention to abrogate at an opportune moment the laws concerning the Jews."

Paragraph 5 (original letter)

"* * * A Sofia, j'ai pu m'enquérir que les membres du Consistoire seraient partis très satisfaits et très contents de cette audience etc."

"* * * At Sofia I was able to ascertain that the members of the Consistory came away from the conversation very well satisfied and pleased etc."

Paragraph 5 (revised letter)

"* * * A Sofia; j'ai pu m'enquérir que les membres du consistoire seraient tout à fait d'accord avec les intentions du Président du Conseil et seraient partis très satisfaits et très contents etc."

"* * * At Sofia I was able to ascertain that the Consistory must have been in complete accord with the intentions of the President of the Council and must have left very satisfied and pleased, etc."

Last sentence, body of original letter of July 25

"* * * Je n'exclus de même pas la possibilité d'arriver graduellement et promptement à l'état complètement normal etc."

"I do not exclude the possibility of reaching gradually and quickly a completely normal state etc."

Last sentence, body of revised letter of July 25

"* * * Je n'exclus même pas, comme je l'ai déjà dit, la possibilité d'arriver prochainement à l'état complètement normal etc."

"* * * I do not exclude, as I have already said, the possibility of reaching soon a completely normal state etc."

7/25/44
Balabanoff
Tari

Jul. 25, 1944

Memorandum for Mr. Kelley:

Upon my return to Ankara I was informed by Monsieur Simond of the International Red Cross that the suggestion had been made that one of the alternative suggestions to permit the voyage of the S.S. Tari with refugees was to request of the Bulgarian government that it release the boat from Burgas with the necessary Bulgarian papers and exit visas for the refugees. I was informed by him that he had discussed the matter with Ambassador Steinhardt who requested him to secure authorization on the above from Numan. Simond reports that both he and Ambassador Steinhardt received the agreement of Numan to permit the boat to sail from a Bulgarian port provided Bulgarian and Russian safe conducts were received, and not German safe conduct.

The matter was left with M. Balabanoff to take up with the Bulgarian officials on his recent visit to Sofia.

Upon Balabanoff's return, yesterday, in an interview with me and Simond, he reported for his government that it had agreed to the above, suggesting however that the arrangements be made by request of the International Red Cross representative here, through the Bulgarian Red Cross representative in Sofia, to which Simond agreed.

In view of Numan's departure from the official scene Simond intends to take up the matter with Saracoglu, and it has been suggested that the concurrence in Numan's agreement be requested by you of Saracoglu at the same time.

In view of the charter agreement now existing between the United States and Turkish Governments on the S.S. Tari and the latter's apparently generous

7/21/44
Balabanoff
Bulgaria

July 21, 1944

Memorandum of conversation held at 12:15 P.M.,
July 21, 1944, with Dr. Black.

Pursuant to my previous conversation with Dr. Black and the memorandum dated July 13, 1944 which I handed to him covering the background of the successful liaison between Cretzianu for the Rumanian Government and myself, and the request for similar assistance of the Bulgarian Government for the release of Jewish refugees, Dr. Black visited me and reported as follows:

1. He had reason to know that I would be given favorable news through Balabanoff, the Bulgarian Minister, when I meet him within the next few days;
2. That B. has made the request to see me;
3. That in his recent visit to Sofia he was informed of a reversal of the policy of the Bulgarian Government with regard to minorities and Jews and that he would seek every possible means of winning our goodwill through efforts connected with the release of refugees.

I was informed that the head of the police in Bulgaria issued a statement (not public) in which he stated that the Government will facilitate all police permits necessary for the release of refugees.

In the latter connection it is important to remember that while the Bulgarian Government may approve the release of refugees from Bulgaria, enormous complexities of a technical nature will interfere. Six different types of permits are required before a person may leave the country. They are tax, military,

In normal times these permits were available at Government headquarters which were centered in Sofia. Since the severe bombing of Sofia the Government offices have been moved to various cities and it is necessary for a citizen to travel considerably to secure the certificates. In addition, many of the forms have been lost in the bombing and the moving. There will be much obstruction and delay in any authorization for citizens to leave the country. In addition, transportation facilities are strained to the utmost, also due to the bombing, and it will be a difficult matter for evacuees to reach Burgas, the one possible port of debarkation.

The best possible solution is for children to be given priority and placed on the boats and trains. They will not require certificates of release. It is possible in this connection that parents may not be willing to separate themselves from the children, especially since the announcement has been made that no further personal or physical persecutions will take place in Bulgaria. There are, however, hundreds of children who are without parents or homes who should be corraled and sent by boat and rail to Istanbul and Palestine.

In my proposed conversation with B. I am to request of him that:

1. He should give me in writing a statement of the present attitude of the Bulgarian Government on the question of minorities and Jews;
2. Information concerning Draganoff's recent meeting with the Jewish authorities and his statement.

My understanding is that they are to be treated like all Bulgarian citizens within the framework of the Bulgarian law which still contains the two anti-Jewish laws which are severe and which reduce the Jews to economic pariahs;

July 13, 1944

MEMORANDUM

Referring to our discussion of yesterday, in February 1944, I met with Alexandre Cretzianu, Minister to Ankara from Rumania acting under the power vested in the by President Roosevelt's War Refugee Board permitting me to deal with "enemy territory". I made three requests of the Rumanian Minister:

- 1) To disband the disease-ridden camp at Transnistria containing 48,000 Jewish refugees.
- 2) To release 5,000 children and facilitate their passage to Constanza; and to expedite the debarkation of ships containing these refugees from Constanza to Istanbul and Haifa.
- 3) To arrange to have Antonescu issue an order which would cause a cessation of all forms of persecution and repressive acts against Jewish citizens.

Within less than a week Cretzianu brought back a message from his government categorically agreeing to the above steps. Confirmation of the break-up of the camp in Transnistria was containing a telegram to us by the International Red Cross in Rumania.

As a result of these moves, I believe the door has been opened for good will by the present Rumanian government and our government. The above steps were publicized dramatically and extensively in the United States. On my visit to the United States in April I took the occasion to emphasize and to have placed on record in the State Department the affirmative steps which were taken by the Rumanian government in connection with the above. On my return to Ankara I reported these results to Minister Cretzianu and have requested further steps of the Rumanian government which he is now transmitting to Bucharest.

Following the success of these efforts an interview was arranged for similar purposes in February with the Minister to Sofia, Mr. Balabanoff. Mr. Balabanoff was pleasant and friendly and agreed to transmit my request to the then Bulgarian government. He has received no reply and so informed me before I left for the United States. The comparison between the attitudes of the Rumanian and Bulgarian governments with regard to the humanitarian appeal made by our government - namely the rejection by Bulgaria - made a strong impression in Washington.

2/13/44
Balabanoff
Rumania
Bogdanov

Upon my return to Ankara in June I requested a further interview with Mr. Balabanoff with the view to suggesting that the same requests be put before the new government of Bulgaria. I understand that the Minister is now in Sofia. I am strongly of the opinion that good will which can be highly evaluated at the proper time, can be won by the present Bulgarian government if they can see advantages to them of making the following steps:

1) Permitting and helping facilitate refugee movement from or through Bulgaria to Turkey by rail to the extent of not less than 500 people a week. In order to give assurances that there will be no penalty from loose conversations at the railway terminals, we will guarantee that these refugees will be well immunized from outer contacts. We will agree that these refugees may in the early stages consist of children and possibly old people. But the traffic must be an uninterrupted flow.

2) Cooperation in permitting and helping facilitate the debarkation of refugee ships from Bulgarian ports.

Mr. Balabanoff, I am informed by Mr. Simond, of the International Red Cross in Ankara has carried with him to Sofia a memorandum concerning a proposed voyage of Turkish s/s Tari from a Bulgarian port to a Turkish port. The s/s Tari is now under charter agreement between the United States government with the Turkish government and the cooperation of the Bulgarian government in permitting and arranging for the movement of refugees through one of their ports by this ship would be a dramatic stroke which would be reported in a highly publicized way throughout the United States.

3) A statement by the present Bulgarian government that all persecuted and repressive measures against Jews will cease and that henceforth they will be treated like other Bulgarian citizens.

In return for the above, I can give assurances that such action on the part of the Bulgarian government would constitute an important contribution toward reestablishing good-will with the government of the United States and that the American people will be made aware of these steps through publicity of an effective nature.

I. A. Hirschmann

