

Programs with Respect to Relief  
and Rescue of Refugees: Temporary  
Havens

Temporary Havens in North Africa:  
Tripolitania & Cyrenaica

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
WAR REFUGEE BOARD

INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION

DATE August 26, 1944

TO : Mr. Joseph B. Friedman

FROM : Milton Sargoy

Re: Acceptability of Jews in proposed  
refugee camp in Tripolitania.

I have looked through the file on proposed refugee camps in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica and have been unable to discover any indication that Jews would not be admissible to those camps. On the contrary, it appears that it was understood from the beginning that Jews would be acceptable. When Mr. Long first broached the matter to the British Ambassador, Sir Ronald Campbell, on January 11, 1944, before the War Refugee Board was created, he implied that it would benefit the Jews by pointing out that such camps would "take pressure off of the British Government to admit persons to Palestine" (see Department cable 371 of January 14, 1944 to London). In a letter to Secretary Morgenthau, dated February 1, 1944, Mr. Stettinius in referring the project to the Board specifically stated that it was for the purpose of assisting Jews and other refugees.

*Milton Sargoy*

AUG 7 1944

Dear Mr. Leavitt:

The following message for you from Doctor Schwartz (JDC No. 41) has been received through the American Embassy in Lisbon:

"Mardchal Kessler Algiers advises repatriation remaining Tripolitanian refugees now French North Africa being carried out. Since shipping not presently available seventy three have recently departed from Tunis by car and ninety nine leaving next (a) days. Balance of Tripolitanians in Tunis Sfax, Algeria and Morocco being transported train to Tunis where they will be required stay thirty days for clearance before proceeding Tripolitania by motor vehicles. Expense of travel by car adult is 1000 francs which we understand being borne by British government."

(a) apparent omission.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) J. W. Fehle

J. W. Fehle  
Executive Director

Mr. M. A. Leavitt, Secretary,  
American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee,  
270 Madison Avenue,  
New York, New York.

*Outdated copy  
SDP reviewed  
in files*

WHD:ldg 8/7/44

DEPARTMENT  
OF  
STATE

INCOMING  
TELEGRAM

DIVISION OF  
COMMUNICATIONS  
AND RECORDS

FBM-458

PLAIN

Lisbon

Dated August 3, 1944

Rec'd 6:17 a.m., 4th.

*7- War Ref  
Bel (Mr.  
Belk)*

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

AUG 3 1944

**CONTROL COPY**

2396, August 3, 1 p.m.

FOR LEAVITT FROM SCHWARTZ. WRB 136 JDC 41.

Mordecai Kessler Algiers advised repatriation remaining Tripolitanian refugees now French North Africa being carried out. Since shipping not presently available seventy three have recently departed from Tunis by car and ninety nine leaving next (\*) days. Balance of Tripolitanians in Tunis Sfax, Algeria and Morocco being transported train to Tunis where they will be required stay thirty days for clearance before proceeding Tripolitania by motor vehicles. Expense of travel by car adult is 1000 francs which we understand being borne by British Government.

*8/7/44  
Wor...*

NORWEB

RR

(\*) apparent omission

*I was by Mr. Ede*

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FROM

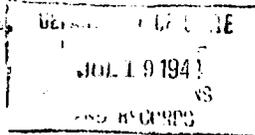
LONDON.

Dated July 13, 1944.

RECD. July 19, 2 pm

UNRESTRICTED.

SECRETARY OF STATE,  
WASHINGTON.  
A-851.



FOR THE WAR REFUGEE BOARD.

Following is complete text from Hansard of the statement given in the House of Commons yesterday by Foreign Secretary Ede in response to a question on a haven for war refugees in Libya:

"EUROPEAN REFUGEES (CAMP, TRIPOLITANIA)

"Mr. Graham White asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he can give the House any information with regard to arrangements for a haven for war refugees in Libya.

"Mr. Ede: Yes, Sir. In consequence of the increasing number of refugees arriving from various parts of Europe, His Majesty's Government have been concerned to find suitable places of

"temporary/

A-851

-2-

July 18, 1944,  
FROM LONDON.

"temporary accommodation in addition to those already arranged. It has been decided to set aside a camp in Tripolitania where some 2,000 refugees can be accommodated until it is possible to send them back to their homes, or otherwise find them places of permanent residence. This, like all His Majesty's Government's activities in regard to refugees, was undertaken in consultation with the United States Government, who are co-operating fully in questions of staff and maintenance.

"Mr. White: Can the right hon. Gentleman say if the arrangements that have so far been made are temporary war-time arrangements, and there is no question of any permanent settlement; and I presume what he says also applies to the Russian front?

"Mr. Eden: I am not sure about the last part of my hon. Friend's supplementary question. This is a war-time arrangement."

WINANT

MR. ALLISON  
JMA:LZ

*was Ref Board*  
*Mr. Poble*  
*1 copy only*

ORIGINAL TEXT OF TELEGRAM SENT

FROM: Secretary of State, Washington  
TO: American Embassy, London  
DATED: June 23, 1944  
NUMBER: 4948  
X

**CONTROL COPY**

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

FROM THE WAR REFUGEE BOARD FOR AMBASSADOR WINANT, LONDON

Please refer to your 4745 of June 14 concerning desire of Foreign Office to receive suggestions of War Refugee Board with respect to personnel and funds for administration of refugee camp in Tripolitania.

It is difficult to make suggestions referred to by Randall without having the details requested in our 4753 of June 15. We would appreciate receiving an urgent reply to our cable under reference.

HULL

RECEIVED  
WAR REFUGEE BOARD  
DIVISION OF D.C.  
JUN 25 5 22 AM '44

DECLASSIFIED  
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-73  
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 20 1972

**CABLE TO AMBASSADOR VINEY, LONDON, FROM THE WAR REFUGEE BOARD**

Please refer to your 4705 of June 14 concerning desire of Foreign Office to receive suggestions of War Refugee Board with respect to personnel and funds for administration of refugee camp in Tripolitania.

It is difficult to make suggestions referred to by Randall without having the details requested in our 4753 of June 15. We would appreciate receiving an urgent reply to our cable under reference.

\*\*\*\*\*

June 22, 1944  
9:55 a.m.

CC: Miss Chauncey (for the Sec'y), Abrahamson, Cohn, DuBois,  
Friedman, Medal, Laughlin, Lesser, Mann, Stewart, Central Files,  
Cable Control Files.

MEM:bbk - 6/21/44

*Myjm*

ORIGINAL TEXT OF TELEGRAM SENT

FROM: Secretary of State, Washington  
TO: American Embassy, London  
DATED: June 15, 1944  
NUMBER: 4753

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Pelle  
**CONTROL COPY**

[REDACTED]  
FROM WAR REFUGEE BOARD TO AMBASSADOR WINANT, IN LONDON

Please refer to your 4586 of June 7.

We are gratified that the British Government has agreed to the establishment of a refugee camp in Tripolitania capable of accommodating between 1000 to 1500 persons. Please convey the Board's appreciation to the Foreign Office.

The Board now awaits British suggestions as to the practical measures required for the joint establishment of the refugee camp in Tripolitania. It is assumed that we shall be advised in the immediate future of the exact location of the proposed camp, together with a detailed description of what is necessary and the time required to put the camp in condition to receive refugees.

With regard to the question of medical and administrative personnel one possibility is to request UNRRA to administer the camp as in the case of Camp Lyautey. If this is acceptable to the British, we shall be glad to approach the UNRRA representatives in Washington on this matter.

Because of the large numbers of refugees arriving daily in Southern Italy from Yugoslavia, the question of havens is particularly urgent at the present time. It is therefore hoped

DECLASSIFIED  
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72  
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 20 1972

that the

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that the Tripolitania refugee project will now move forward  
with maximum speed. Please urge the British to furnish us as  
quickly as possible with the details requested above.

HULL

UNCLASSIFIED BY 60812/STP/RS  
ON 07/22/2010 08:58:59  
BY SP-4 JLD/STP/RS

CABLE FROM WAR REFUGEE BOARD TO AMBASSADOR WINANT, IN LONDON

Please refer to your 4556 of June 7.

We are gratified that the British Government has agreed to the establishment of a refugee camp in Tripolitania capable of accommodating between 1000 to 1500 persons. Please convey the Board's appreciation to the Foreign Office.

The Board now awaits British suggestions as to the practical measures required for the joint establishment of the refugee camp in Tripolitania. It is assumed that we shall be advised in the immediate future of the exact location of the proposed camp, together with a detailed description of what is necessary and the time required to put the camp in condition to receive refugees.

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This is War Refugee Board cable to London No. \_\_\_\_\_.

\*\*\*\*\*  
June 14, 1944  
10:40 a.m.

*Handwritten initials and date: JLD 6/22/44*

DECLASSIFIED  
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72  
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 20 1972

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Embassy, London ✓  
TO: Secretary of State, Washington  
DATED: June 14, 1944  
NUMBER: 4745  
x

CC. [unclear] COPY

<sup>There</sup> It was mentioned yesterday in the DAILY MAIL and the TIMES the action of the American Government in establishing a refugee camp at Fort Ontario, Oswego, New York as outlined in Department's message dated June 12 No. 4641, from the War Refugee Board. It is stated by the London office of OWI that it has been carrying the story in its broadcasts to enemy occupied and neutral countries and it has agreed to stress the significance of the President's action in opening this refugee camp.

On June 12 we discussed with Randall, head of the Refugee Department of the Foreign Office, the possible availability of Cyprus as a refugee haven. He said that the British Government had been informed by the governor of that territory that no more refugees could be accommodated because of the large number of Greek refugees who had fled to Cyprus. Randall felt that it would be absolutely useless to look to Cyprus for assistance. It was stated by him that all possibilities were being considered by the British Government and he was trying to do everything in his power to find havens of refuge for those who can escape from German occupied areas.

During the course of the conversation with Randall on

DECLASSIFIED  
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72

June 12,

By R. H. Parks Date SEP 20 1972

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June 12, he referred to the fact that the British had agreed to the opening of a refugee camp in Tripolitani, as reported in Embassy's cable of June 7, No. 4556, and he expressed again the wish of the Foreign Office to receive suggestions from the War Refugee Board with respect to personnel and funds for this camp's administration.



WINANT

JUN 12 1944

RECEIVED  
MAY 12 1944

K-20

RECAPITULATION OF TELEGRAMS RECEIVED

FROM: American Embassy, London  
TO: Secretary of State, Washington  
DATED: June 7, 1944  
NUMBER: 4566

**CONTROL COPY**

*Handwritten notes:*  
June 11/44  
D. C. [unclear]  
copy only

Reference is made herewith to Department's cables of March 25, No. 2292, and of April 22, No. 3243, for the War Refugee Board.

We have just received a letter from the Foreign Office saying that the British Government agreed to the setting up of a refugee camp in Tripolitania.

The letter from the Foreign Office goes on to suggest that it will be necessary to consider what practical measures will be required for the working out of this scheme on the basis of joint maintenance, et cetera, to be shared between the American and British Governments.

It has been stated orally by Randall, head of the Refugee Department of the Foreign Office, that he is of the opinion that this camp in Tripolitania will be able to accommodate between 1,000 and 1,500 people. The securing of adequate medical and administrative personnel will be the greatest difficulty and we invite the suggestions of the War Refugee Board with respect to this question. It was further confidentially stated by Randall that the political problems involved in setting up a camp in Cyrenaica are so acute that the Foreign Office had reluctantly come to the conclusion that to establish a camp <sup>there</sup> is absolutely impossible.

RECEIVED  
JUN 10 1944  
STATE DEPT.

WINANT  
DECLASSIFIED  
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72  
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 20 1972

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
WAR REFUGEE BOARD

To: \_\_\_\_\_  
(1) ~~Mr. J. Macka~~ ..... 176 ..... (Room) (Side)  
(2) ~~Mr. J. Macka~~ ..... (Room) (Side)  
(3) ..... (Room) (Side)

Have you read the book, as well as all  
the other information sent?

*I have read both the book  
and the information 5/12/44 MFM*

From: *S. B. Friedman* ..... (Room) (Side)

MAY 20 1944

Dear Mr. Liebman:

I am returning under separate cover your book,  
"Fourth Shore". Thank you very kindly for your cooperation.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) J. W. Pehle

J. W. Pehle,  
Executive Director

Mr. Charles J. Liebman, President,  
Refugee Economic Corporation,  
570 Lexington Avenue,  
New York, New York.

MSB:MSW:bbk - 5/1/44

my m

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
WAR REFUGEE BOARD  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

OFFICE OF THE  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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"Fourth Shore". Please <sup>think you very kindly</sup> ~~accept once again~~ my appreciation  
for your cooperation.

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J. W. Fehle,  
Executive Director.

Mr. Charles J. Liebman, President,  
Refugee Economic Corporation,  
570 Lexington Avenue,  
New York, New York.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
WAR REFUGEE BOARD

INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION

DATE April 29, 1944

TO : Mr. Mathew J. Marks

FROM : R. L. Smith

The booklet submitted by Refugee Economic Corporation contained very little that is not already in our files and what little there was is not particularly adapted to our purpose since it apparently is concerned with a permanent settlement project rather than a temporary haven.

"Fourth Shore" by Martin Moore published in England in 1940 contains a little useful information concerning conditions in general, although no information published prior to the North African campaigns is too helpful. On page 66 the author states that "while Tripoli is unmistakably African, Cirenaica belongs by its vegetation and its soil rather to the Isles of Greece". "It has been described as a piece of Europe stuck onto the steppes and deserts of Africa." The chief part of Cirenaica habitable by Europeans consists of two plateaus extending between Benghazi and Derna, about 100 miles long and 20 miles wide. The summers on these plateaus are milder and they are not subject to the typical burning desert wind of North Africa; on the other hand, winters are somewhat more severe than in the lower sections.

These plateaus (Page 171) were previously sparsely populated by semi-nomads who were displaced by Balbo. Since it is reported that the Italians have largely left Cirenaica, this region may be substantially unoccupied at the present time unless the Arab nomads have since returned.

Nine villages have been built in this area, each boasting a central school building, a massive church, and a town hall capable of accommodating the entire Italian local population. Such centers, if unpopulated now, might serve as a nucleus for temporary refugee camps. This is particularly so of the settlements which boast hospital facilities and troop barracks. Theoretically, these plateaus, the climate of which more closely approximates that of Europe, would be preferable as sites for refugees in

view of the fact that the typical refugee would probably be in poor health and in need of rehabilitation and should not be subjected to the added strain of acclimating himself to a rather severe climate.

The only recent information I have been able to uncover on present conditions is contained in a special wire to the New York Times (2/29/44) which reports that only 128 Italians were left in Cirenaica after the Eighth Army drove through Tripoli last year, but there are still 40,000 Italians in Tripolitania plus 20,000 Jews residing in coastal cities. In Cirenaica as opposed to Tripolitania, the Arabs have a high degree of political cohesion, 95% being Senussi. The Senussis were forcibly evicted by Graziani and a good many of the leaders were thrown into jail resulting in fierce hatred of the Italians. Those of the Senussis who escaped to Egypt recruited five Arab battalions who aided the British in the Libyan campaign. As a result the British are undoubtedly obligated to them and the old Palestine story of Arab vs. Jew will probably be repeated.

From a political point of view prospects look better in Tripolitania since the Arabs there have few outstanding leaders, no united front, and very little voice in the government. During the military campaigns in North Africa some 2,000 Jews were interned at a camp at Giado which is south west of Tripoli. These people were liberated by the British after considerable suffering. Facilities here might be capable of expansion to accommodate larger numbers.

I have no information concerning conditions at the camp except that during the last hectic days of the recent campaign the Italians apparently forgot or were unable to furnish food to the camp with the result that large numbers are reported to have starved.

The British have publicly announced that the Senussis will never again be permitted to fall under Italian rule, indicating the possibility of an agreement concerning Cirenaica. It is expected that the Senussis will seek the establishment of a semi-autonomous state in Cirenaica after the war. Such a move was also urged by the Moslem League at Karachi, India in December, 1943. In the light of such prospects the Arab population of Cirenaica would undoubtedly strenuously oppose the establishment of even temporary refugee havens no matter what commitments we might make for the future evacuation of refugees.

Extract from Page 110 of Fourth Shore by Martin Moore

"Such are the characteristics of the various forms: small, intensively cultivated holdings in the artesian well area near Misurata; larger farms where only partial irrigation is possible west of Tripoli; bigger ones in Cyrenaica, where rainfall alone must suffice; largest of all at Bravigliani, where cultivation must be almost entirely dry."

April 29, 1944

: Mr. Mathew J. Marks

: R. L. Smith

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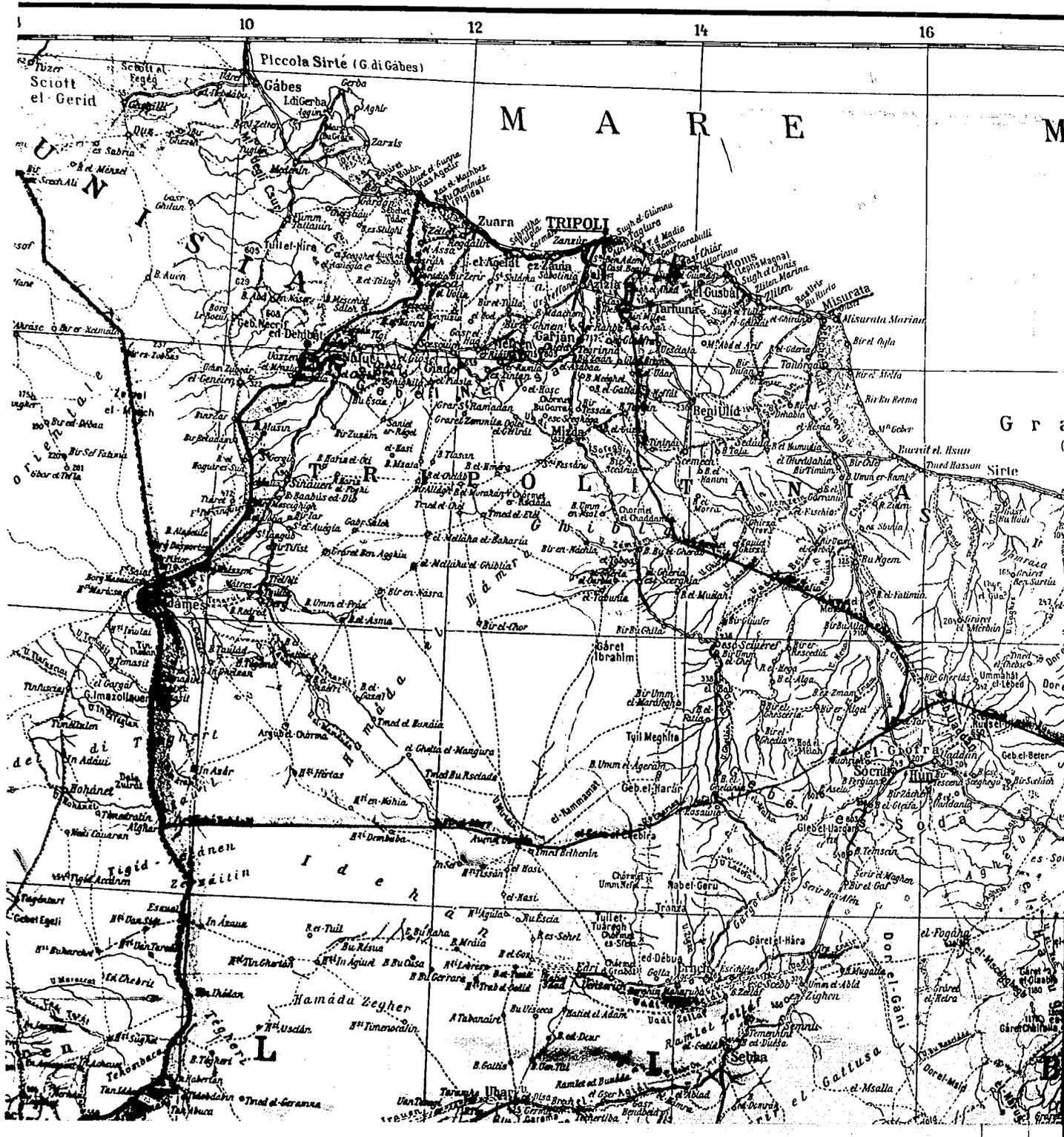
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RLSmith:dh 4/29/44 RLS

Settlement in Libya  
**WAR REFUGEE BOARD RECORDS**  
Refugee Economic Corporation  
April 24, 1944.

**BEST AVAILABLE COPY**

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# SIA

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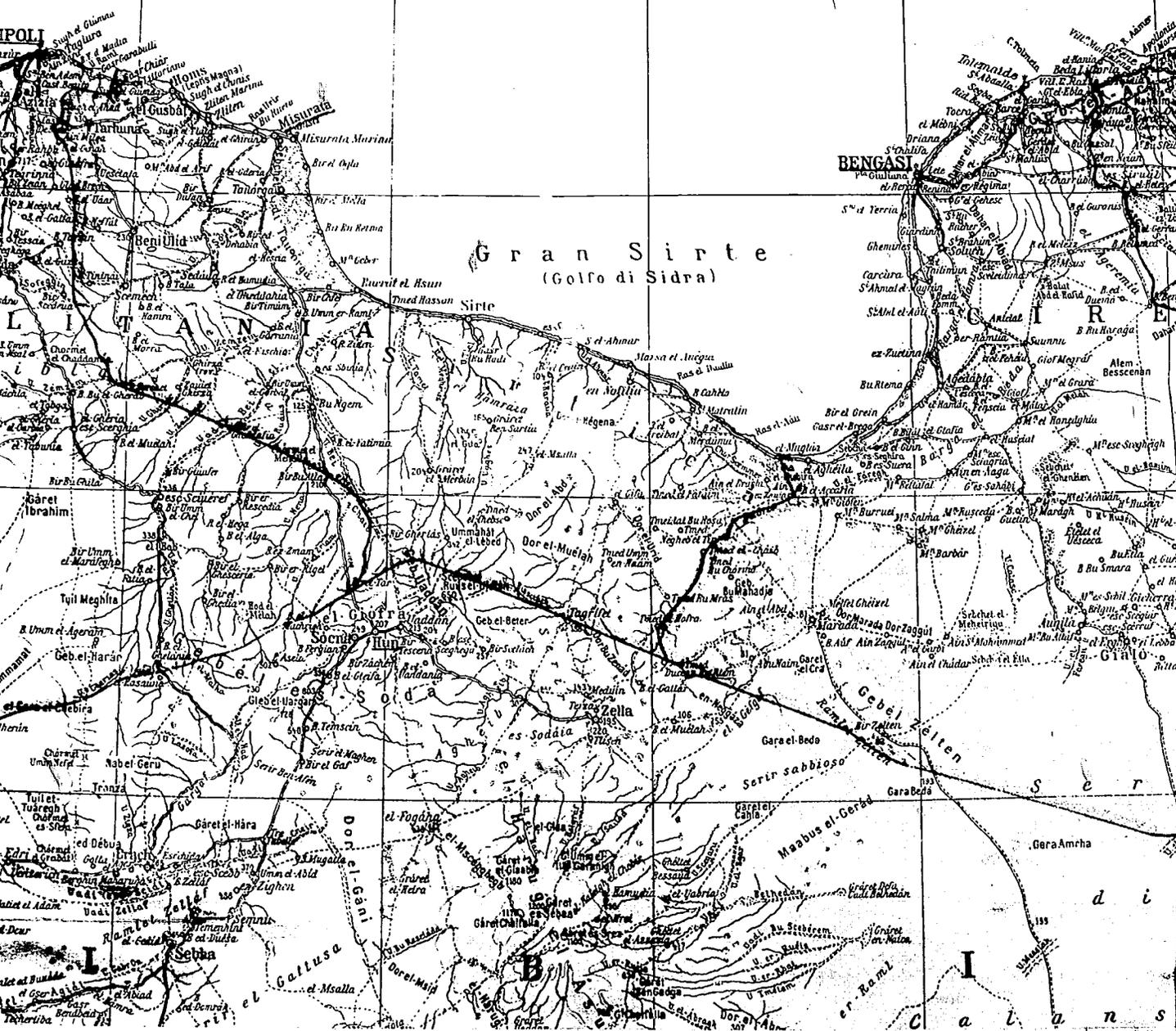
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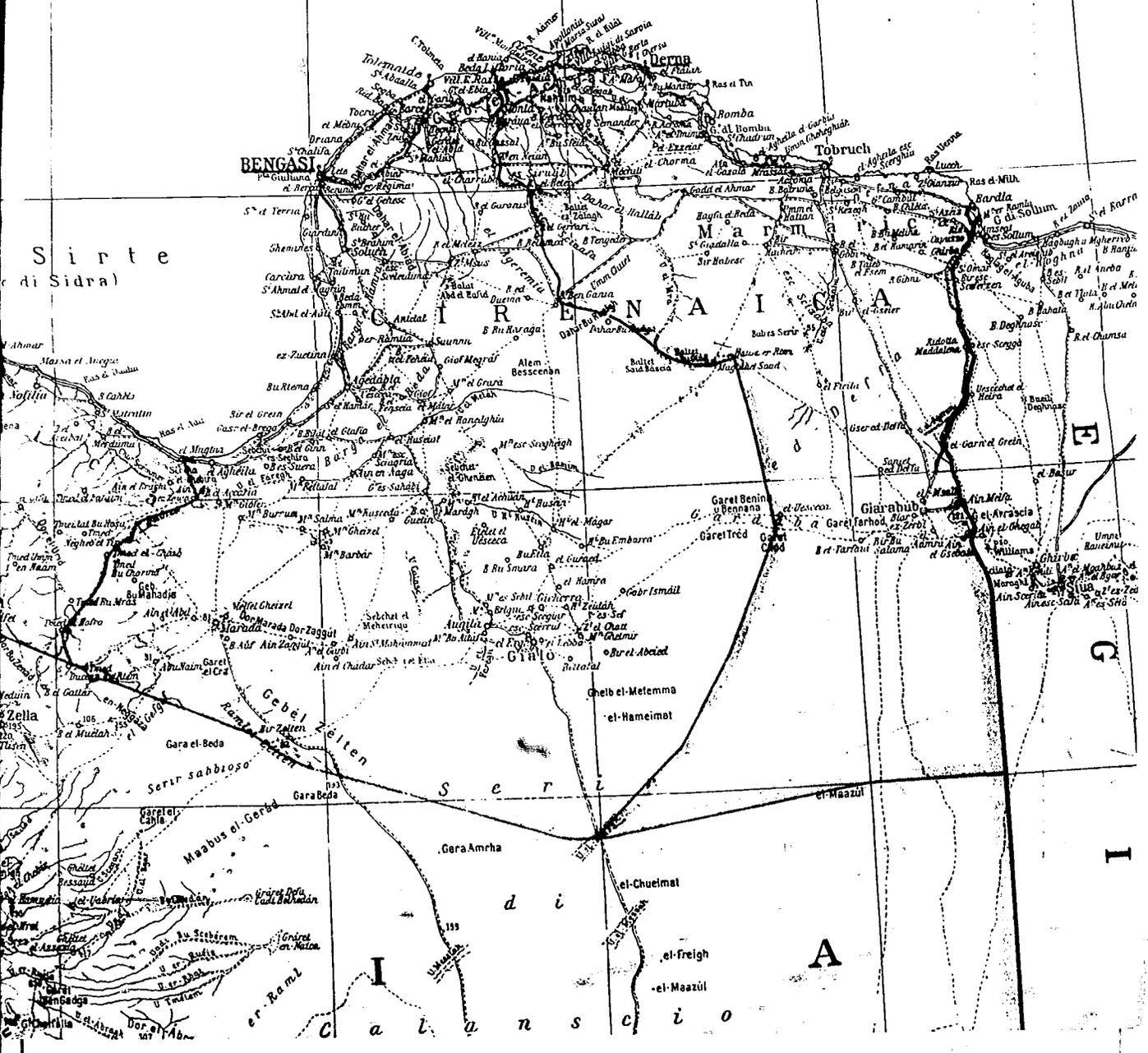
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E D I T E R R A N E O



BENGASI

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S e r i z

C a l a n s c i o

## SETTLEMENT IN LIBYA

### Desert water.

In any desert, water is easily recognized as a dominating factor of life. The hinterland of Libya, practically devoid of moisture, is a vast empty space. The climate is essentially Saharan. Only certain areas receive rain often enough for it to be valuable to man and to other forms of life. In particular, the narrow coastal plains and hills of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica are blessed with fairly regular winter rainfall. There are also numerous springs and some easily accessible underground water to sustain a settled population. Thus, when speaking of colonization in Libya, one naturally has in mind these water favored regions of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica.

### Tripolitania and Cyrenaica.

The two provinces of northern Libya are separated by the Gulf of Sirte. Tripolitania is situated across the Mediterranean from Italy. Cyrenaica is opposite Greece. To the west of Tripolitania lies Tunisia. To the east of Cyrenaica is Egypt. The southern boundaries fade away into the lifeless desert, with only here and there an occasional oasis -- the stopping place of sheep and goat herding Arabian and Berber nomads.

Such place names as Tobruk, Derna, Bengazi, El Agueila, Misurata, Homs and Tripoli stand out in recent memory as the line of Montgomery's pursuit of the erstwhile Afrika Korps from the Egyptian border to Tunisia and to its brief last stand on the Cape Bon peninsula. It is mostly near these same towns

and slightly inland from them that the habitable regions of the two provinces are located.

Population.

All of Libya has a population of less than one million according to 1938 estimates. Of this number about 85.9% are native Mohammedans, 3.4% native Jews, 10% Italians, and about 0.7% other Europeans. The average population density is about 1.3 per square mile. The largest cities are Tripoli and Benghazi with estimated populations of 108,000 and 64,000 respectively. Misurata has a population of 45,000, Homs 34,000, and Berna 21,000. Thus, over a third of the population is urban, comprising, it may be assumed, the majority of the Europeans as well as a large share of the Moslems. Of the native Jews only a small number are found in a few ancient Jewish agricultural communities in the Jebel, assertedly founded by immigrants from Palestine shortly after the destruction of Jerusalem. The majority of these native Jews have drifted to the towns a long time ago and are now largely engaged in commercial pursuits.

Agriculture.

The native Moslems outside of the cities are made up of wandering Berbers and Arabs. An undetermined number of settled Arabs are also engaged in rather primitive forms of agriculture. One such mode of farming called "suani" consists of tilling what amounts to small irrigated gardens devoted chiefly to the growing of barley -- the natives' staple food -- and to some extent wheat, and also to the cultivation of date palms. The "gunanat" or dry system of agriculture in the more arid regions

produces mostly olives and almonds.

The agricultural activities of the recent Italian settlers could have offered an excellent opportunity to observe how far modern agricultural knowledge might improve upon the primitive methods of the natives. Some 1800 specially selected families composed of some 20,000 persons were brought in in 1938.

Attempts at Empire Building.

The planting of these Italian colonists in Libya was an ambitious undertaking sponsored by Mussolini and partially carried out under the guidance of Marshall Balbo. It was planned and initiated in a grandiose, almost pompous manner, with demonstrations, bombastic speeches and promises: some eloquent pledges, marches, farewell parades and triumphant receptions at the points of arrival. The project was marked by a painstaking attention to details hardly paralleled in the history of colonization.

La Litorania - the Coastal Highway.

All of the land was cleared and plowed beforehand with the aid of native Arab labor. Standardized, modern dwellings were erected on each prospective farmstead, as well as the necessary civic centers with their commercial establishments, churches, schools, hospitals and other community buildings. Extensive road construction was carried out, including the completion of the now famous military highway stretching for a distance of 1132 miles along the Mediterranean coast from the Tunisian to the Egyptian border, with spurs leading to the various new settlements.

Aside from the extravagant display of showmanship and the quest for publicity, there was unquestionably a genuine attempt to assure the success of the project. The newly arrived colonists found their fields planted, their barns stocked, even their pantries and cupboards supplied with provisions for an immediate commencement of a normal household life.

The chief products planned were olive oil, grapes, wheat, barley, alfalfa and groundnut. Artesian wells were dug to supply the necessary water for irrigation and for home uses. Nor was the danger of continuous irrigation overlooked. The plans called for a rotation of dry farming and irrigation to permit the occasional heavy showers to wash out the salts brought to the surface by irrigation.

Costs.

The individual farms and equipment cost from a minimum of \$6,750. in the Breglieri area to a maximum of \$9,250. in the Cyrenean plateau region. The total outlay for land, roads, wells, canals, reservoirs, towns, houses, and furnishings, barns, tools, machinery and livestock to provide the 1800 individual farmsteads on 160,000 acres totalled about \$20,000,000. Considerable preparations for further large scale colonization were at hand when the present war broke out. However, Libyan colonization alone could hardly have provided the hoped for solution of Italy's population problem. Conservative estimates place the figure of about 200,000 as the possible maximum number of Italians that could make a living there. Other estimates run as high as 500,000.

Problems: Water

There are a number of difficulties that would have had to be faced. The first problem, of course, would be the one relating to the water supply. The rainfall alone is not only insufficient in most places and for most crops but also rather sporadic and not at all dependable. What little rain there is comes during the cool winter months. The summers are entirely rainless and hot. As to underground water, there is no assurance of a permanent supply. Experience in other parts of the world has shown how rapidly the water table can be lowered through injudicious pumping from artesian wells. Only a small portion of the water used for irrigation returns to natural underground reservoirs. Most of it is lost through evaporation and through run-off, in addition to that used up by the growing crops.

Soil.

The second problem is the soil. There is a slight difference in this respect between Tripolitania and Cyrenaica. The soils of the former are mostly sandy and porous. They are easily worked under any conditions and they readily absorb what little rainfall falls upon them. On the other hand, they are quite subject to severe blowing and washing as soon as their natural grass cover is destroyed. The soils of Cyrenaica are more compact. They stick to the plow and are difficult to work. Under improper cultivation they are apt to become very hard and crack open, allowing most of the rainwater to escape into the deep underground or to run off into the desert wadis and into the ocean. In the Jebel or hill district of Cyrenaica, especially, boring is impossible or very

difficult as the soil is underlain by a rock foundation. Here water must be carried by the new iron viaduct. In other places the artesian wells are at a depth of about 1300 feet. Water reaches the surface at a temperature of 104° F. It is then piped to cooling basins to reduce it to air temperature.

Arabs.

Finally, there is the problem of the Arabs' resentment due to the taking over of their favorite summer grazing lands. During the dry hot summer when most of the desert is completely burned out, these relatively moist coastal lowlands provide the best available grazing. Besides, there is evidence that even in the winter months the desert had been already desperately overgrazed. In spite of all fascist prodding and propaganda and regardless of the fact that certain provisions were being made for the displaced Arabs elsewhere, they were known to be sullen and restive. There were uprisings and serious guerilla attacks from the desert. There was certainly no happy cooperation on the part of the rural and nomadic Moslem population.

Colonization de-luxe.

The entire project has been described as Italy's magnificent gamble. Its cost -- about that of a single battleship -- may be considered excessive by some people. To the fascist regime of Italy, however, the purpose was mainly social and political, not purely economic. It aimed at mass redistribution of population mainly for the purpose of strengthening of political power.

Lessons.

There is, undoubtedly, a great deal to be learned from Italy's ambitious experiment, which must have been quite upset by subsequent military events. Perhaps European colonization in Libya is quite feasible. If it should be attempted again in the future, the political features of the original Italian project would naturally have to be eliminated. The interests of the native population would have to be given much closer attention. In fact, its direct participation in the project in one form or another might be worth considering.

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APR 26 1944

Dear Mr. Liebman:

Thank you very much for your letter of April 22 enclosing material with respect to Tripolitania and Cyrenaica. We will examine this material as soon as possible and communicate further with you if additional information is required. The book, "Fourth Shore", will be returned in accordance with your request.

Your cooperation in this matter is greatly appreciated.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) J.W. Pehle

J. W. Pehle,  
Executive Director

Mr. Charles J. Liebman, President,  
Refugee Economic Corporation,  
570 Lexington Avenue,  
New York, New York.

*Original signed by  
Mr. J. W. Pehle*

*Copy to Mr. Friedman*

9037

JDF:bbk - 4/25/44

597

**REFUGEE ECONOMIC CORPORATION**  
570 LEXINGTON AVENUE  
NEW YORK 22, N. Y.

W. R. B. \_\_\_\_\_  
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Initial \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Cables: REFUGEE NEW YORK \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

April 22, 1944

CHARLES J. LIEBMAN  
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Mr. J. W. Pehle, Executive Director  
War Refugee Board  
Washington 25, D.C.

Dear Mr. Pehle:

I have yours of the 20th. We are sending you the material we have on Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, together with a bibliography.

As it was a mass migration and we thought the experience might prove useful to us, we naturally sought knowledge of it. However, there was no point in our making a complete, final survey as the colonies were under fascist control and the Arabs in the country had been intensively propagandized with fascist dogma.

We turned up a book written by Martin Moore, a correspondent for the London Daily Telegraph - a very comprehensive survey. It was published in England in 1940, and we sent to England for it at that time. We are mailing you our copy. May we trouble you to return it at your convenience as we cannot locate another.

We have no knowledge regarding the extent of the destruction by military action. On the purely economic phases, it is safe to say that the colonies could not possibly have been in any way self-supporting at any time as, to a very large extent, they were planted to monoculture, long-range crops. The motive for the venture was not settlement as such, but was undertaken for political and military reasons.

After receiving the material should you require any further information, please call on us. Somebody in our organization would be happy to come to Washington to discuss the matter if you wish it.

Sincerely yours,

*Charles Liebman*

President

CJL:K

*No. attached to when received in files*

APR 20 1944

20

Dear Mr. Liebman:

Reference is made to your letter of February 14, 1944, in which you state that your organization has made geographical and economic studies of various possible localities for the settlement of refugees. I should appreciate knowing whether the Refugee Economic Corporation has undertaken such a study of the Italian colonies of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica and if so, whether the information in your files could be made available to the War Refugee Board. I am particularly interested in any recent information that you may have concerning this subject matter.

Very truly yours,

[Signed] J. W. Pehle

J. W. Pehle  
Executive Director

Mr. Charles J. Liebman, President,  
Refugee Economic Corporation,  
570 Lexington Avenue,  
New York, New York.

MJM:dm 4/19/44

*Ra*  
*987*

*Wm. L. ...  
and ...*

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Embassy, London  
TO: Secretary of State, Washington  
DATED: May 1, 1944  
NUMBER: 3556

*Copy*

**CONTROL COPY**

ATTENTION OF THE WAR REFUGEE BOARD.

WASHINGTON, D.C.  
WAR REFUGEE BOARD  
RECEIVED

In accordance with instructions as contained in the Department's 2292, of March 26, and 3243, of April 22, the Embassy has on several occasions approached the Foreign Office in regard to the proposal to establish havens for refugees in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica. In connection with the proposal a responsible official at the Foreign Office stated today that there were involved political problems, but that the Foreign Office was actively pursuing the matter and was in touch with British officials on the spot with regard to the establishment of this haven for refugees. This official informally stated that the case had become further complicated by the fact that many Arabs had moved into some of the regions under consideration for havens. Assurance was given the Embassy that, as soon as possible, a formal reply would be forthcoming.

WINANT

DECLASSIFIED  
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-73  
By R. H. Parks Date SEP. 20 1972

*W. Refugee Bd  
Mrs. Pella*

ORIGINAL TEXT OF TELEGRAM SENT

FROM: Secretary of State, Washington  
TO: Amembassy, London ✓  
DATED: April 22, 1944  
NUMBER: 3243

*1 copy only*

**CONTROL COPY**

RECEIVED  
WAR REFUGEE BOARD  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

From War Refugee Board to Winant.  
If an answer has not yet been received from the  
British with respect to the proposal to establish  
refugee havens in Cyrenaica and Tripolitania as out-  
lined in our No. 2292 of March 25, 1944, please  
inquire when answer may be expected.

HULL

DECLASSIFIED  
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72  
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 20 1972

036



*War Refugee Bd  
(In Reply)*

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM SENT

*1 Copy only*

FROM: Secretary of State, Washington  
TO: AMEMBASSY, London  
DATED: March 25, 1944, 5 p.m.  
NUMBER: 2292

**CONTROL COPY**

*not to be used  
(except in the  
file)*

Department's telegram of January 14, 1944 no. 371

is referred to herewith.

One of the most pressing and immediate problems before the War Refugee Board is the finding of havens where refugees may remain for the duration of the war.

In the opinion of the Department and the Board, Cyrenaica and Tripolitania might be suitable for this purpose.

Ever since the Bermuda Conference, at which it was specifically recommended that admission of refugees to Cyrenaica be considered by the British, Cyrenaica and Tripolitania have been under consideration as havens. Thereafter, when agreement was reached to consider a refuge camp in North Africa, the President in a message to Prime Minister Churchill commented on his interest in the possibility of using Cyrenaica and Tripolitania as havens of refuge. The suggestion was again made to the British informally in the manner described in the aforementioned cable as recently as January of this year.

No  
DECLASSIFIED  
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72  
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 20 1972

10 3 15

No decision has apparently yet been taken in this important matter although many months have passed. It is requested that you reopen the matter at once and raise with the British Government the question of using Cyrenaica and Tripolitania as havens of refuge, subject, of course, to the later approval of the Combined Chiefs of Staff. The consent of the British should be secured before any approach is made to the Combined Chiefs of Staff. You should inform the British Government that this Government is prepared to share the responsibility for financing the establishment and maintenance of camps in Cyrenaica and Tripolitania, including the cost of transporting the refugees to these camps. We are confident that part of this cost may be borne by <sup>private</sup> ~~British~~ refugee agencies if <sup>it later</sup> ~~the latter~~ seems desirable. The transportation problem can be worked out cooperatively between the British Government and ourselves.

With respect to Cyrenaica and Tripolitania a division of obligations and responsibilities between the two Governments, similar to the case of the transfer of refugees from Spain to North Africa, can be worked out.

It is extremely important that havens of refuge be established in Cyrenaica and Tripolitania. The War Refugee Board is convinced that there is a real opportunity for bringing many refugees out of occupied areas,

especially

especially from areas contiguous to Turkey and the Black Sea. The Board is determined to do everything it can to rescue refugees in as large numbers as possible, as you have previously been informed. Once these refugees are evacuated to Turkey it is important that areas be found to which they can be removed expeditiously.

For this purpose camps in Cyrenaica and Tripolitania could be used. Also such camps would facilitate the escape of refugees from other areas. For instance, refugees from Southern Italy can be removed from camps there to Cyrenaica and Tripolitania, thus making room for other refugees who are successful in escaping from Italian occupied areas.

It is requested that you give your urgent and personal attention to this matter and inform the Department of the progress of your conversations at the earliest possible moment.

HULL

*File*  
*7/18*

NMC-310  
This telegram must be  
paraphrased before being  
communicated to anyone  
other than a Government  
agency. (ER)

Casablanca ✓  
DATED March 4, 1944  
Rec'd 4:16 p.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

53, March 4, 5 p.m.

Does first paragraph of Department's no. 29,

February 26 8 p.m., refer to the fund mentioned in  
my telegram 44, February 21, noon, to which no  
acknowledgement has been definitely received? If  
so must not Beckelman turn over to me control of the  
\$100,000 in the Banque d' Etat du Maroc? I call  
the Department's attention to the fact that my  
British colleague states his intention of turning  
over the fund of five million francs received from  
his government to Beckelman and disengaging himself  
of all responsibility whatsoever.

RUSSELL

THE TREASURY DEPARTMENT  
DIVISION OF MONETARY RESEARCH  
MAR 9 1944

WSB

*Ames & Britton*  
MAR 2 1944

Dear Mr. Stettinius:

Reference is made to your letter to the Secretary of the Treasury of February 1, 1944, relating to the possibility of transferring war refugees to places of temporary residence in the African colonies formerly occupied by the Italians.

As you know, one of the specific recommendations made at the Bermuda Conference was that the British Government consider the question of admitting refugees to Cyrenaica. Moreover, in July 1943, at the time the President and Prime Minister Churchill agreed to the establishment of a refugee camp in North Africa, the President expressed a definite interest in the possibility of establishing refugee havens in Cyrenaica and Tripolitania. As recently as January of this year, Mr. Long informally presented the matter to Sir Ronald Campbell. Despite this long standing interest in the matter, no agreement has been reached between the two Governments. Accordingly, it is recommended that a definite proposal be made at once to the British Government. Once an agreement has been concluded, the matter can, of course, be cleared with the Joint and Combined Chiefs of Staff. //

Attached is a draft of a cablegram to Ambassador Winant requesting him to make a formal proposal to the British Government. I believe that the American share of the costs of transporting refugees to Cyrenaica and Tripolitania can be met from the President's Emergency Fund, as in the case of the Camp Lyautey project, or from other funds which become available to the War Refugee Board.

If you are in agreement, I should appreciate your having the cable transmitted to Ambassador Winant.

Very truly yours,  
(Signed) J. W. Pehle

J. W. Pehle  
Acting Executive Director

Hon. E. R. Stettinius, Jr.,  
Under Secretary of State.

Enclosure.  
MM:JBF:bbk-3/1/44

*9 am 1/1/44*  
*copy 207*  
*Received in files*  
*MM*

CABLE TO AMBASSADOR MINANT, LONDON

One of the most immediate and pressing problems of the War Refugee Board is the finding of havens where refugees may remain for the duration of the war. It is our opinion that Tripolitania and Cyrenaica would be ideal for this purpose. In this connection refer to Department's cable No. 371 of January 14, 1944.

The use of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica as a refugee haven has been under consideration ever since the Bermuda Conference, where specific recommendation was made that the British consider the question of admitting refugees to Cyrenaica. Since then, at the time of the agreement to establish a refugee camp in French North Africa, the President in a message to Prime Minister Churchill expressed a definite interest in the possibility of establishing refugee havens in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica. The matter was again informally raised with the British as recently as January of this year, in the manner described in our cable No. 371. Despite the many months which have passed, apparently no decision has been reached in this most important matter.

You are requested to take the matter up immediately and press the British Government for its consent to the establishment of refugee camps in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, subject to the approval of the Combined Chiefs of Staff. It is deemed desirable to obtain such consent before any approach is made to the Combined Chiefs of Staff.

You may advise the British Government that this Government is prepared to share with it the responsibility for arranging to finance the establishment and maintenance of refugee camps in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, including the cost of transferring refugees to such camps. If deemed desirable, we are sure that private charitable organizations will bear part of this cost. This Government is also prepared to handle the transportation problem on a cooperative basis with the British.

It should be pointed out that a division of obligations and responsibilities between the two governments can be made here as in the case of the transfer of refugees from Spain to Camp Marechal Lyautey in French North Africa.

The importance of establishing refugee camps in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica cannot be overestimated. The War Refugee Board is convinced that there is a real opportunity for actually bringing many people out of German controlled territory, particularly from areas adjacent to Turkey and the Black Sea. The Board is determined to do what it can to bring these people out in as large numbers as possible. Once these people are evacuated to Turkey, it is essential

- 2 -

that areas be found to which they can be removed without delay. Camps in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica could be used for this purpose. The escape of refugees from other areas could also be facilitated. Thus, for example, refugees from southern Italy could be removed from camps there to the camps in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, thereby making room in Italy for other refugees who succeed in escaping from enemy territory.

It would be appreciated if you would give this matter your urgent and personal attention. Please advise the Department promptly of the progress of these negotiations.

cc: Miss Chauncey, Mr. Paul, Mr. H. D. White, Mr. Pehle, Mr. Lufford,  
Mr. DuBois, Mr. E. N. Bernstein, Mr. Stewart, Mr. Lesser, Mr. Firedman,  
Miss Hodel, Mr. Pollak, Mr. Abrahamson, Miss Laughlin, Mrs. Cohn.

JBF:JED:MMJtech 3/2/44

C O P Y

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

February 1, 1944

Dear Mr. Secretary:

The Department has had under consideration and has discussed with the British a project for assisting Jewish and other refugees now located in France and Rumania. While these plans have not taken definite form, it is proposed that efforts be made to enable the persons in question to leave Rumania and France and be transferred to places of temporary residence in the colonies formerly occupied by the Italians. The Department has been informed that there are at the present time in North Africa partially abandoned cities where buildings and water supply exist and where food could presumably be supplied by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. This plan, to be successful, would, of course, require the close cooperation of the military authorities.

We were just on the point of communicating with the Joint Chiefs of Staff to obtain an expression of opinion from them regarding locations in North Africa which might be made available for this purpose and also as to whether there might be any valid military objections to such an undertaking.

In connection with this plan, the problem of transportation is, of course, an important one since refugees might arrive out of France into Spain or out of Rumania into Turkey in considerable numbers. We had also intended to raise with the Joint Chiefs of Staff the question of transportation to determine whether or not the military might be able to make shipping available for this purpose. Our experience would seem to indicate that complete dependence could not be placed on the utilization of neutral shipping for this purpose. As you know, neutral shipping has been used in the past especially from Portugal to African destinations, but it seems doubtful that a considerable volume of refugees could be handled through that means alone.

In view of the creation of the War Refugee Board, it would seem more appropriate to us that this proposal now be made by the Board to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, if the Board decided to pursue the project, particularly as the War Department is represented on the Board. Several members of our staff are quite familiar with the details of the preliminary discussions and studies which have taken place on this matter in the past and will, of course, be glad to confer with representatives of the Board on the matter.

With best wishes,

Sincerely yours,  
(Signed) E. R. Stettinius, Jr.

The Honorable  
Henry Morgenthau, Jr.,  
Secretary of the Treasury.

cc: Miss Chauncey, Mr. Paul, Mr. H. D. White, Mr. Pehle, Mr. Luxford,  
Mr. DuBois, Mr. E. N. Bernstein, Mr. Stewart, Mr. Lesser, Mr. Friedman,  
Miss Hodel, Mr. Fellak, Mr. Abrahamson, Miss Laughlin, Mrs. Gohn.

COPI

AMEMBASSY,

LONDON,

371

PLAIN

January 14, 1944

With reference to project for evacuation of Jews from Rumania and France referred to in your 139 January 7, Department is presenting for Embassy's information substance of conversation between Sir Ronald Campbell and Mr. Long January 11.

Mr. Long felt that there should be no embarrassment to either Government and that it will be practicable to provide transportation and places of temporary refuge for the persons in question. Cities in Tripoli and Cyrenaica which have been deserted by Arabs and Italians as we understand are standing unpopulated. Benghazi and other places on Mediterranean shore have water and buildings available. Food could be provided on rationed basis and the refugees could remain there until war's end provided British Government agrees. Then these people could return to former countries under arrangements which United Nations propose to adopt for repatriation of refugees. Refuge in the former Italian colonies should take pressure off of the British Government to admit persons to Palestine. Mr. Long was explicit that we were not opening up the Palestine question but simply expressing the belief that it would be helpful in several ways to use these cities in former Italian colonies for temporary residences for refugees.

In regard to problems of transportation and accommodation Sir Ronald was informed that the Department would approach Joint Chiefs of Staff with the hope that necessary shipping space might be secured when sufficient numbers of persons are assembled to warrant it. The refugees could then be transported from Spain to those places of temporary residence in Tripoli and along Mediterranean Coast. In addition, there was and presumably still is the established shipping service between Portugal and North Africa which has carried not less than 35,000 out of Spain to North Africa.

UNRRA will probably take care of these people once they are located since they come within its jurisdiction under terms of present discussions. It is probable that some may desire and obtain entrance into the United States.

Mr. Long made it clear that the situation as presented in the discussion with Sir Ronald was not a definite proposal but merely a conversation wherein suggestions were made with the idea that our two Governments may work out some favorable adjustment of a problem which may assume large and possibly urgent proportions.

VD:RU:ENG:FDGR:EG  
1/12/44

Re CI/L  
Mr. Fell

A-1

cc: Miss Chassey, Mr. Paul, Mr. H. D. White, Mr. Pehle, Mr. Luxford,  
Mr. DuBois, Mr. E. W. Bernstein, Mr. Stewart, Mr. Lesser, Mr. Friedman,  
Miss Hodel, Mr. Pollak, Mr. Abrahamson, Miss Laughlin, Mrs. Cohn.

February 25, 1944.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE FILES

Re: Cyrenaica and Tripolitania

The Italian North African provinces of Cyrenaica and Tripolitania, known together as Libya have a total area of approximately 600,000 square miles, a very large part of which is desert. The two countries together have a population estimated at between 850,000 and a million, about 15 percent of which is Italian. While there is a great deal of conflict as to population figures, the 1943 Statesman's Yearbook gives the following breakdown as of December 31, 1939:

89,000 Italians  
6,000 Other Europeans  
765,000 Moslems (Arabs and Berbers)  
30,000 Jewish natives

Since 1923, over 50,000 Italians have been settled in the territory by the Italian Government as part of an intensive colonization plan at least ostensibly designed to develop the land agriculturally.

The arable section of the country consists of a coastal plain which has been made productive by the use of artesian wells and extensive irrigation systems, a high plateau which has a satisfactory rainfall, and a marginal zone suitable for grazing.

While the imports under the Italian regime far exceeded the exports, largely due to the fact that the colonization plan was carried out on a somewhat extravagant plan, and partly because of the military preparations that were made, and in spite of the fact that many authorities seemed doubtful that the country can ever be self-supporting, at its present stage of development the country is known to have produced approximately 40,000 to 50,000 metric tons of grain, about 20,000 tons of tuna fish and a considerable amount of olive oil, beef and mutton annually. It could consequently be at least partially self-supporting.

The agricultural development put into effect by the Italians included the construction of buildings, roads, irrigation systems (including artesian wells sunk to a depth of 2,000 or 3,000 feet), and towns around which farms were laid out, spaced at a distance of about 900 feet. Each farm was completely equipped and included a 5-room concrete house designed to accommodate a family of eight, since heavy emphasis was put upon large families in selecting colonists. According to a report from our Embassy to the State Department on December 1, 1939, there were 24 such reclamation units set up, designed to accommodate 21,000 persons. 250,000 acres were held by 400 agricultural companies in 1940, but the policy followed by the Italian Government was to discourage this form of development. The companies in question

are supposed to have employed some thousand Italians and an equal number of natives. For the most part, the native population was encouraged to continue the raising of sheep, and the Government was satisfied with an attempt to improve methods and living conditions. The estimated capacity of the country for colonisation purposes is given as from 300,000 to 500,000.

While the type of development practiced by the Italians is not ideally suited for concentrated groups of refugees, it certainly could be made to serve as a nucleus, and it does supply one of the most important requirements for large groups of people, *i.e.*, an adequate water supply. The only information available since the outbreak of the war is contained in the report by Captain Thomas Greenough and Mr. G. F. Jenkins of the American Field Service, who returned to this country in September 1943, and submitted Report No. 11384 to the Military Intelligence Division W.D.G.S. on Libya. This report contains no information concerning the present population or the reported evacuation of either colonists or natives except to report the presence of many young Italians of military age in Tripoli. The Senusis who comprise the largest part of the native population are reported as being hostile to and contemptuous of the Italians, but willing to cooperate with either the Germans or the British depending on who pays the most. It is the opinion of the reporters that the great bulk of available labor in the country is completely unskilled. Civil matters in Cyrenaica, but apparently not in Tripoli, are under the Middle East Command.

The report states that the British have started many farms and are encouraging the people to be self-supporting and to furnish food to the British army. It is not certain the people referred to are natives or Italian colonists still remaining, but it seems probable that the farms in question were part of the old Italian project. Two experimental farms were seen by the reporters and were stated to be very extensive. They were entirely under British supervision and worked by natives.

All the war damage at Tobruk has been repaired, but the report contains no information concerning the rest of the country. Port facilities apparently were not examined generally, although it is reported that the piers at Tripoli have been badly damaged, and it is necessary to use lighters at Tobruk.

In conclusion the statement is made that it is doubtful that Libya can be made self-sustaining, but there is nothing in the report to indicate that the observers are qualified agriculturally.

The material for the foregoing memorandum was obtained from the 1937 edition of Encyclopedia Britannica and the yearly supplements, the 1943 Statesman's Yearbook, two booklets published by the Italian Library of Information entitled "Italy's Colonization and Resettlement Projects" (December 1939) and "Libya" (1940), the files of the European Unit of the Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, Department of Commerce. Copies of two reports made by the European Unit are attached to the original, but were not deemed sufficiently important to warrant copying. Recent investigations of conditions in Libya have been made and reported by N. N. Brailford in the Baltimore Sun (2-6-39) and George L. Steer in the Daily Telegraph and Morning Post (5-30-39).

RLSmith:ia 2/26/44 RZ-1

February 22, 1944.

MEMORANDUM

Evacuation of French and Roumanian Jews  
to North Africa. (Material obtained from  
file in Visa Division, State Department)

On January 18 the Department wired Bern the paraphrase of a wire dated January 14 to London, which stated the substance of a conversation between Mr. Long and Sir Ronald Campbell respecting the transportation of Jews from France and Roumania to Tripoli, Cyrenaica, and other cities vacated by the Italians and the Arabs. Such a project appeared to be feasible. UNRRA could provide food on a rationed basis, and after the war the refugees could return to countries of origin. An approach would be made to the Joint Chiefs of Staff about shipping space. Not less than 35,000 refugees already have been transported from Spain to North Africa and the same facilities could be used again.

February 25, 1944.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE FILES

Re: Cyrenaica and Tripolitania

The Italian North African provinces of Cyrenaica and Tripolitania, known together as Libya have a total area of approximately 600,000 square miles, a very large part of which is desert. The two countries together have a population estimated at between 850,000 and a million, about 15 percent of which is Italian. While there is a great deal of conflict as to population figures, the 1943 Statemen's Yearbook gives the following breakdown as of December 31, 1938:

80,000 Italians  
8,000 Other Europeans  
763,000 Moslems (Arabs and Berbers);  
30,000 Jewish natives

Since 1923, over 50,000 Italians have been settled in the territory by the Italian Government as part of an intensive colonization plan at least ostensibly designed to develop the land agriculturally.

The arable section of the country consists of a coastal plain which has been made productive by the use of artesian wells and extensive irrigation systems, a high plateau which has a satisfactory rainfall, and a marginal zone suitable for grazing.

While the imports under the Italian regime far exceeded the exports, largely due to the fact that the colonization plan was carried out on a somewhat extravagant plan, and partly because of the military preparations that were made, and in spite of the fact that many authorities seemed doubtful that the country can ever be self-supporting, at its present stage of development the country is known to have produced approximately 40,000 to 50,000 metric tons of grain, about 20,000 tons of tuna fish and a considerable amount of olive oil, beef and mutton annually. It could consequently be at least partially self-supporting.

The agricultural development put into effect by the Italians included the construction of buildings, roads, irrigation systems (including artesian wells sunk to a depth of 2,000 or 3,000 feet), and towns around which farms were laid out, spaced at a distance of about 900 feet. Each farm was completely equipped and included a 5-room concrete house designed to accommodate a family of eight, since heavy emphasis was put upon large families in selecting colonists. According to a report from our Embassy to the State Department on December 1, 1933, there were 24 such reclamation units set up, designed to accommodate 31,000 persons. 250,000 acres were held by 400 agricultural companies in 1940, but the policy followed by the Italian Government was to discourage this form of development. The companies in question

are supposed to have employed some thousand Italians and an equal number of natives. For the most part, the native population was encouraged to continue the raising of sheep, and the Government was satisfied with an attempt to improve methods and living conditions. The estimated capacity of the country for colonisation purposes is given as from 300,000 to 500,000.

While the type of development practiced by the Italians is not ideally suited for concentrated groups of refugees, it certainly could be made to serve as a nucleus, and it does supply one of the most important requirements for large groups of people, i.e., an adequate water supply. The only information available since the outbreak of the war is contained in the report by Captain Thomas Greenough and Mr. C. F. Jenkins of the American Field Service, who returned to this country in September 1943, and submitted Report No. 11384 to the Military Intelligence Division W.D.G.S. on Libya. This report contains no information concerning the present population or the reported evacuation of either colonists or natives except to report the presence of many young Italians of military age in Tripoli. The Senusis who comprise the largest part of the native population are reported as being hostile to and contemptuous of the Italians, but willing to cooperate with either the Germans or the British depending on who pays the most. It is the opinion of the reporters that the great bulk of available labor in the country is completely unskilled. Civil matters in Cyrenaica, but apparently not in Tripoli, are under the Middle East Command.

The report states that the British have started many farms and are encouraging the people to be self-supporting and to furnish food to the British army. It is not certain the people referred to are natives or Italian colonists still remaining, but it seems probable that the farms in question were part of the old Italian project. Two experimental farms were seen by the reporters and were stated to be very extensive. They were entirely under British supervision and worked by natives.

All the war damage at Tobruk has been repaired, but the report contains no information concerning the rest of the country. Port facilities apparently were not examined generally, although it is reported that the piers at Tripoli have been badly damaged, and it is necessary to use lighters at Tobruk.

In conclusion the statement is made that it is doubtful that Libya can be made self-sustaining, but there is nothing in the report to indicate that the observers are qualified agriculturally.

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The material for the foregoing memorandum was obtained from the 1937 edition of Encyclopedia Britannica and the yearly supplements, the 1943 Statesman's Yearbook, two booklets published by the Italian Library of Information entitled "Italy's Colonization and Resettlement Projects" (December 1939) and "Libya" (1940), the files of the European Unit of the Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, Department of Commerce. Copies of two reports made by the European Unit are attached to the original, but were not deemed sufficiently important to warrant copying. Recent investigations of conditions in Libya have been made and reported by H. N. Brailsford in the Baltimore Sun (2-6-39) and George L. Steer in the Daily Telegraph and Morning Post (5-30-39).

European Unit  
Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce  
December 1943

LIBYA

Basic Data  
and  
Economic Information

1037

## LIBYA

### General Economic Survey.

Libya has an area of 696,500 square miles, supporting a population of 848,610 according to the census of April 1936. Of these, 112,694 were Italians. Tripoli, the capital, had a population of about 120,000. The most favored areas for agricultural production are the two highland areas near the coast, one in Tripolitania, the other in Cyrenaica.

The principal occupation is agriculture, but this is limited by the insufficient rainfall. Sponge fishing and catching of tuna and other fish are carried on in the coastal waters. There are no important minerals, but small deposits of salt, potash, and magnesium salts are reported. Industry is of an entirely local nature. The colony was, in general, an economic burden to Italy.

Barley and wheat are the principal cereal crops. Olives, grapes, and almonds are quite important, some oriental tobacco was produced recently, and dates are grown in the oases. Hides and skins, especially goat and kid skins, are important items of export despite the fact that the number of livestock is not large. The tuna catch approximates 20,000 tons annually.

The United States and United Kingdom have only very small shares in either the import or export trade of Libya. Italy was by far the most important supplier for Libya and was the chief customer for its exports. Normally, imports were six to seven times the volume of exports.

- 2 -

LIBYA

Exports by Principal Countries -- 1936-38 Average

(Value in lire.)

<u>Period</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>United States</u>	<u>Italy</u>	<u>Other Italian Colonies</u>	<u>Greece</u>	<u>Tunisia</u>	<u>Germany</u>
1936-38 average	112,804,239	19,040	101,200,841	4,173,568	2,840,322	615,636	691,683

LIBYA

Imports from Principal Countries -- 1936-38 Average

(Value in lire.)

<u>Period</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>United States</u>	<u>Italy</u>	<u>Germany</u>	<u>Yugoslavia</u>	<u>Japan</u>
1936-38 average	709,562,713	11,146,748	618,931,761	9,672,125	7,585,180	7,686,580

COUNTRY DATA SHEET - EXPORT COMMODITIES

LIBYA

(In metric tons)

Commodity	P R O D U C T I O N			E X P O R T S	
	Average 1937-38	Latest Year Year	Quantity	Average 1937-38	Major Markets
Fish and fish products	N.A.	N.A.	----	914	Italy 904
Wheat	23,533	1939	20,700	5,910	Italy 5,910
Dates and date paste	N.A.	N.A.	----	2,171	Italy 1,217 Tunisia 929
Tobacco, cigars and cigarettes	"	"	----	125	Italy 118 Egypt 5
Vegetable oils for industrial use	"	"	----	636	Italy 626
Wool, raw	"	"	----	1,850	Italy 1,850
Scrap metal	"	"	----	1,593	Italy 1,593
Manufactures of common metals	"	"	----	980	Italy 972
Hides and skins, crude	"	"	----	1,326	Italy 1,296
Sponges, crude	"	"	----	87	Italy 33 Greece 27 Italian Aegean Islands 20

COUNTRY DATA SHEET - IMPORT COMMODITIES

LIBYA

Commodity	Unit	P R O D U C T I O N			I M P O R T S		Other Major Markets
		Average 1937-38	Latest Year	Quantity	Average 1937-38	From U.S.	
Beef cattle	Number	N.A.	N.A.	-----	4,610	-----	Italy 2,302; Yugoslavia 1,705
Meats, fresh, frozen and cured	Metric tons	N.A.	N.A.	-----	1,686	-----	Italy 920; Argentina 401; Brazil 26.
Cheese	" "	"	"	-----	659	-----	Italy 658
Sugar	" "	"	"	-----	11,537	-----	Italy 8,010; Czechoslovakia 3,519
Wheat, barley, rice	" "	62,933	1939	43,300	19,339	-----	Italy 9,393; Rumania 6,129; Argentina 998; Iran 950.
Wheat flour, macaroni, etc.	" "	N.A.	N.A.	-----	38,755	-----	Italy 37,795
Wine (a)	1,000 lire	"	N.A.	-----	11,931	-----	Italy 11,905
Cotton, linen and hemp textiles and manufactures	Metric tons	"	"	-----	1,904	-----	Italy 1,502
Wool textiles and manufactures	" "	"	"	-----	264	-----	Italy 219
Silk and rayon textiles and manufactures	" "	"	"	-----	191	-----	Italy 189
Iron and steel and their manufactures	" "	"	"	-----	20,800	-----	Italy 20,403
Agricultural machinery and parts	" "	"	"	-----	849	175	Italy 520; Germany 132.
Other machinery and apparatus and parts	" "	"	"	-----	3,165	-----	Italy 3,005
Scientific instruments and parts	" "	"	"	-----	318	-----	Italy 314
Autos and parts	" "	"	"	-----	3,712	-----	Italy 3,690

(a) No uniform quantity figure given.

IMPORT COMMODITIES (Continued)

Commodity	Unit	PRODUCTION		IMPORTS		Other Major Markets	
		Average 1917-38	Latest Year Quantity	Average 1917-38	From U. S.		
Cement	Metric tons	N.A.	----	----	168,932	----	Italy 168,932
Wood, rough or sawn	" "	"	----	----	26,060	4,358	Italy 4,941; Yugoslavia 15,191 Germany 4,358.
Petroleum products	" "	"	----	----	56,319	11,783	Italy 23,594; Netherland East Indies 3,379; Rumania 1,744; Russia 3,182
Chemical and medical products	" "	"	----	----	5,412	----	Italy 5,127
Auto tires and tubes	" "	"	----	----	335	----	Italy 335
Footwear	pair	"	----	----	204,345	----	Italy 203,780

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*From files of European Unit  
Bus. & For. & Dom. Commerce  
Commerce Dept.*

1200024

*(Mr. Phillips copy)*

LIBYA

Libya is a crown colony of Italy (ruled by a Governor-General), with an area of about 696,500 square miles and a population of 848,610 according to the census of April 1936, of whom 112,694 were Italians. The area of the four coastal provinces is only 213,876 square miles, but they contain all but 48,149 of the total population of Libya. However, in 1938 the four coastal provinces of Tripoli, Misurata, Bengasi, and Derna were declared by Mussolini to be integral parts of the Italian Kingdom. In 1934 Italo-Libyan citizens were enabled to obtain full Italian citizenship on application and by fulfilling several requirements, notably that of being non-polygamous; early in 1939 a special form of Italian citizenship was also conferred upon the Moslems by waiving the non-polygamy requirement.

The economic resources of the colony - agriculture, sponge-fishing, and catching of tuna and other fish in coastal waters - are very small; in fact the colony has been an economic burden to Italy as evidenced by the trade figures (exports of only \$5,735,000 in 1938 as against imports of £46,424,000) and by rather heavy expenditures for expanding the colony's productive capacity since 1927 when the final pacification of the whole coastal area was regarded as complete; pacification of the whole of Libya was not accomplished until 1932. A more comprehensive colonization plan was initiated in 1938, but the actual settlement of Italians on the land prepared for them did not occur until the time of the outbreak of the present war, so that realization of Italy's dream of making Libya again the "granary of Rome" at least lies far in the future.

As acknowledged in a survey by the Italian Library of Information in New York, there are no essential mineral resources (coal, iron or petroleum); no internal waterways, and no possible hydroelectric projects. A few mineral deposits are reported (salt, potash, and magnesium salts), but it is evident that production must be principally agricultural.

Production

The principal occupation is agriculture, but output is limited by the insufficient rainfall. The most favored areas are the two highland regions near the coast, one in the west (Tripolitania) and the other in the east (Cyrenaica). Some steps were taken by the Italians to use for irrigation the underground water which is fairly abundant in several areas, and by the time of the outbreak of the present war grandiose plans for settlement of large numbers of Italian colonists on specially prepared farms had matured; some of them had already been settled on the lands but at best it would be several years before they could be expected to contribute any surplus production. Barley and wheat are the principal cereal crops. Olive trees cover a fairly large area, and grapevines and almond trees are also important. Cultivation of oriental tobaccos has been undertaken recently on a large scale. Date production, primarily in the oases, amounts to 30,000 - 40,000 tons a year.

Although the number of livestock is not very large, hides and skins, especially goat and kid skins, are one of the principal exports. The annual catch of tuna fish is estimated at 20,000 tons. Industrial production is on a small scale and mostly for the domestic market.

#### Foreign Trade

Owing to the rather meager data available on production, foreign trade figures give the clearest picture of the general economic position of Libya. As already pointed out, the heavy import excess in the foreign trade illustrates the dependence of the colony on the mother country; imports are normally from 6 to 8 times as large as exports.

The following list of leading imports and exports, with values for 1938, gives more concrete information on this point:

#### Principal Imports, 1938

Commodities	Value \$1,000
Beef cattle .....	349
Meats, fresh, frozen and cured .....	549
Cheese .....	373
Sugar .....	928
Wheat, barley, and rice .....	1,202
Wheat flour, macaroni, and semolina .....	3,038
Wines .....	755
Cotton, linen, and hemp textiles and manufactures ...	2,136
Wool textiles and manufactures .....	855
Silk and rayon textiles and manufactures .....	587
* Iron and steel, and manufactures thereof .....	2,654
Agricultural machinery and parts .....	492
Other machinery and apparatus and parts .....	2,064
Scientific instruments and parts .....	528
Automobiles and parts .....	8,695 <sup>1/</sup>
Cement .....	1,801
Wood, rough or sawn .....	84
Petroleum products .....	1,802
Chemical and medicinal products .....	608
Automobile tires and tubes .....	419
Footwear .....	375
Total, including items not specified .....	46,424

<sup>1/</sup> Exceptionally large in 1938 (normally about 2 to 3 million dollars)



FOREIGN FUNDS CONT

To: Mrs. Friedman 192 Main  
(1) (Room) (Bldg.)  
(2) (Room) (Bldg.)  
(3) (Room) (Bldg.)

Flemer, again pointing out this, in no way concerned us, said we'd be smart in staying out of this, still up in the air, and is involved in the question of who will control the camp, FEA - UNRRS.

Hasn't been decided.

From: Joseph H. Murphy 3/1/44  
(Date)  
182 Main  
(Room) (Bldg.)

authority for Cope } 2.11/

Cope is still on 72 A payroll  
until 4 MRRA Y ~~2001~~  
his Ayt-Cookin author  
continues until -  
(7th 21 from Chapin 4 MRRA Y.)

100,000 has been sent with  
Support a set of Resolutions & Consent  
Add MRRA - Paper Council  
Should be advised not  
to turn it over

Hold off



Ms. Friedman - 19

From the file on this and  
the note you got from Zark,  
it does seem regular examples  
will probably be handled  
by UNRAA.

I gather, from what you  
said last week, we can  
forget this.

JH

J. H. MURPHY

Miss Chauncey (for See

Paul

Gaston

White

Pohle

Luxford

Dobson

H.M. Bernstein

Stewart

Leaser

Friedman

Miss Madel

Mr. Pollak

Randy

12/11/44

10039

**CONTROL COPY**

2 - War Refugee Bd.  
Mr. Beale

EGC-179  
This telegram must be paraphrased before being communicated to anyone other than a Government Agency. (BR)

Casablanca  
Dated February 21, 1944

Rec'd 8:20 p.m.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
DIVISION OF  
FEB 22 1944  
COMMUNICATIONS  
AND RECORDS

*W. A. File 7037*

Secretary of State  
Washington

21, February 21, noon

Banque d'Etat des Maroc informed me that it has received from Federal Reserve Bank of New York, through its central office Rabat, 100,000 dollars to be turned over to myself and Moses W. Beckelman. This is presumably connected with similar transaction whereby my British colleague has received equivalent of same sum towards cost of refugee center. British Consul is instructed as soon as same amount is forthcoming from the United States Government to deposit amount in bank account on which Director of the Center (the above Mr. Beckelman) is authorized to draw. Consul says he is then completely disassociating himself from all further responsibility in the matter.

I have received no instructions as to the above joint account with Beckelman and request authorization to turn over sum to him against receipt thus relieving me of any financial responsibility for his acts as Director of Center. Consulate should not be involved further in my opinion

WTD

RUSSELL