

Memorandum Report to Robert  
Paine of Refugee Evacuation to  
Switzerland

Evacuation to Switzerland, Folder 1

PROGRAMS WITH RESPECT TO RESCUE & RELIEF OF REFUGEES: EVACUATION  
TO SWITZERLAND

1. ADMINISTRATIVE
  - a. General
  - b. Budget
2. GENERAL

WAR REFUGEE BOARD RECORDS

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FFC-76  
(11-42)

CROSS REFERENCE ON . PROGRAMS WITH RESPECT TO RELIEF  
& RESCUE OF REFUGEES: EVACUATION  
TO SWITZERLAND

FOR:

Amendment to this License . . . . .   
Extension of this License . . . . .   
Renewal of this License . . . . .   
Correspondence concerning this application . . . . .   
Other (Specify)

1. FOR MATERIAL RE SWISS GOVERNMENT'S CONCERN REGARDING THE REMOVAL OF REFUGEES AFTER THE WAR, FROM SWITZERLAND
2. FOR MATERIAL RE FINANCING OF REFUGEE RELIEF WORK INSIDE SWITZERLAND AS WELL AS RESCUE AND RELIEF ACTIVITIES USING SWITZERLAND AS A BASE
3. FOR FURTHER MATERIAL RELATIVE TO THIS FILE

- SEE:
1. COOPERATION WITH OTHER GOVERNMENTS: NEUTRAL EUROPEAN (SWITZERLAND)
  2. COOPERATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES: INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE
  3. REPRESENTATIVES & SPECIAL ATTACHES: APPOINTMENTS  
PROGRAMS WITH RESPECT TO RELIEF AND RESCUE OF REFUGEES: EVACUATION TO SWITZERLAND (EVACUATION OF ABANDONED CHILDREN FROM FRANCE)  
PROGRAMS WITH RESPECT TO RELIEF AND RESCUE OF REFUGEES: EVACUATION TO SWITZERLAND (JDC OPERATIONS IN FRANCE)  
PROGRAMS WITH RESPECT TO RELIEF AND RESCUE OF REFUGEES: EVACUATION TO SWITZERLAND (WJC OPERATIONS)  
Programs with respect to relief and rescue of refugees; evacuation to Switzerland  
(Rescue of refugees from France and Italy (IRR C))  
PROGRAMS WITH RESPECT TO RELIEF AND RESCUE OF REFUGEES: EVACUATION TO SWITZERLAND (RESCUE OF REFUGEES FROM FRANCE (SECE) )

*Swiss. to Switz - 1-a*

DEPARTMENT  
OF  
STATE

Distribution  
reading only by  
arrangement.

OUTGOING  
TELEGRAM

August 8, 1945

DIVISION OF  
CENTRAL SERVICES  
TELEGRAPH SECTION

RECEIVED - PM 4 30

*Mar Ref Bd  
O'Dwyer*

**CONTROL COPY**

AMLEGATION

BERN

2408

The following for Katzki from O'Dwyer and Penrose is  
WRB 844.

You are requested and authorized to return to  
Washington upon completion your WRB work in Switzerland.  
You should plan to arrive prior to August 31st when Board  
will be terminated.

BYRMS  
(RMV)

WRB:MMVance:lsg  
8/8/45

WE

DECLASSIFIED  
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72  
By R. H. Parks Date **SEP 18 1972**

CABLE TO AMLEGATION, BERN, FOR KATZKI FROM WILLIAM O'DWYER,  
WAR REFUGEE BOARD, AND PENROSE

You are requested and authorized to return to  
Washington upon completion your WRB work in Switzer-  
land. You should plan to arrive prior to August 31st  
when Board will be germinated.

This is WRB Bern No. 544

August 8, 1945  
12:10 P.M.

*Cleared with Penrose*  
FH:nd 7/8/45

Enclosure to Secretary - per

AUG 6 1945

Dear Mr. McClelland:

Please refer to our cable of June 23, 1945, concerning War Refugee Board equipment in Bern.

It is the intention of the Board to declare all of this equipment surplus. Mr. Charles S. Bell, Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Treasury, has indicated that he wants all Board equipment for use in the Office of the United States Treasury Representative in Bern, and Foreign Funds Control will purchase it for that purpose.

Before the transfer can be made, however, it will be necessary to have a declaration of all non-expendable items, showing quantity, description, condition and purchase price. "Declaration of Property" forms, showing condition code, are enclosed for your use.

Foreign Funds Control will write Mr. Mann when they receive notice of ownership, and will, no doubt, give him instructions concerning property records. However, the physical transfer of the equipment need not be delayed until these instructions are received.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) David White

David White  
Administrative Officer

Mr. Roswell D. McClelland,  
Board Representative,  
War Refugee Board,  
American Legation,  
Bern, Switzerland.

Enclosure

WMAvery:mlw 7/26/45

DEPARTMENT

OF  
STATE - WRB  
ACTION  
INFO:  
EUR-1  
DC/L-C  
WRB  
SWP  
FC

INCOMING  
TELEGRAM

DIVISION OF  
CENTRAL SERVICES  
TELEGRAPH SECTION

MJK-1218 -Z  
Distribution of true  
reading only by special  
arrangement. ( [REDACTED] )  
Bern  
Dated August 4, 1945  
Rec'd 8:40 a.m.

Secretary of State,

Washington.

3804, August 4, 4 p.m.

FOR O'DWYER, WRB, FROM McIELLAND.

Two copies my final report despatched to you by  
pouch August 2. Banque Populaire Suisse, Bern, instructed  
today to transfer unspent balance WRB discretionary funds  
amounting to 1,078,863.19 Swiss francs (minus transfer  
charges) to Chase National Bank, New York City, payable  
David White, Administrative Officer, WRB.

Final accounts also went forward to you by pouch  
today. Remaining records will be sent by pouch next  
week.

Herbert Katzki will return Switzerland August 5 or  
6 and finish job despatching our seven hundred refugees  
to Palestine. This should be completed by about August  
20. Meanwhile, Herbert can be reached care Amlegation,  
Bern.

I am leaving for my vacation tonight. This will,  
therefore, probably be my final WRB wire with which I  
send you and all other board members my cordial remem-  
brances.

JMB  
[REDACTED] WR-1

DECLASSIFIED  
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72  
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 18 1972

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



LEGATION OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

AIR MAIL

Bern, Switzerland  
August 2, 1945.

Dear General O'Dwyer:

I am most happy to be able - finally - to forward enclosed herewith, to the Board and to you, two copies of my general report covering the activities of the representation of the W.R.B. at the American Legation in Bern from March 1944 through July 1945. While it is far from being as smooth and consecutive a piece of prose as I should have desired, had I had more time available to work it over, I hope that it contains material which will be of value to you and your colleagues in drawing up your own final reports.

I wish to thank you sincerely for your very generous and warm letter of July 14 with respect to my service under the War Refugee Board during the past fifteen months in Switzerland. I am afraid that you are really giving me credit for far more than my due since our effort in behalf of the victims of Nazi persecution was a collective more than an individual one. I did my best to contribute to this larger endeavor in which all of us, both in the United States and abroad, shared.

I shall be sending the Board one or two more messages in the course of the next few days concerning details of the final wind-up of Board activities which now show good prospect - including even the departure of our refugees - of coming to a successful conclusion in the near future. I am sorry that, in keeping with your desire expressed some weeks ago, it has not been possible to do this sooner.

In closing allow me to send you my kind personal regards, to express my sincere appreciation of your constant confidence in and support of my activities, and to wish you the best in your own future undertakings. Please remember me to Miss Hodel.

Very sincerely yours,

*Rowell S. McCalland*

Enclosures: 2 copies of  
general report.

Brigadier General William O'Dwyer  
Executive Director  
War Refugee Board,  
Washington, D. C.

DECLASSIFIED  
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72

By R. H. Parks Date SEP 18 1972

REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE  
WAR REFUGEE BOARD THROUGH ITS  
REPRESENTATION AT THE AMERICAN  
LEGATION IN BERN, SWITZERLAND

March 1944 - July 1945

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INTRODUCTION

"The explanation of our defeats is that we have not yet begun to fight" wrote Giuseppe Borgese, the Italian critic and philosopher, in the opening line of a recent book. This was dated July 1942.

With respect to the unprecedented campaign of persecution which the Nazis had waged since 1933, first in their own country and later, as the quick succession of conquest brought more and more countries under their domination, in most of Europe, we must truthfully admit that we did not begin to fight until very late. From one point of view it is doubtless to our credit that we did not, and indeed do not generally now, grasp or believe the truly diabolic character of the Nazi revolution and the sinister thoroughness with which its German followers put into practice their domineering philosophy of a master race. The gap between the norms which govern our behavior and the actions of the Nazis is too great for us to comprehend the positive use by a modern state as an accepted practice of government of such instruments as the gas chamber and the concentration camp.

It is the rôle of leaders, however, in their larger awareness of such developments, to think ahead of their people and to initiate action the reasons for which may not be generally realized until some time later. It is illustrative of the prescience of our late great President, Franklin Roosevelt, and of that of some of his close advisers, that he set up in January of 1944, almost a year and a half before Germany went down to final defeat before the armed might of the Allied nations, a special American governmental agency whose one task was the rescue from the Nazis of as many as possible of the persecuted minorities of Europe, whether racial, religious or political. In his executive

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order Mr. Roosevelt declared:

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

Thus with the setting-up of the War Refugee Board at the eleventh hour of a night whose remaining minutes were still to afford many opportunities to bring aid and encouragement to at least some of the hundreds of thousands of innocent victims of Nazi savagery the United States began to fight on that particular front. The following pages recount the details of a fight, whose weapons were neither bomb nor bullet, undertaken on a small sector of that larger battlefield.

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#### FRANCE

Of all the countries bordering on Switzerland and occupied by Nazi forces perhaps the closest and most well developed contacts existed with France. The French-speaking cantons of Switzerland, particularly Geneva, have always been bound by close cultural, linguistic and economic ties to France. The fact too that some of the French departments adjacent to the Swiss border had been under German control since 1940 meant that intercourse between these regions was well organized. Most of the various French resistance groups had unofficial representatives in Geneva and a number of the international relief agencies had personnel attached to their Swiss offices who had been withdrawn from France at the time of the German occupation of the old "free zone" in November 1942. It was, therefore,

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a comparatively easy matter for the Board's representative in Switzerland (who had himself worked in France with an American relief committee from 1941 to the middle of 1942, and had since been active in Geneva) to make use of several channels to receive information concerning the needs of endangered refugees and persecuted groups in France and to plan and initiate whatever WRB relief and rescue work seemed expedient. Such work was done almost exclusively through existing organizations such as the Joint Distribution Committee, the Union O.S.E. (the Jewish children's relief agency), the Unitarian Service Committee, French YMCA, Spanish "Comité d'Union National, French "Conseil National de la Résistance - Social Service Section, and the World Jewish Congress, and financial aid was the main tool. The pattern of activity was very much the same as that developed in other European countries. Funds in Swiss francs which had been received either independently by the organizations themselves having been transmitted under special Treasury license from the United States, or in the case of WRB grants, which came from Board discretionary funds already in Switzerland, were made available. They were used to acquire local currency in France either through clearing schemes or less often by the purchase of French currency in Switzerland, due care being taken to obtain "clean" money, which was then smuggled into France.

Since as a general policy it proved safer and more practical to expand and intensify the effectiveness of measures of "protective" relief rather than to attempt the hazardous work of moving endangered persons many of whom, if foreign refugees, spoke only broken French, into Spain or Switzerland, funds sent into France both by other agencies and by the Board served primarily to enable people to better evade the Gestapo, and SS and its more vicious local counterpart, the French "Milice."

False papers were the order of the day in France during the occupation period. By way of illustration, the

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output of one large clandestine documentation center in south eastern France, financed in part by contributions from an American Jewish organization, for the month of March 1944 was as follows: 1895 identity cards, 1300 work permissions, 1250 birth certificates, 428 demobilization cards, 920 baptismal certificates, 124 ration cards, 27 naturalization certificates, 25 marriage certificates and 1500 "lavages," that is, the chemical removal of names, dates and the like.

One of the most heart-rending tasks in France under the Nazis and Laval was the protection of Jewish children from deportation. This work was carried on by a number of organizations but with particular success and courage by the Union O.S.E. ("Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants") which, in May 1945, had close to 5000 Jewish children under its charge, part of them abandoned, part of them in hiding with their parents. About 250 new ones had to be taken in each month. The OSE's technique, which was typical of all such work, consisted in falsifying the child's identity, changing its residence and placing it in a non-Jewish private family or institution. With the intensification of the Allied bombing offensive during the spring of 1945 the OSE had good success with placing such children in colonies set up for French children evacuated from heavily bombed regions. The amount of contact work involved in carrying out this program was enormous, of course, and the danger of constant travel by social workers, most of them Jewish, great and ever-present. Extraordinary precautions had to be taken to avoid the concentration of too many children in any given area; but even so the OSE's office in Geneva frequently received those tragic messages telling of the sudden and brutal arrest by the Gestapo of a small group of children, along with one or two faithful social workers, and their transport to Drancy, the notorious Nazi deportation center for Jews, located on the outskirts of Paris.

Such "protective" work in behalf of endangered Jews in France, both children and adults, was in general adequately financed from Switzerland by such large Jewish organizations as the JDC. The Board in Switzerland, therefore, directed its aid into less well supplied channels. Accordingly in June 1944 a major contribution from WRB discretionary funds went to the Social Service Section of the central French resistance movement, the C.N.R. or "Conseil National de la Résistance," primarily to assist the French in shouldering the terrible and ever increasing burden of aid to the families of men tortured, executed and deported by the Germans. Our grant was in turn split up by the C.N.R. among a number of agencies, political, confessional and occupational, specializing in different types of aid: parcels to men and women in the prisons, direct financial subsidies to women and children whose breadwinner was gone, social welfare work, maintenance for persons in hiding, the production and distribution of false documents and, occasionally, the organization of prison breaks.\* A sum of half a million French francs, for instance, went to Father Godard, director of the special relief service of Cardinal Gerlier in Lyon. This sum was instrumental in organizing the release of some 200 wounded "maquisards" held prisoners by the Gestapo in the hospital of Antiquaille in Lyon awaiting their sufficient recovery so they could be executed! Such Board aid to the French resistance movement also served the purpose of enlisting the help and cooperation of the French underground in favor of foreigners on French soil, in danger of their lives for either racial or political reasons.

Smaller grants from WRB funds were also made directly for the relief of such foreign groups in France: specifically the Spaniards and the refugee Germans. The former, numbering

\* For complete details see pages 8, 9 and 10 of WRB, Bern financial report of November 27, 1944.

many tens of thousands, had been living a precarious and wretched existence mostly in south western France since 1939 when they fled from Spain at the time of the collapse of the Spanish Republic. Yet this did not prevent many of them from taking a courageous and active part in the general armed resistance against the Nazis and in the wide-spread campaign of sabotage of the German army communication system in France. But when a Spaniard went down fighting or was executed by the Gestapo there was really no agency with adequate means to which his family could legitimately turn for aid.

The lot of the German or Austrian political refugee (or for that matter of the Italian, Yugoslav or Greek) who in most cases had spent a year or more in a Nazi concentration camp or prison was even more bleak in France. To make matters worse a great many Spaniards and Germans, particularly if they were Jews, were suffering further privation in the notoriously bad refugee internment camps and foreign workers' companies of the Vichy government from whence many of the so-called "politicals" were once more turned over to their Nazi oppressors. This happened to the majority of the internees in the camp of Le Vernet in the department of the Ariège, for example. Or if they were not redeported by the Germans Vichy shipped them to its forced labor battalions in the North African wastes.

Through its representative in Switzerland financial contributions were made by the Board both for the aid of the Spaniards (in May and August 1944) and of the German political refugees (in July 1944). Our assistance to the latter group went through the Unitarian Service Committee whose office in Switzerland maintained close contact with the main organization of German political refugees in France. This aid was used principally to support persons in hiding and to finance the sending of food parcels into prisons and camps.

WRB financial grants to the Spaniards in France

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were channelled through the representative of their "Comité d'Union National" in Geneva and served a double purpose. Besides helping them organize more and better relief for their own people in France this money enlisted the invaluable aid of the Spanish partisan units operating in the chain of the Pyrenées from Cerbère to Hendaye in passing Jewish refugees into Spain. This escape route was dangerous and difficult and involved ten to fifteen hours on foot through mountainous country so that it was open only to the most robust. The number of individuals who got out to safety this way was therefore comparatively small. Estimates vary according to the organization consulted, but between 700 and a 1000 endangered persons must have escaped by this route. Two or three Jewish organizations operating in Switzerland, notably the JDC and the World Jewish Congress, financed the "French end" of this work (whereas part of our WRB contribution had gone into Spain), that is the transport and assembling of the refugees in a suitable place of departure generally located in the Tarbes region of the department of the Basses Pyrenées.

In the interest of both obtaining more aid for the Spaniards and increasing the effectiveness of this rescue work over the mountains into Spain, the Board's representative was able to establish the necessary contact between other Jewish committees in Switzerland and the Spanish C.U.N. In June 1944, for instance, the representative in Switzerland of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States made a sum of 100,000 Swiss francs available to Dr. Weil of the Union OSE which was used almost exclusively, part of it going to the Spaniards, to further this work.

In connection with France the WRB office in Bern was also able to assist in a variety of ways with the passing of Jewish children over into Switzerland, although the increasing difficulty of bringing children up to the border on the French side, during the spring of 1944, precluded any

large-scale rescue action along these lines. The Board's representative had frequent conversations with the chief of the Swiss Federal Police as well as informal talks with the officers of the military police charged with border surveillance in the Geneva area. In March 1944 when authorization for 4000 United States immigration visas for children from France reached Switzerland the occasion was taken to formally impress upon the Government of Switzerland the United States Government's earnest hope "that such action, direct and indirect, as will facilitate and expedite the movement of children into Switzerland from France" would be taken. As a matter of fact in December 1943 the Federal Police had already signified Switzerland's willingness to admit an initial contingent of 1500 Jewish children (boys up to 16 years of age and girls up to 18) through such clandestine channels as a result of representations made in Bern by a group of private refugee relief agencies. This quota, unfortunately, was never reached due rather to the aforementioned difficulty of getting the children up to the border in France (disrupted communications and the growing unrest in the Haute Savoie and Jura regions which broke into open insurrection shortly after the Normandy landings in June 1944) rather than to any lack of cooperation on the part of the Swiss authorities. Between January and July 1944 barely 600 abandoned refugee children were brought over; and about again as many reached Switzerland in the company of their parents or relatives.

With respect to adults fleeing from France to Switzerland an unofficial arrangement was made with the Swiss police by the Board's representative, in collaboration with the members of other relief agencies, whereby the names of particularly endangered individuals waiting in France to cross the border could be submitted and advance consent for their entry obtained.

In reply to much sharp criticism levelled by various

organizations and persons against the Swiss police on the subject of turning fugitives back at the frontier it must in all fairness be pointed out that the equitable application of border control measures at a time when thousands of individuals, many not at all in danger of their lives and often undesirables, were attempting to enter Switzerland illegally, were extraordinarily difficult. Inevitably isolated refugees were turned back who should perhaps have been admitted. The overall percentage of those granted asylum, however, in relation to the number who presented themselves at the frontiers was over ninety-five according to the actual statistical records.

The WRB was further able to facilitate the movement of persecuted persons from France into Switzerland by small financial contributions to such local organizations as the "Franco-Tireur Partisan" group in the Haute Savoie which "occupied" a considerable stretch of the Franco-Swiss border outside Geneva. As customary in the case of grants to underground organizations it was our understanding that part of our help should be used for the legitimate relief activities of the F.T.P. themselves. Or again a modest monthly sum given to a Dutch committee in Geneva which had established a fortunate contact assured the cooperation of a minor Swiss official in the military reception camp in Geneva where incoming refugees were "screened" prior to being definitely admitted or sent back. His help consisted mainly in holding special cases longer than the usual three days until adequate intercession could be taken in Bern, since the border police were often in too much of a hurry, particularly when there was a large influx, to "refouler" the doubtful cases.

Finally, for the further relief of persecuted persons in France, the Board's office in Switzerland financed three small shipments, which went in through clandestine channels, of medicines, sanitary equipment and pharmaceuticals. These supplies crossed the border in May, June and August 1944.

In all these activities it must not be forgotten that

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such aid rendered by an American organization to France, whether in response to the dire need of the French resistance or to succour persecuted foreign groups, had a value far above its intrinsic one in that it strengthened the will to resist of thousands of sorely tried men and women and made them feel that they were not entirely abandoned in their bitter struggle against great odds.

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#### HUNGARY

On March 19, 1944, a few weeks after the creation of the War Refugee Board in the United States and shortly before the setting-up of Board representation at the American Legation in Bern, Switzerland, Nazi forces moved into Hungary. This last armed German penetration of a major European country, one, to be sure, which was already an ally of the Third Reich, precluded one of the most ruthless operations in the long and infamous Nazi campaign of persecution against a Jewish minority. With the willing and cruel assistance of a well-established anti-semitic faction in Hungary itself, Himmler's SS organization succeeded, in the short space of eight months, in decimating a Jewish community of almost 800,000 souls so that today after the Germans have been driven out scarcely 150,000 survivors remain in Hungary proper. Between mid-April and the end of June 1944 alone over 300,000 Hungarian Jews were deported from the provinces, particularly of north-eastern Hungary and Carpatho-Russia, to death for the majority of them, in the camps of Upper Silesia.

The intensity and brutality of this attack on so large a number of defenseless men, women and children immediately enlisted in countermeasure all the energy and resources of the newly formed War Refugee Board. A great deal of the action taken by the Board passed through Bern

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the point located, strategically speaking, as close to Hungary as it was possible for an American mission to be at that time.

The tragic account of the Nazi-satellite assault on the Jews in Hungary, in all its bitter and heart-rending complexity, would fill the pages of a considerable volume. An attempt will be made, therefore, to touch upon only the high points of the WRB's action, as carried on through Switzerland, in an effort to forestall, mitigate or halt this frightful wave of persecution which swept over Hungary in the late spring, summer and fall of 1944.

The methods used to aid the Jews in Hungary as effectively as possible and the channels of approach to this dreadful problem exploited are essentially those which were employed in all Board action in Europe, the choice of method being varied or the stress shifted according to the particular circumstances. These lines of attack may be generally defined as the following: politico-diplomatic, financial and propaganda. The secondary services of liaison and information formed an integral part of the above three. In the case of Hungary the principal technique can best be termed that of "preventative pressure" exercised through diplomatic channels and by means of propaganda measures. Direct assistance in the form of financial grants was also given and constituted a valuable tool.

As soon as it became unmistakably evident toward the end of May that the Hungarian Jews were being deported "en masse" and under the most barbarous conditions the most urgent task was that of attempting to bring the Hungarian government and people to their senses by means of formal warnings transmitted by the competent services of the Legation through the Swiss government. A first strong message was despatched from Bern early in June and delivered by the Swiss minister in Budapest to the Hungarian Foreign Office. An immediate explanation of acts which were shocking the entire civilized world was demanded and the Hungarians were reminded in

unequivocal terms that it was the determination of the Government of the United States, as set forth in President Roosevelt's declaration of March 24, 1944, on the murder of innocent civilians by the enemy, "to see to it that all those who share in the guilt (of such acts) shall share the punishment."

During the ensuing months, in both formal notes and in conversations with the American Minister at Bern, the Swiss authorities were reminded of the great concern of our Government and people that no step be left untaken to bring all possible aid to such victims of persecution. The Swiss were urged to do their utmost to render whatever assistance possible through all channels open to them. As a result their mission in Budapest was helpful in a number of ways: 1) the issuance of protective documents to holders of Palestine certificates (during July Mr. Krausz, the representative of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, was permitted to open an office on the premises of the Swiss Legation), 2) the granting of all possible protection with a view to preserving them from deportation or at least exempting them from forced labor service to persons possessing the documentation of Latin-American countries whose interests the Swiss represented in Hungary, 3) numerous approaches to both the German and Hungarian authorities in an effort to obtain exit permissions and facilities for those categories of Jews recognized as emigrable by both the Germans and Hungarians at the end of July 1944, and finally 4) many individual acts of courage and devotion performed by individual members of the Swiss mission in behalf of the persecuted Jews in Hungary.

On July 14, 1944 the Swiss Federal Political Department in Bern informed the American Legation that instructions had been given the Swiss Minister at Budapest "to leave no doubt in the mind of the Hungarian government with regard to the attitude of the Swiss government and the Swiss people

concerning these persecutions and to make it clear ... that the good relations and the high regard which the Swiss government and people had for Hungary would undoubtedly be adversely effected by a continuance of this policy." The Swiss Foreign Minister, M. Pilet-Golaz, spoke to the Hungarian Minister in Bern in the same terms.

During July the Swiss Federal Council also signified its willingness to admit to temporary asylum in Switzerland some 5000 Jewish children and expectant mothers from Hungary; and again in August declared that Switzerland would receive on its territory, pending their transport elsewhere, from 7 to 8000 holders of Palestine entry certificates if these refugees could not leave Hungary to the eastward. A few days later the Swiss authorities agreed to expand this agreement to include the right of transit and temporary sojourn of some 4500 possessors of Swedish protective documents from Budapest who could not proceed directly to Sweden.

In the field of less formal political intercession, not long after the setting up of the War Refugee Board in Washington, the Board's appointee in Switzerland sent a preliminary "feeler" on March 9, 1944 through the Hungarian minister in Bern to the Hungarian government. In view of the role which Hungary had hitherto played, due largely to its geographic location, as an asylum for Jewish refugees fleeing from persecution in Poland and Slovakia, the Hungarian government was queried as to the extent it would be willing "to develop or assist in the development of programs and the implementation of measures for the rescue, transportation and maintenance of refugees and victims of persecution - racial, religious or political - who were in imminent danger of death." Again on May 6th, the by that time ex-Hungarian minister at Bern, Baron Bakach-Bessenyei, was informally persuaded to despatch a message through the Hungarian Legation addressed to the Hungarian Foreign Office in which the attention of the government was drawn to the importance of the recently created War Refugee Board (with special stress

on President Roosevelt's interest in it) and particularly to the Board's aim of mitigating discriminatory measures against innocent racial minorities. It was suggested that it would be good policy to allow the Jews in Hungary to receive aid in both money and kind from recognized relief agencies, both indigenous and international (such as the International Red Cross) and to permit the emigration of various categories of Jews who could leave Hungary, especially children. At the close of this note the very obvious efforts being made by the rival Rumanian government to atone for its former anti-semitic policy were underlined.

The Board's representative in Switzerland undertook similar informal approaches early in June to the Rumanian minister in Bern, M. Vespiani Pella, as well as to the delegate of the Rumanian Red Cross in Geneva, M. Sumeriu, in an effort to obtain more lenient entry and transit rights into Rumania for Jews fleeing persecution in Hungary. Conversations were also held with M. De Koeber, the representative of the Hungarian Red Cross in Switzerland, with the purpose of warning certain circles in Hungary, particularly those close to Imredy, with whom De Koeber was known to be in personal touch, to mend their evil ways with regard to this question of Jewish persecution if they had any hopes for their personal futures. At this time De Koeber was also supplied with a copy of the Board's informal message of May 6th, which had been transmitted by Baron Bakach-Besseney and which set forth the specific concessions for the Jews desired by the American Government and the War Refugee Board.

Throughout the anguished months of the attack on the Jewish minority in Hungary the Board in Switzerland was also in constant contact with the International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva. No doubt was left in the minds of the leading members of the Committee as to the attitude of the United States Government or of its expectancy that the Red Cross would do all in its power to undertake effective action in behalf of these persecuted people. At the outset of the

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anti-Jewish measures in Hungary the ICRC was requested, on March 28, 1944, to increase the size and strength of its representation in this country "in order to protect the well-being of groups ... who are facing persecution." Although it was not immediately possible for the Committee to send in additional delegates, mainly due to the difficulty of obtaining the necessary German transit visas, its President, Dr. Max Huber, gave assurance that the Committee was working on this problem and some weeks later framed and sent a strong personal letter addressed to Admiral Horthy which undoubtedly contributed to the suspension of the deportation of the Jews from Hungary early in July 1944. Later in this month the ICRC was able to transfer one of their most capable delegates from Germany, Dr. Schirmer, to Budapest where, in cooperation with Mr. Born, he inaugurated a very helpful program of food relief for the over-crowded Jewish quarters, set up special children's homes under the insignia of the International Committee, and undertook considerable protective action in favor of the personnel and property of the local Jewish relief agencies. These ICRC programs continued successfully until the Soviet forces took Budapest early in 1945. During the short-lived Szalasi-Arrow-Cross régime the energetic personal intercession of the members of the ICRC's mission undoubtedly saved the lives of a great many Hungarian Jews.

In addition to promoting action through the Swiss Government and the International Committee of the Red Cross the representative of the WRB kept closely in touch with church groups in Switzerland whose leaders were regularly supplied with detailed information concerning the inhuman persecution of the Jews going on in Hungary and urged to appeal through their congregations and government that appropriate Swiss countermeasures be taken. Thus the Swiss Protestant churches, through the energetic spokesmanship of the director of their refugee service, Pastor Paul Vogt, submitted a strong plea in June for preventative action

to the President of the Confederation. Similar messages including financial aid (received under special license from Protestant groups in the United States) were sent to the fairly <sup>influential</sup> Hungarian Reformed Church group which played a courageous, if limited, role in assisting the persecuted Jewish minority and in bringing pressure to bear on the Hungarian government. Numerous talks were also had with the Papal Nuncio in Bern, Monsignor Bernardini, and with persons close to Monsignor Besson, the highest Catholic dignitary in Switzerland, who likewise made known to the Federal Council the hopes of the Catholic population of Switzerland that their government would do all in its power to allieviate the suffering of the Jews in Hungary.

Contacts for the same purpose were established and fostered with other leaders of Swiss public opinion, particularly political, such as Dr. Hans Oprecht, the leader of the Swiss Socialist Party and with the Secretary General of the Swiss Workers' Party (the Communists), Karl Hofmeier, in order that these men might in turn enlist the support of their parties in Switzerland and elsewhere in the interest of the Hungarian Jews.

Perhaps best described as political steps of an even less orthodox nature were the difficult "negotiations" with the SS in Hungary carried on in and from Switzerland in a long-drawn out and tortuous effort to obtain concessions for the Jews still alive in Hungary and later for other categories of equally defenseless and innocent civil detainees in German hands. The burden of these negotiations was courageously and adroitly born by Mr. Saly Mayer, who negotiated as a Swiss citizen and as president of the Swiss Jewish Relief Fund, although he was also the representative in Switzerland of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee. From the outset the Board's representative in Bern, without directly participating in the numerous discussions pertaining to this affair except on one special occasion, gave all possible

support and backing to Mr. Mayer's efforts.

\* Begun in Hungary and Istamboul in May of 1944 by members of the Budapest Jewish Community in a desperate attempt to deter the Nazis from their fast-moving and diabolic plan to eliminate Hungarian Jewry, these negotiations shifted to Switzerland in July when it became apparent that it would not be possible for the European director of the JDC, an American citizen, to conduct them himself. At the request of the WRB the representative of the Board in Switzerland kept Washington constantly informed on the progress of this action. In order to facilitate Mr. Mayer's trying task rapid and secure communication services through the Legation were made available to him and the Board was later instrumental in securing special U.S. Treasury licenses to permit the JDC in America to transmit funds to strengthen Mr. Mayer's hand as a negotiator. The Board's representative had frequent conversations with the Swiss authorities in the interest of enrolling their aid and interpreting to them the concern of the American Government that such efforts whose purpose was in the last analysis humanitarian go forward. Specific intervention was made with the Swiss Federal Police regarding the granting of necessary entry permits for the German negotiators during November 1944, as well as to explain the need of the numerous meetings which Mr. Mayer had to arrange on the Swiss border.

The primary purpose of these negotiations which were conducted with the SS commercial representative for Hungary, "Obersturmbannführer" Kurt Becher, was to gain time and meanwhile obtain surcease in the deportation measures against the Hungarian Jews. The technique employed, of which Mr. Mayer was a master, consisted in talking: promising, cajoling, intimating, threatening - in short keeping a continual series of proposals and counter-proposals going. In this delicate task Mr. Mayer was ably seconded by a leading Budapest

Zionist and lawyer, Dr. Isreal Kasztner, who acted with courage and resourcefulness for over a year as intermediary between Becher of the SS and Mr. Mayer. Dealing with the Nazis in this specific problem was considerably facilitated by the rivalry existing between factions within the ranks of the SS and the resulting "jockeying" for prestige and success. Early in the German action against the Jews in Hungary contact was established by Dr. Kasztner with the commercial wing of the SS under Becher and the idea planted that there might be certain material advantages, if not personal at least for the SS, to be derived in not eliminating the Jews in so rapid and ruthless a manner. In order that discussions along these lines could be taken up, however, it would be absolutely necessary to check the barbaric activities of the SS "Special Commando," headed by the notorious SS "Obersturmbannführer" Karl Eichmann, charged with deporting the Jews from Hungary. The suggestion appealed to Becher who was already beginning to enjoy the role of "gentleman-administrator" over the "leased" Manfred-Weiss industrial concerns which had fallen to him. Although an ardent Nazi Becher liked to think of himself as a soldier and a gentleman who did not descend to the murderer's trade plied by Eichmann and his henchmen, Hunsche and Wisliceny. On the other hand Becher was very interested in cutting a successful figure in the eyes of his "chief," Himmler with whom his relations were more direct and cordial than Eichmann's. This meant obtaining results of a commercial value to the SS. Throughout, therefore, a long series of meetings, generally at St. Margarethen on the Swiss-Austrian frontier, which began in August of 1944 and continued periodically until as late as April 1945 and were conducted with astuteness and skill by Mr. Mayer, Becher and his various colleagues (Krumej, Kettlitz, Gruson and Krell) were led to believe that eventually they would secure if not commercial at least monetary concessions of considerable value if they

succeeded, in opposition to Eichmann, in sufficiently mitigating the lot of the Hungarian Jews in particular and that of other Jews and civil detainees in general, in Europe. Every imaginable dilatory tactic was employed; and yet the delicate balance between going too far and not offering enough and dangling goods and money before Becher's eyes was always somehow maintained. Meanwhile there were always breaches of good faith (the general agreement having been that while negotiations went on all deportation of Jews should be halted) on the part of the SS - the attack on the Jews in Slovakia in September 1944, for instance, or the forced evacuation on foot of several thousand Hungarian Jews from Budapest in November 1944 - which afforded Mr. Mayer an excuse to threaten to break off the discussions and to dampen the Nazis' hurry to obtain material advantages. And as Germany's military situation grew worse Becher and his men, feeling less and less secure, tended to demand less and in the last analysis to hope (although they never openly admitted this) that in these continued discussions and concessions granted they might save their own skins.

In retrospect it is difficult to understand how these negotiations could have been prolonged to this extent with no actual goods or money having ever been given yet so much, relatively speaking, gained when more than once we thought that the game was up and that the Nazis had lost patience.

Aside from regularly securing a great deal of invaluable first-hand information from Dr. Kasztner concerning the progress and plans of the Nazi-Hungarian operations against the Jews, the tangible results of these negotiations can be summed up as the following:

- 1) The bringing to Switzerland of the two groups of Jews from Hungary, via the concentration camp of Bergen-Belsen, on August 21, 1944 (318 persons) and on December 6, 1944 (1355 persons).

2) The avoidance of the deportation of upwards of 200,000 Jews remaining in Budapest on August 25, 1944 when Eichmann's organization had 66 trains ready.

3) The exemption, as far as the Germans were concerned (the excesses which occurred being due almost exclusively to the cruelty of the Arrow-Cross thugs who were out to liquidate the Jews whereas the Germans were interested in labor), of elderly and sick persons and children (Becher's orders had been no one under 16, no women over 40 or men over 60) from the forced evacuation on foot of Jews from Budapest in November 1944.

4) The diverting of transports of some 17,000 Hungarian Jews to Austria rather than to Auschwitz in June 1944. At least 80% of these persons were reported still in Austria at the time of the Soviet occupation.

5) Tacit SS agreement that the International Committee of the Red Cross be permitted in Budapest and environs to shelter some 3000 Jewish children in homes under the Committee's protection. (August through December 1944)

6) Facilities for the procurement and distribution of foodstuffs and clothing to some 7000 Jews in labor camps in the Vienna region (January 1945).

7) The release and arrival in Switzerland of 69 prominent Jews formerly from Slovakia and Hungary on April 18, 1945.

Although this cannot be definitely listed as a result obtained Becher claimed during his last conversations with Mr. Mayer in April 1945 that he, Becher, had been instrumental in "neutralizing" and arranging the surrender of the camp of Bergen-Belsen to the advancing British forces. Kasztner was there with him at that time. It has, however, never been possible to substantiate this or to determine how great a service this constituted if actually performed by Becher.

It cannot, of course, be claimed that Mr. Mayer's negotiations with Becher were exclusively and solely responsible for the above-mentioned results. Yet they un-

doubtedly contributed in very large measure to their attainment.

The second important general method through which the Board could initiate helpful action from Switzerland was the financial. The sending in of money to support rescue and relief operations being carried on by responsible agencies in Hungary (as well as in other neighboring countries such as Slovakia, Rumania and Austria) constituted one of the most flexible and useful means of rendering rapid aid. Such financial assistance was of two types: direct and indirect. By the former, out and out contributions from WRB discretionary funds are meant; the second refers to the extensive system of special U. S. Treasury licenses which the Board sponsored so that reliable relief organizations could receive adequate contributions from their supporters in the United States which in turn could be employed to finance their rescue programs in enemy and enemy-occupied areas. Prior to the inauguration of the WRB's intensive program in behalf of persecuted and endangered persons in Axis-controlled territory the regulations of the Allied economic blockade had prohibited the remittance of funds for use in enemy controlled areas. In reversing this procedure on a limited and controlled scale in deference to the desperate plight of tens of thousands of innocent men, women and children suffering persecution naturally every precaution was taken that such funds transmitted to Budapest, Bratislava, Bucharest or Vienna, as the case might be, should in no way aid the Axis. In the overwhelming majority of the transactions supervised by the Board's representative in Switzerland there is no evidence that the enemy derived any benefit whatever from funds thus sent into territory under his control; and a valuable weapon was placed in the hands of the relief agencies to combat the enemy's evil designs.

In the cases of Hungary, Slovakia, Rumania and Austria the principal private relief agency financing rescue

operations was the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee which, through their representative in Switzerland, Mr. Saly Mayer, regularly transferred money into the above-mentioned countries. Smaller and less regular remittances were made by such other agencies as the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States into the same countries generally for the relief of some specific group. Such money served to cover in the first place the unprecedented need for relief resulting from the drastic measures of economic discrimination which had rapidly reduced the Jewish minorities to the state of paupers. It also served the many emergency rescue measures taken by the local organizations to save their people from deportation.

In addition to cash remittances (or the releasing of local currency by clearing operations) to Budapest for the Jews in Hungary, the JDC, through Mr. Mayer, financed the purchase of food supplies in Rumania and the procurement of specialized supplies such as medicines and condensed milk in Switzerland for Hungary. Steamer passages to Palestine via Turkey for Jewish refugees in Rumania, many of whom came from Hungary, were paid for through Switzerland by the "Joint". This was an action which had a most important if indirect bearing on the rescue of Jews in Hungary, hundreds of whom were escaping over the border into Rumania. In the interest of keeping this flow going and preserving the continued acquiescence of the Antonescu government it was imperative that steps be taken to evacuate as many such fugitives as possible from Rumania.

Several considerable direct grants from WRB discretionary funds were made from its office in Switzerland for aid to the persecuted Jews in the Balkans through the small but well-organized young Jewish people's organization, the Hechaluz, whose groups were very active in Hungary, Slovakia and Rumania in rescue and related activities. Such Board contributions covered the manifold expenses involved in emergency, illegal rescue work: the maintenance of persons

in hiding, the purchase, acquisition or fabrication of ration cards, travel permits, birth, baptismal and "aryan" certificates, the buying of foodstuffs, clothing, medicines, the payment of train and other transportation costs, the covering of the overhead of frequently moved offices and headquarters, the maintenance of personnel in the field, and the enlisting of the aid or acquiescence of minor officials, peasants, and border guards.

WRB funds were also used in Switzerland to defray the costs of a courier service to Budapest, Bratislava and Bucharest (including, occasionally, Prague and Vienna) so that vital communications might be kept open during those many critical months. Another small Board "grant" went to enroll the aid of the clandestine Communist press in Switzerland and adjoining territories.

Because of the geographical location of Hungary and since it was in generally too unwieldy a relief tool, the Board office in Switzerland, with the exception of one restricted shipment of medical supplies into northern Yugoslavia via partisan channels for Jewish refugees who had escaped from southern Hungary, did not purchase and send in relief goods. Such work was more practically left to the competent services of the local relief agencies in Hungary itself or in neighboring food producing areas such as Rumania.

As a further contribution to the financial side of assistance to persecuted persons in the Balkans it was occasionally possible for the Board's representative in Bern, as a result of the many people seen and contacts maintained, to advise relief agencies of advantageous possibilities or arrangements for the acquisition of local currency in various countries of south-eastern Europe. This was usually done through private clearing schemes where an individual or concern in Switzerland was willing to release funds in Budapest or elsewhere against Swiss francs deposited in Switzerland.

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In this connection as well as with respect to many other matters within the scope of the Board's activity, mainly of an informational nature, the WRB office at the American Legation in Bern could render valuable assistance as a liaison agency. The programs or plans of separate individuals or committees working independently could frequently be coordinated. Often they could be given the benefit of the latest information regarding a special situation whether it was the passing of children from France to Switzerland or the most reliable means of communicating with northern Italy. At all times during the period of WRB activity in Switzerland a great deal of personal interviewing was carried on, <sup>although</sup> our main effort was focused on the larger task of organizing, stimulating and supporting wider relief and rescue programs. It was nevertheless impossible to turn away the distraught individuals whose loved-ones were caught up in the maelstrom of Nazi persecution in a dozen European countries. They had to be comforted, advised and guided to whatever organization or individual might have some chance of helping them with their particular problem.

In the field of liaison work the WRB in Bern made a point of keeping in close touch with the representatives in Switzerland of the various European resistance movements through whom it was often possible to initiate helpful action in favor of endangered persons or minorities in enemy-occupied regions. Cases in point are the Board's financial aid to the underground in Slovakia, given through the Czech representative in Geneva, by means of which military action by partisan forces was undertaken which resulted in the liberation of the concentration camps for Jews of Novaky and Sereď in August of 1944 at the time of the general uprising against the Nazis, and the freeing of close to 1500 detainees; or again our contribution to the northern Italian G.A.P. groups ("Gruppi d'Azione Patriotici") which helped to finance a number of prison breaks for patriots condemned to death or

deportation.

In searching for usable ways and means of combatting the campaign of persecution undertaken in Hungary, a region which was not directly accessible to Switzerland, the psychological weapon of propaganda could not be neglected. With the help of a capable research assistant the collection of authentic documentary material from all available sources (private correspondence and reports, Hungarian and German radios and particularly the Hungarian press) concerning the anti-Jewish measures was immediately undertaken. This information was periodically issued during June and July 1944 in the form of mimeographed bulletins which appeared in French, German and English. These were made available to selected Swiss newspaper editors, influential political figures in Switzerland, church groups and any other organization or individual in a position to reach or influence a block of Swiss public opinion. The result was considerable space in the Swiss press concerning happenings which would probably otherwise have been passed over with a line or two and would not have created much more of an impression on the Swiss public than what had sceptically come to be known as "horror propaganda" normally did. All official statements from the United States such as the President's declaration of March 24, 1944, Archbishop Spellman's statement and Governor Dewey's and Secretary Hull's pronouncements on the subject of persecution in enemy territory which were naturally released to the larger Swiss press by the Bern branch of the Office of War Information were also made available by the Board's representative to the clandestine press in Hungary, northern Italy, Czechoslovakia, Austria, France and even Switzerland (Communist newspapers). It was later gratifying to note that the Germans in Hungary had been forced to take into account the complaints of the Hungarian government concerning "foreign press attacks." This was not without effect in compelling the Sztojay-Horthy government to back down regarding the

further deportation of Jews from Hungary. The Hungarians were particularly vulnerable to the accusation of practicing mass cruelty and intolerance since up to the very last they hypocritically vaunted themselves as a "Kulturstaat" preserving in the midst of a rapidly bolchevized Europe the ancient and Christian traditions of the Crown of Saint Stephan.

Naturally at all times the high points of such information concerning the latest developments in the situation in Hungary were transmitted to the Board in Washington, so that as the WRB deemed useful it could be made available to the larger apparatus of official Allied psychological warfare.

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#### RUMANIA

Aside from the informal diplomatic approaches to the Rumanian Minister in Bern and to the delegate of the Rumanian Red Cross in Geneva previously mentioned, the Board's representative in Switzerland undertook little direct action in Rumania in connection with the persecution of the Jews in the Balkans. A portion of our WRB financial grants were used in this country by the Hechaluz for the maintenance of relay stations just off the Hungarian border for fugitives arriving in Rumania and funds were sent to Bucharest and to Istamboul for the financing of the steamer transport of Jewish refugees in Rumania to Palestine by the Joint Distribution Committee. In relation, however, to the particular question of steamers and sea transportation for Jewish refugees leaving such Rumanian ports as Constanza the International Committee of the Red Cross was very active. The importance of the Committee's contribution to this task which dated back as far as 1942 must not be underestimated. From March of that year up to the time of the Russian occupation of Rumania the ICRC repeatedly

interceded not only with the Rumanian but with the Turkish, Bulgarian and Hungarian governments, as well as with their diplomatic missions in Switzerland in a persistent effort <sup>to secure</sup> the emigration of a sorely tried Jewish minority to Palestine. The ICRC was especially active in the numerous attempts to secure safe-conducts from all the belligerents involved for boats sailing with refugees from Rumanian Black Sea ports to Istamboul or from Turkish harbors to Palestine, in order that the International Committee's insignia could be used by these steamers.\* Lengthy and difficult negotiations were carried on by the ICRC, in which the American Legation in Bern was very active, during several months early in 1944 with regard to the steamers TARI and BELLACITTA; and even though such representations were never successful (mainly due to the refusal of the Germans to grant safe passage) the delegates of the International Committee in Rumania and in Ankara continued to assist in every possible way with the problem of getting refugees safely off for Palestine.

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SLOVAKIA

During most of the period of wide-spread persecution and deportation of the Jews in Hungary the situation of those in the German puppet state of Slovakia was relatively undisturbed. This was due in part to the tireless efforts of an extremely able Jewish office in Bratislava, the "Ustredna Zidov," under the direction of Mrs. Fleischmann

\* For a detailed résumé of the ICRC's activities in this respect see the Committee's long report of April 24, 1944 filed in the WRB-Bern documents: JEWS IN RUMANIA.

and in part to a "negotiated" modus vivendi with the SS. Too, the Tiso government and its Hlinka guard were never as zealous in their anti-semitic program as their Hungarian counterparts. Indeed between April and September 1944 many hundreds of Jews fled from Hungary to Slovakia, particularly Bratislava, in order to escape deportation. Among them, ironically enough, were persons who had previously sought asylum in Hungary during 1942 when mass deportations of Jews from Slovakian territory to Upper Silesia had taken place.

Board action in Slovakia and the aid sent in by such private agencies of the "Joint" and the Union of Orthodox Rabbis during the spring and summer of 1944 was on a small scale in comparison to that despatched to Hungary and limited to financial help. Funds were transmitted fairly regularly to finance the flight of Jews from Hungary (and to a small extent, alas, from Poland) and particularly to cover the costs of the maintenance of several thousands of refugees clandestinely in Slovakia.

In September 1944, as a result of the armed uprising of the partisan groups in Slovakia, the situation of the Jews there became more critical since a certain number of their younger people had taken an active and understandable part in this insurrection.\* Accordingly more active and extensive countermeasures on the part of the Board office in Switzerland were rapidly planned and undertaken. Financial contributions were stepped up and efforts were made, through the Papal Nuncio and the Vatican, to bring special pressure to bear on the Tiso government by means of warnings similar to those delivered to the Hungarian government. In spite of these steps and because the Germans could invoke the excuse of "military necessity," between 3 and 4000 Jews were brutally rounded up in Bratislava by the SS with

\* In the course of conversations with Becher of the SS about a month after this uprising, the latter reproached Saly Mayer for the role the young Jews had played in the resistance. Saly asked him if he, Becher, could conscientiously expect a young Jew to join the SS.

the assistance of the Hlinka Guard on the night of September 28 to 29, 1944, concentrated in the assembly camp of Sereď and deported shortly thereafter to Poland. A parallel action was conducted in the provinces still under German control and many Jews were shot or killed on the spot.

Diplomatic action through the Swiss government in the case of Slovakia was difficult because the United States had never recognized the Tiso "government" and the Swiss themselves only maintained de facto consular representation in Bratislava. The American Legation in Bern, however, requested the Swiss government to lodge a strong protest with the German authorities for the removal from Slovakia of some 360 Jews holding Latin-American documentation (principally Salvadoran and Paraguayan) or claiming other western hemisphere nationalities including that of the United States who had also been deported from Sereď and from a special camp at Marianka outside Bratislava. This intercession was repeated in February 1945 after it had been possible to acquire a list of these persons and attained some limited success in that about thirteen individuals claiming United States citizenship were finally returned. No news was ever obtained concerning the whereabouts of the others although the information was received that the SS had simply torn up their Latin-American nationality certificates claiming that they were false.

It was also unfortunately not possible to take effective steps in Slovakia during the crisis period through the International Red Cross since the latter was unable to get a delegate into Bratislava until the end of October. There is good evidence that the Gestapo purposely withheld granting the necessary transit visa until their operation against the Jews in September and early October was carried through. This fact is characteristic of the inadequacy of the weapons which we <sup>could</sup> bring to bear

in comparison to those normally available to the Germans. When M. Dunand, the ICRC representative, finally did reach Bratislava in late October he interceded energetically on a number of occasions throughout the month of November in behalf of more liberal treatment for the Jews remaining in the camp at Sered (although permission to visit this camp was never granted to him by the German police) and for the handful still at Marianka. Dunand made several representations to the local Slovak authorities including the commander of the Hlinka Guard (then chief of the Slovak police) and although they displayed a noticeable disposition to be less severe in their handling of the Jews than the SS little was obtainable in the face of a general German order to the effect that all Slovak Jews should be transported to German territory "for the duration of the war."\* The continued presence of an ICRC delegate in Bratislava did, however, greatly facilitate relief action for the many other Jews of both Slovak and other nationalities who were in hiding there. Through him it was possible for the Jewish organizations in Switzerland, particularly the JDC, to transmit funds with greater assurance that they would reach their intended beneficiaries.

About the only contact possible from Switzerland with Poland was maintained over Bratislava; and it was through this city that a part of the relief supplies purchased by the International Red Cross with funds supplied, at the instigation of the War Refugee Board, by the Joint Distribution Committee, passed.

In a letter dated July 7, 1944, Dr. Rosenthal, a member of the Bratislava Jewish office wrote: "A railroad car recently arrived containing 15 tons of maccheroni from Hungary for the J.U.S. ("Jüdische Unterstutzungsstelle")

\* For a complete account of the ICRC's efforts in Bratislava see their full report of December 1944 forwarded to the WRB in Washington on Feb. 1st, 1945. A copy of this report is included in the JEWS IN SLOVAKIA file under date of Feb. 1, 1945.

in Cracow. Our Red Cross (the Slovakian) received it and forwarded it to Cracow on July 1st." These foodstuffs had been purchased through the Joint Relief Commission of the International Red Cross with JDC funds. A few weeks later, to be specific, on July 18, Dr. Rosenthal wrote once more: "Last week we received from the Red Cross (the IRC in Geneva) a shipment of apple marmalade which we repacked and sent on to the J.U.S. in Cracow. We try to get off such shipments to them once a month which go through our Red Cross and are officially cleared with the German Red Cross so that they will be exempted from customs' duties. We regularly receive individual acknowledgments for each lot from our friends there so there is no doubt that the J.U.S. actually gets the goods. A few days ago we were notified that 20 cases of Lactocao (a Swiss milk product) were en route from Geneva. Such products, particularly condensed milk, are urgently needed since we can always use part of them here for persons in hiding. Please ask our dear Uncle (Mr. Saly Mayer) to do all he can to get us milk."

The above quoted lines bear strong testimony to the valuable assistance for Jewish deportees in German-controlled areas rendered by the special food relief program inaugurated through the ICRC, due to the Board's action, early in 1944. Aware of the great need existing and generously supported by the Joint Distribution Committee the WRB was instrumental in obtaining a special U.S. Treasury license whereby the Joint's contribution of \$100,000 could be transferred to Geneva. This fund, consisting of 429,000 Swiss francs, served to set in motion an extremely helpful food relief program for persecuted persons in enemy territory, and, after consultation with Mr. Mayer was employed, mainly by the IRC's Joint Relief Commission (the agency specializing in the purchase and shipment of food for civilian relief) in the following manner: 100,000 francs were "cleared" into Rumania, where they realized some 33 million Lei, which

were used, in cooperation with the members of the local Jewish agencies, by the able Intercross representatives in Bucharest, Kolb and De Steiger, to purchase clothing for Jewish deportees returning from Transnistria (8 million Lei), to buy foodstuffs (originally intended for the projected voyage of the SS TARI but later distributed in Bucharest as relief - 15 million Lei), and finally for general financial assistance to the thousands of indigenous and foreign Jewish refugees in Bucharest who were in dire need (10 million Lei). 229,000 Swiss francs were used by the Joint Relief Commission to finance food shipments, partly of Swiss origin, partly bought in Hungary, to the following places: Theresienstadt (July 1944), the "Jüdische Unterstützungsstelle" in Cracow (June, July and August 1944), to the ill-famed concentration camp of Birkenau in Upper Silesia (September 1944), and finally to the equally bad camp of Bergen-Belsen in Germany (November 1944). The remaining 100,000 francs were taken over by the pharmaceutical division of the Joint Relief Commission to buy medicines, concentrated tonic foods (such as Ovomaltine), and pharmaceutical products. During 1944 shipments of these things went: to the J.U.S. in Cracow in July, Theresienstadt in July and November, Bergen-Belsen in October and December, Birkenau in October, and to the Jewish Community in Zagreb for use in the internment camps in Croatia of Jasenovac, Stara Gradiska and Gredjani Salas, in November. An original plan to send medical supplies to the concentration camp for Jews at Westerbork in Holland had to be abandoned for lack of sufficient assurance that the goods would get through or that they would be properly distributed.

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FOOD RELIEF FOR CIVIL DETAINEES IN GERMANY

Out of the close contact which this relief experience had initiated between the Board's office in Switzerland and the "Division of Special Assistance" of the International Committee of the Red Cross whose particularly difficult task it was to aid the many categories of prisoners who did not enjoy the protection of the Geneva Convention, grew the War Refugee Board's major food relief program for persecuted groups in Nazi hands.

In August of 1943 and again in December of the same year the International Committee, aware of the great need existing among the tens of thousands of men and women whom the Germans called "Schutzhäftlinge" ("security prisoners") imprisoned in concentration camps, addressed urgent appeals for help to the governments and national Red Cross societies of several of the United Nations, including Great Britain and the United States. The principal (and formalistic) obstacle in the way of a normal flow of relief to these detainees lay in the terms of the Geneva Prisoner-of-War Convention. Under its regulations, which had been accepted by the Anglo-American agencies of economic warfare, no food shipped through the blockade into enemy territory could be distributed to prisoners other than those "assimilated" either directly or by analogy (as was the case of the interned civilians of belligerent nations) to the Geneva Convention. This meant periodic visits by representatives of either the International Red Cross or the Protecting Power and a regular exchange of information relative to the numbers of internees or prisoners in the camps, prevailing conditions there, etc. The German authorities, for obvious reasons, were never willing to consider the Convention as applying to either racial deportees or to "political" prisoners (whose only crime was the refusal to willingly become a part of the "New Order"). The size and quality of

this category of detainees which numbered well over a half a million men and women in the concentration camps proper,\* the conditions of dire need under which they were forced to live, and finally the fact that by virtue of resourceful humanitarian effort the International Committee had succeeded in obtaining a measure of access to them for relief parcels, made it imperative that extra-ordinary relief action in their behalf be undertaken.

In the fall of 1943 with the few foodstuffs procurable in Europe suitable for parcels the ICRC had begun a limited service whereby next-of-kin could purchase packages for their relatives in concentration camps. These parcels were sent to individual addressees (insofar as such addresses were known) through the parcel post system, each parcel containing a receipt card. The percentage of such cards which found their way back to Geneva was unexpectedly high and receipt of the parcels was also confirmed by many grateful messages from relatives of such detainees who wrote from Denmark, Holland, Poland, Norway and other occupied countries. Meanwhile the Committee's delegates in Germany and German controlled areas diligently exploited every opportunity to visit concentration camps, to work out some modus operandi with local commanders for the distribution of such parcels, establish contact with the men-of-confidence among the national groups of detainees, and generally obtain all the information possible concerning numbers of prisoners and conditions and needs in these camps. Gradually a control

\* The numbers of detainees in the major, regular concentration camps toward the end of 1944 were roughly the following: Oranienburg 45,000, Ravensbrück 35,000, Buchenwald 30,000, Dachau 25,000, Mauthausen-Gusen 40,000, plus a whole galaxy of lesser camps containing between 5 and 10,000 internees each: Flossenbürg, Schiermeck, Sangerhausen, Papenburg, Dora, Bergen-Belsen, Landsberg, Gross Rosen, Stutthof, Auschwitz, Birkenau, Schliesfach, Hannover-Stoeken, Hamburg Neuengamme, Kaufering, Muhl Dorf, Allach, Floeha, Johannegeorgenstadt, Wiener-Neustadt, Neubrandenburg-Mecklenburg, Zwodau-Falkenau and others.

system was built up and a measure of toleration of such relief work elicited from the SS.

The food supplies available to the ICRC's Division of Special Assistance (mainly purchases in Switzerland and the Balkans) remained, nevertheless, tragically inadequate to meet the growing need. The German occupation of Hungary in March 1944 and the Soviet advance into Rumania of the following months further limited the procurement of stocks. The International Committee's renewed appeals for aid, however, no longer fell on deaf ears. In May and June of 1944 the WRB's office in Switzerland urgently drew the attention of its headquarters in Washington to the ICRC's proposal that a sizeable stock of parcels from overseas be built up in Switzerland for this type of relief. The Board went to work and on June 28, 1944 was able to cable to Switzerland:

"Discussions between the MEW, FEA and the WRB have resulted in agreement to an experimental program of relief for distribution by the ICRC to persons in concentration camps in enemy Europe subject to certain distribution guarantees. This agreement calls for the shipment to the IRC of 100,000 standard food parcels per month for 3 months."

At this juncture a stroke of luck or perhaps bad luck, whichever way you chose to look at it, brought to Switzerland the salvaged cargo (which had consisted of standard POW food parcels) of the SS CRISTINA, a steamer carrying ICRC goods damaged by aerial attack and beached at Sète in southern France. In agreement with the representative of the American Red Cross in Geneva a request was immediately wired to the Board in Washington that part of this food be acquired (the canned goods had all been declared safe for human consumption during a 3 to 4 months period), repackaged by the ICRC and despatched to the concentration camps in Germany. Permission to distribute these parcels was of course dependent upon the final decision of principle of the blockade authorities in London

to allow foodstuffs shipped from overseas to go to "unassimilated" persons in enemy territory. Pursuing its efforts in this direction, the Board in Washington cabled the American Embassy in London, after having cleared the matter with the Foreign Economic Administration:

"We feel that on account of the project's political and humanitarian aspects, the economic warfare considerations which have hitherto precluded our making packages available to the ICRC for distribution (to unassimilated detainees) should at this juncture largely be waived. The amount of food which might fall into enemy hands could not effect the outcome of the war nor prolong it. The desperate situation of the people detained in the concentration camps makes it increasingly necessary that some aid be given them, even though we may not receive tight guarantees that each package reaches the beneficiary for whom it is intended. We suggest, therefore, the granting of blockade authorization for the shipment of 300,000 ... food parcels to ICRC for distribution on a trial basis ... Please present this matter as soon as possible to the relief sub-committee and endeavor to secure a favorable reply."

The proposal for the immediate use of part of the CRISTINA goods was also submitted and its value in being immediately available for shipment from Switzerland stressed.

By August 11, 1944 the Board was happily able to wire to Bern that the blockade authorities had agreed to the Intercross' proposal for the despatch of parcels to concentration camps. It was likewise agreed that a portion of the reclaimed cargo of the CRISTINA could be used in the same manner. The authorization to the ICRC covered an initial lot of 300,000 3 kilo food parcels to be shipped from the United States.

With enthusiastic speed the International Committee's Division of Special Assistance made up some 55 tons of the CRISTINA foodstuffs into 25,600 parcels of 2.15 kilos each. These parcels were shipped during August and September 1944,

both to individual addressees (some 13,300 parcels) and as collective shipments (12,300 parcels) which were distributed by the men and women of confidence of the national groups, to the following concentration camps: Sachsenhausen-Oranienburg, Ravensbrück (the women's camp), Buchenwald, Dachau, Bergen-Belsen, Hamburg-Neuengamme, Natzweiler, and Weimar-Schliessfach - names, now their horrors have been revealed to an incredulous world, <sup>which</sup> have become synonymous with the intentional degradation and mistreatment of human beings at its vilest and most ruthless. The CRISTINA parcels reached men and women, in descending order of the size of the groups, of the following nationalities: French, Belgian, Polish, Norwegian, Dutch, Italian, Greek, Yugoslav, Czechoslovak and Spanish. With regard to the ICRC's individual receipt cards it is interesting to note that from 3800 parcels sent to the camp of Dachau cards returned bearing the names (as well as the all-important matriculation and block numbers) of close to 8000 individual detainees almost all of whom had been hitherto unknown to the ICRC. Some of the "individual" receipt cards had as many as 15 signatures crowded into every available space on them by the famished men who had divided up the contents of these precious parcels. Such information was naturally extremely valuable to the ICRC's DSA for the addressing of future shipments.

Meanwhile the WRB in the United States had arranged for the shipment from America of an initial lot of 15,000 parcels out of the 300,000 scheduled. This batch went forward on the SS GRIPSHOLM and reached Gothenburg in Sweden in mid-September. Shortly thereafter they were transhipped to Lübeck in northern Germany en route to Buchenwald, Dachau, Oranienburg, Neuengamme, Mauthausen and Bergen-Belsen.

During September and October the WRB in Switzerland was fortunately able to assist in getting two other programs for the relief of concentration camp detainees under way. On September 21 the ICRC asked the Board to back up a request

from the French Red Cross (Algiers) to divert to their political deportees in German camps some 40,000 parcels out of a lot of 260,000 originally intended for French colonial prisoners-of-war. This matter was immediately taken up in Washington and London by the WRB with the result that on October 2 both the FEA and MEW had signified their agreement.

In the middle of October the office of the World Jewish Congress in Geneva drew the attention of the Board's representative to the plans of the WJC's Stockholm bureau to ship some 40,000 food parcels purchased through the Swedish cooperatives into German-controlled territory for Jewish detainees in the camp of Bergen-Belsen and in the ghetto of Theresienstadt. The Board undertook to back-up the Congress' request for Anglo-American clearance on this program.

In November the representative of the Board in Switzerland had occasion to see a detailed report on the frightful conditions prevailing in the women's concentration camp at Ravensbrück. The author of this report particularly stressed the almost complete lack of medical care or the most rudimentary medical supplies. In the interest of doing whatever possible to remedy in some small measure this deplorable situation the WRB's office in Bern immediately arranged for the procurement of 500 special pharmaceutical packages which, with the assistance of the Joint Relief Commission of the IRC, were sent into Ravensbrück early in 1945.

On November 25, 1944 the Board in Washington was able to wire that plans for shipping a second lot of approximately 224,000 special parcels were well advanced and that they should go forward to Gothenburg on the SS SAIVE within a few days. Then in December the welcome news reached Switzerland that the unshipped balance of the 300,000 WRB parcels, some 60,000 in number, would be sent to Toulon on the SS CARITAS during the second half of

December for delivery to the ICRC in Geneva.

All such information was rapidly relayed to the ICRC which then communicated with its delegates at the reception points giving them the necessary advise concerning labelling, addressing and reforwarding. The Board's representative in Switzerland was naturally in constant contact with the International Committee in the setting-up of the various distribution plans.

By the close of 1944, therefore, substantial progress had been made by the WRB, in close cooperation with other interested agencies, particularly the International Committee of the Red Cross' Division of Special Assistance, in at least starting the flow of precious food parcels to the tens of thousands of famished and misused men and women behind the charged wire and in the bleak barracks of the Nazi concentration camps.

During the spring months of 1945 a rapid deterioration of the German railroad system set in under the heavy blows of the Allied air offensive so that transportation became, as had been foreseen, the most difficult obstacle to be surmounted in the satisfactory continuation and extension of the WRB's food relief program for concentration camp detainees and deportees. Due to the fact that Switzerland had been virtually cut off from the outside world for several war years such equipment as heavy duty trucks, fuel and particularly tires were almost unobtainable here. Exhaustive efforts, however, on the part of the ICRC's DSA and of one or two private relief agencies, as well as of the WRB to obtain trucking equipment in Switzerland for our parcel program met with some measure of success and half a dozen trucks were rented commercially for a limited number of relief hauls, one during April as far as Theresienstadt. But this could scarcely be considered adequate to meet the great need in Germany. In March, therefore, at the suggestion of and with the backing of the WRB in Washington, Board

representatives from London, Washington and Bern met in Paris for conversations with the American military authorities regarding transport equipment. Although the great push of the Allied armies into Germany made it impossible for SHAEF's transport and supply section to release trucks to the ICRC for WRB's programs it was possible to obtain a special weekly allotment of gasoline and a number of heavy-duty truck tires. These supplies enabled the International Committee to assign certain trucks, particularly part of a lot of 100 Renaults which the French government had made available to the Committee for transporting food to French prisoners-of-war and detainees in Germany, exclusively to the concentration camp relief program for persons of all nationalities. Through this aid from our army and the generosity and comprehension of the French it was possible to ship at an emergency pace about half of our Swiss stock of 60,000 WRB parcels to Dachau, Theresienstadt, Mauthausen and Landsberg before the final surrender of the German armies.

Early in October 1944 - to go back a little in time - the International Red Cross had presented a formal note to the German Foreign Office requesting that the Government of the Reich give most serious consideration to extending to all civil detainees treatment analogous to that accorded prisoners-of-war and the interned nationals of belligerent countries under the Geneva Convention (i.e. "assimilating" them). A similar approach was made directly to Himmler in December of 1944 by Mr. Raoul Nordling, the Swedish Consul General in Paris, whose courageous and energetic action at a critical moment when the Nazis evacuated Paris in the summer of 1944 had saved the lives of several thousand political detainees in the city's prisons who otherwise would probably have been executed or deported. Although no direct response was ever given to either of these approaches it was evident that they had not been made in vain. They

undoubtedly paved the way for the conversations between the SS and representatives of the International Red Cross which began toward the end of January 1945 in Berlin. At that time members of the highest SS circles responsible for all civil detainees, political prisoners and deportees in Germany displayed, in the course of several meetings with ICRC men, a willingness hitherto unknown to mitigate the severity of their treatment of detainees at least to the extent of allowing more extensive relief shipments into the camps. During February, March and April, in the interest of seeing that the ICRC took full advantage of these overtures on the part of the SS, the Board's representative in Switzerland was in almost daily contact with various members of the Committee. The great interest of both the United States Government and the War Refugee Board that no stone be left unturned to bring all possible aid to the men and women in the concentration camps was impressed upon the Committee and its President on numerous occasions. Whatever persuasion, pressure, counsel or aid seemed best suited to the circumstances was applied or offered. Finally, on March 12, 13 and 14 the President of the ICRC, Professor Burckhardt, went to discuss this question at some length with both Himmler's personal representative, Kaltenbrunner, and with various members of the German Foreign Office. The result of these talks was certain opening concessions, the most important of them being permission for the International Committee to station delegates in all the major concentration camps to supervise relief distributions and work until the end. This constituted a most important concession in that it would provide a channel through which that invaluable, last-minute psychological pressure could be exerted on camp commanders and other SS personnel in order to prevent final acts of barbarity. To cite only one example of what this meant. The presence at the camp of Mauthausen near Linz of an ICRC man named Haefflinger, at the time of the Nazi break-down, whose courageous intercession was applied at this

critical moment undoubtedly saved several thousand prisoners from being buried alive in an underground aeroplane factory where the SS commander, Ziereis, had received instructions to trap them by blowing up the exits and ventilation shafts.

A second concession secured in the course of the Burckhardt conversations was the right to evacuate from the concentration camps women, children, elderly and ill people, mainly of French nationality, although this was later extended to include a few Belgians and Dutch. The basis of this was a small exchange of German civilians whom the French had interned in Alsace. Returning convoys of empty trucks which had been delivering parcels to prisoners-of-war were employed for this work and during the month of April 5 convoys succeeded in getting back to Switzerland with a total of about 1400 detainees, largely French women, from the terrible camps of Ravensbrück and Mauthausen. This small number is due mainly to the fact that trucks were a most inadequate means of evacuating, over long distances and secondary roads, men and women in terrible physical condition from prolonged mistreatment and starvation.

While WRB packages were moving out of Switzerland the larger lot of some 224,000 parcels shipped to Gothenburg in Sweden in December were being gradually moved to northern Germany. Outside of some 40,000 WRB parcels distributed through the Swedish representation of the World Jewish Congress to Jewish detainees in Bergen-Belsen and Theresienstadt, the bulk of our Board packages went through the ICRC's depot at Lübeck to concentration camps in that area, principally the women's camp at Ravensbrück and the smaller men's concentration camp of Hamburg-Neuengamme which, in the last weeks of the war, became an assembly center for detainees and deportees evacuated there from all over the Reich. The balance of these parcels undistributed at the time of the German surrender were later used, as were those in Switzerland, for continued distributions

to detainees freed from concentration camps but still in great need. From Switzerland, for instance, WRB parcels were shipped during the latter part of May, June and July, through ICRC's DSA to Salzburg, Bolzano, Linz, Uffing (in Bavaria), Lustenau and Vienna for distribution in displaced persons' centers in these areas, especially deportees on the move. Some 5500 parcels were used in this manner at St. Margarethen on the Swiss-Austrian border through which large numbers of liberated or escaped detainees, deportees and forced laborers in very bad physical shape came into Switzerland during the second part of April or later passed in transit for repatriation to western European countries. This "post-hostilities" relief work with our remaining WRB parcels filled a very urgent and great need at a time when the Allied military authorities were not yet able to cope with the tremendous task of feeding the hundreds of thousands of displaced persons.

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Similar to the diplomatic steps initiated by the Board through the Swiss Government in an effort to offset the persecution of the Jews in Hungary, numerous and vigorous representations were made by the Section of American Interests of the Legation at Bern through the Division of Foreign Interests of the Swiss Federal Political Department throughout most of 1944 and the early months of 1945 in a sustained endeavor to safeguard the lives of several thousands of Latin-American document holders (mainly Jewish deportees from Poland and Holland) still in Germany or German-controlled territory. These unfortunate people were those who, beginning as early as 1942, had been provided by desperate relatives with the passports and nationality certificates of certain central and south American countries (such as Paraguay, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Haiti, etc.) whose consular officers

in various parts of the world had been willing, partly for humanitarian motives but unfortunately more often for reasons of unscrupulous personal gain, to provide such documents. Their original purpose had been to serve as a travel document which might enable the bearer, who had generally been declared stateless by the Nazis, and who had received an entry visa for some overseas country, to depart. It was simultaneously discovered that the Gestapo, amazingly enough, often chose to consider the bearers of such papers as bonafide citizens of belligerent countries and to place them and their family members in regular civilian internment camps. There are cases on record of the German police excepting Polish Jewish families from the most frightful pogroms in the midst of Poland and shipping them half way across Europe to a civilian internment camp simply because they held the photocopy of a Honduran passport irregularly issued in their name. Since it is quite clear that the Germans had no illusions about the origin of such papers their action can only be explained by the fact that these people had some value as exchange material against German nationals interned in the Western Hemisphere. Such Latin-American documentation, therefore, preserved many (some only temporarily, alas) from deportation and extermination. In the interest of taking every advantage of this fortunate, yet undependable state of affairs (which had already been almost too far exploited by various individuals and organizations), the War Refugee Board, through the Swiss Government which, <sup>American Legation and the</sup> along with Spain, was the protecting power for a number of the countries whose documents these deportees held, exercised whatever "preventative pressure" could be brought to bear on the Germans. The technique consisted in frequently and energetically calling the attention of the German authorities to the fact that persons in this category were eligible for exchange against German citizens.

Simultaneously negotiations for the actual exchange of these ad hoc Latin Americans were actively pursued by the Legation through the Swiss Division of Foreign Interests. Due, however, to the extreme complexity and length of time involved in actually effecting such exchanges, a situation caused in large part by the unending obstacles raised by the Germans, and by the obvious necessity of first bringing out individuals either possessing United States citizenship or having a prior claim to exchangeability, it was only possible during several months of negotiation to extricate some 170 deportees holding such Latin-American papers. They passed through Switzerland at the time of the general American-German exchange at the end of January 1945. At the same time, nevertheless, the status of several hundreds of other Jewish refugees holding similar documents as regular civilian internees was preserved and they were able to remain in the comparative safety of the "Illags" or internment camps for belligerent nationals under the protection of the Geneva Convention.

As demonstrated by the case of the deportation of about 200 such Jewish civil internees from the Anglo-American internment camp of Vittel in the spring of 1944 it was never possible to know to what extent such preventative pressure through diplomatic channels could adequately protect deportees in this particular category. In the Vittel affair, despite months of energetic intercession through the Swiss Legation at Berlin to the German Foreign Office, both prior to and after the deportation of this group, no satisfaction whatever was obtained and no trace of the people removed found. Repeated inquiries addressed to the German Foreign Office elicited only the laconic answer of the SS to the effect that the deportation of these individuals had been ordered "in line with the general policy regarding the treatment of eastern Jews." This tragic episode is once more illustrative of the feebleness of the weapon of diplomatic representation. In such cases the

Swiss Legation at Berlin could only address itself to the German Foreign Office and the latter admittedly exercised only very slight control over the sinister operations of the "Reichssicherheitshauptamt" whose "Abteilung 4" under the notorious Müller directed the whole frightful program of the extermination of the Jews in Europe. In this we were beating against a steel door with bare fists.

Parallel to protective action in behalf of Latin-American document holders the War Refugee Board undertook special steps through the American Legation in Bern in an effort to assist another category of endangered persons in enemy-held territory. In the fall of 1944, at the Board's instigation, the American Legation in Switzerland was instructed by the Department of State to advise the governments of enemy countries - in this case Hungary and Germany - that United States immigration visas would be made available through American Consulates in neutral countries to persons in territory controlled by Germany or its allies for or to whom such American visas had been either authorized or issued on or after July 1, 1941 and who, since December 9, 1941 because of wartime conditions or enemy repressive measures, had been unable to make use of these visas and depart. This authorization, in order that its effect might be more widespread, was extended a short time later to include four other categories of persons: 1) the alien spouse, parent or minor unmarried child of a U.S. citizen, or 2) such relatives of an alien resident of the United States, 3) persons in whose behalf petitions for the issuance of U.S. immigration visas had been submitted to and approved by the Immigration and Naturalization Service, and 4) such persons for whom verification of last entry into the U.S.A. had been filed and approved.

Lists of a great many individuals, principally Jewish deportees, believed to be in Germany or German-controlled areas

coming under this category were forwarded to the Swiss Government with the request that they in turn be presented to the German authorities with proper notification that United States visas awaited these persons in Switzerland. The Swiss authorities were also asked to signify to the Germans their willingness to admit such persons to Switzerland.

After the transmission of a number of these lists to the Swiss Legation at Berlin it became apparent, as born out by the experience of the Swiss representatives there, that the German authorities gave little or no consideration to requests made for the protection of non-exchangeable persons. The Swiss Legation accordingly recommended, in the interest of enhancing the protective value of this program, that such people be reclassified and declared exchangeable so that steps similar to those currently being undertaken in behalf of the several other categories of exchangeable civilians in Germany could also be applied to these prospective visa holders. On December 30, 1944 both the WRB and the Department of State concurred. The Swiss Government was accordingly asked to inform the German Foreign Office that all these persons were to be considered exchangeable against German civilians in the Western Hemisphere.

Although it is difficult to evaluate the positive results of this particular protective program certainly such repeated reminders through diplomatic channels that the outside world and particularly the United States were aware of the extent of Nazi oppressive measures against innocent men, women and children and prepared to take all possible steps to frustrate and counteract this persecution did act as a deterrent upon many German officials.

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NORTHERN ITALY

The pattern of WRB action conducted from Switzerland for the assistance of persecuted persons in the area of northern Italy controlled by the Germans and the Neo-Fascists closely followed that in France. Two minor financial grants were made in September and November 1944 to organizations and individuals for courier service and intelligence work, while a third went in January 1945 in support of an effort at "political intimidation." A fourth minor contribution was made in May 1945, just prior to the German-Fascist surrender in northern Italy for relief action by the Valdensian (Protestant) Church in behalf of fugitives in hiding. Two major financial contributions went in June 1944 and January 1945 to support relief and rescue programs by Italian resistance organizations. And also as in the case of France, a small shipment of medicines and concentrated foodstuffs for persons in prisons was financed and shipped by the WRB in Bern in January 1945.

Although territory adjacent to Switzerland and one with which numerous contacts existed it was never possible to develop in northern Italy as effective programs of assistance as in France. This was due in large part to the active participation in measures of oppression of a much larger and better established indigenous group than had been the case in France, namely, the Fascist Party and later the Neo-Fascists under whom irregular police action went to even greater lengths of brutality. The battle waged for existence by a great many persecuted men and women was therefore not only against the Germans but against a large element in their own people.

The Jewish minority, both Italian and foreign, in occupied northern Italy was never large and at the time the War Refugee Board began its work could certainly not have numbered more than 15,000 souls at the most. The financial

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requirements of "straight" relief for this broken Jewish community were in general, as in France, fairly adequately covered by such agencies as the Joint Distribution Committee. The most profitable field of action for the Board lay, hence, in financially supporting assistance of a less orthodox character through underground groups for Italians themselves and for such aid as these Italian organizations could render to foreigners in danger for either racial or political causes. Formal political pressure, such as had been exerted in the case of Hungary was not possible for lack of a diplomatic channel. The Swiss Government had never recognized the Neo-Fascist "régime" and had no diplomatic relations with it other than certain de facto commercial contacts. The Board in Switzerland did promote, however, late in 1944, one "political" approach of an unofficial nature although the Swiss were not involved. This was done through a dissident commercial agent of the Neo-Fascist "government", a certain Dr. Kiniger, who was in Zürich and who happened to be personally related to some of the members of Mussolini's clique in northern Italy. This effort was initiated with the assistance of the Papal Nuncio in Bern at the suggestion of the latter and <sup>of</sup> the representative of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees in Rome. The Nuncio, with whom the Board's representative was frequently in contact on other matters, both facilitated the exit and reentry of Dr. Kiniger as well as the latter's contacts with the ecclesiastical authorities in Milan and Como. Through Kiniger's connections it was planned to intimidate the Neo-Fascist Minister of the Interior, Buffarini, and his chief of police, Montagna, by threatening them with eventual prosecution as war criminals if they did not grant certain concessions. Although our original hope of perhaps even effecting the release of certain groups of racial and political prisoners or at least obtaining better treatment for them was never realized due to the fact that the SS was then in control of practically all the prisons and camps

in northern Italy where such people were incarcerated, Kiniger did secure permission and facilities from Buffarini for the sending of medical and food relief on a limited scale to the detainees in the Italian section of the ill-famed prison of San Vittore in Milan.\*

Major financial grants from WRB discretionary funds were made in June 1944 and again in January 1945 through a Communist representative in Switzerland of the Milan Liberation Committee to support in particular the excellent clandestine relief work carried on by the "Women's Defense Groups." This organization which was active in all the major cities and towns of northern Italy specialized in aiding the families of men who had been imprisoned, deported or executed by the enemy and in maintaining in hiding or transferring to safer regions women who were in danger of arrest for political or racial reasons. The "Women's Defense Groups" also organized the sending of parcels to patriots in prisons and camps to the extent of their means and procurable foodstuffs. Our contribution to their work was given with the specific proviso that insofar as possible it should permit them to increase their aid to foreign Jewish women and children who were in constant danger of deportation and forced for the most part to live in hiding under deplorable conditions.

A portion of this WRB financial aid also went to various partisan groups united under the Milan Liberation Committee for other special programs. Part of our funds, for instance, helped to organize a certain number of prison breaks, generally in the smaller provincial towns, which during July, August and September 1944 resulted in the release of some 35 patriots either condemned to death or deportation to German concentration camps. At the Board

\* For a detailed report of this undertaking see pages 7 and 8 of WRB - Bern financial report submitted under date of May 30, 1945.

representative's express request a sum of half a million Lire was devoted to the smuggling of food and other necessities to internees both racial and political in the deportation camps of Fossoli di Carpi near Modena and of San Martino di Rosignano outside of Monferrato. Several attempts through underground channels were made to "crack" the concentration camp of Gries near Bolzano which, after the closing of Fossoli, became the principal assembly center for the deportation of Jews and political prisoners to Germany. Due to the severity of the SS control not only over the camp but over this whole strategic border region no success was obtained. It was unfortunately not until after the liberation of northern Italy that some of our WRB parcels could be sent there through the International Red Cross which also hitherto had not been able to bring aid to civil detainees in northern Italy.

The Italian resistance, lastly, used smaller sums from our WRB contributions for the purchase of food and other types of relief for the survivors of villages sacked in reprisal by the SS and Neo-Fascist militia.

Throughout the period of WRB activity from Switzerland in northern Italy it was very difficult to bring many persons north to safety although general assurance had been early obtained from the Swiss police that all racial fugitives would be admitted. The obstacles in the way of this type of rescue work were the same as in France: a mountainous frontier, poor communications due to Allied aerial attack, and frequent partisan activity which led to increased patrolling and punitive action on the part of the SS and the Fascists. Despite these difficulties the "Women's Defense Groups," during the late summer of 1944 and again in April of 1945, did succeed in passing over some 10 families consisting of 27 persons in all.

As with respect to other countries the WRB's representative in Bern naturally lent all possible support, of a

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liaison, advisory and communications nature to other competent committees and individuals engaged in similar rescue work in northern Italy.

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In the course of the Board's work in Switzerland a second uneasy and rather distasteful affair which happily met with a certain measure of success involving negotiations with high Nazi circles for the release of Jewish deportees took place during the winter of 1944-45. As in the case of the difficult and lengthy negotiations between Mr. Mayer and Becher of the SS the role of the Board's representative throughout Mr. Sternbuch's (as representative of the "Swiss Relief Committee for Jews Abroad") dealings with Mr. Musy remained essentially that of an interested adviser. Whatever aid deemed advisable was naturally extended to Mr. Sternbuch and safe and rapid communications with the United States were made available to him. As his negotiations progressed the Board was also instrumental in the granting of a special U.S. Treasury license to his organization in America so that funds could be transmitted to "back up" these negotiations. As a measure of security, however, the Board's representative in Bern was named joint trustee of these funds, a policy which had also been adopted with other similar remittances (those, for instance, received by Mr. Mayer from the JDC during the Becher affair), to avoid any use of them contrary to the interests of the Allied blockade.

The "Musy Affair" as it came to be known in the Swiss press, reduced to its simplest terms, involved several meetings in Germany between Himmler and other high SS officers and a former Swiss Federal Counselor named Jean-Marie Musy well-known in Switzerland for his pro-Nazi sentiments and who professed to be an old personal friend

of the SS leader. These discussions concerned ways and means of effecting the liberation of Jewish deportees in German hands. Mr. Musy's motives in performing this service, which were open to question, seemed to consist of a mixture of the desire for personal gain, the hope of playing a striking "humanitarian" role and the belief that he might hereby obtain more favorable peace terms for the Nazis. The results obtained, however, were a matter of more immediate concern than his motives; and Musy's actions were successful to the extent of extricating one group of 1200 Jewish deportees from Theresienstadt who reached Switzerland on February 7, 1945.

Other similar schemes, of a lesser nature, were frequently presented to the Board's representative at Bern by individuals and organizations, so that one of the distinct tasks which developed in Switzerland was the careful investigation and evaluation of all of them in order that the WRB in Washington might be properly informed if and when approached by groups in the United States who had been apprised of such schemes by their correspondents abroad. In general these proposals were of a more or less suspicious sort which turned on ransom or near-ransom. They were usually characterized by dubious commercial slants and by an almost universal lack of concrete evidence that they would produce any results other than lining the pockets of the unscrupulous individuals who promoted them largely in an effort to exploit desperate and distraught persons who were willing to go to any lengths to save relatives and friends from Nazi hands. It was accordingly more often than not the unpleasant task of the Board's representative to turn them down as tactfully as possible.

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GERMANY

Board sponsored activities in Germany proper outside

of diplomatic representations through the Swiss Government, our parcel program for the concentration camps and other organized relief shipments through the International Red Cross were necessarily limited by the extreme difficulty and danger of developing successful relief or rescue operations on any appreciable scale in this country. Regular relief remittances were occasionally despatched to Germany, generally through neutral diplomatic couriers, by such agencies of the JDC for the support of the few groups of Jews still alive there and in hiding. One such contribution from WRB funds was made in December 1944 to the Hechaluz for the maintenance of their group in Berlin and environs and especially to finance the flight of some young Jews to Switzerland six of whom arrived on March 18 their admission having been previously arranged with the Swiss police.

Although the extent and ruthlessness of internal surveillance in Germany restricted underground "resistance" activity in the main to local operations it was possible for the Board, through the "Freies Deutschland" movement in Switzerland, a group composed of German exiles of various political complexions who maintained fairly close contacts with Germany, to develop a modest but satisfactory relief program. Although the primary aim of the "Freies Deutschland" was anti-Nazi propaganda work, they were glad to be able to assist political opponents and victims of the National Socialists whose lives were in danger. Small Board financial contributions were therefore made periodically to this organization in Switzerland from June 1944 through April 1945 to support and develop the following types of work: 1) the maintenance in hiding of endangered political and racial refugees, particularly those near the Swiss border awaiting a chance to come over, 2) the smuggling of medico-food parcels to "Freies Deutschland" centers near the Swiss border for such persons, 3) the "passing" of these fugitives across the frontier into

Switzerland (which took place generally across the Rhein into the canton of Schaffhausen), work which included a certain amount of preparatory "smoothing of the ways," and, 4) the operation of an intelligence service concerning the concentration camps.

All of these services, with the exception, of course, of the parcels, were financed not so much in currency on the German side as in kind. From the beginning of 1945 Reichsmarks as such had less and less value in Germany because there was nothing to buy. On the other hand such small and unobtainable objects as pocket knives, cakes of toilet soap, razor blades, cigarette lighters, and cheap Swiss watches were highly prized and of greater value than bank notes. We have one case on record of a young German political refugee who was hidden by a farmer not far from Lörrach, after the July 20th. affair of 1944, for over two months for a Swiss watch which scarcely cost 50 francs! A second-hand suitcase full of such barter goods was, therefore, smuggled across the border about once a month; and human lives were saved with what could have been picked up for a hundred dollars in any dime store in the United States.

The intelligence service with respect to the concentration camps (and many "Freies Deutschland members had been and were still in them) was more difficult to organize and long in producing any tangible results. When they did finally filter through they were of utmost value, particularly in helping plan the subsequent shipments of WRB parcels through the ICRC. It was exceedingly valuable in this connection, for instance, to have inside information on points such as the following: the "ideological" and personal attitude of the SS commander and the principal SS officers toward the receipt of food parcels by detainees, how much of a "cut" did they and other administrative personnel take, which guards or block leaders could be bribed and which could be counted on to side with the internees, which of them were open to intimidation of later prosecution as war criminals, the degree

to which the "men-of-confidence" of the various national groups in the camp had worked out a modus vivendi with the SS on the subject of relief deliveries to their men, or whether a "Schutzhaftling" was forced to sign receipt cards for parcels he never received. Although it was long in reaching Switzerland considerable information did come through, particularly after January 1945 and concerning such camps as Landsberg and Dachau not far from the Swiss border, which was of great assistance in planning our parcel shipments.

Characteristic of the secondary fields of activity, not directly involving rescue and relief operations, in which the Board in Switzerland could be of help, was the work, for example of the "Dutch Jewish Coordination Committee" in Geneva. During the course of many months this small organization had slowly built up a very complete card file covering practically all Jewish deportees from Holland, whether of Dutch or other nationalities. This had been accomplished by dint of painstaking investigation conducted by mailing out thousands of registered postcards with prepaid answers attached. These cards were directed mainly toward Poland and Upper Silesia; and out of about twenty sent off an average of one answer was received. Often this answer consisted only of the stamp of the local Jewish organization which, however, meant that the individual in question was alive. Again a hastily scrawled postcard would come back to Switzerland after many months but bearing precious information concerning half a dozen relatives or friends in addition to news of the addressor. All those mentioned were done so by nick name or in veiled terms. The Dutch Committee and one or two other organizations doing this work developed specialists in this type of cryptic correspondence who could decipher an amazing amount of precious news from one seemingly innocuous postcard. Once then a person's whereabouts was established with reasonable certainty

the address was passed on to one of the committees in Lisbon which arranged the sending of those little packages of one or two boxes of Portuguese sardines which have become so well known to everyone who has lived in occupied Europe during the past several war years.

This excellent work by the Dutch Jewish Coordination Committee was unfortunately inadequately financed so that small, regular contributions from Board funds could happily play an important part in keeping it going.

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As was inevitable in the case of an agency with official governmental connections such as the War Refugee Board doing special relief work for persecuted persons at a time when half or more of Europe fell into this category, a large number and variety of requests, both relevant and irrelevant, reasonable or highly unrealistic, from all quarters of the compass, descended upon it. Although the intention of not letting the "trees obscure the forest" was firmly and repeatedly taken it was of little avail. These approaches might be best illustrated by examining a cross-section of the incoming mail, visits and telephone calls during a typical week. The following matters, for example, were called to the attention of the representative of the Board during a week in April 1945: a list of "reliable" anti-Nazis in the Cologne area whom the writer felt should immediately be brought to the knowledge of the competent American military authorities, several offers of service from German, Austrian and Swiss citizens wishing to receive jobs in the control system of Germany or Austria (one of them was from a specialist in cattle breeding), a letter from a sergeant in the American Army in the Rhineland whose parents had been deported to Theresienstadt in 1942 and who wished to know how he could find out if they were still alive, a telephone call from a lady who wished to

have a special shipment of food parcels sent to her relatives in the Illag at Biberach, a letter from a Swiss insecticide manufacturer who was sure that the WRB would be interested in purchasing several thousand liters of his product for "its vast relief projects," a long memorandum from a man purporting to be a specialist on the subject regarding the difficult lot of refugees from Soviet territory who did not wish to return, a telephone call from a woman who declared that under no circumstances should her husband be compelled to return to Yugoslavia since he would most certainly be executed by the partisans, a further visit (despite protestation) from a man who had several times in the past submitted a project for the resettlement of Jewish refugees along the west coast of Africa - such were the problems of a chaotic and suffering Europe placed hopefully on the Board's doorstep.

In addition to despatching wires relative to the more important relief and rescue operations in which the Board was participating or particularly interested, its representative at Bern also received and transmitted a large number of "secondary" messages for a variety of organizations and committees such as the following: the United Lithuanian Relief Fund, the American Christian Committee for Refugees, the Unitarian Service Committee, the Queen Wilhelmina Fund, the Save the Children's International Union, the Self-help for Emigrés from Central Europe, the National Catholic Welfare Council, the International Migration Service, the Friends of Luxembourg, Inc., the United Yugoslav Relief Fund, the Jewish Labor Committee, the Union O.S.E., the Belgian War Relief Society, the Delegazione Assistenza Emigranti of Rome, and the International Rescue and Relief Committee.

In conjunction with its work of extricating endangered persons from Germany and German-controlled areas - specifically the two groups of deportees from Bergen-Belsen and Theresienstadt, numbering in all about 2700 souls - the Board also

(58)

concerned itself with the "straight" (that is, "Straight" in comparison to the primary task of the WRB - special rescue and relief action within enemy territory) refugee job of arranging for their evacuation from Switzerland. This duty devolved upon the Board as a result of the guarantees previously given the Swiss Government and underwritten by the Department of State and the WRB - in the interest of facilitating and accelerating the admission of persecuted persons to Switzerland - to remove all such refugees granted asylum on Swiss territory to havens of refuge in Allied controlled areas. This job developed into a most complex, difficult and time-consuming one involving a great deal of liaison with various authorities and organizations both in and outside Switzerland. A long series of discussions, beginning as early as January 1945 and which lasted well into the summer, and meetings took place with military and railroad outfits, with SHAEF and AFHQ, with the Jewish Agency for Palestine and with the Swiss Red Cross, as well as UNRRA and the Intergovernmental Committee on refugees. Boats and trains were ordered and then cancelled, welfare personnel was engaged and then released - in short what should have been a distinctly accessory task grew into a major responsibility to the detriment of other more pressing and important programs. The experience, however, was instructive and indicative of the very complex psychological problems inherent in the great task of resettling human beings who have endured years of uprooting, mistreatment and life under conditions which bore little or no resemblance to those which we Americans accept as rock bottom in our social welfare work.

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(59)

Such was the fight on one of the War Refugee Board's fronts, with its sorties and skirmishes, its trenches stormed and its ground gained - and lost - in the uneven struggle to succour and to save some of the victims of the Nazi assault on human decency. Its successes were slight in relation to the frightful casualties sustained; yet it is sincerely felt that its accomplishments constitute a victory, small in comparison to that far greater one carried by force of arms, but which nevertheless adds a measure of particularly precious strength to our cause.

\*\*\*\*\*

*KDac.*

RDMcG.

Bern, Switzerland

July 31, 1945.

RDMcC:rm



LEGATION OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

AIR MAIL

Bern, July 26, 1945.

Dear General O'Dwyer:

With reference to my letter of July 12th, I have forwarded to you in Washington with today's pouch the following confidential War Refugee Board files and records:

- XII. WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS: January through July 1944; August through December 1944; and, January through June 1945.
- XIII. INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS: RELIEF (WRB) FOR CONCENTRATION CAMPS IN GERMANY AND GERMAN-OCCUPIED AREAS: January, February and March 1945, and April, May and June 1945.
- XIV. UNION OF ORTHODOX RABBIS: REPRESENTATION IN SWITZERLAND (L. STERNBUCH): "SCHWEIZ, HILFSVEREIN FUER JUED. FLUECHTLINGE IM AUSLAND: January through June 1944; July through December 1944; and, January through June 1945.
- XV. U.S. IMMIGRATION VISAS FOR PERSECUTED PERSONS IN ENEMY OCCUPIED TERRITORY: August and October 1944; November and December 1944; and January through May 1945.
- XVI. UNION O.S.E. ("OEUVRE DE SECOURS AUX ENFANTS") : JEWISH CHILDREN'S RELIEF AGENCY May 1944 through May 1945.
- XVII. JEWS IN GERMAN OCCUPIED ITALY WRB RELIEF ACTION IN NORTHERN ITALY: January and February 1944; April through December 1944; and January through July 1945.

Brigadier General William O'Dwyer  
Executive Director  
War Refugee Board,  
Washington 25, D. C.

DECLASSIFIED  
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72  
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 18 1972

(2)

- XVIII. DOCUMENTS, CORRESPONDENCE AND LISTS OF DETAINEES - CONCENTRATION CAMP OF BERGEN-HELSEN: March 1944 through April 1945
- XIX. MISCELLANEOUS DOCUMENTS (REPORTS, WIRES, ETC.) CONCERNING OTHER CONCENTRATION CAMPS IN GERMANY: April, May and June 1945
- XX. DOCUMENTS, CORRESPONDENCE AND LISTS OF DETAINEES - GHETTO OF THERESIENSTADT: September through December 1944 and January through June 1945.
- XXI. JEWS IN FRANCE WRB RELIEF ACTION- FRANCE: April through October 1944.
- XXII. U.S. IMMIGRATION VISAS FOR REFUGEE CHILDREN IN SWITZERLAND: March through August 1944 and November and December 1944.
- XXIII. INTERNATIONAL RESCUE AND RELIEF COMMITTEE (R. BERTHOLET): March through November 1944.
- XXIV. JEWISH LABOR COMMITTEE: February through November 1944.
- XXV. DUTCH JEWS AND DUTCH JEWISH COORDINATION COMMITTEE (GENEVA): May 1944 through May 1945.

There are a few remaining files still to be forwarded which I plan to send off with the pouch of August 2nd. These will probably be the last ones with the exception of documents relating to finances which I cannot forward until I have closed my accounts. If everything goes well everything should be wound up by August 4th, which I have now set as my target date. The re-activation of the whole question of evacuating our refugees bound to Palestine from Switzerland, as well as a number of other minor matters, have prevented me from making as rapid progress as I had hoped. The rough draft of my final report is now practically complete; and I shall work over once more during the next few days and then have the final copies made. It should also be able to go forward on August 4th.

Very sincerely yours,  
*Rowell S. McClelland*  
Special Representative  
of the War Refugee Board.

Roswell D. McClelland  
Representative of the War Refugee Board  
THE FOREIGN SERVICE

OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
AMERICAN LEGATION,  
BERN, SWITZERLAND.

**SECRET**

SECRET

VIA POUCH

Brigadier General William O'Dwyer  
Executive Director

War Refugee Board  
c/o Treasury Dept.

62227

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

REG. No. 746

 By air mail  
Par avion

000924

RDMcC:rm



LEGATION OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

AIR MAIL

Bern, July 12, 1945.

Dear General O'Dwyer:

In line with the request contained in the Board's wire No. 531 (Department's 1971 of June 6) and with my preliminary answer transmitted in the Legation's cable No. 3242 of June 19 I have forwarded to you in Washington with today's pouch WRB files and confidential records entitled as follows:

I. JEWS IN HUNGARY: February through December 1944 and January, February and March 1945.

These files cover all Board activity as conducted in and from Switzerland with relation to the persecution of the Jewish minority in Hungary, including the confidential material concerning the long "negotiations" carried on by Mr. Saly Mayer with the SS ("Obersturmbannführer Kurt Becher").

I am retaining for the moment, however, all documents connected with the evacuation from Switzerland of the two groups of Jewish refugees from Hungary who reached this country via the camp of Bergen-Belsen. This material is all in 1945 as I have forwarded the few letters and wires relating to this subject of the end of December 1944. This is a chapter of Board work which it has unfortunately not yet been possible to close as none of these refugees has yet left Switzerland. I shall be wiring the Board regarding this question within the next few days.

II. PRESS COMMENT IN SWITZERLAND (CLIPPINGS AND PUBLICATIONS) CONCERNING THE ANTI-JEWISH MEASURES IN HUNGARY: February 1944 (background material), March & April 1944, and June, July & August 1944.

III. SWISS RELIEF COMMITTEE FOR THE JEWS IN HUNGARY: March through December 1944. This file covers a rather voluminous but not particularly correspondence (mainly in German) with a small organization set up in Zürich at the end of March 1944. It was directed by a Swiss citizen of Hungarian Jewish extraction, Dr. Michael Banyai, a well-intentioned but somewhat excitable man who did a great deal of rushing around and letter-

DECLASSIFIED  
State Dept. Letter 1-11-72  
By R. H. Parks Date

letter-

SEP 18 1972

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NEW YORK  
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IX. INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS: RELIEF FOR CONCENTRATION CAMPS IN GERMANY AND GERMAN-OCCUPIED AREAS: April through December 1944. I am still working on the important 1945 file which covers the ICRC-WRB food relief program for unassimilated detainees in Germany and German-controlled territory, but should be able to forward it in about a week.

X. MISCELLANEOUS DOCUMENTS AND REPORTS CONCERNING EXTERMINATION CAMPS FOR JEWS IN POLAND, INCLUDING AUSCHWITZ AND BIRKENAU: 1944

XI. JEWS IN EUROPE: February through December 1944 and January through June 1945. This file is devoted to the very numerous representations made by the Legation through the Swiss Government to the Germans concerning Jewish holders of "ad hoc" Latin-American nationality documents and covers the "Vittel Affair" of 1944 and the exchange of the Category "F" document holders during January of 1945.

This is only a first shipment of files and records, the balance of which I plan to get off to you within the next ten days. I have been going over all Board files and records in Switzerland carefully and assembling all material which should form an integral part of the WRB's records in Washington. Simultaneously I have been composing the rough draft of my general report (of which about 30 pages are already behind me). This work has proceeded more slowly than I should have wished since there is a great deal of material to be reviewed and there are always - unfortunately - outside interruptions since it has become pretty much the habit of the Legation to refer all matters concerning refugees to me irrespective of their connection with the Board. It is also very difficult to "waan" one former clients. Referring them to other organizations is easy in theory, but not so in practice. If all goes well I should be able to wind up my report and the shipping of the files by about July 28th. I am sorry that it could not be sooner.

Very sincerely yours,  
*Rowell D. McCalland*

Brigadier General William O'Dwyer  
Executive Director  
War Refugee Board,  
Washington, D. C.

000927

Representative of the  
War Refugee Board,  
THE FOREIGN SERVICE

OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

AMERICAN LEGATION,  
BERN, SWITZERLAND.

**SECRET**

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

S E C R E T

VIA POUCH

Brigadier General William O'Dwyer

Executive Director

War Refugee Board,

Washington, D. C.



By air mail  
Par avion

REG. No. 867

58939

000928

1-a

III 28

Dear Mr. McClelland:

I have just returned from a brief vacation (my first in three years) which delayed my replying to your letter of June 22nd.

You may be assured that your position with respect to our suggestion that you accompany Harrison on his survey trip was thoroughly understood and appreciated by all of us.

Your service to the special refugee work which the Board undertook was indeed most selfless and I feel that your decision not to become involved in postwar refugee relief matters is very understandable. Since you made that decision, I feel, and the others here agree, that it was advisable from your personal viewpoint not to join the Harrison mission. I am very sympathetic to your situation because my own is very similar and I personally appreciate your desire to get back to work more suited to your training.

I am sure that by now you have heard from many sources of the praise which your work for the Board has received. You may be justly proud of an outstanding reputation which your unusual service to this cause has brought you. I hope that someday I may have the pleasure of meeting you. While it may not have been apparent to you, my contact with you was constant throughout the Board's operations.

I thought you might be interested in seeing the enclosed copy of a letter which we have just received from the International Red Cross. Herbert Katzki may like to see it too.

With very best wishes for all possible success in your new assignment,

Sincerely yours,

Mr. Roswell D. McClelland,  
Special Representative,  
% American Legation,  
Bern, Switzerland.

Enclosure.

FH:hd 7/23/45

*Attached copy of letter  
- file*

00092

OW/EVR, 10 May 30th, 1948.

CONFIDENTIAL  
BY SA  
CROSS-REFERENCE

Brig. General William C. Dayer  
Executive Director  
War Refugee Board  
Washington, D. C.

Sir,

The conclusion of hostilities in Europe involves obviously a substantial change and reduction in the activities of the International Committee of the Red Cross. The relief scheme for what were known as "unassimilated groups", and, in particular, for Jews in Germany and in the occupied territories, which had been undertaken in the face of the greatest obstacles, is drawing to a close. The International Committee therefore considers it an essential duty at the present time to thank the organizations which have been particularly helpful in this welfare work.

The War Refugee Board, which was called into being under the wise and noble leadership of President Roosevelt, enabled some tens of thousands of the most sorely tried war victims to receive some degree of help, although this was on a modest scale, in comparison to the stupendous needs of the sufferers. According to testimonies received repeatedly from the latter, this help, however, in many cases spelt rescue from death by starvation.

The International Committee would therefore like to thank the War Refugee Board sincerely for the effective and understanding assistance which they have invariably received through Mr. Roswell D. McClelland. The Committee greatly regrets that such fruitful cooperation with the War Refugee Board, and in particular with their distinguished representative in Switzerland, should come to an end. Mr. McClelland's resourcefulness and selfless labours have contributed in large measure to the success of the enterprise, and he was latterly very ably seconded by Mr. Hatzki.

Believe me,

Yours faithfully,

/s/ Max Huber

MAX HUBER  
Honorary and Acting President of the  
International Committee of the Red Cross

(Personal)



LEGATION OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

AIR MAIL

~~RESTRICTED~~

Bern, June 22nd, 1945  
6:00 p.m.

Dear Miss Hodel:

One main point now occurs to me, following your kind telephone call from Washington, in connection with the suggestion that I accompany Mr. Harrison on his forthcoming survey trip in Europe, which perhaps I should have mentioned. It is a personal one which probably showed through my answering wire but which I now have the disquieting thought might have been interpreted as a rather ungrateful rejection of the Board's sincerely appreciated recommendation that I go with Mr. Harrison. I therefore feel that I owe you some explanation.

I am frankly desirous of leaving the field of refugee and relief work in which I have now been active for almost five years. I was not trained in social work nor do I intend to make it my profession but "happened" into it more or less by chance in 1940 when I accepted an appointment to work with the American Friends Service Committee in Europe. My original plan in going abroad for the Friends had been to take up, as soon as war-time conditions permitted, the fellowship for a year's academic research in Geneva which I had been granted through the AFSC. As you can well imagine this plan never materialized since the need for refugee relief work increased yearly from 1940 on and the few of us who were privileged to remain in Europe had to continue lending our hands to mitigate to the limited extent possible the growing suffering among refugees. So my wife and I went from Italy to France to Switzerland for the AFSC with always more than enough to do, and then came the splendid chance of placing, during the last 14 months, what experience I had acquired in this field at the service of the War Refugee Board. I do not regret a moment of it, only that the Board was not called into being one or two years earlier. But now the war in Europe has come to an end and the Board, in keeping with its original charter, is bringing its activities to a close. The end of a particular phase of war-time relief

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
LEGATION OF

(Enclosed)

(2)

work has come. It seemed to me, therefore, the moment to make a change if I really desired to do so, although perhaps a somewhat selfish decision in view of the vast amount of relief work which will have to be done in the course of the coming 4 or 5 years in Europe. At the same time I felt that it would be better not to start or become involved in post-war refugee relief operations if I did not wish to continue in this field for several more years, particularly if a worthwhile possibility of work more suited to my training and wishes presented itself. It would also not be fair to whatever organization I started working with if I did so with the intention of leaving it as soon as something else more interesting turned up. For these reasons I have indicated my definite interest in the offer of ~~obtaining~~ an appointment in the Foreign Service Auxiliary which was made to me some weeks ago by Mr. Huddle, the Counselor of our Legation here.

In my application which went in to the chief of the State Department's Foreign Service Personnel Division a few weeks ago I took the liberty of giving Mr. Pehle's name as a reference, so that he may receive an inquiry in the near future from Mr. Davis.

Please feel that I most appreciate your kind offer to bring me back to Washington for consultation. In many ways I should like exceedingly to do this, and it may still be possible depending on the date I can wind up Board work here and when I will be expected to take up my new duties at the Legation which I imagine will be around September 1st. On the other hand as I mentioned to you over the phone I am most desirous of taking a few weeks off quietly with my wife and children of whom I have not seen a great deal during the past year. I also find that my nerves are getting pretty frayed, my temper short and my mind stale. One should not allow oneself to go on this way if anything can be done about it.

Let us therefore leave the matter open. Meanwhile please accept my most sincere thanks for the confidence and kindness and generosity which all of you in the Board in Washington have always shown me. If we do not have the chance of meeting in the near future I hope this will prove possible in the course of the coming year. I would be grateful if you would convey my best regards to General O'Dwyer and to Margaret Jones of the AFSC the next time you have occasion to talk to her over the phone.

Very sincerely yours,

*Rowell S. McCalland*

Miss Florence Hodel  
War Refugee Board  
Washington 25, D. C.

DEPARTMENT  
OF  
STATE

PER  
Distribution of [redacted]  
[redacted] only by special  
arrangement. (W)

**OUTGOING  
TELEGRAM**

DIVISION OF  
CENTRAL SERVICES  
TELEGRAPH SECTION  
June 23 1945  
4 p.m.

RECEIVED  
DIVISION OF  
CENTRAL SERVICES

1945 JUN 25 AM 9 13

DC/L  
LIAISON

AMLEGATION

BERN  
2119

The following for McClelland and Katzki from C'Dwyer  
is WRB 537.

Reference your 3256.

Mr. Earl Harrison and Board approve Katzki's ac-  
companying Harrison on forthcoming survey trip. Penrose  
also agrees but hopes this assignment for Katzki will be  
terminated within three months.

Harrison will communicate with Katzki as soon as  
he arrives in Europe. As soon as itinerary is known,  
Penrose wishes to be advised.

CREW  
(ASST)  
(GIRL)

WRB:HHVance:kg  
6/23/45

[redacted]  
The contents of this telegram shall  
be closely guarded.

DECLASSIFIED  
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-73  
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 18 1972

*Control and [unclear]  
[unclear] 7/14/45*

CABLE TO MCCLELLAND AND KATZKI, BERN, FROM O'DWYER, WAR REFUGEE BOARD

Reference your 3256.

Mr. Earl Harrison and Board approve Katzki's accompanying Harrison on forthcoming survey trip. Penrose also agrees but hopes this assignment for Katzki will be terminated within three months.

Harrison will communicate with Katzki as soon as he arrives in Europe. As soon as itinerary is known, Penrose wishes to be advised.

THIS IS AN UNCLASSIFIED COPY

11:20 a.m.  
June 23, 1945  
Miss Ripple (for the Sect.), Cohn, Hodel, Hutchison, McCormack, Files.

FH:ve 6/23/45

*JH. Cleared with Penrose*

DEPARTMENT  
OF  
STATE

**OUTGOING  
TELEGRAM**

DIVISION OF  
CENTRAL SERVICES  
TELEGRAPH SECTION

MEM  
Distribution of true  
reading only by special  
arrangement. (██████████)

June 23  
4 p.m.

DC/L  
LANSON

1945 JUN 25 AM 9 13

RECEIVED  
DIVISION OF  
CENTRAL SERVICES

ALLEGATION

BERN

2120

The following for McClelland and Mann in WRD 536.

Reference telephone conversation June 23, 1945,

War Refugee Board equipment should be held for Treasury

pending further instructions from Charles Bell,

Administrative Assistant, Treasury.

GREW  
(Acting)  
(██████████)

For  
text  
be  
██████████

WRD:MM:Venco:kg  
6/23/45

ME

DECLASSIFIED  
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72  
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 18 1972

*Control not used in packet  
7/10/65*

00093

GABLE FOR MCCLELLAND AND MANN, BEHN, FROM WAR REFUGEE BOARD

Reference telephone conversation June 22, 1946,  
War Refugee Board equipment should be held for  
Treasury pending further instructions from Charles  
Bell, Administrative Assistant, Treasury.

THIS IS THE ONLY COPY.

4:00 p.m.  
June 22, 1946

Miss Ripple, (for the Sec'y), Conn, Wood, Hutchison, McCormack, Files.

DW:FH:ve 6/22/46

JJA

DEPARTMENT  
OF  
STATE

INCOMING  
TELEGRAM

DIVISION OF  
CENTRAL SERVICES  
TELEGRAPH SECTION

GSL-529  
Distribution of true  
reading only by special  
arrangement. ( [redacted] W)

Bern  
Dated June 20, 1945  
Rec'd. 8:03 p.m.

Secretary of State  
Washington

US URGENT

3256, June 20, 4 p.m.

O'DWYER WRB FROM MCCLELLAND.

DEPT'S 2076 WRB 535 June 19 and LEGT'S 3242 June 19.

Whereas I much appreciate suggestion that I accompany  
Mr. Earl Harrison American delegate to IGCR on survey trip  
in Europe and Board's approval thereof, I am afraid this  
will be practically impossible since I have a minimum of  
4 weeks work ahead of me getting off refugee convoys,  
writing final WRB report and generally winding up Board  
affairs in Switzerland.

Provided it does not interfere with his WRB work in  
Switzerland, particularly dispatching these refugees, I  
warmly recommend Herbert Katzki to accompany Mr. Harrison if  
this meets with Board's approval. H. K. is well acquainted  
with question of displaced persons in Europe and would  
be much interested in such a trip.

HARRISON

JMS

DECLASSIFIED  
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72  
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 18 1972

*central not needed  
7/10/45*

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

1945 JUN 21 AM 9 43  
DIVISION OF  
CENTRAL SERVICES  
DC/L  
LIAISON

DEPARTMENT  
OF  
STATE

**OUTGOING  
TELEGRAM**

DIVISION OF  
CENTRAL SERVICES  
TELEGRAPH SECTION

LB  
Distribution of  
true reading only  
by special arrange-  
ment. (██████ W)

2 05

June 19, 1945

4 p.m.

US URGENT

AMLEGATION

BERN

2070

The following for McClelland from C'Doyer is WRB 585.

Clearance obtained for Mr. Earl Harrison, American Delegate to Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, to proceed in very near future to the liberated countries of Europe and to Germany to investigate certain facts regarding displaced persons, particularly Jews. He would be charged to ascertain needs of these people and to what extent these needs being provided by international, national, or private organizations.

It has been suggested that you accompany Harrison on this mission as Special Attaché of the American Legation in Bern. Board heartily approves. If agreeable with you, please advise at once. Harrison will proceed to Paris shortly and you will be advised when and where to meet him.

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

GREW

ACTING  
(GLW)

WE

TRU:R.V. nco:tkg  
6/19/45

DECLASSIFIED  
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72  
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 18 1972

*Central Serv. Sec. 7/10/45*

US DROPPED

CABLE FROM WASHINGTON, 1938, FROM DIRECTOR, WAR REFUGEE BOARD

Clearance has been obtained for Mr. Earl Harrison, the American Delegate to the Inter-Governmental Committee on Refugees, to proceed in the very near future to the liberated countries of Europe and to Germany to investigate certain facts with regard to displaced persons, particularly Jews. He would be charged to ascertain the needs of these people and to what extent those needs are being provided by international, national, or private organizations.

It has been suggested that you accompany Harrison on this mission as Special Attache of the American Legation in Bern. Board heartily approves. If agreeable with you, please advise at once. Harrison will proceed to Paris shortly and you will be advised when and where to meet him.

*Clearance with Pollock*

ENVOY 6/19/45

DEPARTMENT  
OF  
STATE

INCOMING  
TELEGRAM

DIVISION OF  
CENTRAL SERVICES  
TELEGRAPH SECTION

VE-505  
Distribution of true  
reading only by special  
arrangement (██████ W)

Bern

Dated June 19, 1945

Rec'd 7:10 p.m., 20th

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

US URGENT

3242, June 19, 9 p.m.

PERSONAL FOR O'DWYER OF WRB FROM MCCL~~AND~~

Dept's 1971, WRB's 5316 and Legation's 3064,

June 6.

Regret not having been able answer your 531 sooner  
but was absent from Switzerland visiting concentration  
camps in Germany from June 8 to 16.

Although I should like to comply with your desire  
that I come to Washington for consultation on termination  
Board activities in Switzerland, such trip would be  
practically very difficult both for official and personal  
reasons. Please advise regarding its necessity.

Barring any unforeseen delays or complications  
in getting off refugee group scheduled leave Switzerland  
for southern Italy toward end this month with possibly  
a second convoy of 700 certificate holders leaving mid

July directly

DECLASSIFIED  
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72  
By R. H. Perks, Date SEP 18 1972

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

1945 JUN 21 AM 9 49

DIVISION OF  
CENTRAL SERVICES

*Central services  
on file 7/16/45*

-2-#3242, June 19, 9 p.m. from Bern

July directly for Palestine, I should be able forward overall report and records to you by pouch between July 15 and 20.

Herbert Katzki's assistance in Switzerland will be necessary until departure these refugees. It may be possible send part of records back with him if and when returns to Washington.

As soon as books can be definitely closed on Board financial operations in Switzerland I will return unspent confidential funds along with proceeds sale WRB equipment as instructed.

HARRISON

JM

7 0 0 9 4

DCG  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
Production of  
only by special  
arrangement. ( )  
OUTGOING TELEGRAM  
June 7, 1945  
4 p.m.  
DIVISION OF  
CENTRAL SERVICES  
TELEGRAPH SECTION  
DIVISION OF  
CENTRAL SERVICES

1945 JUN 9 PM 1 24

AMLEGATION

DC/L  
LIAISON

BERN

1980

The following for McClelland is WHB 582.

A representative of General Donovan will contact you shortly concerning war crimes matters. Please make available to him any of your files which he may wish to investigate.

GREW  
(ACTING)  
(GHV)

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

MHE:R2 Vance:kg  
6/7/45

WE

DECLASSIFIED  
State Dept. Letter 1-11-72  
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 18 1972

DEPARTMENT  
OF  
STATE

INCOMING  
TELEGRAM

DIVISION OF  
CENTRAL SERVICES  
TELEGRAPH SECTION

DMH-1287  
Distribution of true  
reading only by special  
arrangement.

DIVISION OF  
CENTRAL SERVICES

Dated June 6, 1945

5 JUN 7 AM 9 02  
REC'D 10:59 a.m.

*Am. Ref. Sec.*  
*J. J. [unclear]*

Secretary of State

DC/L  
111524

Washington

**CONTROL COPY**

3064, June 6, 6 a.m.

PERSONAL FOR O'DWYER OF WRB FROM MCCLELLAND

With reference to your 521 (DEPT'S 1763, May 10)

I should appreciate knowing whether when I have wound  
up unfinished WRB business outlined in Legation's 2824,  
May 19 which should be about July 15 you plan to ter-  
minate Board activities in Switzerland will no longer  
need my services so that I may make my personal plans  
for future.

Forwarded my discretionary accounts covering  
period November 1, 1944 to May 31, 1945 inclusive by  
pouch June 5.  
EDA

HARRISON

DECLASSIFIED  
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72  
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 18 1972

7 0 0 9 4

DEPARTMENT  
OF STATE

OUTGOING  
TELEGRAM

DIVISION OF  
CENTRAL SERVICES  
TELEGRAPH SECTION

Distribution of this telegram by special arrangement. ( ) CENTRAL SERVICES

June 6 5 p.m.

1945 JUN 8 PM 1 55

*Wor Ref Bd  
O. Sawyer*

DECLASSIFICATION

DC  
LIAISON

CONTROL COPY

MEMO

1971

The following for McClelland from War Refugee Board in LHM 531.

It is now contemplated that the War Refugee Board will complete all operations, including liquidation, sixty days after June 30. Effective July 1 your salary and other expenses must be drawn from confidential RB funds in your possession. These confidential funds should also be used for lump sum payment for your unused annual leave accumulated at rate of 2 1/2 days per month from April 26, 1944, through date of conclusion of your connection with RB. You are authorized and requested to return to

Washington for consultation as soon as all RB work has been completed in Switzerland. Please advise approximate date of your departure.

Since your reports and records are needed in connection with preparation of final Board reports, they should be forwarded to Board as soon as possible and in quickest manner. You are authorized to bring reports and records with you on return to Washington if other means of transit will take too long.

Unspent confidential funds should be returned via Chase National Bank, New York, payable David White, Administrative Officer, RB.

You are authorized to sell RB equipment. Money received for this is payable Secretary Treasury care of RB. Instructions concerning disposition of 206,000 U.S. parcels will follow.

RB: AVance:ag 6/6/45

GEN  
( )  
(GEN)

DECLASSIFIED  
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72  
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 18 1972

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

70094

CABLE TO HARRISON, BERN, FOR MCCLELLAND, FROM THE WAR REFUGEE BOARD

It is now contemplated that the War Refugee Board will complete all operations, including liquidation, sixty days after June 30. Effective July 1 your salary and other expenses must be drawn from confidential WRB funds in your possession. These confidential funds should also be used for lump sum payment for your unused annual leave accumulated at rate of 2 1/2 days per month from April 26, 1944, through date of conclusion of your connection with WRB. You are authorized and requested to return to Washington for consultation as soon as all WRB work has been completed in Switzerland. Please advise approximate date of your departure.

Since your reports and records are needed in connection with preparation of final Board reports, they should be forwarded to Board as soon as possible and in quickest manner. You are authorized to bring reports and records with you on return to Washington if other means of transit will take too long.

Unspent confidential funds should be returned via Chase National Bank, New York, payable David White, Administrative Officer, WRB.

You are authorized to sell WRB equipment, money received for this is payable Secretary Treasury care of WRB. Instructions concerning disposition of 206,000 P.O.W. parcels will follow.

THIS IS WRB BERN CABLE NO. 521

JUN 27 1945  
The Middle (For the South), Club, Hotel, Hitchcock, in Geneva, 21-22.

DW:Rive 6/4/45

JH

7 0 9 4

DEPARTMENT  
OF  
STATE

*Evac. to Switz. - wa*

**INCOMING  
TELEGRAM**

**DIVISION OF  
CENTRAL SERVICES  
TELEGRAPH SECTION**

JT-1249

This telegram must be  
paraphrased before being  
communicated to anyone  
other than a Government  
Agency. (~~SECRET~~)

Bern

Dated May 19, 1945

Rec'd 8:02 p.m.

*Wm. R. Ford*  
*O. Sawyer*

Secretary of State

Washington

2824, May 19, 8 p.m.

C'D. YER RB FROM GENEVA

Dept's 1763 RB's 521, May 10.

In accordance with your 521 I shall begin to wind  
up all Board activities in Switzerland. This can  
probably be done by June 30 or July 15 at latest.

Preparation of final report and of files for ship-  
ment to Washington will take a good three weeks of  
relatively undisturbed work.

Evacuation from Switzerland of group of over  
2000 refugees originally from Bergen Belsen and  
Theresienstadt will not be completed before mid June  
at earliest. According to recent news from SWITZ  
4 in Paris first convoy of about 1100 persons should  
be able leave Switzerland around May 28. Second sch-  
duled depart two weeks later. This constitutes  
boards outstanding commitment in Switzerland.

An now working on financial report and accounts  
covering expenditure

**COMMING COPY**

**BEST AVAILABLE COPY**

-2- 2824, May 19, 8 p.m. from Bern  
covering expenditure confidential WRB funds for  
period Nov 1, 1944 to April 30, 1945 inclusive.  
Should be able forward these to you before end May.

HARRISON

HRRM

1094

DEPARTMENT  
OF  
STATE

OUTGOING  
TELEGRAM

DIVISION OF  
CENTRAL SERVICES  
TELEGRAPH SECTION

RLW  
Distribution of  
reading only by

DIVISION OF  
CENTRAL SERVICES  
MAY 10, 1945

1945 MAY 11 PM 1 56

US URGENT

DC/L

AMERAGATION

BEMB  
1763

The following for MacLelland from War Refugee Board is

WRB 521.

Reference your no. 2350 of May 1, 1945.

The Executive Order establishing the War Refugee Board strictly limits Board's activities to rescue and relief of victims of enemy oppression in enemy-occupied territory.

Accordingly, relief and assistance of refugees liberated from the Germans are not (repeat not) within Board's jurisdiction.

In view of foregoing, all shipments of WRB parcels should cease. You are requested to take stock of all WRB parcels still in Switzerland and report figures and location to Board. Instructions concerning disposition of these parcels and other WRB property in Switzerland will follow.

Requests received by you concerning relief and assistance of refugees liberated from the Germans should be referred to UNRRA, the appropriate military authorities, the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, private refugee organizations or other national or international groups which are authorized to deal with matters of this nature.

DECLASSIFIED  
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72  
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 18 1972

YOU

For security reasons  
text of this telegram  
is hereby withheld

-2- 1963, May 10, 4 p.m. to Bern

You should begin now to wind up all Board activities in Switzerland and prepare final reports. Board would appreciate knowing how long this will take.

CREW  
(Acting)  
(CE)

WRE:MMV:kg  
5/10/45

WE

SMP

7 10 44

ADDRE

1. Evac. to + thru Security  
(Admission)

April 24, 1945

Dear Sir:

Following our telephone conversation of this morning, and following up your letter of April 11, 1945, concerning retirement deductions made by L. J. Daymont, Special Disbursing Officer, Bern, Switzerland, from the salary of Mr. Roswell D. McClelland, it is requested that the amount of such deductions be refunded from the Civil Service Retirement and Disability Fund by payroll adjustment. As these deductions were deposited into the fund by your department, it is not considered proper for this office to process a refund through the Civil Service Commission.

It has been noted also that retirement deductions were withheld from the salaries of Robert C. Dexter and Eleanor Widen paid by N. Lancaster, Jr., for December 1944. No retirement deductions had been taken from the previous payments made to these two employees and we know of no request from this office for such deductions.

It will be appreciated if the amounts withheld are paid to Mr. Dexter and Miss Widen, and reimbursement for the amount thereof should be requested in the regular manner, as we were only billed for the net amount paid.

It is our understanding that you will forward necessary instructions to your disbursing offices in Bern and Lisbon. Please let us have a copy of the instructions you send out.

Very truly yours,

David White  
Administrative Officer

Mr. F. R. Young,  
Assistant Chief, Accounts Branch,  
Division of Budget and Finance,  
Department of State,  
Washington 25, D. C.

DWhite:JADent:agr 4/24/45  
JADent

Take up Mr. White's  
file

ADDRESS OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS TO  
THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 25

3067



DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

In reply refer to  
BF-A:BL

April 11, 1945

Executive Office of the President,  
War Refugee Board,  
Washington 25, D. C.

Attention: Mr. David White

Sirs:

There is enclosed a copy of a self-explanatory letter received from L. J. Daymont, Special Disbursing Officer, Bern, Switzerland, relative to retirement deductions from the salary of Mr. Roswell D. McClelland.

In as much as these deductions have been remitted and deposited into the Treasury, it is suggested that you instruct Mr. McClelland to file a claim with your office for refund in the amount of \$221.24. The claim should be certified to the Civil Service Commission for payment.

It will be appreciated if the Department is advised of the action taken, at which time a reply will be drafted to the last paragraph of Mr. Daymont's letter.

Very truly yours,

For the Secretary of State:

  
F. B. Young  
Assistant Chief, Accounts Branch  
Division of Budget and Finance

Enclosure:  
As stated above.



*laill*  
*Mr. Young - State Dept Ext. 432*

*1526*

*Solomon T. Sims  
Under file*

COPY

LEGATION OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Bern, February 19, 1945

F. R. Young, Esquire,  
Assistant Chief, Accounts Branch,  
Division of Budget and Finance,  
Department of State,  
Washington, D. C.

Sir:

The receipt is acknowledged of your letter of January 9, 1945, (BF-A:BL), enclosing a copy of a letter dated December 28, 1944 from the Administrative Officer of the War Refugee Board, addressed to the Chief, Division of Budget and Finance, concerning the withholding of retirement deductions from Mr. Roswell D. McClelland.

The amounts listed below, (totalling \$221.24), have been withheld from the salary of Mr. McClelland, and have been remitted to the Treasurer of the United States as part of the checks indicated:

Period.	Amount Withheld.	Remitted as part of:			C/D No.
		Check no.	Amount	Date	
April 1944	\$ 4.52	1468	\$ 500.96	5/31/44	84
May 1944	27.09	1468	500.96	5/31/44	84
June 1944	27.09	1469	563.67	6/30/44	85
July 1944	27.09	1470	27.09	7/31/44	86
August 1944	27.09	1472	971.53	8/31/44	88
Sept. 1944	27.09	1474	496.65	9/30/44	90
Oct. 1944	27.09	1476	48.14	10/31/44	92
Nov. 1944	27.09	1478	480.05	11/30/44	94
Dec. 1944	27.09	1480	848.31	12/31/44	97

Total: \$221.24

If the sum of \$221.24 is for refund to Mr. McClelland, I should appreciate being advised as to the procedure to be adopted.

Very truly yours,

L. J. Daymont,  
Special Disbursing Officer.

*Subj: Mr. McClelland*

DEPARTMENT  
OF DCG

OUTGOING

DIVISION OF  
CENTRAL SERVICES  
TELEGRAPH SECTION

STATE Distribution of true  
reading only by special arrangement. ( )  
TELEGRAM March 29, 1945  
DIVISION OF CENTRAL SERVICES 8 pm.

1945 MAR 30 PM 4 12

DC/L  
LIAISON

EMBASSY

PARIS  
1244

The following for Roswell McClelland is from War Refugee Board.

Reference your no. 1739 from Bern of March 23. Katzki is entirely at your disposal. Any arrangement you make with him will be satisfactory to Board. Advise Katzki that Andrews agrees.

GREV  
(ACTING)  
(C-1)

LRB:LMV:KG  
3/29/45

WE

DECLASSIFIED  
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72  
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 18 1972

DEPARTMENT  
OF  
STATE

INCOMING  
TELEGRAM

DIVISION OF  
CENTRAL SERVICES  
TELEGRAPH SECTION

LFG-420  
Distribution of true  
reading only by special  
arrangement. (W)

Bern

Dated March 23, 1945

Rec'd 9:30 p.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

1739, March 23, 5 p.m.

X  
FOR O'DWYER WRB FROM MCCLELLAND

Department's 998, WRB'S 438, March 9 and 1090

WRB'S 455, March 16.

Many thanks your telephone call March 21. I regret that illness prevented my going to Paris immediately on receipt your 998 but I was laid up with flu until March 20.

It would be most helpful to have Katzki in Paris in first place actively to follow up negotiations with SHAEF concerning allocation trucks tires and fuel for ICRC WRB relief and evacuation work in Germany and secondly to accelerate evacuation from Seitzerland of "Hungarian" group of 1672 refugees as well as some 700 stateless from the Resienstadt convoy. Slowness with which this has been moving is beginning to have unfavorable reaction in dealings with Swiss. It is most important at this critical time that at least a few hundred of the refugees

moved on as

DECLASSIFIED  
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72  
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 18 1972

-2-#1739, March 23, 5 p.m., from Bern

be moved on as promptly as possible in view of conceivable arrival in Switzerland shortly of unknown numbers of new evacuees. Katzki could perform most valuable service as WRB liaison man to handle such matters now and in future with SHAEF in France AFHQ in Caserta and UNRRA.

If I had someone to do this outside work who could assist me in Switzerland for a week or two from time to time I could continue swinging the job at this end without need of your sending a special WRB man to assist me full time here.

I shall discuss this whole question with Katzki and would appreciate your opinion. Please wire me in Paris.

HARRISON

WFS

— to  
Europe  
Switzerland  
1-2

MAR 19 1945

My dear Mr. Minister:

Permit me to thank you again for your sympathetic helpfulness in granting a visa for entry into Switzerland to Mr. Herbert Katzki, representative of our Board. As I explained to you over the telephone, it is of greatest importance that Mr. Katzki arrive at his post at the earliest possible moment in connection with the rescue and feeding programs our Board has undertaken in behalf of civil internees in Germany and German-occupied areas.

Your cooperation with the Board is greatly appreciated.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) William O'Dwyer

William O'Dwyer  
Executive Director

His Excellency,  
The Minister of Switzerland,  
Washington, D. C.

HK:hd 3/17/45

*Jed*

My dear Mr. Minister.

Permit me to thank you again for your sympathetic helpfulness in granting a visa for entry into Switzerland to Mr. Hubert Kazyli, representative of our Board. As I explained to you over the telephone, it is of greatest importance that Mr. Kazyli arrive at his post at the earliest possible moment in connection with the rescue and feeding programs our Board has undertaken in behalf of civil internees in Germany and German occupied areas.

Your cooperation with the Board is greatly appreciated.

Yours Excellently  
The Board of Switzerland

DEPARTMENT  
OF  
STATE

OUTGOING  
TELEGRAM

DIVISION OF  
CENTRAL SERVICES  
TELEGRAPH SECTION

*Mar 10 1946*  
March 10, 1946  
*J. G. ...*

MOK  
Distribution of this telegram  
reading only by special  
arrangement. (P. W.)  
MAR 12 AM 11 43 7 P.M.

AMERICAN

LIAISON

CONTROL COPY

1014

The following to Harrison and McClelland from  
C. Dwyer is WRB 440.

Reference Department's No. 819 of February 23,  
1946.

Since my trip to Switzerland has been delayed  
for the time being, I have decided to send Herbert  
Katzki to Switzerland temporarily to assist Dr.  
McClelland in developing program approved by Board  
members at the meeting on February 20. Mr. Katzki  
has just returned from Ankara, Turkey, where he was  
Special Representative of the Board, and is expected  
to leave United States for Switzerland very shortly.

GREW  
ACTING  
(GHH)

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

WRB:Vid:  
3/10/46

DECLASSIFIED  
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72  
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 18 1972

CABLE TO HARRISON AND McCLELLAND, BERN, FROM WILLIAM O'DYER, WAR REFUGEE BOARD

Reference Department's No. 819 of February 23, 1945.

Since my trip to Switzerland has been delayed for the time being, I have decided to send Herbert Katski to Switzerland temporarily to assist Mr. McClelland in developing program approved by Board members at the meeting on February 20. Mr. Katski has just returned from Ankara, Turkey, where he was Special Representative of the Board, and is expected to leave United States for Switzerland very shortly.

THIS IS WRB BERN CABLE NO. 440

1:30 p.m.  
March 10, 1945

Miss Chauncey (for the Sec'y), Akzin, Cohn, DuBois, Gaston, Hodel,  
Hutchison, McCormack, O'Dwyer, Files

*M* *Cleared*  
*WZLO*  
Filed 3/10/45

1095

DRAFT

CABLE TO HARRISON, BEIN, FROM WILLIAM O'DWYER, WAR REFUGEE BOARD

Reference Department's No. 219 of February 23, 1945.

Since my trip to Switzerland has been delayed for the time being, I have decided to send Herbert Katzki to Switzerland temporarily to assist Mr. McClelland in developing program approved by Board members at the meeting on February 20. Mr. Katzki has just returned from Ankara, Turkey, where he was Special Representative of the Board, and is expected to leave United States for Switzerland very shortly.

DEPARTMENT  
OF  
STATE

OUTGOING  
TELEGRAM

DIVISION OF  
CENTRAL SERVICES  
TELEGRAPH SECTION

TO: [redacted]  
Distribution of true  
reading only by special 27 PMO3pl. [redacted]

January 26, 1945

COMMUNICATIONS  
AND RECORDS  
(LINCOLN)

*War Ref Bd.  
Pehle*

AMLEGATION

BERN  
442

**CONTROL COPY**

The following for McClelland from Pehle is WRB 386.

Reference your No. 483 of January 23. We, of course, have no objection to your taking a well-earned vacation between either of the dates mentioned by you. I assume that you have made arrangements for the handling of War Refugee Board work during your absence.

GREW  
(Acting)  
( )

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

WRB:MMV:KC  
1/26/45

WE

DECLASSIFIED  
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72  
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 18 1972

10096

CABLE TO ALEGATION, BERN, FOR MCCLELLAND FROM PENLE, WAR REFUGEE BOARD

Reference your No. 483 of January 23. We, of course, have no objection to your taking a well-earned vacation between either of the dates mentioned by you. I assume that you have made arrangements for the handling of War Refugee Board work during your absence.

THIS IS WRB BERN CABLE NO. 386.

1:00 p.m.  
January 26, 1945

Miss Chauncey (for the Sec'y) Ackermann, Akzin, Cohn, Drury, DuBois,  
Gaston, Hodel, Marks, McCormack, Penle, Files

*W. Penle*  
*W. Penle*

FHrhd-1/26/45

DEPARTMENT  
OF  
STATE

INCOMING  
TELEGRAM

DIVISION OF  
CENTRAL SERVICES  
TELEGRAPH SECTION

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
DIVISION OF

LF-1450

1945 JAN 24 AM 11 38 ✓  
Bern

COMMUNICATIONS  
AND RECORDS  
(LIAISON)

Dated January 23, 1945

Rec'd 9:25 p.m.

Secretary of State,

Washington.

X  
483, Twenty-third

FOR WRB FROM MCCLELLAND ✓

With the Board's consent I should very much like  
to take a short vacation between either January 29 and  
February 6 or latter date and February 14.

HUDDLE

JT

**CONTROL COPY**

December 28, 1944

Chief, Division of Budget and Finance  
Department of State  
Washington, D. C.

Attention: Accounts Branch

Dear Sir:

In the examination of vouchers submitted in the account of Mr. L. J. Daymont and Mr. Robert F. Kelly at Bern and Ankara, respectively, it has been noted that retirement deductions have been withheld from the salary of War Refugee Board representatives assigned to the embassies at those points. It has not been our intention to have such deductions made as the services of these people were expected to endure for a brief period, not in excess of one year. At other posts where we have representatives, retirement deductions have not been made.

Mr. Roswell D. McClelland at Bern and Miss Mary H. Bixler at Ankara have had no previous Government employment. Mrs. Virginia D. Henderson is on leave from the Treasury Department, Comptroller of Currency Office. Mrs. Henderson we know is interested in the continuation of retirement deductions, but the most convenient way to handle this would be upon her return to pay up the amount required for her overseas employment. I am today writing to Mrs. Henderson informing her that no retirement deductions will be made for her service overseas and that when she returns it will be necessary for her to pay into the retirement fund the necessary amount to bring her up to date. This arrangement meets with the approval of her superiors in the Comptroller of the Currency Office. From our examination of Mr. Kelly's accounts, the deductions for retirement have not been deposited into the Retirement Fund nor have we been charged for those amounts.

Following up the telephone conversation with Mr. Young of your office I shall appreciate your immediately notifying the offices at Bern and Ankara to discontinue further retirement deductions from salaries and to repay in a subsequent payroll the amounts already withheld.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) David White  
David White  
Administrative Officer

DWhite:ar 12/28/44

*John F. ...*

TREASURY DEPARTMENT

INTER OFFICE COMMUNICATION

DATE  
December 22, 1944

TO Mr. White  
FROM James A. Dent

Subject: Retirement Deductions for Certain Employees in Foreign Countries

ROSWELL D. McCLELLAND - BERN, SWITZERLAND

In the examination of the vouchers submitted in the accounts of L.J. Daymont, Bern, Switzerland, it has been noted that retirement deductions have been withheld from the salary of Roswell D. McClelland. The amounts withheld have been deposited by Mr. Daymont in the Civil Service Retirement, and Disability Fund. It is my understanding from you that it was not the intention to have such deductions made, as Mr. McClelland expected service was to be for a brief period, not in excess of one year. It would seem desirable to have the State Department make proper adjustment, withdrawing the amounts placed in the Retirement Fund and making payment thereof to Mr. McClelland, and of course, discontinue any further deductions.

VIRGINIA D. HENDERSON -- ANKARA, TURKEY  
MARY HARRIET BIXLER

In the examination of the accounts from Robert F. Kelley, at Ankara, Turkey, it has been noted that deductions for retirement from the salaries of both Miss Henderson and Miss Bixler have been made. In this case, however, the amounts of such deductions have not been deposited into the Retirement Fund nor have we been charged for the amounts thereof. So far, no arrangements have been made for the handling of the amounts withheld from the salaries, and it is my understanding from State that it is not their intention to do anything more than just pay the net salary to these employees, leaving the matter of retirement deductions to us to handle. As far as Miss Bixler is concerned, it is my understanding that she is in approximately the same position as Mr. McClelland, and there appears no necessity for withholding retirement deductions. If you concur in this, it would be possible to have State pay in a subsequent payroll the amounts already withheld, and of course, include the amount so paid when claiming subsequent reimbursement, and this matter would be cleared up.

With regard to Miss Henderson, there are some complications, as she is an employee of the Comptroller of the Currency, and I am advised that as such, she is subject to the Civil Service Retirement Act. Several alternate suggestions are offered, however.

1. Instruct State to make payment of the retirement deductions withheld to Miss Henderson, and pay her full salary, then have the Comptroller of the Currency, after Miss Henderson's return, through a payroll adjustment, make the retirement deductions for the entire period of her service for War Refugee Board and claim reimbursement therefor.

*John - Mr. White's  
File*

2. Have the deductions withheld by State, deposited in the Retirement Fund, as suggested to you by Mr. Young of that Department, and the Comptroller of the Currency could obtain a report of such deductions made and record them on her retirement account. This may involve some adjustment in the Retirement Accounts between State and Treasury.
3. State could continue to pay her exclusive of retirement deductions, and have the Comptroller of the Currency deposit the retirement deductions through their payroll currently, claiming reimbursement from the Board for the amount thereof.

It is my suggestion that you discuss this matter with Mr. Miller, of the Comptroller of the Currency's office, and work out with him and the State Department the most desirable procedure to be followed.

In conclusion, of the accounts which I have received from the State Department for payments to Board representatives abroad, these cases are the only ones in which retirement deductions have been withheld. I will appreciate your advising me as to what arrangements are worked out in this matter, and if I can be of any further assistance to you, please call on me.

*James A. Dent*

*Exec. to Secy*



LEGATION OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

AIR MAIL  
UNRESTRICTED

Bern, November 28, 1944.

Dear Mr. Pehle:

In reply to the Department's 3924 of November 18, 1944 8 p.m. I am pleased to enclose for the information of the War Refugee and the Department of State three copies of a list of the office equipment (including date of purchase of each item and cost, as well as condition) which has been purchased by the War Refugee Board, American Legation, Bern.

Very sincerely yours,

*Roswell D. McClelland*

Roswell D. McClelland  
Special Assistant to  
the American Minister.

Enclosure: 3  
copies of inventory  
of WRB office equipment

John W. Pehle, Esquire  
Executive Director,  
War Refugee Board,  
Washington 25, D. C.

INVENTORY OF OFFICE EQUIPMENT PURCHASED BY THE WAR REFUGEE BOARD,  
AMERICAN LEGATION, BERN, SWITZERLAND.  
NOVEMBER 24, 1944.

<u>Date of Purchase:</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Condition</u>
		15	
		\$220.70	Excellent
May 24, 1944.	1 Halda typewriter.	90.03	"
May 24, 1944.	1 Four-drawer steel filing cabinet.	43.66	"
June 30, 1944.	1 Portable Hermes-Baby typewriter.	93.62	"
July 19, 1944.	1 Secretarial desk.	96.28	"
July 19, 1944.	1 Secretarial desk.	82.95	"
July 19, 1944.	3 Arm chairs, each \$27.65	58.16	"
July 19, 1944.	1 Typist desk.	43.42	"
July 19, 1944.	1 Library table.	22.32	"
July 19, 1944.	1 Typist chair.	7.98	"
Oct. 6, 1944.	1 Desk lamp.		

DEPARTMENT  
OF  
STATE

Distribution of  
this message only to  
Special Agents of

OUTGOING  
TELEGRAM

DIVISION OF  
COMMUNICATIONS  
AND RECORDS

1944 NOV 19 AM 11 10

COMMUNICATIONS  
AND RECORDS  
(LIAISON)

AMLEGATION

BERN  
3924

The cable below for McClelland is WRB 282.

Please furnish us for our records office equip-  
ment inventory, approximate value each item and  
indication of each item's condition.

STETTINUS  
ACTING  
(GLE)

CONTROL COPY

WRB:MAV:KG  
11/18/44

WE

DECLASSIFIED  
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72  
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 18 1972

11096

CABLE TO MINISTER HARRISON, BERN, FOR MCCLELLAND FROM WAR REFUGEE BOARD

For our records, please furnish us office equipment inventory and approximate value each item. Also indicate condition of each article.

THIS IS WRB BERN CABLE NO. 282/

2:00 p.m.  
November 17, 1944

Miss Chauncey (for the Sec'y) Abrahamson, Ackermann, Conn, DuBois, Friedman,  
Hodel, Lessef, Lannon, McCormack, Files  
DWhite:hmd 11/15/44

*hmd*

*MYM VBF*

*I was by Bd  
Mrs Peble*

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Legation, Bern  
TO: Secretary of State, Washington  
DATED: August 19, 1944  
NUMBER: 5389  
X

**CONTROL COPY**

McClellan sends the following for Peale, War Refugee Board.  
Reference is made herewith to Department's cable of August 15, no. 2905.

I want to thank you for your kind and encouraging expression of appreciation for my work. It is regrettable that it has not been possible for me to obtain more far reaching results in our effort here in Switzerland to bring to safety people in danger of their lives in so many countries of Nazi-occupied Europe. Tangible results are difficult to achieve in view of the impossibility of direct relations with reliable contacts in enemy and enemy-occupied territory. During the coming critical months when Nazi repression promises to intensify in ruthlessness, our difficulties may increase. Nevertheless, the effort of our Government through WMB to help victims of Nazi persecution continues visibly to encourage a great many hardy tried people to hold out until effective relief can be brought to them.

HARRISON

DCR:VAG 8/21/44

DECLASSIFIED  
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72  
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 18 1972

7 0 0 4 7

*Edward P. Board*  
*Mr. Pehle*

ORIGINAL TEXT OF TELEGRAM SENT

FROM: Secretary of State, Washington  
TO: American Legation, Bern  
DATED: August 14, 1944  
NUMBER 2805

**CONTROL COPY**

Please deliver the following personal message from  
Mr. Pehle to McClelland:

QUOTE In the course of a recent review of our activities  
I have been impressed with the efficient and wise manner in  
which you have handled the large number of complicated  
War Refugee Board problems that have come your way. I sin-  
cerely appreciate all you are doing and I congratulate you on  
your performance in what is undoubtedly one of the most  
difficult assignments in the field UNQUOTE

THIS IS WRB BERN CABLE NO. 123

HULL

DECLASSIFIED  
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72  
By R. H. [unclear] Date SEP 18 1972

700971

5000  
Transfer to JSA  
RECEIVED  
AUG 15 1944  
OFFICE OF THE  
DIRECTOR

CABLE TO HARRISON, BERN, FROM WAR REFUGEE BOARD

Please deliver the following personal message from  
Mr. Pehle to McClelland:

QUOTE In the course of a recent review of our activities  
I have been impressed with the efficient and wise manner in  
which you have handled the large number of complicated War  
Refugee Board problems that have come your way. I sincerely  
appreciate all you are doing and I congratulate you on your  
performance in what is undoubtedly one of the most difficult  
assignments in the field UNQUOTE

THIS IS WRR BERN CABLE NO. 123

5:10 p.m.  
August 14, 1944

Miss Chauncey (for the Sec'y) Abrahamson, Cohn, DuBois, Friedman,  
Hodel, Laughlin, Lesser, Mann, Mannon, McCormack, Cable Control Files

JJA  
FH:lab 8/5/44

*2 war ref. file*

ORIGINAL TEXT OF TELEGRAM SENT

FROM: Secretary of State, Washington  
TO: American Legation, Bern  
DATED: June 16, 1944  
NUMBER: 2076 X

**CONTROL COPY**

From War Refugee Board to Minister Harrison, Bern, Switzerland for McClelland.

Herbert Katzki and Ira Hirschmann are en route to Turkey as representatives of the War Refugee Board. They would appreciate hearing from McClelland on mutual problems. McClelland can communicate with them in care of American Embassy, Ankara.

Please advise Saly Mayer, St. Gallen, about Katzki and also that Katzki would like to hear from him. Katzki requests that Mayer advise friends, particularly Gizi Willy Blum Gurevitch.

THIS IS WRB CABLE TO BERN NO. 47.

HULL

DECLASSIFIED  
State Dept. Letter, 4-11-72  
By R. H. Fuka Date SEP 18 1972

70097



Excerpt from a Report to the State Department by the  
Consulate General in Zurich dated December 14, 1938

10. The Refugee Problem

After the annexation of Austria large numbers of emigrants entered Switzerland illegally. It was reported that for a time the German authorities themselves encouraged the smuggling of Jews into this country, apparently with a view to fomenting anti-Semitic feeling.

Jewish emigrants are now admitted into Switzerland only temporarily and only if they are in possession of a passport properly visaed by a Swiss Consulate. Emigrants caught crossing the frontier illegally are sent back to Germany, also illegally, usually at night. According to the local authorities 50 to 60 emigrants are deported in this manner to Germany and Italy each month.

A fine distinction is made between ordinary emigrants and political refugees. The former may remain in this country only until arrangement is made for their transportation elsewhere; they are strictly prohibited from accepting work or engaging in any form of business. On the other hand, the traditional privilege of asylum is still being accorded to the latter. They may remain in this country indefinitely and are permitted to work. It is understood, however, that the right of political asylum is seldom granted.

At present there are about 5,000 German and Austrian Jews in Switzerland. Of this number one-half is in the city of Zurich alone. As they are not permitted to work, those without money are supported by Jewish and other welfare organizations. Neither the Federal Government nor the local authorities are contributing to their maintenance.

While there is no danger that these emigrants will swell unemployment, violation of the regulation prohibiting work being punishable by a fine and deportation to Germany, many difficulties stand in the way of their transportation to another country for permanent settlement. In the event of war, even if Switzerland should remain neutral, the presence of a large number of refugees would doubtless be a severe burden for a country threatened with shortage of food, apart from other complications.