

United States Relief and
Refugee Evacuation To and
Through Turkey

Evacuation To and Through Turkey
Vol. 5

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July 20, 1944

PERSONAL

Mr. John Fehle
War Refugee Board
Washington 25, D. C.

Attn: Miss Hodel

Dear Mr. Fehle:

For your confidential information, I enclose a letter and supporting documents which we have just received from Reuben Resnik. May I call your attention to the reference to Mr. Hirschmann on page 5. For obvious reasons, this will not appear in the confidential copies which we are circulating among our small group of executive officers.

Sincerely yours,

Moses A. Leavitt
Moses A. Leavitt
Secretary

MAL:RP
encl.

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000466

c/o American Consulate General
Istanbul, Turkey
June 19, 1944

Mr. Joseph C. Hyman
Executive Vice-Chairman
Joint Distribution Committee
270 Madison Avenue
New York City

Dear Mr. Hyman:

Enclosed herewith are copies of correspondence that I have addressed this day via diplomatic pouch to Dr. Joseph Schwartz, Joint Distribution Committee, Lisbon. This correspondence, I believe, merits your careful examination and throws a great deal of light on some of the problems with which we have been confronted here. Naturally, I should be glad to have word from you on these matters and on any other developments which will be of special interest to me.

As yet I have not received an acknowledgment from you on my V-mail letter dated May 16. Some of the materials that you are sending through to my APO address are coming through. I also want to express my appreciation for your thoughtfulness in keeping my family regularly informed about me. Will you remember me to the officers, executive committee and staff.

I presume that Schwartz, Lisbon, has informed you that in addition to a large number of Palestinian personnel in Istanbul several representatives of so-called American Agencies have recently arrived. They include Eri Jabotinski of the Emergency Committee to save the Jewish people of Europe, Leon Dennenberg of the International Relief and Rescue Commission. Hirschman is scheduled to arrive here within the next few days and it is said that he will be accompanied by Herbert Katzki. There are approximately 20 persons representing various Palestinian interests here, including, of course, the two Palestinians who have been asked to represent the Vaad Hahatzala. I am amazed at the Ambassador's patience in dealing with all of these people. He plans to develop some device for coordinating the interests of the various groups concerned with relief, rescue and emigration.

With kindest personal regards and every good wish, I am

Sincerely yours,

(sgd) Reuben B. Resnik
AMERICAN JOINT DISTRIBUTION COMMITTEE

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MEMORANDUM

June 19, 1944

TO: JOSEPH SCHWARTZ
FROM: REUBEN B. RESNIK

RE: CONTACT WITH SWITZERLAND, etc.

I have previously indicated that it was highly important that some type of contact be established between this office of JDC and with Sally Mayer in Switzerland. I have tried to do so but without much success. Perhaps it is not feasible.

The need for this type of cooperation was underscored recently by two incidents. In a series of cables exchanged between the Lisbon office and Barlas the question was raised concerning assistance that was being rendered by various groups in occupied areas, mainly France. It appears that Barlas does not desire to instruct some of his associates here to effect a more cooperative type of arrangement since he claims that what assistance is going from here is used mainly for movement from France to havens of refuge in neutral countries and not for relief in the occupied country itself. Whether the funds are being used for those purposes or other purposes is difficult to tell, and to what uses the other funds are being put is also something, at least, we do not know. At any rate this matter is one that requires a more careful examination into the scope of relief operations here for occupied countries. It also requires a fuller knowledge on our part of what is being done elsewhere.

Recently word was received from Simond of the Ankara office of the International Red Cross asking for assistance in securing relief for Cracow. In my absence Barlas was supposed to have handled the matter. Your instructions were to have Simond instruct Geneva to communicate with Sally Mayer. Barlas, however, had previously informed Simond that the whole matter was successfully completed by him (B). It was not until Simond had received instructions from me on my return that he communicated with Geneva with your instructions (See copies of letter to me from Simond).

If Sally Mayer could establish some type of contact with me here it would, I believe, serve to help the situation in many ways.

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Translation from the French

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DELEGATION OF THE COMITE INTERNATIONAL OF THE RED CROSS IN TURKEY

Ankara, June 9, 1944

Mr. Reuben B. Resnik
American Joint Distribution Committee
Park Oteli
Istanbul

Dear Mr. Resnik:

I wish to acknowledge receipt of your letters of June 2nd and 6th, and to thank you for your courtesy.

In accordance with your request, I shall advise the Banque Ottomane in Ankara today to remit to Mr. Mehmet Sipahioglu the balance of my dollar account, i.e.

\$ 21.000

As to the second remittance of \$100.000 I wish to inform you that I have not yet heard from the Hollandsche Bank in Istanbul. I would appreciate it very much if you would take the necessary steps in order to expedite matters so that I may receive this amount at the earliest possible date.

As to the Frs. S. 100.000 which my committee in Geneva commissioned me to ask from you for the shipment of clothing etc. to Cracow, I wish to inform you that I was approached about this in your absence, and that to gain time I requested Mr. Barlas who happened to be in Ankara on this very day, to cable immediately to the competent authorities. For your information you will find below the text of the three telegrams which were exchanged with Geneva regarding this question:

Geneva May 8th:

JEWISH RELIEF CRACOW NEED SWISS FRANCS 100.000 FOR CLOTHING
PLEASE REQUEST BARLAS WIRE US FUNDS

3843 CROIMLXT

to which I answered on May 11th:

YOURS 3843 BARLAS CABLED WASHINGTON REMIT 100.000 YOUR BANK
GENEVA STOP WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR GIVING DETAILS RE CLOTHING

SIMOND 103

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to Geneva on May 19th:

"CONFIRM MY 103 BARLAS ADVISES TRANSFER EFFECTED"

SIMOND 109"

I suppose that the remittance was made. However, at your request I wired to my committee in Geneva on this very day to communicate with Mr. Sally Mayer in St. Gall.

I am perfectly in accord with your suggestion of making up packages of 5Kg. of the same merchandise. This procedure seems to me to be advantageous to the sender, to the beneficiary, and for the custom's authorities. I am satisfied with your decision, and would be grateful to you if you would instruct Mehmet Bey in this sense.

Enclosed please find:

- 1) a letter from Dr. W. Filderman addressed to you.
- 2) for your information, copy of a letter of my colleague, Mr. Kolb, of Bucharest, G.728 of May 15th.
- 3) copy of a letter of Mr. Kolb - G.736 of May 17th.
- 4) copy of a letter of Mr. Kolb - G.770 of May 31st.

As agreed, I shall arrive in Istanbul next Tuesday, June 13th, where I expect to stay until Friday night.

I am looking forward to seeing you soon, and remain

Sincerely yours,

G. E. Simond
Delegate of the Comite International
of the Red Cross in Turkey

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Translation from the French

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COPY

Bucharest, May 31, 1944

Mr. G. Simond
Delegate of the International Red Cross
Ankara

Dear Sir,

Last night I received through the Swiss Legation your letters of May 19, #679, 685, 686, with enclosures, and letter #701 of May 20. I thank you very much for all your information.

Re: Jewish Emigration

I was very much interested to read your reports #11, 12 and 13, which you had addressed to Geneva in due time. I realize that you had a terrific amount of work in this matter and like yourself I am very sorry that all these efforts should have been in vain. I can understand your disappointment at the failure of the S.S. Tari project, which was doomed by the excessive zeal of Mr. Hirschmann who had come to Turkey for the express purpose of effecting Jewish emigration. My disappointment was just as keen. While with the failure of the sailing of the Tari the matter was closed for you, I must continue to care for the children whom the Jewish organizations assembled in Buzau and Bucharest on the basis of your information that this boat would arrive at a certain date to transport them to Istanbul. Moreover, we have quite a large stock of food supplies which we bought to supply the Tari before we heard that it had been decided in Istanbul to furnish the necessary food to the passengers of that boat, either before its departure to Constanza or during its passage to Haifa. Since the prices of food are increasing daily in Roumania, there is no fear that any loss will result from these purchases. We are keeping the food in reserve to be used for another boat leaving for Palestine, or for distribution to children and other needy Jews.

The Roumanian Government, which gave me its support, was also disappointed by the failure of the Tari project. Meanwhile a few small boats succeeded in leaving Constanza for Turkey, but the total number of emigrants remains very small, and a satisfactory result could be achieved only if big boats were available to transport 1000 or more passengers at one time.

It has been suggested to the Roumanian Government to permit the sailing of certain small Roumanian boats at present in Roumanian territorial waters. The Vice-President of the Cabinet, Mihai Antonescu, accepted this proposition, but nothing has as yet resulted from it.

You may know that the emigration of Jews on small boats has caused dissension among the local Jewish organizations. Moreover, I

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learned, to my disgust, that the owners of the boats, as well as the shipping agency, that is to say Messrs. Pandelis and Kokinos, have made a fortune by asking up to two million Lei per person per trip. For months I have been opposing this slave trade, but up to the present time these gentlemen have continued to fill their pockets at the expense of the unfortunate people who wish to flee the terrible fate which threatens them. Mr. Zissu, who was charged by Mr. Barlag with the handling of Jewish emigration from Roumania, is in perfect agreement with me and has insisted in several telegrams that all matters concerning the selection of the emigrants and the price to be paid for their passage should be withdrawn from the hands of the Pandelis clique. Mr. Zissu has finally succeeded in convincing the gentlemen in Istanbul that the continuation of this illegitimate trade would jeopardize the entire emigration project.

The Vice-President, Mihai Antonescu, told me during our last meeting of these hideous agitations (I am using his words) and in order to remedy this situation he is playing with the idea of putting the emigration project into the hands of a Special Section, organized within the Executive Council. Although in that case we would no longer have to deal with the Pandelis clique, I do not believe that we would be better off if the emigration project would be handled by the Roumanian authorities. I fear that those in charge would do the same as Pandelis and his associates, and that consequently the emigrants would have to pay large amounts to obtain emigration permits.

I hope that Mr. Mihai Antonescu will receive me shortly and I shall point out to him certain disadvantages, especially the fact that it will certainly be impossible for the Jewish organizations overseas to obtain from their respective governments the authorization to pay any funds to the Roumanian Government to charter Roumanian boats to be put at their disposal for the emigration of Jews. It might be possible that such authorization be granted for private individuals (Roumanians) who are owners of ships, as was done for Bulgarian owners of small boats, but it is quite a different matter to turn over funds to a government of a country with which one is at war.

I learned that some small boats, as for instance the "Kasbe", are in Constanza, or en route to this port to take emigrants on board. I have just read in the newspapers that the boat "Maritza" was sunk in a storm during a trip from Istanbul to Constanza. Fortunately this did not happen during a trip from Constanza to Istanbul, with a full load of emigrants aboard. I also heard that a boat, "Smyrni", sailed from Braila, where it had been in drydock for repairs, to Constanza, to be used for emigration purposes. There had been talk about this matter for months. It is Pandelis again who directs this business. I had a long conversation with Mr. Wilhelm Fischer, who will visit you during his land trip to Palestine, and I requested him to tell you all, so that you may know the "low-down" of the emigration situation, and in order that you may inter-

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vene with the competent authorities to induce them to discontinue their relations with the Pandelis clique and to look for more trustworthy partners.

While dictating these lines, I received mail from Geneva, in which a copy of the letter of Mr. Fulleman, director of the transportation and communication division of the Comité International of the Red Cross was enclosed. I realize that the attitude of the Comité International does not entirely coincide with our view point. I think that the people in Geneva have no exact idea of the difficulties which we must overcome, and, that in order to reach some concrete results, we must often, against our will, commit ourselves more deeply than the diplomatic policy to be followed by the delegates would allow. On the other hand, I am certain that the Jewish organizations approve our efforts. This is certainly the case in Bucharest, where all the gentlemen with whom I have discussed emigration matters always assured me that they wholeheartedly approved my actions and that the little that could be accomplished was due to a great extent to my work. I pride myself on being on good terms with all competent personalities, and also on having succeeded in interesting the Roumanian Government in giving all its support to this emigration project. If the project of the boat Tari and others could not yet be carried through, it is not our fault, but is due to circumstances which are beyond our control.

I requested Mr. Wilhelm Fischer to talk to you of a project relating to the purchase of a Swedish boat which is at present in the Baltic Sea, and the owner of which would be willing to sell it for the sum of C. S. 10,250,000 (Swedish Crowns). This boat, reconditioned for passenger transportation, has a tonnage of about 11,000 tons and is, therefore, very cheap. If you find a possibility to negotiate this matter, I would appreciate your wiring me whether the purchase could be made within the sums directly placed at your disposal or whether the Jewish organizations in Istanbul could be interested in the purchase.

Finally, there is a very small boat which has been constructed lately, a sister-ship of the "Bellacita", which is in the possession of a group of prospective emigrants who are trying to obtain a neutral flag under which this boat, constructed in Roumania, could leave Roumanian territorial waters and sail to Istanbul. I asked my friend, Mr. Christoph Dabcovich, of a shipping agency in Istanbul, to find a Swedish captain, a condition sine qua non for obtaining the Swedish flag, and he suggested a Swedish captain, who is at present in Istanbul, where his ship, owned by the Agency "S.V.E.A.", is being repaired. The captain demands C.S. 10,000 as the price per trip, which the people concerned would gladly accept provided that the permission to sail under a Swedish flag be granted by the Roumanian Government. As soon as the details of the transaction will have been put down in writing, I shall approach the Vice-President of the Cabinet to ask his opinion on the matter. In case the government should grant permission for this boat built in Roumania to sail under a foreign flag, (the

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fact that the boat was constructed in Roumania means that it cannot sail under a foreign flag without a special permit) the matter could be settled and this small boat could shuttle between Constanza and Istanbul as long as it will be necessary.

Another proposition regarding the ship "Ajax", the former "Lemnos", previously sailing under the Greek flag, was rejected by me because the boat has no engine and the project to have it towed all the way to Istanbul is not feasible because a break of the cable would transform the passenger ship into a drifting coffin.

Food from Turkey

While checking the merchandise which arrived on the four freight cars, we found that it did not correspond entirely to your previous information concerning it. I dispatched you wire 734 (through the Swiss Legation)--see enclosed copy--and am awaiting your reply. For the time being, the permit required from the Roumanian Government to import the goods duty free has not yet been granted, but a decision should be reached this week. Immediately after this question has been settled, the stock set aside for this purpose will be sold, i.e., after deduction of one carload destined for Theresienstadt, and another carload to be distributed to the needy children who returned from Transnistria, Bucovina, Moldavia, etc.

The Comitè of Geneva and the Slovakian Red Cross in Bratislava inquired about the cars which they believed were already en route, but unfortunately the complete disorganization of the official services, caused by the bombardments, hinders a speedy solution. The Presidency of the Cabinet, to which the application for the transit permit for this car was addressed by the Roumanian Red Cross, asked my advice and I insisted upon the fact that the proposition was made at my suggestion, and that I would request the government to grant the authorization.

I shall keep you informed.

Shoes

I regret exceedingly that this matter is dragging along, and that although six weeks have passed since my wire 628 was sent out, I have not yet received any news on the part-shipment of the shoes. I beg you to insist that a shipment be made without delay.

Adina Jacker

I have good reason to believe that this girl will depart tonight with Mr. Wilhelm Fischer, and I assure you that I would be greatly relieved to be able to confirm her departure by wire. If every individual case would require as much work as the case of little Jacker, I would need a staff of 200 persons....

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Before closing, I wish you would ask Mr. Fischer to give you confidential information on the probable fate of the Jews in Roumania. Unfortunately the Roumanian Government is under pressure from which it might not be able to free itself. It has been required that they imitate the Hungarian example, i.e. to apply the anti-Semitic ~~Law~~ laws-- to set up ghettos, concentration camps, etc. The news which we receive from the Hungarian refugees is very sad. I do not wish to dwell on this situation any longer. Mr. Fischer, who is well informed, will be able to give you all the details. I shall only tell you about a law which has just been promulgated by the Roumanian Government, and which threatens with death all Hungarian refugees crossing the Roumanian border. This is a flagrant contradiction of the promises made to me by the Vice-President of the Cabinet and of which I informed you in my wire #734.

In any case, the situation is growing worse daily, and if we want to save at least a certain number of Roumanian Jews, emigration should be organized on a larger scale than was possible until now. I am doing my utmost to reach this goal and am certain that you, at your end, will insist that the Jewish circles of Istanbul do everything possible to save their co-religionists.

Sincerely yours,

Ch. Kolb
Delegate of the C.I.C.R. in Roumania

000475

Copy

Cable to Mr. Schwartz - Lisbon
 from Ch. Barlas - Istanbul 13.5.44

2401 following cable received by Simond from Geneva
 quote for Jewish relief oracow necessary hundredthousand
 swiss francs for clothing ask barlas transfer telegraphi-
 cally unquote shall appreciate your asking license send
 amount societe banques suisses for commixte stop please
 acknowledge regards

barlas

Cable to Mr. Barlas - Istanbul
 from Mr. Schwartz - Lisbon 21/5/44

Yours 2401 suggest you tell Simond geneve should take
 matter up directly with Sally Mayer stop wish point out
 your sending ezra switzerland without advising Sally
 causing confusion also duplication stop would appreciate
 it if you would find some way correct this situation
 regards

schwartz

Cable to Mr. Schwartz - Lisbon
 from Mr. Barlas - Ankara 25/5/44

2505 yours 21/5 submitted statement according our
 agreement re ezra switzerland understand our
 action serving other purposes than sallis competence stop
 wire whether you are ready include jetzija tiju your scheme
 regards

barlas

Cable to Mr. Barlas - Istanbul
 from Mr. Robert Pilpel - Lisbon 3/5/44

Your 2505 reference ezra switzerland please request
 Simond geneva discuss with Sally Mayer according our
 May 21 because apparently confusion continues exist
 stop will advise later reference jetzija tijul
 matter

robert pilpel

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COPY

May 23, 1944

Dear ~~Chawa~~ Chaim jr.

I use the opportunity to send you many greetings.

Am in steady contact with Nathan and what we can do is always done immediately.

Our work constantly increases, and Schwartz and his friends do not abandon us.

Specially help Scheps in his matter and in the main thing Nathan Chawerim. I am not quite clear as to what you intend to do with Zelow Odom who lives at Scheps' place, that I will do. You should cooperate with his friend in Ankara, whether this one can do something in Ankara, especially at Fischer and Baruch. But if everything should not be possible, then you may send me Kaspi for Zarphat and Naomi.

Many regards and heartiest Schalom

(signed) Saly Mayer

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Translation from the French.

Ch. Kolb
23, Strada Eremia Grigorescu
Bucharest

May 17, 1944

Mr. G. Simond
Delegate of the Comite International of the Red Cross
Ankara

Dear Colleague,

Pursuant to my letter G.728, I wish to ask you the following question:

Certain respective emigrants who wish to leave Roumania for Palestine, on the well known little boats, approached me with the request to be permitted to deposit their funds with me, against payment of the equivalent in Pounds Sterling upon their arrival in Palestine. The Roumanian government had authorized me to make this arrangement with the emigrants of the boat "Tari" and I am certain that the Vice-President of the Cabinet, who is doing everything he can to rid the country of Jews, will grant this permission also for emigrants sailing on other boats.

Since the amounts of which you dispose to assist the Jews of South Eastern Europe, were put at your disposal by the Jewish overseas organizations, I am certain that the payments in Palestine will be effected without difficulty. On the other hand, the Jewish charity organizations in Bucharest need funds to meet the ever growing needs, and I think that this would be an occasion to procure certain sums without having to overcome the well known difficulties of working through the Red Cross in Geneva which is handicapped by the regulations of the various countries.

I would be very grateful to you if you would wire me upon receipt of this letter whether such transactions are feasible. You might also indicate the maximum amount available in English or Palestinian currency.

It is obvious that the emigrants who leave Roumania, and who cannot take their property along, would be happy to take advantage of such an occasion, and that I could collect gradually quite important sums. For your information I wish to tell you that the rate of the Palestinian pound on the black market is 5000. - Lei for one Pound, and that lately I concluded a transaction for 3000 pounds at the preference rate of about Lei 4000.

If necessary I shall inform you by letter of each transaction, requesting you to follow up the case so that the person in question can receive upon his arrival in Palestine the equivalent due him.

Sincerely yours,

Ch. Kolb
Delegate of the C.I.C.R. in Roumania

000478

Translation from the German

Ch. Barlas
Istanbul

June 10, 1944

Dear Uncle Sally,

I was very pleased to have your lines of May 29, 1944 addressed to Chaim J. and see that you still remember me. It is regrettable that the common work we are both doing necessitates an extreme reserve in our correspondence. However, I am following with interest and admiration your activities in that country and I wish you further success in your rescue work.

I have talked to the local representative of the Fa. Zolai Adom and requested him to inform his central office to communicate with you. I hope that they will settle the matter satisfactorily. I understand from a wire of Dr. Schachors, that you know about it and I think that you will take the necessary steps.

The question of the transport from Emzaim to this city is very complicated and I am awaiting Dr. Schachors' information as to whether you are willing to care for the families Tijul and Jetzija in order to be able to reach a decision.

You may know that during the last weeks we had a visit from Joel, who had full powers from Dr. Stern. At present he is on his way to Erez where he will discuss the problems with our friend, Moshe. Meanwhile I succeeded in inducing Mr. Avi here, to send a favorable report to his firm and I hope that everything possible will be done to send help to our gravely ill family in Hagar.

Today I am thinking of your visit, 4 years ago, when you said goodby before I went home. There have been many tragic changes since then in the world in general and in our world in particular. There are so many victims that our aid can hardly be called a solution. But we must carry on our activities, with our usual perseverance and hope to save the lives of thousands of people.

Sincerely yours,

Ch. Barlas

000479

Translation from the French.

Mr. G. Simond
 Delegate of the C.I.C.R.
Ankara

Dear Mr. Simond,

Enclosed please find a letter from Dr. Filderman, addressed to Mr. Resnik, which I request you to forward to its destination.

This letter was written in answer to Mr. Resnik's letters of March 30th and April 6th regarding the matters which I am handling together with Dr. Filderman.

I would like to refer only to the last paragraph of Dr. Filderman's letter regarding the assistance to the destitute of Bucharest and other cities which suffered from the consequences of the recent aerial bombardments. Up to date I heard of 300 Jewish casualties. Moreover a great many Jews lost their property.

This adds to the list of the needy which you know already and which is growing daily due to the arrival of the refugees from Moldavia.

On the other hand the wealthy population of Bucharest left this city for more secure places which resulted in a very great reduction of the income of the charity organizations. It is impossible for the committees to make both ends meet, and at their request I appealed to Geneva asking that considerable amounts be put at their disposal so as to enable them to assist the war victims. Unfortunately Geneva informed me that at the moment no funds are available but I hope that pursuant to my repeated appeals, Geneva will succeed in obtaining funds for the relief of these unfortunate people. You informed me at the time that large amounts had been made available to you for the assistance of the needy populations of South Eastern Europe, and I would appreciate it very much if you could examine the question and let me know whether you could let me have certain funds which I could send as they are needed.

It is true that I will be able shortly to cash the money obtained by the sale of the two car loads of food stuffs - (one car will be shipped to Theresienstadt, and contents of the other distributed to the needy children, especially to the orphans who returned from Transnistria). But these sums will not last very long.

While it was said in Geneva that 250 tons of food would be shipped you tell me that only 4 car loads, i.e. 50 tons will be necessary.

Could you find other possibilities to make additional funds available to me?

Sincerely yours,

CH. KOLB

Delegate of the Red Cross in Roumania

000480

June 18, 1944

MEMORANDUM

TO: JOSEPH SCHWARTZ, LISBON
FROM: REUBEN B. RESNIK, ISTANBUL

RE: TRANSPORTATION AND MAINTENANCE COSTS OF REFUGEES FROM OCCUPIED AREAS - HICEM

For many months, indeed, from almost the time I arrived, I have made requests for statements from the Jewish agency covering the maintenance and transportation costs of refugees coming from occupied areas. Figures on emigration were supplied to me some weeks ago. Some of these figures proved to be inaccurate, and what was more the figures with respect to those in need of assistance were open to question.

There are no accounts available now, and Barlas finally has indicated that in a letter to me. The reasons for that I shall explain when I see you. For in that situation is bound up a number of other unbusinesslike and unsound practices about which there is much to do.

In an effort to work out a reasonable basis for payment it has been suggested that the JDC pay the average cost of care for a refugee in transit for what can be regarded as a reasonable length of time. As for the transportation costs, the Agency claims it has an agreement with you to pay Dollars 70 per passenger from Turkey to Haifa. This cost is excessive and needs to be revised downward considerably. Apart from the use of more expensive transportation than is necessary at this end, the cost involves also some unnecessarily high fees to Feltours for travel services from Aleppo to Haifa. Barlas agrees that these fees are high and finally communicated with the Agency about the matter. It will be a long time before anything is done about it. I do not propose to approve payment of these costs.

In addition to this problem no effort is made to determine who can pay for his own transportation. Indeed, in many instances persons with transportation all the way through have sold their tickets here and requested transportation. In some instances Agency personnel have encouraged persons who could afford to pay their own travel and maintenance costs to demand that those costs be paid by local committees handling these arrangements.

Barlas has agreed to supply some revised figures on immigration and I am at the moment trying to work out some figures that represent reasonable costs for maintenance and for transportation.

I had hoped to have had this matter clarified and finally resolved by you when you came here since it involved, according to Barlas, some agreements that you made with him. I shall have materials ready shortly but perhaps you will conclude that it should be settled after you are here. If not the figures that I hope to develop will be a basis for what I believe will be a reasonable disposition of the matter.

000481

-2-

The unbusinesslike and thoroughly disorganized manner in which things are done here are enough to drive one to distraction. And all of it is so unnecessary.

HICEM: This quite naturally brings me to Hicem and Dave Schweitzer. Schweitzer has been here for about eight or nine weeks. Prior to that he spent over two months in Palestine. He naturally is anxious to relate himself and Hicem to operations here. I had occasion to discuss Hicem - JDC relationships with our Advisory Committee in Palestine. It was clear to me that no clear relationship between Hicem and JDC had been worked out. Schweitzer has no information which would throw any light on the matter. Your apparent silence and some of your telegrams to the Committee have determined my point of view in dealing with Schweitzer who really has been affable and pleasant and who, I might add, seems to be enjoying himself in spite of his anxiety about being unable to work here or elsewhere.

Schweitzer is desirous of setting up some type of organization to handle what immigration comes through here from occupied countries. It is badly in need of some type of more careful operation no matter who does it. It is quite disorganized now, and one of the reasons I have not exerted more pressure about it is that there are comparatively few coming through on the overland route. Those coming off the small boats during the past few weeks, do not present a serious problem since they must be taken directly from the boat to the railroad station.

In one of my cables some weeks ago I indicated the need for having some clarification of Hicem and JDC relationships. I would like to hear further from you about that matter.

I presume Dr. Bernstein has shown you the Hicem-Agency plan of cooperation. It has not been implemented because Passman did not accept the assignment as the Hicem representative in Palestine.

000482

MEMORANDUM

June 18, 1944.

TO : JOSEPH SCHWARTZ, LISBON
 FROM : REUBEN B. RESNIK, ISTANBUL
 RE: TARI, TRANSPORTATION, etc.

In the many cables which have gone forward from here and from other points of my travels I have tried to keep you current on all developments with respect to transportation for refugees from the Balkans to Istanbul or other ports.

Previous reports indicated that the German safe conduct had been denied, but Simoud claims that the German government has not issued an official denial. For all intents and purposes we cannot count on "safe conduct" from that belligerent. There was a plan to have the S/S "Tari" sail without German safe conduct but with Bulgarian safe conduct. A request for that has been made, but it appears doubtful that the new Bulgarian government, dominated as it is by the Nazis, will grant it.

In the meantime the Turkish government has relaxed somewhat about the use of Turkish boats and there is a strong likelihood that small Turkish vessels will be permitted to sail shortly without safe conduct. Several such boats are now in Constanza and it is reported that one or more might arrive here shortly. The S/S "MILCA" and the S/S "MARITZA" which were used previously were Bulgarian boats. The former is no longer available, the latter sank shortly after it left its last group of passengers at Istanbul.

The manner in which this traffic is being carried out leaves much to be desired. The copies of the letters from Filderman which were sent to you previously and now those from Kolb of the IRC in Bucharest make that clear. Moreover, the passengers themselves (those who pay as well as those who do not) have lodged all sorts of complaints. One of the major difficulties is the manner of selection of the persons who go. Obviously there is an effort made to select persons favored by the group who is operating the service, with the result that there have been few children and a special category of refugees now in Roumania - those from Hungary and from Poland have been quite neglected in spite of assurances by Kolb that he would try to have them removed as soon as possible lest they be returned to those countries or killed.

I discussed the whole matter with the Ambassador after I have heard from Filderman and others. Since Turkish boats are available and the Ambassador consented to have the JDC procure such shipping I immediately began some explorations which may prove quite productive. I have assurances that the ships will be made available to us. I am now trying to determine whether the IRC can and will have the children ready -- children who were destined to leave on the "Tari". If these children are available I am prepared to recommend that we engage boats -- which, by the way, we can secure at a price that is infinitely lower than that quoted to us by the Aliyah Beth

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operators who have been responsible for the two boats that have come up to the present time.

You can well understand that the Aliyah Beth does not wish to have anyone provide other shipping, and for this reason have discouraged everyone who has attempted an examination of the problem from going further. They simply want to be the only ones providing the service with as complete control as possible exercised by them. They have not hesitated however in asking the JDC to finance all or part of their operations. (See Committee's No. 77 and mine No. 100).

I expect to have word within a short time on the feasibility of having the children ready, and as soon as I do you will hear from me asking for approval of entire project.

Enclosed herewith you will find a copy of an editorial that appeared in PM not so long ago. It is a sample of the kind of stuff that has appeared in a number of places in the U.S. press. It is based on inaccurate and unfounded information and smacks very much of the kind of material that you inquired about when it was announced some months ago that a "shuttle service was established between Constanza and Haifa." Hirschmann is reported to have left the U.S. on June 11 en route to Turkey.

000484

c/o American Consulate General
Istanbul, Turkey
June 17, 1944

MEMORANDUM

TO: JOSEPH SCHWARTZ
FROM: REUBEN B. RESNIK, ISTANBUL

RE: TRANSFER OF FUNDS TO AGENCY FOR MAINTENANCE AND
TRANSPORTATION OF REFUGEES.

I have delayed making a transfer of 15,000 dollars to the account of Mr. Ch. Barlas, until now because his accounts and the activities of his organization were being examined by the Ministry of Finance because of certain alleged irregularities. I have assurance by Mr. E. Goldenberg that the transfer of funds that we have for purpose of assisting refugees may now be made without any embarrassment to our organization. Accordingly I am instructing the Merkez Bankasi to transfer the above named amount to the account of Mr. Ch. Barlas, for the purposes indicated.

This is the second transfer of funds effected here for his account. On March 25, I transferred the sum of 10,000 dollars from our funds in the account of Gilbert Simond of the IRC for food parcels which cooperating emissaries of the Jewish Agency sent from here to occupied areas.

000485

C O P Y

THE FOREIGN SERVICE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

American Embassy

Ankara, June 15, 1944

Mr. Reuben B. Resnik
c/o American Consulate General
Istanbul

Dear Rube:

Thank you for your two letters of June 14th. Since last seeing you I have had a talk with the Secretary General of the Foreign Office who agreed not only to inform the Turkish Minister in Bucharest that the Turkish Government desired the movement of Jewish refugees from Rumania to Istanbul and Palestine facilitated but that he would give the necessary instructions to make at least two and perhaps more smaller Turkish vessels available to operate without safe conduct between Rumanian and Bulgarian ports and Istanbul.

The only point that bothered him was the criticism to which the Turkish Government might be subjected if a Turkish vessel was sunk and a large number of refugees lives lost while operating without safe conduct. I replied that the plight of the Jewish refugees in the Balkans was now so desperate that I was sure they would be willing to take the risk involved of passage without safe conduct rather than be left to the tender mercies of the Nazis and intimated -- without saying so -- that if there should be a disaster we would do everything within our power to make it clear to the American public that it had been the result of a humanitarian act by the Turkish Government which could in no sense be held morally responsible for the loss of lives growing out of an attempt to save these same lives.

I have sent a lengthy explanatory telegram this morning to the Department of State outlining our difficulties under Turkish law in obtaining the consent of the Ministry of Finance to purchase Turkish Pounds at the diplomatic rate for your exports, explaining the situation with respect to UKCC and urging the Department to request London to telegraph UKCC in Istanbul to accord you the favorable rate.

I expect to see the Minister for Foreign Affairs within the next two days and will press him again to accord you the favorable rate direct but have less confidence that he will be able to persuade the Minister of Finance -- who is extremely hard-boiled -- than I have that you will get the rate through UKCC. It also occurs to me that the rate the UKCC can give you if authorized may be even more favorable than the diplomatic rate but as to this I am not certain. In any event it will not be less favorable,-- of that I am sure.

With kind personal regards,

Sincerely yours,

(sgd)

Laurence A. Steinhardt.

000486

COPYTHE FOREIGN SERVICE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

AMERICAN EMBASSY

Ankara
June 8, 1944Mr. Reuben B. Resnik
Park Hotel
Istanbul

My dear Reuben:

Thank you for your three letters of June 6th. Obviously anything that the Joint Distribution Committee can do to increase the means of transportation for refugees from the Balkan ports to Istanbul will be most welcome and contribute materially to increasing the numbers rescued.

Thank you for the copies of letters from Dr. Filderman which I have read with interest. I received a long letter from Dr. Filderman two days ago which was in effect an appeal for assistance in bringing about the escape of Jewish Refugees from Rumania - without however offering any practical suggestions or containing any information that we do not already possess.

Insofar as concerns my efforts to obtain the diplomatic rate of exchange for funds which the Joint Distribution Committee sends to Turkey for the purchase of supplies to be sent to certain occupied areas, I am informed that about two or three weeks ago the Foreign Office made a favorable recommendation to the Ministry of Finance which however does not appear thusfar to have taken any action in the matter.

The day after you were last in to see me, Mr. Kelley took the matter up again with the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Finance and informed me that the Ministry of Finance was opposed to granting the diplomatic rate of exchange for the purpose of purchasing supplies in Turkey to be sent out of the country, apparently on the grounds that to grant a favorable rate of exchange for such purposes contributed to the much criticized cost of living and tended to encourage the shortage of food supplies and consumption merchandise available to the Turkish public.

As I have noted a tendency during the past two years on the part of the Turkish authorities to discourage the purchase of food and consumption merchandise for the benefit of refugees whether inside or outside of Turkey, the position now taken by the Ministry of Finance is consistent with the policy which it has adhered to for a long time. As the Embassy may only approach the Foreign Office and not the Ministry of Finance, it is quite probable that the favorable

000487

-2-

recommendation of the Foreign Office was made to satisfy the Embassy with full knowledge that the Ministry of Finance would resist granting the request.

After his last talk, Mr. Kelley expressed doubt that we would achieve our goal. Before abandoning my efforts, I would appreciate your calling to see Mr. Kelley who will be in Istanbul until Sunday evening, June 11, and having him bring you up-to-date on his most recent conversations on the subject. On Mr. Kelley's return to Ankara next Monday, after talking the matter over with him further, I will seek the first opportunity to discuss the subject with the Foreign Minister in person in the hope of being able to persuade him to bring pressure to bear on the Ministry of Finance.

As it is possible that we may yet succeed, I suggest that you endeavor to borrow your requirements temporarily which should not be difficult with the guarantee of the Joint Distribution Committee behind the loan or if this is not practical that you only bring over your minimum requirements pending a final decision by the Ministry of Finance.

With kind personal regards,

Sincerely yours,

(sgd) Laurence A. Steinhardt.

000488

Bucharest, May 10, 1944

Dear Mr. Barlas:

I am confirming the receipt of your last wire announcing the arrival of Bellacitta and the departure of the children and escorts.

I am writing you today about the general emigration problem because for some time now the name of the Jewish Agency has provoked such hatred among our population that I should be remiss in my duty were I to keep quiet about it.

I know that the former Zionist Executive resigned because of what was taking place in the emigration office. His resignation was followed by the election of Mr. Al Zissu, who was previously the Jewish Agency's delegate for emigration, with the result that the executive and emigration work was in one person's hands.

But with all this - order has not yet been reestablished. Mr. Zissu told me this himself. He told me certain things that confirm the rumors circulating here: the Jewish Agency pays the transports not for the benefit of the emigrants, but for the benefit of a few individual Jews and Christians who have earned hundreds of millions. In spite of the fact that the boat was paid for by the Jewish Agency, all the passengers paid a minimum of several hundred thousand Lei, up to one million and a half, and even the Chalutzim paid certain amounts.

I saw cables addressed to the International Red Cross concerning the boat Tari, stipulating that the Jewish Agency delegate alone has the right to choose the persons, and that even his rights are limited because he should, in the first place, take people with certificates from before 1941, and then the old Zionists.

In order to avoid a repetition of the evils I have pointed out, Mr. Zissu informed me that he has formed a committee composed of 9 Zionists, to choose the persons and to see to it that the emigration should be gratuitous, but he is dissatisfied with the activities of this committee.

Under these conditions, I asked Mr. Zissu to combine the work of the Rumanian Committee with the Jewish Agency, and to establish the principle at the same time that the one criterion in judging the prospective emigrants is their usefulness in the reconstruction of Palestine and for the conservation of Jewish cultural values, and not their position as former Zionists. I asked that people who have the means shall pay a certain amount which will be given to the International Red Cross in order to assure Jewish relief work. As far as the selection of emigrants, I suggested the following order: Children, young people, qualified workers, intellectuals, professional men, capitalists with a spirit of enterprise, persons whose husbands or wives or children are in Palestine, and finally, people who have an income.

000489

Mr. Zissu answered me that the Jewish Agency delegated its powers to the executive Zionist body and that this fact must be taken into account. He told me that some other people had suggested persons for the committee who were all Zionists, and that he agrees with my preferential proposal, but that he must decline the collaboration with the Roumanian Jewish Agency.

This brings us to the culminating point of the problem. I must protest violently against this procedure. Does the Jewish Agency exist, or does it not? If it has no rights it does not exist. Of what good then are elections, the choosing of delegates, money collections, etc., contributions for the reconstruction of Palestine according to International treaties, if the Zionist organization which comprises 50%, has all the privileges and the non-Zionists, that is the other 50%, have only obligations.

In peace time, when the problem of emigration was not of such gravity and so widespread, the delegate of the Jewish Agency could himself assume the responsibility, whereas in wartime - the most cruel war against the Jews - the refusal to non-Zionist members of the Jewish Agency of the right to participate in all activities concerning emigration, in my opinion, not only strikes a mortal blow to the Jewish Agency, but is as anti-Semitic in feeling as the Nazi doctrines. What right then do we have to reproach the Nazis for their refusal of equal rights if the Jewish Agency itself refuses them to their own Jews and, even worse, to the Jewish Agency's own members.

It seems that the big boat in question does not belong to the Jewish Agency, but to the American Committee for the rescue of Jews, and if this is true, I am convinced that this committee, as well as the American contributors, will be shocked to learn that the people who are fighting and suffering haven't the right to express themselves, but that emigration is purely an affair of the Zionist bureau, and that it is not the Jews, but the Partisans, alone, who can save themselves.

I do not speak "pro domo", because while I have certificates and a thousand other possibilities to leave, I have decided at the risk of my life and the lives of my family, to stay at my post, which I have never left for one day during 32 years. I speak to the Jewish Agency, to the Jewish Government, as I would speak to the Roumanian Government. I hope that I will be heard and that justice will be done.

If you cannot solve this question yourselves, please send a copy of this immediately to Mr. Weizmann and the government of Palestine.

Yours very sincerely,

** and that people of worth have not the right to save themselves,
 ^

000490

Dr. W. Filderman

May 20, 1944

Dear Mr. Barlas:

I add to my previous letter a new category of emigrants who should be taken care of first: that is, the refugees from Hungary and Poland.

They saved themselves - arriving illegally - in Rumania. If they are discovered, it means death. One can imagine their situation. They are soliciting to be among the first to leave. In my opinion, which is the same as the opinion of the delegates of the International Red Cross, their demands are justified because, at the moment they are the most endangered Jews in Rumania.

However, they have been offered only 20 places on a boat of 260, and out of those 20, 7 or 8 for refugees who have been here for 2 or 3 years and whose legal situation is entirely satisfactory. With this percentage, it will be necessary for 15 boats to take the refugees who are already here, and who knows how many more will come in.

I write this letter to ask that orders should be given by you in this matter, if you are in a position to do so, and if not, by the people who are able to do so, and to whom I beg you to transmit my urgent demand.

Very sincerely yours,

000491

Translation from the French.

Filderman

16 str. Apostoli

Bucharest

Thanks your first message just received. Agree to everything. Writing details.

RESNIK

000492

Translation from the French.

c/o American Consulate General
Istanbul, Turkey

June 10, 1944

Dr. W. Filderman
16 Str. St. Apostoli
Bucharest, Roumania

Dear Dr. Filderman:

As I indicated in my recent wire, your first letter reached me only a few days ago and I hasten to acknowledge receipt of your letters and their enclosures. I have already forwarded copies of your letters as well as the enclosures to our Lisbon and New York offices. Cables regarding your requests on behalf of the orphans from Transnistria and other categories of beneficiaries were dispatched without delay. You will receive promptly answers on the problems in question either from me, from Sally Meyer or from Lisbon. Meanwhile would you please keep me informed of further developments and needs. As you may know JDC is willing to borrow funds locally which will be returned after the war, and I am certain that you will examine all possibilities that may exist.

Food supplies. We are preparing, in collaboration with the International Red Cross, several large shipments of food supplies to be distributed in certain regions including Roumania. We intend to send trucks containing food to Theresienstadt, Slovakia, Cracow, Birkenau, etc. Therefore, I would be grateful to you if you would send me as much information as possible on the last food shipment. As you know, we are very limited as to the kind of food stuffs we can export from this country, but we are doing our utmost to send the best and most nourishing food. I learned that part of the food sent to Bucharest could be used in Bratislava for the camps Novaky and Serad. Such shipments can be dispatched to the Slovakian Red Cross to be distributed in collaboration with our representatives in Bratislava. We hope to be able to dispatch our next shipment directly to that city.

000493

Page 2 - To Dr. Filderman, Bucharest - 10/6/44.

Shoes: We have already purchased 20,000 pairs of shoes of good quality. The matter was delayed, however, by the formalities required for the obtaining of the export license as well as by other formalities. However, we hope to be able to hasten this business and make the first shipment shortly.

Emigration: I was very interested in what you said regarding the nature and the goal of the emigration endeavors in Roumania. It is generally known that in Roumania the manner of proceeding in the selection of the emigrants leaves much to be desired and it is for this reason, among others, that JDC is studying the possibilities of sending transports for the evacuation of the needy as well as for their emigration to havens of refuge. At present the most important problem is not that of transportation but the need of an organization in Roumania capable of selecting the people who must be saved i.e. first of all children who will have to be prepared for such transport as will eventually be available. For this purpose the JDC discussed with an important and trustworthy organization of our city, the possibilities of establishing a service in Roumania which would collaborate with the leaders of the JDC in that country, and which would also provide the necessary transportation facilities for Turkey. We made some progress regarding this matter and your last letters have greatly inspired us. We hope that a representative of this organization will be in Roumania shortly. He will discuss things with you as well as with other persons. Would you please give us, if possible, detailed information on the possibilities and probable drawbacks of such a plan. I know it is not easy.

Your letters to Mr. Barlas are, of course, very revealing. I forwarded copies to the interested persons. Our Ambassador told me that he received news from you. As you may know, he is very eager to help, and was of great assistance to JDC, with the leaders of which he has been on very intimate terms for several years.

I would not like to omit that JDC is willing to finance the Tari project in case the boat should sail. There are certain formalities, the most important of which is the "safe conduct" from the belligerent nations. These formalities were delayed and we can do very little to hasten the matter. Everything that can be done is being done from our end. Your advice regarding the use of neutral ports was followed.

000494

Page 3 - To Dr. Filderman, Bucharest - 10/6/44.

You are requesting the address of Mr. Aronovici. Mr. Aronovici is a good friend of mine. I saw him several months ago, shortly before my departure from the United States. He is in good health and can be reached c/o Joint Distribution Committee, 270 Madison Avenue, New York City. I gave his address to his cousin in Palestine and I requested our Lisbon office to inform him of your request.

It is needless to say how happy I am to have established contact with you. I am certain that our collaboration will be satisfactory and productive. I hope that you will take advantage of every occasion to keep me informed of further developments and needs. As soon as there will be definite news regarding some of these matters I shall communicate with you. You may rest assured of my wholehearted cooperation and my sincere gratitude for your help.

Kindest regards,

REUBEN B. RESNIK
AMERICAN JOINT DISTRIBUTION COMMITTEE

000495

Translation from the French

Dr. W. Fildorman
Bucharest

April 29, 1944

Dear Mr. Resnik,

I wish to acknowledge receipt of your letters of March 30th and April 6th for which I thank you.

1) Shoes.

Several weeks ago I discussed this matter with Mr. Kolb, delegate of the International Red Cross, and the intervention with JDC was probably made after this discussion. I am in perfect agreement that this shipment be made.

2) Food Supplies.

I also discussed this question with Mr. Kolb a few weeks ago.

I have taken notice of your suggestion to ship one trainload to Theresienstadt, and I discussed the matter with Mr. Kolb to whom I submitted your two letters. He agreed that the necessary formalities be made for the further shipment to Theresienstadt.

The carloads mentioned in your letter have already arrived.

3) Collaboration with the International Red Cross Regarding Shoes and Food Supplies

The International Red Cross received several letters from Genova informing it that in all matters concerning the JDC, it is I, who, as the President of the Joint from 1919 until the entry of Roumania into the war, would dispose with the approval of the I.R.C. - but Mr. Kolb, to whom I submitted your letters, told me that as far as the shoes and food supplies are concerned, he did not know that it was a JDC matter, because it was the I.R.C. that had informed him of the shipment.

Therefore, Mr. Kolb did not know that I had to be consulted and that the distribution should be made in collaboration with the leaders of JDC.

Mr. Kolb is a man of great vitality who has rendered us considerable services and with whom, as mentioned above, I discussed the question of food supplies and the shoes several months ago. There is a desire for collaboration. But it is desirable that he be informed each time a money remittance or shipment of merchandise is made by JDC.

4) Emigration

The international Red Cross has been informed that a boat was to arrive to transport 1500 persons to Haifa, 1300 children and 200 escorts. 500 of the 1500 passengers are Hungarians.

000496

Subsequently a wire announced that the Germans were opposed to the emigration to Haifa, and that the boat would not arrive. I suggested to Mr. Kolb to wire that the boat take the children to another port outside Palestine, in order to obtain the authorization from the Germans. He followed my suggestion and this morning received a wire informing him that it had been suggested that the boat disembark the passengers at Alexandrette, but we are still waiting for an answer from the Germans. However, I was unable to find out who was the owner of the boat. Had JDC anything to do with it? I saw a telegram saying that the delegate of the Jewish Agency for emigration was the only one to select the passengers - children and escorts. Even if JDC has no right whatever, I as the President of the Jewish Agency of Roumania, think that this matter is very regrettable. What is the purpose of the Jewish Agency, composed of Zionists and non-Zionists, if in Jerusalem or Istanbul one appoints delegates without even requesting the opinion of the Roumanian Committee, and if the delegate appointed in such manner decide alone without the collaboration of the Committee of the Jewish Agency in Roumania.

I am not against the person who at present represents the Jewish Agency for emigration. I am interested in the Principle.

5) Collaboration with you.

I thank you for your promise of collaboration and today I wish to submit you two questions:

- a. Emigration. I would appreciate it very much if you would intervene in favor of the emigration. Would it not be possible for JDC to send a boat for this purpose? The Zionists have two small boats. They are the ones who are going to decide on the big boat and in accordance with their instructions, it will be the old Zionists who will have the privilege of emigrating first. And the non-Zionists? Don't they have the right to be rescued. Moreover, is it the status of militant Zionist or the value of the individual that count more in the reconstruction of Palestine?
- b. Aid needed for the victims of bombardments. The bombardments have caused casualties and have ruined directly a certain number of Jews, because economic activity is completely at a standstill. Large stores and industries can no longer pay wages and consequently the contributions of the rich Jews to the charity organizations will become almost non-existent and all assistance to the needy impossible. - Therefore I request you to intervene urgently that heavy contributions be sent.

and indirectly the greatest part of the Jews

000497

o/o American Consulate General
Istanbul, Turkey
June 14, 1944

His Excellency
Mr. Laurence A. Steinhardt
American Embassy
Ankara, Turkey

Dear Mr. Ambassador:

I have this day informed the Antalya Umumi Nakliyat T.A.S. with whom we are negotiating for transport and related facilities that you have agreed to ask the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey to request His Excellency, the Turkish Ambassador to Roumania to facilitate the movement of refugees in Roumania to havens of refuge.

I am assured that this instruction will go a long way toward accelerating the movement of refugees from Roumania.

Naturally, I shall keep you informed of developments as they occur.

With kindest personal greetings, and with every good wish, I am

Sincerely yours,

REUBEN B. RESNIK
AMERICAN JOINT DISTRIBUTION COMMITTEE

000498

c/o American Consulate General
Istanbul, Turkey
June 14, 1944

His Excellency
Mr. Laurence A. Steinhardt
American Embassy
Ankara, Turkey

Dear Mr. Ambassador :

At the outset I want to renew my thanks for your courtesies and assistance in connection with some of the projects that we have underway.

FAVORABLE RATE OF EXCHANGE: Pursuant to the suggestion made by Mr. Kelley I communicated immediately with Mr. Andrew Fember of the UKCC in an effort to have that agency assist us in securing the favorable rate of exchange. It was Mr. Fember's opinion that London might react more favorably if the request were made by our Government from Washington rather than from his office in Ankara. You will recall that in my letter of April 14, I indicated that that means of effecting our purchases here at the favorable rate presented a likely possibility. May I kindly ask your assistance in communicating with Washington with the suggestion that our funds be accepted by the UKCC, say, in London or Washington so that the local office can be instructed to make the purchases for us.

I presume that if this meets with your approval that it will be done simultaneously with the renewed efforts on the part of your office to have the Turkish Ministry of Finance grant us the rate directly. I might add in this connection that Mr. Fember thought that if sufficient pressure were exerted that the rate would probably be granted for our purposes just as it was in the case of the UKCC for the special relief program in which that agency is engaged.

Our next relief shipment will be ready within a very short time, and it would help us considerably if we could have a favorable decision in either or both instances at an early date.

With every assurance of our appreciation, I am

Sincerely yours,

REUBEN B. RESNIK
AMERICAN JOINT DISTRIBUTION COMMITTEE

000499

c/o American Consulate General
Istanbul, Turkey
June 14, 1944

Mr. A. W. Walker
Socony-Vacuum Oil Company
400 Vakif Han
Istanbul

My dear Mr. Walker:

The American Embassy has transmitted to me the following message from the Home Office of the Joint Distribution Committee:

In connection with the remittance of 100,000 Dollars to Gilbert Simond, the American Joint Distribution Committee has requested the Socony-Vacuum Oil Company to sell it Turkish Pounds at a charitable rate. The New York office of the Socony-Vacuum Oil Company stated that they were prepared to do this but that the Socony representatives in Turkey have informed them that the Turkish Minister for Finance had refused authorization for the sale on the grounds that the funds of the Socony-Vacuum Company could be used only for the export of specific products. In view of the fact that the funds of the American Joint Distribution Committee are used only for humanitarian purposes, please discuss with the Ambassador the possibility of persuading the Minister of Finance to reverse his decision.

His Excellency Mr. Laurence A. Steinhardt and Mr. Robert F. Kelley, Counselor of the Embassy, have suggested that I discuss the matter further with you, since you may be permitted to utilize your funds for some of the products we intend to export.

May I take this means of renewing my thanks for your courtesy in making available the necessary tin-plate for use in our next food-shipment.

With kindest personal regards, I am

Sincerely yours,

REUBEN B. RESNIK
AMERICAN JOINT DISTRIBUTION COMMITTEE

000500

May 20, 1944

Dr. W. Filderman

Dear Mr. Resnik:

Pursuant to my previous letter, I am writing you now asking you to transmit the contents of this letter to New York and to Mr. Sally Mayer of St. Gall, Switzerland, and to tell them that we are lacking funds and consequently we can engage in very few activities.

For the maintenance alone of the 600 orphans saved from Transnistria, and who are actually in Budapest, we need 4,000,000 per month and \$17,000,000 for their clothing. We have 1,000 more orphans from Transnistria who are in other cities, and for whom we are responsible.

As you will see from my letter addressed to Mr. Barlas, of which I am enclosing a copy herewith, we have a new category of people in need of assistance - Hungarian and Polish refugees from Hungary - a category which will probably increase every day.

The money which was put at our disposal by Sally Mayer - through the International Red Cross - is almost exhausted. Besides, I have had no news from Sally Mayer for more than five months, despite my letters, and a report of the activities submitted to the International Red Cross on January 10th.

I have heard that money will be sent, but I did not receive any. (I have heard of the amount of Swiss francs 100,000).

Therefore, I ask you to contact Mr. Mayer and to send him the enclosed statement, and to ask him to send us a statement of the amount put at our disposal from June 1st, 1943, (date of my deportation to Transnistria), and also all the amounts appropriated for the current year. In this way I will establish a budget, without which it is difficult to work.

Please send a second copy of my statement to New York.

Very sincerely yours,

P. S. I just learned that it would be possible to find out the address of Mr. N. Aronovici at the Comunidade Israelita de Lisboa, Seccao de assistencia a refugiados, 16 rua da Monte Olivetti. Please cable New York on this subject, in any case.

000501

Translation from the French

Mr. Filderman
Bucharast

May 10, 1944

Dear Mr. Resnik,

Enclosed please find, copy of a letter which I dispatched
by same mail to Mr. Barlas.

Please forward immediately copies of this letter to the
JDC and to the American non-Zionist delegates of the
Jewish Agency as well as to the non-Zionist delegates in
the Palestine government, requesting them to let me have
their decision. I would appreciate it if they would
acknowledge receipt of my letters and let me have their
opinion on the problem raised in my letter.

Sincerely yours,

FILDERMAN

000502

Bucharest - 5/10/44

37.

International Red Cross Delegation - to Roumania, Bucharest

Gentlemen:

In our previous letter of January 10, 1944, we gave you detailed information on our relief activities in behalf of the Jewish population of Roumania during the months of November and December, 1943.

We present herewith, for the time being, the essential data regarding this activity during the first four months of this year from January 1st through April 30th, 1944, worked out on a program more developed than the old one, but still not as complete as the more intensive one presented on the 17th of March, which would require that more funds be placed at our disposal.

We give below data concerning our current and future program and the funds necessary therefor:

I. FUNDS AT OUR DISPOSAL	
Balance as per 1/1 (see letter of 1/10).....	Lei 1,678,000
Funds received:	
During February (Account #9000/850).....	Lei 7,650,000
During March (Account #106000/900).....	95,400,000
During month of April (Account #3840/1350).....	5,184,000
TOTAL.....	Lei 108,234,000
Account #100,000/33.....	33,000,000
TOTAL.....	Lei 141,234,000
Various private contributions.....	4,199,000
TOTAL.....	Lei 147,111,000

- over -

0 0 0 5 0 3

II. ASSISTANCE GIVEN JANUARY 1 THROUGH APRIL 30, 1944

	January	Fébruáry	March	April	TOTAL
Polish refugees	5,402,705	1,650,000	8,770,300	3,337,000	19,160,122 lei
Deportees & Repatriated	5,000,000	4,300,000	--	7,458,560	16,758,560
Various Communities	--	480,000	14,907,000	32,326,250	47,713,250
Individual Relief	--	175,000	420,000	427,500	1,042,500
					<u>34,674,432</u> lei

We are continuing to send to the family of Mr. Noel Aronovici, employee of the JDC for his account money necessary for their maintenance.

From October 1, 1943; we sent them a total of 975,000 lei.
 From January 1, 1944, to August, 1944, it will be necessary to send an amount of..... 675,000

Please approve the payments made in order that we may know whether we should continue the payments.

For the orphans repatriated from Transnistria and for various needy communities, about..... 25,000,000

TOTALEXPENSES..... 110,349,432 lei

Balance as of May 1, 1944
 147,111,000

110,349,432

36,761,568 lei

000504

III. The Main Requirements and Funds
Necessary Therefor

A) Direct Relief - On the basis of the program of March 17th, we wish to make the following observations:

1) Categories of Needy

Chapter 1,2,3 - Deportees and Repatriates, adults and orphans - The development of the war has obliged us to stop the relief work for the Jews deported in Transnistria. About 10,000 adults were repatriated. Of this number, 6,000 have returned to the district of Dorohoi, the remainder to other parts of the country. Of the 5,000 orphaned (both parents or only one) only 2,000 could be repatriated. They were brought in groups into various cities of Moldavia and about 3/4 of them were taken to Focsani, Buzeu and Bucharest. One hundred of them emigrated and have already arrived in Palestine.

Chapter 4 - Communities not in a position to cover their entire needs - The number of these communities has been reduced by the occupation of part of the country, but this has not reduced our relief expenditures. New categories of needy people have appeared, about which we will speak in chapters 6, 7, 8.

Chapter 5 - Foreign Refugees - (Almost all of them Polish) See our explanations given on March 17th.

Chapter 6 - Evacuated - Quite a large number of Jews from Cernauti (Bucovina) and from Moldavia were evacuated in various localities, particularly in Bucharest.

The Jews from certain cities situated in the battle area particularly from Tg.Neamt and Tg.Frumos, about 4,500, were evacuated by the Roumanian authorities into neighboring cities.

It is easy to imagine the situation of these people almost without means, who had to leave their homes with only a few hours' notice.

Chapter 7 - Victims of Aerial Bombardments - Jews from Floesti, Bucharest, Craiova and T. Severin suffered greatly from the bombardments.

We do not possess data about the number of victims and the damage. We know that thousands of families were totally ruined and are actually without means and without shelter.

Chapter 8 - Detachments of Forced Labor - This category, which, until now was under the exclusive care of the communities and the Jewish Centers, should be especially mentioned. Of the total number of Jews working in these detachments, at least 25,000 or 30,000 are needy people requiring equipment and maintenance relief.

0 0 0 5 0 5

These people belong, to a great extent, to the occupied communities, and cannot receive aid either from the communities nor from their relatives. They have been working hard for years, far from their families, whom they left without any means.

We will indicate below the minimum of relief needed for this category:

- 2) The means necessary to assist the 8 categories of needy people and the greatly reduced contribution to cover these needs, which may be counted upon from the communities and the Jewish Center.

Chapter 1-3 - The Repatriated Deportees

Adults about	4,000	
Orphans "	2,000	
	6,000 - to 5,000 lei per month	30,000,000

Chapter 4. Communities Which Are Not in a Position to Cover Their Budget

The latest events have almost totally destroyed the economic activities of those Jews who still remained in productive work. The results are as follows: firstly, considerable increase in the number of needy people; secondly, the alarming decrease of Jews who had been contributing to relief work; as well as the decrease in the amount of contributions received.

Not only the communities totally or partially evacuated, but the others too, and particularly the cities situated in the battle area, find it impossible to help the daily increasing number of needy without the great help they expect and ask of us.

The Jewish Center gives practically no more funds, and it is foreseen that the contributions to be received will barely be sufficient to cover, besides the ordinary expenses, 10 to 15%, at the most, of the relief needs.

In our program of March 17th, we had foreseen that the relief expenses of the Jews would be supported to the extent of 50% by the Jewish Center and the richer communities. Today we are obliged to reduce our estimates concerning this contribution to only 10-15%.

About 20,000 families today have need of direct relief (food and lodging). This number will increase in the near future to 35 - 40,000 families.
This chapter demands a monthly minimum of Lei 125,000,000.

Chapter 5 - Foreign Refugees

Besides the Polish refugees and those of other nationalities, we have to include in this chapter Hungarian refugees, which makes an increase in our estimates from 4,500,000 to Lei 8,000,000.

Chapter 6 - About 5,000 evacuees from occupied or endangered zones have need of at least 3,000 leis per month and per capita Lei 15,000,000.

000506

Chapter 7 - Victims of Aerial Bombardments

Without taking into consideration rehabilitation, we are limiting ourselves to furnishing immediate relief to about 3,000 families (incomplete data), of about 10,000 leis per month and per family.

Lei 30,000,000

Chapter 8 - Detachments of Forced Labor

Maintenance expenses, for about 20,000 persons, of at least 2,500 lei per month.

Lei 50,000,000

TOTAL of the amounts necessary to cover the ordinary and periodic relief needs

Lei 258,000,000

B. EXCEPTIONAL RELIEFEquipment

Of all the categories of needy people, excluding the forced labor detachments, approximately 12,000 people are in need of clothing, shoes, underwear.

Figuring 20,000 leis for complete equipment, this exceptional relief demands an amount of

Lei 240,000,000

For the detachments of forced labor, it is

necessary to figure for complete equipment 20,000 Lei 400,000,000

Total for exceptional relief Lei 640,000,000

The increasingly precarious situation of the Jewish population of Roumania calls for rapid and more substantial relief than in the past, and this is possible only with the help that we are counting on from abroad.

Only by receiving the subvention on time will we be able to do our work.

We thank you for your most important support of our work.

No page 42

000507

MEMORANDUM

TO : JOSEPH SCHWARTZ, LISBON
 FROM : REUBEN B. RESNIK, ISTANBUL
 RE : U.S. VAAD HAHATZALA - EMERGENCY COMMITTEE OF VAAD HAHATZALA

From various sources, including the JDC in New York City I have heard that the above named group is making representations without basis in fact in the United States concerning the nature and scope of its program and its capacity to perform a service in the overseas field that cannot be carried on by any other agency.

Several months ago the above named organization sent the sum of 25,000 Dollars to Jacob Griffel in Istanbul asking him to constitute a local committee and to perform some service in the field of foreign relief and rescue. I cabled you about this development (No. 75, April 14). Griffel set up an informal committee made up of one Joseph Klarman of Palestine who represents the Revisionist Party here, Ludwig Kastner, a former Czechoslovakian business man and who now concerns himself in what he terms "refugee matters", and Griffel, a Palestinian, who represents the Agudath Israel here.

Some weeks ago the local so-called Aliyah Beth organization carried on by representatives of the Histadruth were seeking funds to finance some of their operations. They requested Griffel for some. Accordingly a cable was sent to the New York office of the Vaad asking for the sum of 200,000 Dollars. This telegram caused some differences between Ch. Barlas and the representatives of the Histadruth as well as with Griffel and his committee. At the same time the Jewish Agency and the Histadruth in Palestine requested the JDC for financing of some of the shipping that is being planned. I cabled you on this matter from Palestine (See Committee's No. 77) and later I cabled you from here (see No. 100).

In reply the Vaad Hahatzala instructed Griffel to consult Barlas and me. He has consulted me, but does not wish to consult Barlas. As yet there have not been any funds expended here for purposes of relief and rescue by Griffel and/or his committee members on behalf of the Vaad Hahatzala. It was at one time suggested that by someone here that since the Vaad was especially interested in assisting rabbis and yeshivah personnel that the funds of the Committee might be employed for paying the maintenance and transportation costs of some of the rabbis and their families who have been coming through here en route to Palestine. The Joint has been paying the full costs of these and of all other needy persons who come from the occupied areas to Palestine through Istanbul or other Turkish communities. Griffel and his associates did not respond to the suggestion.

Finally I want to say that there is nothing in my opinion which this committee can do here that isn't being done already. There is nothing that this Committee and its organization can do that cannot be done by another organization already operating and much better at that. Up to

000500

-2-

the present time the local committee of the Vaad has not expended any funds and from what I can see at the moment the need for their funds for any important and useful projects is not indicated.

Enclosed are copies of telegrams sent and received by Griffel concerning the request for 200,000 Dollars. I suspect that the Vaad in its customary manner has already made scores of photostats of the cable requesting the 200,000 Dollars and is employing it in its fund raising efforts.

Mr. Ch. Barlas, representative of the Jewish Agency in Istanbul, informs me that he plans to reject any offers of assistance of this group and has given similar instructions to others who are associated with the Jewish Agency in its operations from here.

You will recall that I cabled you about this matter on June 5. (No. 100)

000509

C O P Y

The Foreign Service
of the
United States of America

American Embassy

May 30, 1944

Mr. Jacob Griffel
Hotel Continental
Beyoglu

Sir:

In pursuance of a telegram dated May 25th from Washington, the Embassy takes pleasure in furnishing you the following paraphrase of a message from the Emergency Committee of the Vaadhatzala, signed by Rabbi Abraham Kalman, and transmitted through the War Refugee Board:

Your telegram with respect to a further sum of \$ 200,000 has arrived. The belief here is that the difficulty does not arise from an insufficiency of funds but from the shipping shortage. It is feared here that bidding for shipping on a competitive basis would not result in the total number of persons saved being increased. Accordingly it is necessary that you submit your plans to the American Embassy and that after consulting Barlas and Resnik your joint recommendation be transmitted through the Embassy telegraphically. It is suggested here with respect to conditions prevailing in Hungary that Jews in that country be advised to seek cover in rural sections bordering on Yugoslavia and Slovakia and not to remain in large cities.

For purposes of reference the above message is designated as telegram No. 40 of the War Refugee Board.

Very truly yours,

Harry L. Troutman I. Secret. of
Embassy.

000510

Copy

VAADHATZALA EMERGENCY COMMITTEE
132 NASSAU STREET NEW YORK CITY

CABLE BARLAS FROM ANKARA TO WARREFUGEE BOARD FOR NUCHIM
GOLDMAN AGAINST OUR PROPOSAL SENT YOU PROVOKED SUNDAYS
JEWISH AGENCY VAADHATZALA MEETING GENERAL OPPOSITION STOP HIS
CABLE ISSUED BECAUSE WAS COMPLETELY UNINFORMED RE OUR
AGREEMENT WITH COMPETENT FACTORS WHO ARE ENTRUSTED BY
COMPETENT INSTITUTIONS THIS RESCUE WORK AND ACTED IT
TILL NOW STOP BARLAS REGRETTED AND DECLARED HAVING RECTIFIED
CABLE THUS WE ACTED BONAFIDES STOP WE REMARK IN MERITORIOUS
RESPECT ACTUALLY OFINIONS DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BARLAS HIS
COLLEAGUES BECAUSE BARLAS ATTITUDE FINANCIAL MEANS ONLY
POSSIBLE JEWISH AGENCYS CHANNEL STOP ALL PRECEDED RESCUEWAYS
EXCEPTED PROPOSED VALUELESS STOP YOUR FIRST AMOUNT OTTOMANBANK
UNTOUCHED WILL USE ONLY EFFECTIF RESCUEWORK STOP REPEATING
PROPOSAL PLEASE WIRE DECISION

JACOB GRIFFEL LUDWIG KASTNER JOSEF KLARMAN

Jacob Griffel
Ludwig Kastner
Josef Klarman

17/5/44

Hotel Kontinental

000511

Copy

VAATHAZALA EMERGENCY COMMITTEE 132 NASSAU STREET
NEW YORK CITY

SEATRANSPORTS STARTED SUCCESSFULLY ABOUT 1000 PEOPLE LAST
FIVE WEEKS STOP SEEING POSSIBILITY ENLARGING WITH OUR
HELP STOP NEEDING THIS PURPOSE 200,000 DOLLAR AUGMENTATION
SAVING ACTION CRUCIAL NEXT MONTH STOP PLEASE SEND THIS
AMOUNT FREE CURRENCY OUR DISPOSAL SWISS THUS ENSURING
CONTINUATION SEATRANSPORTS

JAKOB GRIFFEL LOUIS KASTNER

JOSEPH KLARMAN

Istanbul, 5/V/1944

000512

Memorandum

TREASURY DEPARTMENT

INTER OFFICE COMMUNICATION

Date
May 31, 1944

TO: Mr. Friedman

FROM: Anne Laughlin *AL*

RE: Comments on Mr. Reuben B. Resnik's Report

There should be...

Paragraphs one and two of Mr. Resnik's report would clearly indicate that the rescuing of human beings in some countries is developing into a racket. In rescue work, almost any means could be condoned if the net result was a life saved. However, with graft a habitual practice, rescue work will become increasingly difficult and result in a greater loss of lives. I would suggest that the Board's representatives in Turkey with the American ambassador look into this matter very thoroughly and take every step possible to eliminate where possible this apparent graft in human traffic.

*This should be...
...of fact
by Path...*

Paragraph 3. The Board should take any further steps possible in urging and, I would prefer saying forcing, Turkey to issue transit visas and to transmit them by the quickest means possible to the occupied countries up to the maximum number agreed upon.

Paragraph 4. If there are any means by which the War Refugee Board can be of assistance to the Joint Distribution Committee in getting a more favorable rate of exchange for the purchase of food stuffs in Turkey, it should be done.

*I disagree...
...a dangerous precedent.*

Paragraph 5. In my opinion, this would be establishing a dangerous precedent.

*I disagree...
...this has been
...in case of Spain
...a sufficient for
...refugees cases*

Paragraph 6. The suggestion in paragraph six would be even more dangerous.

We are working on this

Paragraph 7. The suggestion in paragraph seven seems quite logical. I am not sure but what I think the small boats would be more successful in transporting refugees than large boats because I would imagine that securing a sufficient number of passengers for large boats at any one given time would be difficult under the circumstances and cause delays that might be dangerous.

JDC has reopened negotiations

I can't see why Mr. Hirschmann should have requested the JDC to drop the negotiations for Portuguese boats. I hope the JDC proceeds with their plan.

000513

Paragraph 8. I believe we have pushed this point to the best of our ability.

Paragraph 9. We should follow through on the suggestions made in this paragraph.

AL:M

000514

The Following Pages Are the Best Available

000515

AMERICAN LEGATION
near the
GOVERNMENT OF EGYPT

Cairo, Egypt,
May 18, 1944.

No. 113

X
Subject: Rescue of refugees from Europe; a
Memorandum by the representative of
the Treasury Department regarding
conversations with the representative
of the American Joint Distribution
Committee concerning recent develop-
ments in Turkey.

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington.

Sir:

With reference to my telegram no. 158, May 17,
noon, I have the honor to transmit herewith for the
Department's information a copy of a memorandum pre-
pared by Mr. Irving S. Friedman, Treasury Department
representative in Cairo, concerning recent conversa-
tions with Mr. Reuben S. Resnik, Middle East Director
of the American Joint Distribution Committee, regard-
ing developments in connection with the rescue of
refugees from Europe.

I am informed that Mr. Friedman has already trans-
mitted this memorandum to the Treasury and the Embassy
is also forwarding a copy of this despatch and the
memorandum to Ambassador Steinhardt at Ankara for his
information.

Respectfully yours,

Lincoln MacVeagh

Enclosure:

Memorandum prepared by Mr. Irving S. Friedman.

Carbon copy to: American Embassy, Ankara.

File no. 848

Sent in hectograph to Department

LS/hem

000516

Enclosure 1
Embassy, Cairo, Subject: Rescue
of Refugees from Egypt; Memo-
randum by the representative of
the Treasury Department regarding
conversation with the representa-
tive of the American Joint
Distribution Committee concerning
recent developments in Turkey.

May 11, 1944

WAR REFUGEE WORK IN THE BALKANS AND TURKEY

The following report on war refugee work in the Balkans and Turkey is based upon information supplied by Mr. Leuben S. Resnik, Middle East Director of the American Joint Distribution Committee, whose address is ordinarily in care of the American Consul General, Istanbul. He is in Cairo for a few days. It is well to be that much of this information has already been supplied by Mr. Hirschmann, but I believe it is of sufficient interest and importance to warrant passing along even though it may be to some extent repetitious. It will be noted that items 3 through 9 raise points for possible action by Treasury or the War Refugee Board. No comment, of course, was made to Resnik with respect to any of these matters. Mr. Resnik asked that, if possible, a copy of this report should be sent to Ambassador Steinhardt. He said that he would be willing to supply more detailed reports, if requested.

1. The SS EMIL, the Turkish boat for which the War Refugee Board has been negotiating, is still in Istanbul because of inability thus far to obtain German safe conduct. There had also been some other relatively minor causes for the delay. For example, the Turkish Government had raised objections to having a Red Cross flag painted on the boat and wished, instead, to have a crescent used. A compromise was reached by agreeing to use both the red cross and the crescent. Mr. Resnik reports that the procuring of the boat is receiving the complete cooperation of Ambassador Steinhardt, who has been carrying the major burden of the negotiations. Mr. Resnik says that he feels there is, at best, a fifty-fifty chance that the project will go through.

2. At the end of March 1944, the first of a series of several small vessels arrived in Istanbul from Constanza. The first of these vessels was a boat called the SS MILCA, a small, schooner-type vessel, weighing approximately 240 tons, sailing the Bulgarian flag. Many of the passengers obtained passage through a so-called travel agency in Bucharest, and alleged they had to pay exorbitant "fees" to the travel agency to secure passage. The passengers did not have transit visas, but immediately on the report of the sailing of the boat Ambassador Steinhardt had made representations to the Foreign Minister of Turkey urging that transit visas be made available. The Ambassador argued that since the overland traffic, as later noted, had substantially decreased, the transportation of the refugees who were coming by boat would not be an undue burden on the Turkish railways. The transit visas were immediately granted and the passengers were taken from the boat, placed on railroads, and sent to Haifa. Soon after, the second of these boats, the SS BRITZA, an older and less seaworthy boat, sailed from Constanza (over the objections of the International Red Cross, who claimed that the vessel was not seaworthy and that the lives of the passengers were placed in serious jeopardy). This vessel is allegedly operated by the same owner as the SS MILCA and also carries the Bulgarian flag. There were roughly 240 passengers on this boat and the same procedure with respect to securing the transit visas was followed.

On April...

000517

On April 25 the SS S. L. ... - formerly a Bulgarian boat, but sailing with International Red Cross insignia under safe conduct (unlike the cases of the SS ... and SS ...) - arrived in Istanbul with 100 passengers, 120 of whom were orphans and the remainder adults and their children. The adult passengers claimed that they were charged from 2 million to 3 million liras per passage, which was supposed to be sufficiently large to cover the entire cost of the boat and, thereby, the orphans were presumably transported free of cost. The adults complained that they were compelled to pay exorbitant "fees" to go-betweens and travel agencies. The boat was a 71-ton schooner-type vessel which took about five to six days to make the trip, as had the other boats. In this instance, the transit visas had been previously secured and all the necessary paperwork had been done, for the International Red Cross would not have participated in the project unless all formal arrangements had been completed before the boat sailed. These people, as in the case of the others, were on the boat roughly two days until railroad accommodations were made available and were then transported by railroad to Haifa.

On May 2 the SS ... arrived again, with, reportedly, 250 passenger aboardship. Railroad accommodations were immediately procured, transit visas obtained, and the refugees transferred to Palestine. Mr. Resnik was not in Istanbul at the time the boat arrived and does not have any additional details.

Mr. Resnik reports that the above refugees frequently complained of the excessive charges they had to pay to secure passage on the vessels, to have their papers processed in Rumania, etc. The Joint Distribution Committee paid for the expense involved in transporting these refugees from Turkey to Palestine, just as it pays for the fares and maintenance of those coming by way of the overland route.

3. The overland refugee traffic is still a trickle. The only bottleneck is the delay by the Turkish Government in sending out the necessary transit visas to the various occupied countries. The Turks have agreed, in principle, to send approximately nine certificates per week to each of the three occupied countries involved (Rumania, Bulgaria and Hungary), or a total of about 100 transit visas per week since each certificate usually covers three or four persons. Resnik feels that if this was actually done it would result in a satisfactory overland flow, except, of course, to the extent that recent military developments in Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria may have severely affected railroad traffic. Actually, the Turks have not been sending out these transit visas and the few they have been sending out have been mailed with resulting considerable delays. Resnik suggests that pressure be brought in Washington to have the Turks send out by cable the promised amount of transit visas. He says that the Turks are sensitive to American pressure on this matter.

4. The American Joint Distribution Committee is getting the favorable rate of 180 piastres per dollar for their relief work in Turkey, but get the official rate of 120 for the purchase of food-stuffs in Turkey for export to the occupied areas, for which Treasury licenses have been obtained. The Committee wishes to get the same favorable rate of 180 for these food purchases instead of the official rate of 120. Mr. Resnik says that Ambassador Steinhardt is taking up this matter with the Turkish Foreign Minister, but it would help a great deal if the matter was also taken up in Washington. He says that he feels Ambassador Steinhardt would not seriously object to such assistance.

5. Mr. Resnik asked whether the Trading with the Enemy Act could be suspended for the representative of the American Joint Distribution Committee, namely, himself. He says that he could be much

more..

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more effective if he were permitted to deal with enemy nationals for such purposes as securing local currencies, arranging transportation facilities, making plans for the movement of refugees, etc. Similar privilege could not be requested by other, since very few private agencies are engaged in this type of work.

6. Mr. Resnik also raised the possibility of permitting him to send U.S. currency into the occupied areas, since in cert in cases relief and rescue operations could be consummated by the use of U.S. currency, or other non-axis currencies such as Swiss francs, which would otherwise be impossible. Ordinarily they much prefer not to use U.S. currency, but they are finding that in some cases their objectives cannot be accomplished with the use of local currency alone.

7. The War Refugee Board should request the Anglo-American shipping pool to give two small ships to the International Red Cross. Mr. Resnik suggested this proposal may have been taken up with Washington by Mr. Hirschmann, since he (Resnik) presented several memoranda to Hirschmann on this matter as early as February 1944 and also to his home office in New York. These boats would be operated by the International Red Cross under Swiss registry and manned by neutral crews. They would be used for different types of errands of mercy, such as carrying food and rescuing refugees. He says that the boats could be very small in size, since they would be used only in short hauls. Mr. Resnik states that it has been reliably reported that this type of tonnage is available.

The Joint Distribution Committee for some weeks now has been negotiating for Portuguese boats to sail from Constanza to Haifa manned by neutral crews. These negotiations had been started by Dr. J.J. Schwartz in Lisbon, European Director of the Joint Distribution Committee, but were suspended at the request of Mr. Hirschmann in March who claimed that the negotiations for these Portuguese boats would interfere with his obtaining the IS T.M.I. Mr. Resnik discussed the matter with Ambassador Steinhardt, and the Ambassador took the position that Schwartz should resume the negotiations, since, according to the Ambassador, (1) there was no assurance that the Turkish boat would be obtained, and (2) there were sufficient refugees available in the Balkans to utilize all available shipping. The negotiations for Portuguese shipping were resumed in mid-April, and it is reported that a Portuguese ship might be available by the end of May or early June. Figures originally submitted were that the approximate cost per passenger would be \$200 and that the boats were prepared to carry up to 3,000 passengers in three or four trips, i.e. about 1500 per trip. This would not obviate the necessity to obtain the suggested two small ships to be given to the International Red Cross by the Anglo-American shipping pool.

8. The help of Washington would be appreciated in the case of the repatriation of neutrals or in the protection of the interests of such neutrals in occupied Europe. For example, there are 3,000 Turkish nationals in France and the French Government was going to deport them. This was at least temporarily prevented through action initiated by Ambassador Steinhardt. The Ambassador had represented the situation to the Turkish Foreign Minister who, in turn, had given instructions to the Turkish Ambassador in Vichy to take up this matter with the French. Several hundreds of these Turkish nationals have already been repatriated and are being supported by the Joint Distribution Committee (even though they are now in their own country). It seems that even in the case of Turkish nationals who are in occupied Europe the Turkish Government needs prodding and reminding before they take steps to help them. Mr. Resnik says that he feels this is a problem which is within the sphere of interest of the War

Refugee...

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Refugee Board because the War Refugee Board is concerned with the rescue of people who might otherwise be deported, killed, etc.

9. The traffic of refugees from the Greek mainland and from the island of Evros to Coale in Turkey, from where they are taken to Smyrna, is continuing and it is safe to say that since December about 250 Jewish refugees in addition to other refugees have been rescued. He says that this operation has been carried on in caïques operated by the British Navy in cooperation with American military personnel. Mr. Goldik says that it would be very helpful if -

(a) the U.S. Navy was requested to accelerate such operations, and it is pointed out to him that these operations were not merely helpful from the point of view of obtaining information but also as a refugee operation;

(b) the British, also, were influenced to accelerate such operations;

(c) the Greeks were informed of our interest in these operations (he suggests that the people to be informed are the Jews since they have been most helpful in this connection.

(d) funds were gotten to the people in Greece, particularly in the form of gold coins or gold Napoleons; and

(e) the caïques carry a full load during each trip (he says that his information is that during each trip the caïques carry about 20 instead of 30 or 35 which they could carry.)

Irving S. Friedman,
Cairo.

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April 28, 1944

Mr. John W. Pehle, Executive Director
War Refugee Board
Main Treasury Building - Room 288½
Washington, D.C.

Dear John:

I am enclosing copy of Reuben Resnik's report from Turkey, which he gave to Ira Hirschmann for us. I am sure it will be of interest to you.

I am also sending a copy of it to Miss Hodel for the use of such members of the staff who may be interested.

Sincerely yours,

Leavitt
Moses A. Leavitt
Secretary

MAL:BK
encl.

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April 28, 1944

Miss Florence Hodel,
Special Assistant to Director
War Refugee Board
Main Treasury Building
Washington, D.C.

Dear Florence:

I am enclosing copy of Resnik's report, which you will be interested to read. You may wish to pass it on to Friedman and Abrahamson and other interested members of the staff.

Sincerely yours,


Moses A. Leavitt
Secretary

MAL:EK
encl.

000523

CONFIDENTIAL

REPORT ON ACTIVITIES
From February 1944 to March 21, 1944
Reuben B. Resnik

IMPORTANT: Much of the information in this report is based on data secured from official bodies and as such should be treated in strictest confidence.

BASIS OF THE REPORT:

This report is based on conferences, negotiations, meetings, interviews, and the product of those activities during a period of roughly six weeks. During this period I spent time in four places: Cairo, Jerusalem, Istanbul, Ankara. At each of these places I found it necessary to confer with officials, directors of agencies that were related to our field of interest, and finally, with persons who came from occupied areas to neutral countries en route to Palestine or for permanent residence in Turkey. It is unnecessary to list the vast number of people whom I have seen and with whom I have conferred.

This report is being handed to Mr. Ira A. Hirschmann, a representative of the War Refugee Board attached to the American Embassy at Ankara. Mr. Hirschmann has agreed to hand this report to Mr. Joseph C. Hyman, Executive Vice Chairman of the American Joint Distribution Committee. I have had occasion to work closely with Mr. Hirschmann and I want to acknowledge his valuable cooperation and courtesy. I shall have occasion to relate more of his activities and interest in some of the special problems with which the JDC is concerned.

NATURE OF THIS REPORT:

The following subjects will be included in this report:

- 1) Immigration from and through Turkey to Palestine and other areas
- 2) Emigration from other countries
- 3) Repatriation of Turkish nationals from France
- 4) Other migration programs
- 5) Special projects of the War Refugee Board
- 6) Proposal to have the Anglo-American Shipping Pool make available ships to the International Red Cross
- 7) Efforts to organize movements of populations from occupied areas to ports of embarkation
- 8) Organization of migration services in Istanbul by
 - a) Jewish Agency
 - b) Local community
- 9) Food Parcel service
 - a) From Teheran to Polish, Latvian, Lithuanian, Estonian refugees now in Asiatic Russia
 - b) From Lisbon to Theresienstadt
 - c) From Istanbul to Transnistria, Theresienstadt, Yugoslavia and possibly Bulgaria.

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- 10) Currency transfers to occupied areas
- 11) Vocational training project
- 12) Assistance to local communities
- 13) Balkan relief units
- 14) JDC Advisory Committee in Palestine and its relationship to programs in the Middle East
- 15) Cooperative relationship with the Jewish Agency
- 16) Special efforts made by Ambassador Steinhardt and Mr. Hirschmann in connection with the plans of the War Refugee Board
- 17) Summary of current situation in occupied countries as obtained from refugees
- 18) Summary, general comments, and indicated next steps.

* * *

1. Immigration from and through Turkey to Palestine and Other Areas

Major activity in migratory movements to Palestine through and from Turkey began in March 1942. At no time during the past two years has this movement assumed large proportions. In 1943 refugees in transit through Turkey for Palestine numbered:

- 1) Rumania: 141
- 2) Hungary: 373
- 3) Bulgaria: 128

Total 642

A group of 252 persons destined for Palestine but not admitted were sent to Cyprus. During this period, in addition, Greek refugees coming by way of Cesme and Izmir, passing through Turkey but not through Istanbul, numbered 327. There was also an exchange of enemy nationals in Palestine for an equal number of persons from enemy countries, numbering 121. Miscellaneous: 10. In other words, during 1943 there passed through Turkey for Palestine and Cyprus from all sources a total of 1352 persons. Turkish nationals who left Turkey for Palestine numbered, for the period from March 1942 to December 31, 1943, 1921. During the month of February 1944, 55 persons arrived in Turkey from Bulgaria en route to Palestine, 12 from Rumania, 78 from Hungary, and approximately 74 from Greece. In addition, about 200 persons resident in Turkey left for Palestine. During the early days of March some 46 Bulgarian children came through. Most of the above migration movements were financed by the JDC. Within the next week or ten days a group of 150 immigrants from Rumania is expected; 135 will be children and 15 adults.

In connection with migratory movements of persons from occupied countries, I wish to summarize briefly a statement which Mr. Barlas represents as an agreement worked out between him and Dr. Schwartz: The JDC to pay for maintenance, clothing, etc., and transportation from the frontier to Haifa. In the case of immigration from Turkey, the sum of \$70 per person to be allowed. It is estimated that there might be up to 200 persons leaving monthly. In the case of movements prior to September 1943 Dr. Schwartz approved the payment of transportation for 380 persons at \$70 each

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payment to be made to the Jewish Agency which advanced the funds. In a cable from Dr. Schwartz on March 20, 1944 the following statement was made:

"... We have agreed to pay transportation refugees from Balkans arriving Turkey for Palestine as well as certain amount local group proceeding Palestine and have for this purpose appropriated \$14,000 monthly as per our conversation with Barlas..."

2. Emigration from Other Countries

Late in January 1944 the Middle East Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (MARRA) began the transfer to Egypt of some 20,000 so-called "Yugoslav" refugees who were in refugee camps in southern Italy: Bari, Brindisi, Taranto, Ferramonte. It is said that many of these refugees had come to Yugoslavia from other countries and from some of the islands off the Dalmatian coast. When I was in Cairo in late January 1944, the first group (4,300) had already been taken to the camp "El Shatt" (formerly a British army camp) near Suez. It was indicated that most, if not all, of these 20,000 refugees would be resettled in this camp within the next few weeks. In the first group of 4,300 there were only 20 Jewish persons. Some observers thought that a much larger proportion would be found in subsequent groups. (It is important to note that these refugees were being transferred on two large British troop ships, formerly passenger ships operated by the Gdynia-America Line. I point this out because it indicates the possibility of effecting the transfer of groups of refugees if and when a government desires to take the necessary steps.) There have been small groups from other places, e.g. in early February a small group of nine children was brought to Cairo from a Kenya refugee camp in transit to Palestine.

There have been movements of refugees from Poland to Slovakia and from Slovakia to Hungary, all effected by the use of false passports, visas, etc. Small groups of these persons have found their way to Turkey and thence to Palestine.

3. Repatriation of Turkish Nationals from France

During the past few months about 335 Turkish Jews who lived in France for varying lengths of time were repatriated to Turkey. They came in groups of about 50, the last group coming on March 20. Of this group of 51, 36 were in need of assistance. It is estimated that a total of approximately 700 will come to Istanbul and that between 50% and 60% will need assistance. It is estimated that about 10,000 Jews of Turkish nationality are now in France, but the Turkish Government has not seen fit to recognize all of them as subjects for repatriation. A law states that persons of Turkish nationality who did not return to the country between 1918 and 1928 are not entitled to the full benefits of Turkish nationality, and therefore most of the 10,000 persons will remain in France, although it is reported that there might be some relaxation of the law in the case of children, who obviously could not return to Turkey during this period. The problem of the repatriates has become a serious one, and we have set up a committee here to deal with it. We have developed tentative budgets for families and individuals, and it is estimated that approximately \$9,000 a month will be needed to cover the costs of this operation. There is divided opinion here as to whether the local community can meet a part of the costs. Until this question is decided I have authorized the local group to make expenditures on the basis of these reasonable budgets, the funds coming out of balances held by Goldenberg for other local operations. I cabled Schwartz suggesting the sum of \$9,000 monthly to be appropriated for the next six months, and added that any funds not utilized for this purpose could be used for a number of other urgent matters that have arisen, and for still others which are likely to develop here.

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It should be noted that the level of service extended to all groups of dependents is quite low, and much will have to be done to improve the service that we have already organized for this group.

4. Other Migration Programs

You are aware of the study that was authorized of Yemenite refugees in Aden. This was completed by Mr. Harry Viteles in December 1943 and copies were to be made available to the New York office and to the Lisbon office. I read the report in Palestine in early February. Dr. Magnes made the following recommendation on the basis of that report:

- 1) Defray expenses incurred by the Aden Government during the one-month quarantine period, which would amount roughly to 6,000 pounds sterling. In this connection it should be stated that the Jewish Agency has agreed to contribute 2,000 pounds toward this care.
- 2) Relief for 1,600 refugees after release from quarantine and until transportation is secured for those for whom certificates have been obtained, and for those to be repatriated to Yemen because of ineligibility to go to Palestine. An estimated budget of \$108,000 was presented, of which \$42,000 was required for relief, \$8,000 for repatriation, \$10,000 for salaries, maintenance, travelling expenses to and from Aden for two nurses and director, and \$8,000 for other expenses of personnel while at Aden.
- 3) \$40,000 to be appropriated for transportation for approximately 1,000 of the 1,600 now in Aden, this \$40,000 representing about half the total cost. Professor Kligler and three nurses were scheduled to leave Palestine on February 15, 1944.

Dr. Schwartz asked Dr. Magnes to request the Aden Government to assume the quarantine expenses and also questioned the cost of repatriation of the Yemenite Jews who would have to return to Yemen. Lisbon also authorized payment of transportation costs as requested by Dr. Magnes (\$40,000), but no authority was granted for further commitments. Later Dr. Schwartz agreed to underwrite 6,000 pounds quarantine expenses (less 2,000 pounds contributed by the Jewish Agency), but with respect to relief requirements after release from quarantine Schwartz stated that the JDC was willing to consider it on a month to month basis. Schwartz also cabled that the Committee had incurred commitments on behalf of the JDC without prior approval. He urged me to make that clear to the Committee. My discussions with Dr. Magnes on this score were not very productive; he felt that the Committee should have more freedom in such matters. Schwartz later found it necessary to cable Dr. Magnes directly, stating:

"...All of us have fullest confidence judgment and your recommendations fullest consideration but obviously only one central committee can determine final policy and ability cope problems of this nature particularly now in view substantial deficit expected this years budget cannot undertake responsibilities new areas without careful deliberation and formal consent central body. Please advise whether staff departed for Aden...."

* * *

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The Aliyah Bet has had two small ships available for sailing from Constanza, and after considerable delay enough people had papers made available to leave on these ships. There is a question as to the seaworthiness of the vessels. As a matter of fact, the International Red Cross refused to secure safe conduct for the vessels, but reports are that one of the boats will sail and is due to arrive in Istanbul shortly. One of these ships arrived with 243 passengers on 3/31/44. Another due to arrive shortly, and organization for others is going ahead.

5. Special Projects of the War Refugee Board

Mr. Hirschmann came to Ankara early in February as representative of the War Refugee Board. He was invested with broad powers. His major interest was to survey the present facilities and to effect plans for moving refugees from wherever it was possible. The most likely opportunity that presented itself was the movement of children (for whom certificates are available) from Rumania, Bulgaria and Hungary. There were several major problems in this connection. An important one was securing transit visas from the Turkish Government. At the present time the Turkish Government issues only nine visas per week for certificate holders to Palestine from Bulgaria, Rumania and Hungary. It is estimated that these nine visas include roughly between 27 and 30 persons, and that therefore the total group that could come per week from these three countries would be somewhat less than 100. At no time since the Turkish Government allowed this number were there as many as 100 persons coming through Turkey in one week. It is said that if there were pressure for larger numbers to come through the Turkish Government might re-examine the matter. This problem was one with which the War Refugee Board was concerned, and if transportation were available from, say Constanza to Istanbul only, and by land from Istanbul to Haifa, the question of transit visas would be an important one. Since, however, transportation will probably be made available from Constanza directly to Haifa, transit visas at this time are not the major problem. In this connection it should be pointed out that for at least two months visas that have been approved at Ankara have not arrived at Turkish Consulates (or offices representing Turkish interests) in any of the occupied areas. There have been many promises and reassurances, but very little has happened.

Transportation was important. Turkish vessels, being neutral and accessible, presented a likely possibility. Before a Turkish vessel could be utilized for this purpose the Turkish Government insisted that it be indemnified for the loss of any ship, notwithstanding the fact that the boats are covered by insurance. Accordingly, the War Refugee Board requested the United States Government to indemnify the Turkish Government in the event that a ship was lost. This the United States Government agreed to do. At this point negotiations are taking place for the use of a 4,000-ton vessel (S.S. Tira) which at the maximum can accommodate 1,500 passengers. It appears that the ship will shortly be ready to sail for Constanza and may call there between April 6 and 10. It will be under the supervision of the International Red Cross, and will wait until safe conduct is granted. According to present reports, this may take as long as a month, although efforts are being made to accelerate the process. Negotiations concerning the cost of the ship have not been completed, but will be approximately T.L. 175,000, with extra charges for food, etc. I advised Mr. Hirschmann and the Ambassador that the JDC was prepared to participate in the cost of transportation, and, if necessary, to underwrite the full cost.

It should be noted that consent for the use of the vessel has been given for only one trip. There is divided opinion as to whether the vessel will be made available for other trips, some insisting that the first trip will furnish a basis for

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continued voyages, others claiming that the Turkish Government will believe that it has discharged its "humanitarian" obligations by making available a small merchant ship for the transfer of refugees for a single trip. In the meantime there have been reports that the German hold on Rumania became stronger immediately following the occupation of Hungary, and some doubts have been expressed as to the possibility of having persons ready for embarkation. Moreover, it is thought that Constanza may be bombed. In discussing with Mr. Hirschmann the matter of securing other transportation facilities, he expressed the view that the Turkish boat might become a permanent measure, and in the event that a regular shuttle service between Haifa and Constanza were established, the need for additional transportation on that run would not be so great. However, I urged Mr. Hirschmann to press further the suggestion of securing shipping from the Anglo-American shipping pool. I have also urged him to continue investigating the possibility of obtaining a Portuguese boat. From the first, requests were made of the JDC office in Lisbon to explore this possibility. Negotiations were entered into but were interrupted because no assurances could be given that refugees would be available on precise dates, and other important facts were not obtainable because of various complications. Now, however, assurances have come from the International Red Cross (these were received directly by telephone from Bucharest to Istanbul on March 20) that persons would be available at Constanza for transfer to Haifa. Moreover, there is every reason to continue exploration of other transportation possibilities since at the present time there is permission for only one trip for the Turkish ship.

Mr. Hirschmann reported that he had had conferences with interested parties concerning the movement of large numbers of Jews in Transnistria to other parts of Rumania. At the time this report is being written there is no clear information here on the number of persons that have actually been moved. A telegram from Kolb several days ago reported that about 15,000 persons from Transnistria were transferred to other areas and it is thought that a substantial number were Jewish.

6 Proposal to have the Anglo-American Shipping Pool make available ships to the International Red Cross

I have submitted several memoranda to Mr. Hirschmann and have also made them available to Dr. Schwartz, and I know that the New York office has knowledge of the proposal which urged the transfer of vessels from the Anglo-American shipping pool to the War Refugee Board which, in turn, would give them to the International Red Cross to operate under Swiss registry. These vessels would be manned by neutral crews, with safe conduct, and perform many tasks in connection with relief, rehabilitation and emigration, one of the most important being the transportation of refugees from Constanza, Burgaz, and Varna (?) to havens of refuge. I have cabled Lisbon several times on this matter and urged the New York office to take up the matter with Washington. Mr. Hirschmann agreed to discuss the question with the War Refugee Board.

7. Efforts to organize movements of populations from occupied areas to ports of embarkation

One of the major problems in transporting refugees from occupied areas is bringing them from points of concentration to ports of embarkation. One of the main ports at this stage is Constanza; other possibilities are Burgaz and Varna (?) Processing of refugees in an occupied country is not easy; therefore it became necessary to determine from the International Red Cross whether people could be made available and whether that organization could assist. The help

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of Jewish leaders in these communities was also enlisted, but this was interrupted for a while because twenty-six outstanding Jewish leaders in Bucharest who were concerned with this problem, were taken into custody and were only recently released. On March 20, word was received directly from Bucharest by Mr. Gilbert Simonu of the International Red Cross while he was in Istanbul, indicating that persons could be made available, and there was every reason to go ahead with securing transportation. The situation may, however, be modified in the light of military developments within the last twenty-four hours. (I was also informed that it was possible to process emigres through another source - one that was used for the passengers of the "Aliyah Bet" vessels.)

8. Organization of migration services in Istanbul

a) The Jewish Agency

The Jewish Agency operates a migration office under the direction of Chaim Barlas. The office is maintained in the Pera Palace Hotel; in addition there are other offices of a more or less unofficial nature in the homes of members of the staff. On the staff of the Agency and related to its operations in one way or another are fourteen persons and a number of clerks. Not all of these fourteen persons are on the staff of the Jewish Agency as such. Some carry on other operations and represent party interests in Palestine. For example, representatives of the Revisionists, Hashomer Hatzair, Agudath Israel, Mapei, are concerned with migration problems, keep up correspondence with persons in occupied areas, and participate in a so-called council made up of representatives of various parties concerned in the local program. Some party members have more specific tasks such as sending funds into certain areas, arranging for vessels, reviewing press reports, accelerating Zionist propaganda, etc. Barlas is supposed to be the head of all operations. There is practically no decentralization or division of labor. Many persons here, some quite competent, complain that they are unable to utilize their skills and that Barlas refuses to share responsibilities with them. Barlas very rarely has time for any one subject because he insists on concentrating everything in his own hands. The criticism of concentration leveled against him by almost everyone here, in and out of the operation is, I believe, a legitimate one. There is, moreover, much confusion and duplication of effort. The result of all this is that insufficient concentrated and careful consideration is given many important problems. Moreover, Barlas recognizes many people as threats to his position and sees the introduction of any new person as a potential undermining of his status. An undercurrent of dissension and tenseness characterizes the whole situation and, I believe, inhibits more effective work. It has also not been possible to secure factual information on certain matters. For example, I have been unable to secure a statement of the exact cost for emigrants from occupied countries and from Turkey to Palestine for the months of December 1943 and January and February 1944.

b) The Local Community

The Jewish Agency has requested Mr. Simon Brod, a retired merchant, to assist

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in securing transit visas, railroad transportation, food lodging, etc. When Turkish repatriates began to come here, I found it necessary to set up a service for them, and we organized a local committee composed of Mr. Raphael Karako, Mr. E. Goldenberg and Mr. David Soriano. Efforts are now in the initial stages and obviously will need improvement. In the meantime, all repatriates in need of care are being extended assistance.

9. Food Parcel Service

- a) From Teheran to Polish, Latvian, Lithuanian, Estonian refugees now in Asiatic Russia

In early February I conferred with Mr. Charles Passman in Jerusalem concerning our parcel service at Teheran. He reported that for five weeks preceding February 1, 7,500 food parcels were sent from Teheran. It was his opinion that this rate could not continue, but that at least 5,000 monthly could be sent, and that sufficient supplies were on hand to keep the project going for at least five months. Lend-Lease supplies in Cairo which were originally consigned to the Polish Government for Polish refugees were promised to the JDC because the Polish Government could not make use of the supplies. I could not settle the question when in Cairo because I did not know what supplies were needed or in what quantities. I left the matter open until I could discuss it with Passman and until he could come to Cairo to complete negotiations. There remains the question whether they can be given to the JDC or whether they will have to be purchased. I suggested to Passman that he go immediately to Cairo to select the necessary supplies, and he agreed.

The Russian Government has made available facilities for transportation from Basra to Teheran and has also stationed a customs official in the JDC warehouse in Teheran, thus obviating the necessity for further formalities at the frontier. The Iran postal authorities have also stationed a person in our warehouse, and all arrangements for the use of the postal service are taken care of at the warehouse, without the packages going through the regular postal channels. This obviously facilitates the handling and increases the speed of the whole operation. I have previously suggested to the New York office that supplies be purchased in the United States and shipped to Basra by transport made available by the Middle East Supply Center. One hundred tons of this shipping space is made available to American relief agencies each month, and JDC is eligible to secure some space.

Recently the Palestine Government permitted the export of 20,000 pairs of shoes, available for use anywhere. They were offered to the package service emanating from Istanbul but at this stage the situation is too uncertain to make definite plans for their use. Perhaps some can be used for the package service in Teheran if all other elements in the offer are satisfactory. The offer: 20,000 pairs at 36,000 pounds sterling.

- b) From Lisbon to Theresienstadt

Approximately 8,000 packages a month are sent from Lisbon to internees in Theresienstadt. These parcels weigh one kilo and contain four tins of sardines - cost \$2.00 per parcel including postal service.

- c) From Istanbul to Transnistria, Theresienstadt, Yugoslavia and possibly Bulgaria

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During the latter part of 1943 the JDC secured a license to send as much as 250 tons of food to Theresienstadt and Transnistria. Later the license was amended to include Yugoslavia, and recently I suggested it to be amended to include Bulgaria, since it may be desirable to send food there. This has not been finally determined. We agreed to make food available on the condition that the International Red Cross would distribute it there in agreement with the local Jewish communities and local Jewish leaders in those areas.

From the beginning the International Red Cross suggested that the purchasing and other facilities of the United Kingdom Commercial Corporation (UKCC) be utilized. For one reason or another, the suggestion was not followed, but arrangements were made by Mr. Barlas and a group of assistants with the Antalya Forwarding Company, ordinarily engaged only in transportation, not only to transport the goods, but also to purchase them. All manner of delays were encountered in securing a license for the export of the goods, and when I arrived in Istanbul the middle of February, the goods had not even been packed. The package originally agreed upon was to weigh five kilos and to be made up of bulama (a nutritious refined residue of raisins), hazel nuts, figs, apricots, raisins, soap and margarine. Later the margarine and the raisins had to be eliminated since an export license could not be obtained, and the quantity of bulama was increased. The value of each package is approximately \$6.50. (Some of the food may be sold by the International Red Cross in Rumania and with those funds other supplies purchased.) The five kilos of supplies will be packed in textile bags and each unit of ten bags packed in burlap. Both the cloth and the burlap can be used for clothing.

Originally it was suggested that of the 10,000 parcels about four-fifths be sent to Transnistria, and one-fifth to Theresienstadt. Both of these possibilities seem to be out of the question for the moment. It is reported that most of the Transnistrians have been evacuated to other parts of Rumania, and bulk shipment to Theresienstadt is not likely, although this may be possible to effect after the goods are in Bucharest. It is estimated that the first 10,000 will cost \$68,500 exclusive of insurance. I am now completing insurance arrangements with a company used by the UKCC. It is our plan to use the balance of the funds for additional supplies if feasible. The food is ready to go. Three freight cars will leave for Bucharest on March 27; the remaining two cars will probably leave within a week or ten days.* I am making efforts to communicate with William Filderman, informing him of the shipment of supplies, and am also trying to reach him through Sally Mayer because it is important, for obvious reasons, that great discretion be used in reaching Filderman.

Reports from Rumania stated that citrus fruits are much in demand and bring high prices. I immediately tried to get a permit for their export from Turkey. Until recently I was hopeful, but I received final word that the license could not be secured. Even if a permit could now be granted, it is doubtful if the oranges would last to bring good prices in Rumania.

In connection with the food parcel service, I set up a committee of competent persons in Istanbul, including Carl Austrian of the United States Commercial Corporation (USCC), to review our project up to the present and explore ways of improving methods and accelerating further shipment either in bulk or in individual packages. We have already concluded that purchasing and other facilities of the USCC and UKCC are to be employed. Among other advantages that would accrue to us is the favorable rate of exchange which was not made available at the time of the first purchase. (Our present rate is T.L. 1.28 for \$1.00).

* All cars have gone.

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The Jewish Agency is sending some individual food parcels through regular Turkish mails and they had no funds available for that purpose. They therefore asked for a loan of \$10,000 with which to send food. I instructed Simond to send the exporter \$10,000 for individual packages and I have an agreement signed by Barlas to repay the money shortly. These food parcels include the same supplies as are in our packages, with the addition of pork fat, which we were not permitted to export, and which is not now permitted, but is being sent anyway.

10. Currency transfers to occupied areas

Currency transfers to occupied areas take place in the following ways:

- a) Food supplies are shipped to occupied areas, where they are sold and other supplies purchased with the funds;
- b) Local funds are borrowed and held for accounts in the United States, Palestine, Switzerland and elsewhere;
- c) Funds are sent by other means.

All three methods are presently employed by groups operating in Istanbul for relief in occupied areas. I suggested the possibility of having funds sent through the facilities of the International Red Cross, and asked their delegate in Ankara if Geneva would accept funds to be made available to responsible persons in Rumania, Slovakia, Bulgaria, and Hungary, on the assumption that a license could be secured to send funds. There is, of course, one obvious weakness in such a plan, since full knowledge would be transmitted to official bodies in the occupied areas and there could not be the freedom that is so important in carrying on relief for Jewish groups. In any event, Geneva's views are being solicited, and if Geneva is willing we can then determine if funds should be sent in this manner. There has been made known some sources of funds in Slovakia, Hungary and Bulgaria, and I shall report on available funds in Rumania within a short time. These persons are willing to make funds available on a guarantee that their equivalent will be deposited in Palestine or the United States. This whole matter takes on added importance in the light of the need for large-scale relief operations in Hungary and Rumania, and to a lesser extent Bulgaria.

11. Vocational training project

The vocational training program has expanded beyond what was contemplated in September 1943, and much larger sums are spent for these purposes. Up to this point, I have not felt justified in suggesting a change in our participation until another and more adequate manner of effecting this training could be developed. There may be better ways of doing it, and with a less restricted clientele participating in the training project. On the basis of present information, it is fair to say that certain groups are favored in training projects over others, probably due to the fact that the persons in charge of the training projects are friends of the trainees. There are a number of other complications that have a bearing on our inter-organizational relationship in the United States. I expect to discuss this very fully with Schwartz within a short time. After that a report will be made available. At the moment it appears that large additional funds will be necessary.

12. Assistance to local Communities

- a) Istanbul

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Jewish population: 40,000 - 50,000. During the year 1943 the sum of T.L.123,429.84 was made available for the local institutions and services in Istanbul. Not all of this has been paid to the various institutions. Some have not received funds because they have not submitted statements; in the case of others, Goldenberg, who administers the funds effectively, has refused to allocate funds because the institutions used the funds obtained for operations to purchase an interest in a community Metzoth project. Goldenberg is of the opinion that until such time as these institutions withdraw from this project and utilize the funds as they were intended, they should not receive additional funds from the JEC. More recently, Goldenberg requested an additional \$15,000 for needs that he foresees and which are quite evident to me. \$7,500 of this sum has already been received. I have visited all of the institutions in Istanbul. They are conducted on a very low standard. The orphanage, which the JEC assisted in building, is in a bad state of repair. The standard of care for children would be considered primitive even for a backward community, and in my discussions with the Board of Directors of this institution as well as some of the others we began to talk in terms of improvement of standards. Much of these efforts will revolve around the availability of additional funds and better personnel.

The hospital is sixty years old and lacks it. It is situated in one of the deteriorated sections of Istanbul. The buildings have been quite neglected. Some wards have had to be closed. The maternity building has not been operating for some time. It is a large-scale project to put this institution in shape.

Better local institutions are the schools. A number of these have had to be closed. The Government recently ordered an increase in salary for the instructors due to the sharp increase in the cost of living.

There is no central organization for the raising of funds and each institution attempts to secure funds for its own operation, and does a very poor job according to American standards. If it is at all possible there would be some wisdom in having the community improve its fund-raising facilities. Many objective observers feel that the local community is not doing its share in spite of the fact that the Varlik has hit all of the people seriously.

b) Izmir

Jewish population: 12,500. Budget: T.L. 102,000 for local institutions, now requesting a grant of T.L. 50,000 to meet an estimated deficit. Until final determination of our participation I have suggested increased grants, including extra feeding for children, care for the aged, food, clothing and shelter. I also urge increased admissions to the orphanage and provision of Passover supplies to the poor. Izmir is desirous of securing additional capital for its small loan society and believes it could eliminate relief by increasing the number of loans. The small loan society in Izmir is regarded as one of the best in Turkey. I have had two meetings with Rabuene Politi, an important leader of the community, and I have agreed to go to Izmir at the earliest opportunity. In 1943 Izmir received the sum of 6,000 pounds sterling (T.L. 48,600), and observers who have had any association with Izmir regard the organization and operations there as of much finer caliber than, for example, those of Istanbul.

c) Edirene

Jewish population: 2,900. During the past year about T.L. 15,000 have been spent for the general range of needs, but probably T.L. 25,000 is needed to meet the

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needs more adequately. Relief is extended to poor families on the basis of 50 piasters, and in unusual cases T.L. 1.00 per week. Feeding is inadequate; there is little coal. The community, however, is well organized and is regarded as doing an excellent job. I have the impression, after talking with two leaders of the community, Bechor Philosef and Meise Helfon, that the organization in Edirne is well developed. The small loan society deteriorated because of decreased capital, nor has a working capital of only T.L. 4,000, and is not recognized by the Government, which will not recognize any society with a capital of less than T.L. 10,000. The relief situation could be relieved and a much more constructive job done if the loan society's funds were augmented. In the case of Edirne I have also suggested that additional funds be secured locally on the basis that we would undoubtedly participate later and spend immediately on relief grants; extra food for children, additional medical care, which is badly needed, and provision for Passover. There was an agreement, and as soon as detailed reports and a budget are submitted we will confer again and work out final details. I have the impression that Edirne will meet a fair share of the burden. Up to now it has received T.L. 500 as an advance from our funds. Some money was collected in Istanbul from friends who formerly lived in Edirne and some who live in Switzerland also sent several hundred T.L.

d) Broussa

Jewish population: 2,500. For the period from October 1943 to January 1944 the sum of T.L. 4,540 was expended in Broussa for general needs. The standard of relief is low and needs improvement. The organization is fairly good. Broussa has received during this period from JDC funds T.L. 1,700. I have not had occasion to meet any leaders of Broussa, nor do I have any first-hand knowledge except a financial report. Second-hand reports obtained in Istanbul and Ankara reveal that the local finances are straitened, with resulting deprivation. I hope to visit Broussa within a short time. In the meantime I have suggested that increased grants be made by the local community out of what funds are available and that these will be augmented later, as soon as the extent of JDC participation is determined.

e) Ankara

Jewish population: 1,000. The financial situation there is not too grave. Children are in need of extra feeding. Relief is on a low standard, and there is no organization. I set up a local committee to determine the extent of the problem, and the extent of local contribution and outside assistance. A full report will be made available within the next few days.

From all the above cities persons are constantly being sent to Palestine; e.g. from Ankara a total of 130 persons left for Palestine from March 1943 to March 1944. Transportation for many of these was paid by the JDC.

13. Balkan Relief Units

My Cairo report indicated the nature and scope of this proposal and I am pleased that the JDC saw fit to relate itself so quickly to this operation. I was informed by Schwartz on February 22, 1944 that the JDC had agreed to supply a minimum of ten persons including one doctor, six child care workers, one nutritionist, one public health nurse, and one sanitarian. At his request I suggested that the JDC be prepared to send another team made up mainly of medical social workers, doctor, bacteriologist, and/or laboratory technician. There should be an emphasis on male personnel, largely because of the extremely difficult working conditions, but women

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are acceptable in not too great numbers. I emphasized the use of medical social workers since that group would probably be more adaptable to the general range of needs presented, including even nursing and related tasks. Each of the teams should have one person who has capacity for overall supervision. I suggested the additional team because I think our contribution to the project under consideration could be a greater one, and primarily because we would have available over here personnel for other operations if and when they develop. Other details concerning personnel specifications are available in my Cairo report.

14. JDC Advisory Committee in Palestine and its relationship to programs in the Middle East.

During a five day visit in Palestine I had several occasions to meet in a group and individually the members of the JDC Advisory Committee in Palestine. The group is made up of six American citizens who reside in Palestine. The Committee is dominated by Dr. Magnes, its Chairman. Some members of the Committee notably Dr. Magnes, Mr. Viteles and Mr. Kligler, contend that the status of the Committee was not clearly defined and as yet the Committee is not entirely certain as to how far it should go in being purely advisory and/or to what extent it should take on functional activities. The fact is that it has taken on functional activities and at times has acted without prior consultation with the central body.

Dr. Magnes was rather anxious to raise the issue of the Committee's authority and scope. I attempted to avoid it by taking the position that events and situations as they arose and as the Committee dealt with them would help clarify the status of the Committee. The Committee wanted more power, autonomy and authority.

15. Cooperative relationship with the Jewish Agency

As nearly as I could determine without discussing the matter directly with anyone, there seem to be three points of view in the Agency Executive. The first view, fostered largely by Eliezer Kaplan, is that the Agency should not engage in foreign relief programs and that should be the concern of other agencies. The second view is that the Jewish Agency should be in the foreign relief field because neither the political program of the Agency nor any of its other programs can be separated from the relief field and from the problems of the remaining Yishuv in European countries. In this group can also be considered those who say that they are not necessarily interested in the foreign relief field, but since they were compelled to enter it the program must be carried through. The third view is that everything concerning the Jews concerns the Jewish Agency and the Agency should use all means to further these ends. If the assistance of other agencies can be secured so much the better.

In my Cairo report I pointed out the interest of the Jewish Agency in sending relief units to the Balkans. Recently a Mr. Leo Hermann was sent by the Jewish Agency to represent it in connection with UNRRA relationships. In Palestine I learned that the Agency had announced that the JDC was cooperating with the Agency in that program. I made it clear to the leadership and to our own committee that the JDC was operating independently and that relations with UNRRA and other groups were made on its own and not through any other agency. In Istanbul I found that it is necessary to keep JDC interests and JDC approach to the problems in the relief program separate and clearly identified, for many of the same reasons that it was necessary in Cairo and elsewhere. This does not mean that there is not the fullest cooperation and understanding on other matters. The fact that Palestine personnel has been carrying on some of the projects here, and naturally dealing

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with Zionist personnel in occupied countries, also has a bearing on the development of the Jewish Agency in the foreign relief field. In discussing the matter with Shertok he indicated clearly that it was the intention of the Jewish Agency to expand its program in the foreign relief field and, if possible, to secure the cooperation of other agencies already operating. I believe he intended to accelerate these plans in London and I believe he also intended to discuss them further with Nahum Goldman and others. I informed Schwartz and New York of these views and indicated the bearing that they might have on the projected plans of the relief commission of the American Jewish Conference.

16. Special efforts made by Ambassador Steinhardt and Mr. Hirschmann in connection with the plans of the War Refugee Board

I do not want to conclude this report without a statement concerning the efforts of our Ambassador, Mr. Lawrence A. Steinhardt. I have had opportunity to observe at close range the activities of the Embassy with respect to the general range of interests in the relief and rescue fields. Our Ambassador, during a period when many urgent and important matters demanded his attention, devoted the greater part of his time to the effort in which our agency and the War Refugee Board are interested. It is hardly necessary to cite the specific instances in which our Ambassador's assistance and intercession were productive, but the fact remains that there is at present in the Embassy at Ankara a genuine interest in the programs and a desire to render a full measure of assistance, and I wanted our organization to know it.

Naturally much of the activity that has been carried on here has been initiated and accelerated by Ira A. Hirschmann, who came to Ankara in early February as a representative of the War Refugee Board. I had occasion to work closely with Mr. Hirschmann and want to acknowledge with sincere appreciation his important, useful and constructive contribution to the work that has been so auspiciously begun here. There are many other matters that fall within the scope of the Refugee Board. Mr. Hirschmann is aware of these and hopes to bring them to the attention of those who can give them earnest, quick and fruitful consideration.

17. Summary of current situation in occupied countries as obtained from refugees.

I have considerable factual data on Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria and Greece. These will be made available at a later date.

18. Summary, general comments, and indicated next steps

- a) With the occupation of Hungary and the extension of German control in Rumania and Bulgaria, the needs of these countries increase and means of extending assistance become more circumscribed and limited. Large sums of money will be necessary on very short notice.
- b) The use of funds available in these countries for repayment after the war is being explored and possibilities exist for securing such funds.
- c) A more streamlined migration service needs to be established in Istanbul.
- d) Improved standards are necessary in local institutions and agencies in Istanbul and elsewhere.

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e) JPC needs to explore the possibility of making available additional personnel for Istanbul current work and training with the view of having them available for work in contiguous countries.

f) Explore the possibilities of additional food shipments into occupied areas including the possibility of bulk shipment of shoes from Palestine.

g) More careful review of expenditures for migration and related services financed by the JPC.

h) Need for development of methods for extending relief to occupied areas apart from those presently employed, either as a substitute or as a supplementary program.

I intend to discuss all these matters with Schwartz within a short time.

Finally, I should say that this report has been prepared in great haste and under considerable pressure, and therefore is not as comprehensive as it might otherwise have been.

Reuben B. Resnik

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