

Hirschman, Ira

136pp

Hirschmann, Ica

REGENT 4-7547

I. A. HIRSCHMANN  
654 MADISON AVENUE  
NEW YORK 21, N. Y.

*File*

August 10, 1945

Dear Florence:

The report you sent on August 9th  
is precisely the one I wanted. Many  
thanks. We'll keep it in strictest  
confidence.

I'm looking forward to seeing you at  
the first opportunity.

With good wishes,

Cordially yours

*Ica*

iah:ret

Miss Florence Hodel  
War Refugee Board  
Treasury Building  
Washington, D. C.

I. A. HIRSCHMANN  
 654 MADISON AVENUE  
 NEW YORK 21, N. Y.

August 8, AUG 9 1945

Dear Ira:

I believe the enclosed letter and report on the Mefkura are the documents you refer to in your letter of August 6th. Please let me know if you need anything else. enclosed memorandum of the report of the conversation With kindest regards, David Bengourian. A thousand thanks. You know I will keep all this material in confidence. Sincerely yours,

(Signed) Florence Hodel

The only missing link now is the report which I wrote while in Istanbul in September 1944 on the details of Florence Hodel the S.S. Mefkura. Assistant Executive Director to some lengths in arranging for interviews with the captains of the three ships, B.S. Bulbul, S.S. Marina, and the ill-fated Mefkura. The three captains all managed Mr. Ira A. Hirschmann, I had Herbert take Metropolitan Television, Inc., their evidence 654 Madison Avenue, New York 21, N. Y. report to John. It may be returned in October. If I could borrow a copy of this I should be most grateful.

Enclosure.

I am sorry that we missed each other in our peregrinations. Please let me know when you are coming to New York again and

HIRSCHMANN  
34 MADISON AVENUE  
NEW YORK 21, N. Y.

August 6, 1945

Dear Florence:

On returning to my office I find your kind letter of July 25th and the enclosed memorandum of the report of the conversation which Herbert had with David Bengourian. A thousand thanks. You know I will keep all this material in the strictest confidence.

The only missing link now is the report which I wrote while in Istanbul in September 1944 on the details of the sinking of the S.S. Mefkura. You will recall that I went to some lengths in arranging for interviews with the captains of the three ships, S.S. Bulbul, S.S. Marina, and the ill-fated Mefkura. The three captains all managed to save themselves and I had Herbert take down stenographic notes of their evidence and sent a full report to John. It may be that I brought this with me when I returned in October. If I could borrow a copy of this I should be most grateful.

I am sorry that we missed each other in our peregrinations. Please let me know when you are coming to New York again and

ON THE MIDDLE  
I DELETED THE  
DEAR JES:

Hirschman, Ira

SMANN  
SON AVENUE  
YORK 21, N. Y.

page two  
Miss Hodel  
August 6, 1945

I shall call you on my next trip to  
Washington. With thanks for all your  
kindness, and good wishes,

Cordially yours

iah:ret

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

Hirschman, Ira

Ira - Personnel



(AV)

Herbert Katzki, Istanbul, December 12, 1944.

JUL 25 1945

... and past few days, Mr. ... of the Executive Committee of the ... made a trip to Bulgaria. Upon his return to Istanbul in ... to Palestine, I had opportunity for speaking with him and with his assistant, who accompanied him to Bulgaria. You undoubtedly are interested in knowing some of his first-hand observations, which I shall summarize below.

Dear Ira:

Your secretary called the other day for a copy of the Katzki report on the Stara Zagora group of refugees. The only report which we have been able to find is the enclosed, which you will note is a report of a conversation which Herbert had with David Bengourion. Please let me know if the enclosed material is satisfactory.

I am very sorry that I was unable to get to New York and to arrange for a talk with you. I am sure that General O'Dwyer would be very pleased to talk with you and I suggest that you may wish to call him sometime at Triangle 5-8274.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) Florence Hodel

Mr. Bengourion made Florence Hodel to learn what might be done in order to ... Assistant Executive Director ... one quarter to another, no one apparently being able to state exactly who the responsible person was to approach. Finally, however, Mr. Bengourion was told by a Russian general in charge, a General Pankosch, that the matter can be solved only in

Mr. Ira Hirschmann,  
Metropolitan Television, Inc.,  
654 Madison Avenue,  
New York 21, N. Y.

Enclosure.

At the present time, restrictions have been placed upon emigration from Bulgaria. Until recently, although there were several sections where exit visas were not being issued,

FH:hd 7/25/45

Hirschmann

- 2 -

Letter from Herbert Katzki, Istanbul, December 12, 1944.

Within the past few days, Mr. David Bengourion, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Jewish Agency of Palestine, made a trip to Bulgaria. Upon his return to Istanbul en route to Palestine, I had opportunity for speaking with him and with his assistant, who accompanied him to Bulgaria. You undoubtedly will be interested in knowing some of his first-hand observations, which I shall summarize below.

1. The situation of the emigrants from Rumania who were detained at Stara Zagora -- they are still there today -- is as follows: At Stara Zagora there are 278 refugees. These people are for the most part Hungarians, or Slovaks and Poles from the area west of the Curzon line, who had succeeded in escaping to Hungary and subsequently made their way to Rumania. These people at Stara Zagora were especially selected in Rumania, as they came from areas which were not being claimed by the Russians, in order to avoid any difficulties which might arise from such claims. The emigrants at Kazalnik, just outside of Stara Zagora, numbering 320 persons, are for the most part real Hungarians. These likewise had been selected because of their origin in an area not subject to Russian claim.

The emigrants at Stara Zagora, with the exception of some women and children, are still living in the railroad cars in which they arrived in that city. A number of the women and children have been given shelter by the inhabitants of Stara Zagora. It should be noted that those people living in the railroad cars have been there now for almost a month.

Mr. Bengourion made inquiry in Sofia to learn what might be done in order to solve this situation. He was referred from one quarter to another, no one apparently being able to state exactly who the responsible person was to approach. Finally, however, Mr. Bengourion was told by a Russian general in charge, a General Pantscheff, that the matter can be solved only in Moscow.

The detention of the emigrants at Stara Zagora has resulted in a stoppage of emigration by land from Rumania. Sofia has instructed the Bulgarian consulates in Rumania not to issue any transit visas to Rumanians, Poles, or Hungarians.

2. At the present time, restrictions have been placed upon emigration from Bulgaria. Until recently, although there were several sections where exit visas were not being issued,

their issuance was being continued in others. Now the issuance of exit visas generally has been stopped, and those persons who are now arriving in Istanbul are those who already had had their exit permits issued or authorized. This stoppage of emigration may be only a passing phase. This sort of thing has happened before, and it is not unusual to find that regulations made one day are annulled the next.

Several months ago the Bulgarian Government stated that they will do everything in their power to facilitate the emigration of those people who desire to leave the country. One of the difficulties connected with emigration, pointed out to the Bulgarian Government at that time, was the multiplicity of documents which had to be secured before an exit permit would be granted. These documents numbered up to 13 or 15. Despite the assurance given by the Bulgarian Government, there have been no changes in the number of documents which must be secured and presented by a prospective emigrant. An absurd result of this procedure is that, for example, a six-year-old child for whom an exit permit is requested must present documents that it does not owe any money for mortgages which it has contracted, or that it owns no forest-lands in Bulgaria. At the moment, in view of the discontinuance of the issuance of exit visas, the question of documentation is perhaps somewhat academic. In due course, however, the question again will arise, and will have to be met in some way by the interested organizations.

Despite assurances which have been given and steps already taken to remove disabilities which heretofore attached to the Jewish people in Bulgaria, the desire by the Jewish people to leave the country continues. This can best be indicated by the fact that, when Mr. Bengourion held a meeting in Sofia to discuss Palestine and emigration to that country, 7000 Jews, or over one-third of the Jewish people now in Sofia, attended the public meeting he held. The Jewish people in Bulgaria, by and large, are not satisfied that their future in that country is assured, according to Mr. Bengourion.

3. In general, living conditions in Bulgaria are bad. There is no clothing to be purchased, no shoes, no wearing apparel of any kind. The obtention of these items is not dependent upon money. By way of illustration, one of the Bulgarian Ministers asked Mr. Bengourion to send him a pair of shoes from Palestine, not that this Minister was interested in having a pair of Palestinian shoes, but merely because he needed a pair and could not purchase any. Food, too, is scarce.

The Germans have taken out of the country all cattle, fowl, sheep, anything that could be eaten. The stores in Sofia literally are without merchandise. Medicines are not to be obtained, even with money. Living conditions have become quite difficult. In the Jewish quarter of Sofia, under-nourished and badly clothed. Many of them are without shoes.

Those persons most affected by the general hardship in Bulgaria are the Jews. These people for four years have been without income, have been away in forced-labor camps, were forced out of their homes, were deprived of their possessions, were unable to purchase any clothing, remained without adequate medical care.

Despite restrictions which have been placed upon emigration of the 25,000 Jews who had resided in Sofia four years ago, and who had been expelled to the provinces, between eighteen and twenty thousand have returned. When they returned to Sofia, they found that the dwellings which they had been compelled to give up were pillaged, even the windows and doors had been taken out of the houses. At the time of the bombardment of Sofia, non-Jews had moved to the Jewish quarter, to the houses taken away from the Jews, in the belief that the Jewish quarter, for some reason or other, would escape bombardment. When they left the Jewish quarter, to return to their own homes, they took with them everything that could be moved. In consequence, the Jews now returning can find none of their possessions. It is necessary to take elementary measures of sanitation for the crowded quarters in which they live.

Fifteen thousand of the Jews who returned to Sofia are living in the Jewish quarters of the city. They are crowded together, living two and three families in one room, the children with the old people, the well with the sick. Subject to deprivation over a long period of years, these Jews, under-nourished, ill-clothed, many with no shoes or only what might have passed for shoes a year or two ago, have no resources. Though having the right to work, they have no employment. Most of the men have been called up for military service. Their families receive the regular allowance for those whose bread-winners are in the army, but this amounts to 500 leva per month. At unofficial rates of exchange, this represents about one and one-half Turkish lira. Some idea of the purchasing power represented by 500 leva can be secured when one compares this amount, for a family, with the minimum amount one person must have in order to secure food and shelter. I have been informed by individuals from Bulgaria that one must have a minimum of six to eight thousand leva per month per person in order to have a minimum existence. The Bulgarian authorities told Mr. Ben-gourion that they will raise the allocation to from eight to fifteen hundred leva per month.

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...in Axis countries could have been subjected. In a  
children. There are upwards of 5,000 Jewish children in Bul-  
garia between the ages of six and fifteen. Most of these  
children are residing in the Jewish quarter of Sofia, under-  
nourished and badly clothed. Many of them are without shoes.  
Although the Jewish children in Bulgaria now have the right to  
attend the Bulgarian schools, Mr. Bengourion stated that he  
saw many children who could not avail themselves of this oppor-  
tunity, as they had no shoes or decent clothes to wear and  
performance had to remain at home.

Despite restrictions which have been placed upon emigra-  
tion to Palestine, heretofore reported to you, Mr. Bengourion  
proposes to recommend and to take steps to make efficacious  
the admission into Palestine of 5,000 children from Bulgaria.  
He proposes also to try to purchase in Palestine 10,000 pairs  
of shoes for export to Bulgaria, and also a quantity of medi-  
cines based upon the list which I transmitted to you in our  
letter of December 8. Medicines are urgently required because  
of the existence of typhus in the Jewish quarter, malaria,  
diphtheria, and other illnesses. There is no soap to be ob-  
tained in Bulgaria. As a result, it is not possible for the  
people in the Jewish quarter to wash themselves, to clean  
their clothes, and to take the necessary steps to delouse  
their apparel or to take elementary measures of sanitation  
for the crowded quarters in which they live.

4. While in Bulgaria, Mr. Bengourion learned that there  
are 300 Jews of Macedonia who have come out of hiding in the  
mountains and are now in Skopie. At this time, these are all  
the Jews known to be in Macedonia after the deportations which  
took place a year or two ago. Perhaps there are others still  
in hiding, but they have not yet disclosed themselves. This  
group in Macedonia is another which requires assistance, but  
it cannot be reached from Bulgaria. Perhaps, in due course,  
some channel will be found through which these people can be  
aided.

5. From here in Istanbul, it would seem that the fol-  
lowing inferences can be drawn regarding the Balkans. With  
the exception of Italy, whose political position is somewhat  
unique, Rumania and Bulgaria are the first two Axis countries  
which have been fully liberated. The Jews in these two coun-  
tries have felt in full measure all the pressures and disabili-  
ties, the deportations and sufferings to which the Jewish

*Handwritten:* Hirschman, I...

people in Axis countries could have been subjected. In a limited sense, one might regard them as an example of what one might expect to find among the general population in other areas of Central and Eastern Europe which have been under Nazi control.

At the present time, the efforts of the Jewish people, or the Rumanian and Bulgarian Governments in their behalf, to reestablish themselves, must be regarded as an attempt to lift themselves by their own bootstraps. It cannot be done, and outside aid, in kind and in money, must be made available to aid them in their efforts.

Under the circumstances, it would seem that an early study of conditions in Rumania and Bulgaria, of problems which exist and which will arise, would be informative and profitable to some of the governmental agencies, such as the Intergovernmental Committee for Refugees, the UNRRA, and others which, in due course, might be called upon to aid refugees in liberated areas which formerly were Axis. If any of them expects to give assistance, generous and immediate aid, preferably in kind, should be sent if the assistance is to do any good.

Sincerely yours



SECRET

Mrs. Florence Hodal  
War Refugee Board  
Executive Building  
Washington, D. C.

I. A. HIRSCHMANN  
654 MADISON AVENUE  
NEW YORK 21, N. Y.

June 26, 1945

*Fles*  
///

Dear Florence:

Thanks for your nice letter. I'd like to talk with General O'Dwyer. And I do want to see you. When are you planning to come up this way?

With good wishes,

Cordially yours



iah:ret

Miss Florence Hodel  
War Refugee Board  
Treasury Building  
Washington D. C.

T. A. HIRSCHMANN  
654 MADISON AVENUE  
NEW YORK 21, N. Y.

JUN 22 1945

Dear Ira:

In General O'Dwyer's absence from Washington, I want to acknowledge receipt of your letter of June 13, and the copy of the issue of the SURVEY GRAPHIC containing your article "Palestine - as a Refuge from Fascism".

I have read the article with great interest and I think you have done an excellent job. I am left with the feeling that I would like to see the other chapters of your forthcoming book. General O'Dwyer plans to be in Washington next week and I shall certainly call your letter and article to his personal attention.

I am still hoping to get to New York for a chat with you.

In the light of the current political situation I thought you would be interested in this issue and the treatment of the subject of the refugees which has been explored in my article entitled "Palestine - as a Refuge from Fascism".

Sincerely,

*L Florence Hodel*

Florence Hodel

Cordially yours,

Mr. T. A. Hirschmann A. Hirschmann  
654 Madison Avenue  
New York 21, New York

FH:ve 6/22/45

*The Bureau of Census  
Mr. E. L. ...  
June 22*

HIRSCHMANN  
54 MADISON AVENUE  
NEW YORK 21, N. Y.

June 13, 1945

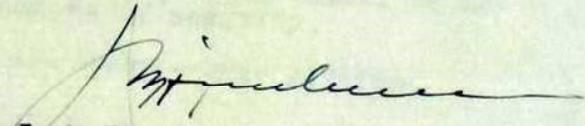
Brig.Gen. William O'Dwyer  
Chairman, War Refugee Board  
Treasury Building  
Washington, D. C.

Dear General O'Dwyer:

Under separate cover, I have mailed you a copy of the issue of the Survey Graphic "The British and Ourselves".

In the light of the critical political situation in the Middle East I thought you would be interested in this issue and the treatment of the subject of the refugees which has been explored in my article entitled "Palestine - as a Refuge from Fascism".

Cordially yours,

  
I. A. Hirschmann

iah:em

*For issue of "Survey Graphic"  
See: Exhibits  
Hirschmann  
In C.*

BLOOMINGDALE'S  
NEW YORK

EXECUTIVE OFFICES

February 2, 1945.

Mr. John W. Pehle  
Treasury Department  
Office of the Secretary  
Washington, D. C.

Dear John:

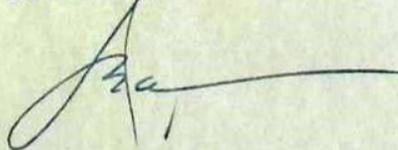
I am coming to Washington on Thursday, February 8th to consult with you about the book. You know I appreciate the time you and your associates gave to reading it. I want your criticism.

Certainly I am looking for suggestions leading to the elimination of any aspects of it which would be misleading from the point of view of unwitting self-projection and information which would better be deleted for reasons of security.

I will call you on Thursday morning.

With good wishes,

Cordially yours,



I. A. Hirschmann

iah:em

EXHIBIT COPY

*Hirschmann*

The  Sun

JAN 13 1945

**Hirschmann to Tell  
Of Relief Problems**

Ira A. Hirschmann, special representative of the War Refugee Board, will discuss phases of overseas rescue and relief problems at a meeting tomorrow of the Council of Organizations of the United Jewish Appeal. The meeting will be held at 2 P. M. in the Hotel Biltmore.

*Hirsch*

BLOOMINGDALE'S  
NEW YORK

22

*Felles*

EXECUTIVE OFFICES

January 12, 1945

Mr. John W. Pehle  
Treasury Department  
Office of the Secretary  
Washington, D. C.

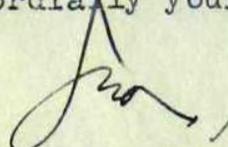
Dear John:

I have finished my book which must be in the publisher's hands before the end of the month. As you will recall, you volunteered to look through it to determine whether there were any points that should be challenged or edited. I appreciated this more than I can say.

I am going to Washington this Wednesday, January 17th, and will bring a manuscript with me for you. Fortunately it is not very long. It's a shame that you have to go through the chore of reading this, but you will probably find it of interest.

I want to see you anyhow so I'll call you on Wednesday. I hope this finds you well. With good wishes,

Cordially yours



I. A. Hirschmann

iah:ret

JAN 9 1945

**In FM-Television Post**



*Ira A. Hirschmann*

**Ira Hirschmann  
Will Take FM,  
Television Post**

**To Organize Activities for  
Federated Department  
Stores in These Fields**

Ira A. Hirschmann has been appointed to organize frequency modulation and television activities for Federated Department Stores, Inc., according to announcement yesterday by Walter Rothschild, president of Abraham & Straus, Inc., and of Metropolitan Television, Inc. Mr. Hirschmann, who is assuming his new post with the agreement of James

S. Schoff, president of Bloomingdale's, is a vice-president of both Bloomingdale's and Metropolitan Television, Inc. The latter organization is a subsidiary of Abraham & Straus and Bloomingdale's.

After Feb. 1, Mr. Hirschmann will make his headquarters at the offices of Metropolitan Television, 654 Madison Avenue.

"This move is an indication of the concrete interest in the new fields of broadcasting on the part of Federated Department Stores," Mr. Hirschmann said. "Frequency modulation is now acknowledged as the accepted form of post-war broadcasting and, with television having indicated its expansion in the near future, we are setting up a developmental program. Through FM and television our stores will be able to offer an expanding service to all the communities in which they are located."

Metropolitan Television operates FM Station WABF and the experimental Television Station W2XMT. As vice-president of the company, Mr. Hirschmann initiated and supervised the developmental work for Abraham & Straus and Bloomingdale's.

Applications have been filed with the Federal Communications Commission in Washington for FM and television licenses for three other stores which, along with Abraham & Straus and Bloomingdale's.

Applications have been filed with the Federal Communications Commission in Washington for FM and television licenses for three other stores which, along with Abraham & Straus and Bloomingdale's are members of Federated Department Stores, Inc. The stores are: F. & R. Lazarus & Co., Inc., Columbus, Ohio; John Shillito Co., Cincinnati, and Wm. Filene's Sons Co., Boston. Mr. Hirschmann will direct the developmental program of all five stores.

Meets:

# Ira A. Hirschmann

Last February, Ira Hirschmann, a brisk young American businessman, arrived in Turkey on a special mission for the War Refugee Board. His job was to get political and religious refugees out of the Balkans—alive. He was armed with extraordinary powers, the right to trade with the enemy if necessary, the instant co-operation of the War Refugee Board, and his own innocent American forthrightness and moral indignation.

Shortly after his arrival, he called upon the Soviet Ambassador to Turkey, to enlist his help.

The Soviet Ambassador heard him out.

"I have been here six years," the Soviet Ambassador said. "What you hope to do is impossible. I know. For six years I have tried to do it myself."

"And I have been here only two weeks," Hirschmann said. "So I know nothing. Therefore will you help me? Will you teach me? I see now I have so much to learn."

Touched by the American young man's humility, and by the nobility of the task he'd traveled so far to accomplish, the Soviet Ambassador agreed to help him. This he did, and the American young man stayed in Turkey for eight months,

and when at last he returned to his America, John W. Pehle, Director of the War Refugee Board, praised him warmly.

"Our profound, abiding gratitude," Pehle said. "Mission accomplished. Impossible mission — accomplished."

One day while he was still in Ankara, Hirschmann and Laurence Steinhardt, the American Ambassador to Turkey then, were talking, pondering Hirschmann's problems. Hirschmann said he thought the thing to do was just to go up to the Romanian Minister and say to him right out: "Let them go. Let those people go."

"But you can't do that," Steinhardt said. "That's not the way it's done. Already everywhere you go, secret agents follow you. The Romanian, the Bulgarian, the Turkish, the British. We're at war with Rumania. If you go to see the Romanian Minister, those agents will report secret peace negotiations. The repercussions will be world-shaking. You can see for yourself . . ."

Hirschmann and Steinhardt discussed it far into the night.

"I don't give a damn how they report it," Hirschmann argued. "My



Ira A. Hirschmann

job is to get those refugees out. I'll take the responsibility."

At dawn Steinhardt agreed.

So Hirschmann called upon the Romanian Minister, and stated his proposition.

"If you don't want them, we'll take them," he said to the Romanian Minister. "They're Romanians, but we'll take them. America will take them."

And Hirschmann convinced the Romanian Minister to release Rumania's refugees.

When their negotiations were concluded, Hirschmann looked at the Romanian Minister for a long time.

"Don't you at least feel embarrassed?" he asked. "I should think you'd feel embarrassed for another nation to come to you and ask you to stop torturing and murdering your own countrymen!"

"We're not mean," the Romanian Minister said. "We're really very nice people. But the Germans—they forced us to . . ."

"Cut that out!" Hirschmann said. "Don't give me that. You enjoyed it. If you feel frustrated, now that there's nobody for you to beat, come tell me about it. But you know what? I'll bet you're going to come to me in about a week, and you're going to say, 'I don't quite understand it, but you know—I feel better!'"

*Hirschmann Ira*

### Fell in Love

Hirschmann had lots of adventures in the Middle East, and since it's Arabian Nights country, he fell in love.

It happened in Ankara. He had to journey all the way to Ankara—to find out how much he loved his own country. He had taken her for granted, before.

Back in New York, one night he was talking about it to a friend.

"The truest perspective of America—I got from Ankara," he heard himself say.

Quickly he wrote it down in his notebook because Hirschmann's apt to forget significant things he says if he doesn't straightway write them down. Besides, he's writing a book.

But he told at least some of it, in his office at Bloomingdale's, an impressive office, inasmuch as he's a vice president there. He told it first seated at his desk, kind of quiet and spiritual-like. But presently he was on his feet striding and gesticulating, returning to his desk for his conclusion, quiet again. Hirschmann's also an amateur of music and likes the symphonic form.

He explained he was experiencing a fermentation, as a result of what he's seen and felt.

"There is," he said, "the world at war, the world at half-war, the world of political upheaval—and then there's America!"

### Freedom and Security

"This country is so much better than we realize here. Here we've got the essentials of living with freedom and security—and the ability to contribute to our own as well as to the new world in the making. That's all here, in great abundance.

"Then the quality of the American people is different. They've got an essential kindness and decency and goodness and concern with the other fellow. Some may interpret it as childlike softness, but it isn't. Maybe we haven't got a culture yet, but we certainly are a strong, a good, a constructive, people. What's lacking is a basic seriousness, but we shall have that, too. Now the people have been jolted. They've had a collision with seriousness. The war, their loved ones in the war, has jolted them into a world of reality. We can no longer go on living for fun. We must make it, 'for happiness.'"

Looking thoughtful, Hirschmann drew on his pipe.

"Everywhere I went in the Middle East, the people told me: 'Thank God for America!' The refugees asked: 'When are you coming to save us?' The others asked: 'When are you going to exert your great power, for liberation?' But all of them: 'Thank God for America!'

### Amazed

"They couldn't believe it, that in the midst of war, the President should establish the War Refugee Board with unprecedented powers, and issue a decree to save people, rather than kill them.

"They couldn't believe a government would do such a thing as save other people. That our great Government reaches out its arms, 14,000 miles away. . .

"But we have taken this position. We are the leaders in conscience and direction and concern with the lot of the people throughout the world—and we can not shirk it.

"Every American should sit down with himself and say to himself: 'I'm thrilled and proud to be an American—but now I'm called upon to play a part in a universal theater and I can't let them down. I belong to the free and the great. This is my responsibility. What am I going to do about it? You can't avoid history. You can't duck it. We tried ducking it once before, when Wilson put it to us.'

"Yes," Hirschmann said, "I came back the great patriot. For I saw a dramatic example of America at work in the way she should be.

"The great story of the release of the refugees from the Balkans is the American people. First, people who would create such a thing as the War Refugee Board; then, the kind of men running it, men who have vitality, imagination, resourcefulness—who act—which is America.

"I've come back with nothing but faith—faith that there's in this wonderful country a young group of vital and imaginative and flexible-minded Americans to take a responsible and sympathetic share in shaping the world."

Hirschmann says it's pretty hard to adjust himself to his job at Bloomingdale's again, but on the way out, Bloomingdale's looked just fine.

December 12, 1944

Telephone Conversation with Ira Hirschmann

DEC 12 1944

Mr. Fabelman read an article from the Jewish Experiment to Mr. Hirschmann. He said that Mr. Fabel was disturbed about some statements made by Mr. Hirschmann and would like to get his side of the story.

Dear Ira:

I am enclosing with this letter a pamphlet which we received for you from the Geological Department of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

Sincerely,

*John*

Mr. Hirschmann: Fabelinsky came to me at my advice. He made life miserable for me. He got in this trouble in connection with German spies. He did not save one person. He claimed that he did all the work that the Board did, in public statements. I was asked about it and I decided to answer it. I am sorry if that was contrary to policy. I think I had better say that I am speaking as a private citizen in the future.

Mr. Ira Hirschmann,  
Vice President,  
Bloomingdale's,  
New York 22, New York.

Mr. Friedman: I think that would be helpful.

Enclosure.

Mr. Hirschmann: I was the guy that was hammered. Fabelinsky was an obstructionist and I must have been... I am interested in...

*The attachments received in...*

*RBH*  
RBHutchison:inp 12/8/44

November 30, 1944.

Telephone Conversation with Ira Hirschmann.

Mr. Friedman read an article from the Jewish Exponent to Mr. Hirschmann and said that Mr. Pehle was disturbed about some statements made by Mr. Hirschmann and would like to get his side of the story.

Mr. Friedman: John did not get the necessity of making the statement -- the Board was slipping down on the Emergency Committee. The statement was made I gather?

Mr. Hirschmann: Jabotinsky came over against my advice. He made life miserable for me. He got in this trouble in connection with German spies. He did not save one person. He claimed that he did all the work that the Board did, in public statements. I was asked about it and I decided to answer it. I am sorry if that was contrary to policy. I think I had better say that I am speaking as a private citizen in the future.

Mr. Friedman: I think that would be helpful.

Mr. Hirschmann: I was the guy that was hammered. Jabotinsky was an obstructionist and I know they did not save one person net. I am interested in stating the truth there. I stated it because those fellows

Mr. Hirschmann continuing:

had me running in circles and I also state that  
I will not make any statements except as a private  
citizen.

Hirschmann

## JEWIS ARE WARNED TO HALT TERRORISM

Hirschmann Urges 'Ruthless'  
Action in Palestine to Curb  
'the Lunatic Fringe'

Ira Hirschmann, who returned three weeks ago from a mission to the Balkans as representative of the President's War Refugee Board, yesterday advocated "aggressive, ruthless" elimination of the terrorists in Palestine.

Unless the Jewish people rid themselves of what he described as "the lunatic fringe," they will suffer for all acts committed by the few hundred persons in that group, he said.

Mr. Hirschmann, vice president of Bloomingdale's, who was on leave of absence for his eight months' mission, addressed the twenty-first annual convention of the National Labor Committee for Palestine at the Hotel Commodore.

Three thousand delegates from unions and Jewish organizations in the United States and Canada are attending the convention, which is expected to approve a \$2,000,000 fund-raising campaign for Histadrut, the Jewish Labor Federation in Palestine.

Referring to the recent assassination in Cairo of Lord Moyne, British resident Minister in the Middle East, Mr. Hirschmann said that he was "probably the last American to see and work with him."

"I didn't agree with Lord Moyne in many days of conference," he said. "We finally compromised. You can't just kill a man simply because you do not agree with him. It doesn't work that way. Simply because the British Empire doesn't keep its promise, or hasn't kept its promises with Palestine, you can't settle things that way."

### Melodrama in His Work

Describing the arrangements that were made to permit the escape of refugees to Palestine, Mr. Hirschmann said he dealt directly with the enemy in "strange and clandestine meetings," compared to which even Alfred Hitchcock movies were "mild stuff." He was often followed by German, Turkish and even British agents.

After telling how he successfully negotiated with a Rumanian Minister for the cessation of wholesale massacres, he said that he believed that if the democracies had taken stronger action, the people in the Balkans would have been "impressed by the fact that the moral power of free peoples would throw weight against despots and tyrants."

"When the matter was put to Government leaders they ceased their persecutions," he said.

A message from the British Labor party, signed by Harold Laski, vice chairman, and J. S. Middleton, secretary, said: "In this grave moment in Jewish history the recent deplorable terrorist crime in Egypt and the continuous murder of Jewry in Fascist Europe alike must strengthen the determination of true friends of Zionism everywhere to pursue their efforts to secure the Jewish claim for refuge and freedom in their Palestinian homeland."

### Praise From Senator Wagner

Senator Robert F. Wagner, in a message, declared that Histadrut's accomplishments "in rescuing unfortunate Jews who were trapped in Nazi Europe is a story which when fully told will add a glorious chapter to the history of human heroism."

Other messages were received from Philip Murray, president of the Congress of Industrial Organizations; William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor, and Walter Schevenels, general secretary of the International Federation of Trade Unions.

Isadore Nagler, vice president of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union and chairman of the administrative committee of the National Labor Committee for Palestine, traced the growth of the

organization, which raised \$51,000 in its first year, twenty-one years ago, and last year raised \$1,250,000.

At a mass meeting at Carnegie Hall last night, Dr. Bernard Joseph, legal adviser of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, who recently arrived from there, reported that Jewish public bodies in Palestine "have consistently condemned whole-heartedly these acts of terrorism committed by a handful of misguided fanatics." He added, however, that "the British authorities are not free from blame."

He emphasized that the most imperative need of the Jewish people today is free immigration into Palestine, maintaining that "little

Palestine has brought more succor to the persecuted Jews of Europe during these last five years than all the other countries of the world taken together." The immigration would have been greater, he added, "had it not been for the arbitrary restrictions of the White Paper."

Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver of Cleveland, co-chairman of the American Zionist Emergency Council, was another speaker. Joseph Schlossberg was chairman. The convention ends today with a business session.

NOV 26 1944

## How Refugee Jews Were Saved By American Mission in Turkey

Anti-Nazis with German passports caught in Ankara in August when Turkey broke relations with Germany found haven in the American Embassy until they could be transported on British visas to Palestine, Ira A. Hirschmann disclosed yesterday.

A special Presidential mission composed of himself and two assistants, Mr. Hirschmann said, abrogated the trading-with-the-enemy act in this and other instances to save internal enemies and victims of the Nazis and their satellites.

In his first public address since his return from the Mediterranean three weeks ago, at a luncheon of 1,000 delegates to the National Labor Committee for Palestine at the Hotel Commodore, Mr. Hirschmann recounted some of his experiences. The meeting opened the committee's two-day annual con-

vention and was followed last night by a rally at Carnegie Hall, where American, British and Polish leaders of Zionism spoke.

Mr. Hirschmann, who has resumed private life as a vice-president of Bloomingdale Brothers, Inc., served in Ankara and Istanbul from February to October as assistant to John W. Pehle, director of the War Refugee Board. He had the status of a special attache of the State Department and worked, with the approval of the Army, under an emergency order of President Roosevelt clothing him "with the most extraordinary powers probably ever given to a man by any government."

"Turkey was a window to the Balkans when we got there," Mr. Hirschmann said. "Our assignment was to make it a door. I think we succeeded before I left in making it a gateway." Under

orders to do everything possible "to save our people from the enemy," he said, "we had many strange and clandestine meetings" with the enemy and were constantly shadowed by German, Turkish and even British agents.

"I was called to task by some members of the State Department for breaking conventions," he recounted, "but not by Mr. Steinhardt (Laurence A. Steinhardt, Ambassador to Turkey), who is a great American. I received a letter from an American general calling my attention that we had overstepped a military rule. I reminded the general that the military had 12,000,000 men to kill the enemy while we had three to try to save people from the enemy. I asked him to be tolerant of my organization."

### Met Romanian Minister

One of the mission's assigned tasks was to try to break up a concentration district in Romania between the Dneestr and Bug Rivers, where 175,000 victims of the Nazis were bottled up. By the time he arrived in Ankara, Mr. Hirschmann said, the population of the disease-infested area had been reduced to 50,000.

Though Romania and the United States were "still in the heart of war," he reported, "the district was broken up in forty-eight hours, most of the adults were absorbed into Romania and many of the children were removed to Palestine, simply because the Romanian government was impressed by the concern of the United States government for those people.

"I had several meetings with the Romanian minister in Ankara, an intimate of Antonescu," Mr. Hirschmann said. "It is not true, in my belief, that the Germans forced the Romanians to these mass murders."

### Children Well Received

Mr. Hirschmann told the committee, which supports financially the social services of the Jewish Federation of Labor in Palestine, that "you can take great heart received in Palestine when there was no other door open to them in the whole world," but he ended on a note of somber warning to those who hope to see there a co-operative Jewish commonwealth.

"This is the critical hour for Palestine," he said. "It is distressing to see what is happening there at the hands of a small group of terrorists" (a reference to the Fighters for the Freedom of Israel, to which belonged the two gunmen

*Hirschmann, Ira*

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# The New York Times.

NOV 24 1944

## HIRSCHMANN TO SPEAK

Will Report on Near East to Palestine Group Tomorrow

Ira Hirschmann, who recently returned from the Near East as a representative of the President's War Refugee Board, will be principal speaker tomorrow at the Hotel Commodore as the twenty-first annual convention of the National Labor Committee for Palestine gets under way.

Three thousand delegates from unions and Jewish organizations engaged in raising funds in aid of the Histadrut, the Jewish Labor Federation in Palestine, are expected to attend and authorize a 1945 quota of \$2,000,000. The funds are used to rescue Jews from Nazi-occupied countries and establish them in Palestine, and for reconstruction work.

A highlight of the convention, which ends Sunday, will be a meeting at 8:30 P. M. tomorrow in Carnegie Hall.

Hirschmann,  
9-11

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# The News

NOV 23 1944

## We Should Be Thankful **By Thomas L. Stokes**



A GROUP of us—a few newspapermen and some Government officials—sat about a nice dinner, enjoying the quick give-and-take of a post-mortem on the election, with gay chatter and good humor punctuated by occasional sharp thrusts and sly remarks about big political figures.

Few were spared. It's a good old American custom.

Then the things were cleared away and we settled back to cigars and cigarets, while a young man, the guest of honor, began to speak. He was Ira

A. Hirschmann, who worked in the Near East, in Turkey and the Balkans, cutting red tape to get out refugees. He was a representative of the board designated by President Roosevelt, consisting of Secretary of State Hull, Secretary of War Stimson, and Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau.

He sat and talked informally. He mentioned the election as he started, and then went into an account of his work. He told of the horrors of persecution in the Balkans, of massacres, of a thousand children who waited and waited and waited, literally at the docks—lost waifs with no country and no home, for whom, it seemed, nobody could find visas. He got them to Palestine and he reported that, on a visit there later, he found them different little beings, recovering rapidly, physically and emotionally. All told, 50,000 persons were moved to Palestine.

As he talked, the fear that grips the souls of men who dared to speak out against the Nazis, the hidden lives they had to lead, the deaths that so many of them died—

all this rose up about that table with its white linen and its bowl of flowers. It made his listeners a serious and sober group.

Then, as he talked on, you recalled with a bit of shame the earlier gay and trifling talk about the election.

But back in your mind, as you listened, you began to see that in a different light. For we have no fear here. We held an election in the midst of war. We walked into the polling places as free men and voted as we pleased.

Later, we talked about it as we pleased, just as we had talked about it in the campaign, and as we had talked about it at that dinner, joshing the big men, taking them apart, criticizing them.

Our guest had hinted at it once.

"Out there, you went around always looking behind your back," he said.

We should be thankful.

He told about meeting people in secret places.

We should be very thankful.

THEN he told what it means to be an American citizen over there, and his voice filled with emotion. He told what it meant to represent our Government. Officials of other governments he met there were amazed at his visit.

"You mean that your Government is interested in what happens to people over here?" they asked in effect. "And the American people—are they so interested?"

They couldn't understand it, but when they found out about it, they were moved into action.

And the average person on the street—how they look to America, and how they welcome Americans!

bound to extermination at the hands of the retreating  
German armies in Transnistria, were at the last moment removed into  
Romania proper and thereby saved from the clutches of the Germans.  
It was in...

NOV 22 1944

*Hirschmann, Ira*

New York Post  
NOV 22 1944

# Washington Memo

By Charles Van Devander and William O. Player Jr.

## War Refugee Board to Carry On Until Germany Is Defeated

Washington, Nov. 22.

The War Refugee Board—which some people have feared might be prematurely abolished under the Russell amendment prohibiting executive agencies from continuing more than a year without Congressional approval—is going to stay on the job as long as there's a war on in Europe.

The WRB's allotted year will expire next Jan. 22, after which time it will have to look to Congress, rather than to the President, for its finances.

Therefore, the board, composed of Secretaries Hull, Stimson and Morgenthau, is submitting to the deficiency sub-committee of the House Appropriations Committee, now in session, a request for \$150,000.

The Board's executive director, John W. Pehle, estimates that this amount will be sufficient to meet WRB requirements for salaries, supplies and other expenses through June, if necessary.

Thus far, no Congressional opposition to such a grant is in prospect—certainly not from any sources acquainted with the WRB's activities.



IRA HIRSCHMANN

As a matter of fact, however, it had looked until recently as though there would be little or no reason for extending the life of the Board beyond the prescribed period.

Less than two months ago, for instance, Victory-in-Europe day seemed so much closer at hand than it does now that Pehle, at a press conference, indicated the WRB work was just about done; and, at the same conference, Ira Hirschmann, who had been representing the board in the Middle East, announced his return to private life on the ground that his assignment—that of arranging to funnel out Balkan refugees via Turkey—had virtually been completed.

Both Pehle and Hirschmann made it clear at the time, though, that the WRB couldn't really call it quits so long as there were still any Jews or members of other persecuted minorities to be rescued, if possible, from areas still occupied by the Nazis—such as Germany, itself, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, etc.

There still are, and there will continue to be—until V-Day itself. And, though their numbers are far smaller (growing smaller and smaller each day under the Nazi extermination program) and the difficulties of getting them out of these territories are far greater than they were in the Balkans generally, the WRB will continue to maintain its staffs here and abroad and to do all it possibly can to further rescue activities.

German armies in Transnistria, were at the last moment removed into  
Rumania proper and thereby saved from the clutches of the Germans.  
It was in large part due to your efforts NOV 13 1944

## New York Post NOV 22 1944

Once the European war is over, however, and there are no more "occupied" territories, the WRB will quietly fold its books, close its doors and go out of existence.

As the Board's prospective demise nears, considerable pressure is being brought by various interested groups to make it a permanent government agency, so as to insure continuation of some of the work it has been doing, both directly and indirectly, in behalf of persecuted minorities all over the world.

Its educational value alone, for example—the role it has played in promoting sympathy, understanding and active assistance, within the U. S. itself as well as abroad, for the victims of oppression—is regarded as inestimable.

But, contrary to the tendency in most government agencies, the WRB's members and administrative personnel look upon the office and its functions as strictly emergency affairs—and, after the emergency has passed, they have no desire to be "perpetuated."

At their first meeting here Economic Stabilizer Fred Vinson told WLB member Frank Graham the story of a remarkable inning of baseball in which he played, as shortstop for Centre College, against the University of North Carolina, of which Graham is now president, back in 1909.

On the first pitched ball, Vinson singled. On the next two balls, two more Centre men safely bunted, loading the bases. On the fourth pitched ball, the batter grounded to short, the shortstop threw to second, the second baseman threw to first and, after Vinson had crossed the plate, the first-baseman threw to home, catching the man who had been on second and retiring the side. All, Vinson stressed, on four pitches!

Graham listened to the story and then said quietly: "Yes, I remember that inning very well. I was sitting on the bench at the time—as a substitute for North Carolina."

Hand  
written  
note

*Mr. Hirschmann*

EMBASSY OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Istanbul, October 30, 1944

**NOV 22 1944**

Dear Mr. Pehles:

We have heretofore advised you of the arrival in Istanbul by railroad from Rumania of a group of some 160 adults and children en route to Palestine. Mr. Hirschmann, in his reports to you, has included information regarding the earlier steps which had been taken and agreements obtained for the issuance of the necessary transit visas for emigration from Rumania. Quite likely, he has also advised you personally, since his return, of other details. However, the War Refugee Board, as a matter of fact, **I send you herewith a copy of a letter** is developing.

**which I have just received from Herbert Katzki and**

In accordance with arrangements which have been made **which he has asked me to pass on to you.**

advised the Bulgarian Consulate in Rumania that it is in order to issue Bulgarian transit visas **Sincerely,** persons in Rumania who are in possession of confessions issued by representatives of the Jewish Agency, the migration certificates for Palestine have been authorized for them. This arrangement depended, of course, upon the two earlier agreements which had been secured, namely (agreement with the British Passport Control Office) that any Jewish refugee arriving on Turkish territory would be admitted to Palestine, and (agreement with the Turkish Foreign Office) that the Turkish authorities would issue transit visas to any persons who are in possession of one of four identify-

**Mr. Ira A. Hirschmann,** Vice-President, can and British Embassies in Ankara and **Bloomingdale's,** New York 22, N.Y. With few exceptions, the persons

included in the group of 160 mentioned above were in possession of Rumanian passports and exit visas. Turkish **Enclosure.** as were issued either in Rumania or at Swillingrad, at the Bulgarian-Turkish frontier. For your confidential information, the group included four children who simply attached themselves to the larger group of children in Rumania, and one child who did the same in Bulgaria. The four Rumanian children received Bulgarian transit visas, and all five received Turkish transit visas at Swillingrad, with nothing more in their pockets than confessions of the Jewish Agency that Palestine certificates would be issued to them, Bulgaria to the west of the

*Included copy sent  
account in files*

EMBASSY OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

-2-

Istanbul, October 30, 1944

During recent days, a total of perhaps 50 Jewish people from Bulgaria have presented themselves at Svilingrad with Bulgarian passports and other documents, and entered into Turkey without any difficulty on the basis of their Jewish Agency confirmations. This process

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In accordance with arrangements which have been made with the Bulgarian authorities, Sofia has advised the Bulgarian Consulate in Rumania that it is in order to issue Bulgarian transit visas to any persons in Rumania who are in possession of confirmations, issued by representatives of the Jewish Agency, that immigration certificates for Palestine have been authorized for them. This arrangement depended, of course, upon the two earlier agreements which had been secured, namely (agreement with the British Passport Control Office) that any Jewish refugee arriving on Turkish territory would be admitted to Palestine, and (agreement with the Turkish Foreign Office) that the Turkish authorities would issue transit visas to any persons who are in possession of one of four identifying documents, as enumerated in the special agreement between the American and British Embassies in Ankara and the Turkish Foreign Office, regarding which you have already been advised. With few exceptions, the persons included in the group of 160 mentioned above were in possession of Rumanian passports and exit visas. Turkish transit visas were issued either in Rumania or at Svilingrad, at the Bulgarian-Turkish frontier. For your confidential information, the group included four children who simply attached themselves to the larger group of children in Rumania, and one child who did the same in Bulgaria. The four Rumanian children received Bulgarian transit visas, and all five received Turkish transit visas at Svilingrad, with nothing more in their pockets than confirmations of the Jewish Agency that Palestine certificates would be issued to them. Bulgaria to the cause of the

During recent days, a total of perhaps 50 Jewish people from Bulgaria have presented themselves at Svilingrad with Bulgarian passports and other documents, and were admitted into Turkey without any difficulty on the basis of their Jewish Agency confirmations. This procedure is now working quite automatically. The Turkish transit visas are issued at Svilingrad, the Palestine certificates and other necessary transit visas from Turkey to Palestine are issued in Istanbul, and the journeys can be continued.

/s/ Herbert Katak

There is some confusion as to the categories of persons who may emigrate from Rumania. We are advised that children repatriated from Transnistria are not being permitted to emigrate, as the Russians, regarding these children as Russian nationals, wish to return them to Russia. This same attitude seems to apply to adults repatriated or otherwise returned to Rumania from Transnistria. We are advised, likewise, that there may be some difficulty for Polish nationals to emigrate from Rumania, as they, too, seem to be considered as persons to be returned to their countries of origin. Although this apparently is the general attitude, nevertheless 20 Polish nationals were among the 160 persons referred to above. Then there is question as to whether young men of military age will be permitted to emigrate from Rumania. In principle, all men of military age, including Jews, have been required to register for military service. However, Rumanian Jewish young men in small numbers are receiving passports and other necessary documents, and are emigrating. As you can see--and it has always been thus in Balkan countries--regulations have been made and then exceptions turn up one after the other, so that a clear picture cannot be secured.

In Bulgaria, likewise, Jewish men of military age have been registered for service. Theoretically, therefore, they should not be able to emigrate. Practically, however, some have been passing through Turkey, so that here again one cannot say definitely what the future will hold for emigration of young people, of whom there are thousands in Bulgaria ready to emigrate to Palestine.

The foregoing is for your information. In accordance with your various cables, we are now refraining from interfering in these emigration matters which, since the defection of Rumania and Bulgaria to the cause of the

...ed Nations, may be regarded as "normal" emigration and not as emigration with which the War Refugee Board must concern itself. Nevertheless, because these procedures were initiated by Ambassador Steinhardt and Mr. Hirschmann while he was still here, we thought you would be interested in knowing how they developed. We would appreciate your informing Mr. Hirschmann.

With personal greetings,

Sincerely yours,

/s/ Herbert Katzki

Mr. J. W. Pehle, Executive Director  
War Refugee Board  
Treasury Building  
Washington 25, D. C.

... your assistance that the welcome ... country that was again refugees from ... before you succeeded in having the ... Turkish transit visas in Turkey and ... it became known that all refugees from ... would be admitted through Turkey to ... arrival. Thus, the Transit ... largely to your untiring efforts.

... that proceeded to attack with equal impetuosity and ... the obstacles placed by the satellite governments in the paths ... trying to escape from the Balkans. With the approval of ... Ambassador Steinhardt, you disregarded traditional ... presented situation; when necessary, you exercised authority to seal ... procedures and made full use of your extraordinary authority to deal ... with the enemy. As a direct result of your activity, thousands of

File  
WP

refugees, doomed to extermination at the hands of the retreating German armies in Transylvania, were at the last moment rescued into Romania proper and thereby saved from the clutches of the Germans. It was in large part due to your efforts NOV 16 1944 and Bulgarian Governments finally came to realize how seriously our Government considered their inhuman treatment of the Jews and other minority groups. Thus, very not fortunate enough to escape were nonetheless unofficially protected inside Romanian and Bulgarian territory and now when the Arbitration Delegation, the Bulgarian Government re-

Dear Mr. Hirschmann:

In your letter of resignation to the Board, you expressed your gratefulness for being given the unique opportunity to save lives at a time when the main preoccupation of the world is that of killing. In this observation lies the essence of your personal approach to the difficult and heart-rending task with which the President charged the War Refugee Board. It explains your zeal and energy in carrying out your duties, your determination to do what others called impossible. It explains why at the very time of the creation of the War Refugee Board you were in Turkey, taking time from a busy and important business career, trying to do what you could as a private citizen to alleviate the suffering of the victims of Hitler. This convinced us that in you the Board would find the selflessness and the will to accomplish necessary to throw open wide the exit doors from the Balkans through Turkey. The Board was fortunate indeed in having you as its representative. And its faith in you has proved well justified.

It was not long after your appointment that the welcome news was first flashed in this country that once again refugees from the Balkans were being admitted into Turkey. At first they came in trickles. But it was not long before you succeeded in having the entire procedure for obtaining Turkish transit visas and Palestine certificates overhauled and streamlined. The trickle then increased to a flow, particularly when it became known that all refugees from the Balkans, with or without papers, would be admitted to Turkey and Palestine. All who arrived were transported through Turkey to Palestine in a matter of days after their arrival. Thus, the Turkish bottleneck was broken, due largely to your untiring efforts.

You then proceeded to attack with equal imagination and energy the obstacles placed by the satellite governments in the paths of those trying to escape from the Balkans. With the approval of Ambassador Steinhardt, you employed unprecedented methods in an unprecedented situation; when necessary, you disregarded traditional procedures and made full use of your extraordinary authority to deal with the enemy. As a direct result of your activity, thousands of

PH:JMB:hd 11/11/44

CC - Mr. Gaston, Mr. Pehle, Mr. Abrahamson, Mr. DuBois

Mr. Friedman, Miss Rodel, Mr. Lesser, Mr. Laxford

File  
WP

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
- 2 -  
WAR REFUGEE BOARD

OFFICE OF  
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

refugees, doomed to extermination at the hands of the retreating German armies in Transnistria, were at the last moment removed into Rumania proper and thereby saved from the clutches of the Germans. It was in large part due to your efforts that the Rumanian and Bulgarian Governments finally came to realize how seriously our Government considered their inhuman treatment of the Jews and other minority groups. Thus, many not fortunate enough to escape were nonetheless unofficially protected inside Rumanian and Bulgarian territory; and even prior to the Armistice Declaration, the Bulgarian Government repealed its anti-Jewish laws.

War Refugee Board

Washington: It is with deep regret that your resignation as Special Representative of the War Refugee Board in Turkey has been accepted. The contribution which you have made to our work is indeed outstanding and should give you the deepest personal gratification.

Since returning from my special mission in Turkey for consultation and having submitted my report, Very truly yours, my understanding that the assignment given me by the War Refugee Board as Special Representative in Turkey has been concluded.

(Signed) J. W. Pehle

On October 4, 1944, I submitted to you a summary report of my operations in Turkey from June 18th J. W. Pehle October 4th when I left Ankara. My previous report Executive Director fully my operations for the Board since you designated me the Board's Special Representative in Turkey on February 15, 1944. The job, as I perceived it, was to implement the policy of the United States Government, announced in the President's Order of January 22, 1944, to rescue through Mr. Ira A. Hirschmann, satellite countries. Turkey is well described Vice-President, the Balkans. Through the aegis of the Board, we Bloomingdale's, ing of it first a small aperture, then a door, through New York 22, N. Y. thousands of refugees were rescued. These refugees, I am confident, would not have been saved from persecution and annihilation without the eleventh hour efforts of the Board, working through its representatives with Ambassador Steinhardt in Ankara and Istanbul.

Your clothing of us with authority to deal with the enemy afforded me the opportunity of dealing with and persuading the Ministers of Bulgaria and Rumania to loosen the stricture against the oppressed minorities; to abandon the disease-ridden camp in Transnistria; to induce the Government in Bulgaria to revoke its nefarious anti-Jewish laws, reinstating a population of 45,000 citizens (who had been reduced to pariahs) to their normal state of human rights and dignity. Through the auspices of the Board, numerous other steps were taken to rescue stricken peoples in the Balkans, all of which steps are recorded in your files.

closed with  
JH, MSM, JBF, AA,

FH:MM:hd 11/11/44

CC - Mr. Gaston, Mr. Pehle, Mr. Abrahamson, Mr. DuBois

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



OFFICE OF THE  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

October 17, 1944

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

Dear Mr. Pehle:

Since returning from my second mission in Turkey for consultation and having submitted my report to you, it is my understanding that the assignment given me by the War Refugee Board as Special Representative in Turkey has been concluded.

On October 4, 1944, I submitted to you a summary report of my operations in Turkey from June 18th through October 4th when I left Ankara. My previous reports to you covered fully my operations for the Board since you designated me the Board's Special Representative in Turkey on February 15, 1944. The job, as I perceived it, was to implement the policy of the United States Government, enunciated in the President's Order of January 22, 1944, to rescue through Turkey victims from the satellite countries. Turkey is well described as a window into the Balkans. Through the aegis of the Board, we succeeded in making of it first a small aperture, then a door, through which literally thousands of refugees were rescued. These refugees, I am confident, would not have been saved from persecution and annihilation without the eleventh hour efforts of the Board, working through its representatives with Ambassador Steinhardt in Ankara and Istanbul.

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CC - Mr. Gaston, Mr. Pehle, Mr. Abrahamson, Mr. DuBois

Mr. Friedman, Miss Hodel, Mr. Lesser, Mr. Luxford

Hirsch

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



OFFICE OF THE  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

October 17, 1944

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Since returning from my second mission in Turkey for consultation and having submitted my report to you, it is my understanding that the assignment given me by the War Refugee Board as Special Representative in Turkey has been concluded.

On October 4, 1944, I submitted to you a summary report of my operations in Turkey from June 18th through October 4th when I left Ankara. My previous reports to you covered fully my operations for the Board since you designated me the Board's Special Representative in Turkey on February 15, 1944. The job, as I perceived it, was to implement the policy of the United States Government, enunciated in the President's Order of January 22, 1944, to rescue through Turkey victims from the satellite countries. Turkey is well described as a window into the Balkans. Through the aegis of the Board, we succeeded in making of it first a small aperture, then a door, through which literally thousands of refugees were rescued. These refugees, I am confident, would not have been saved from persecution and annihilation without the eleventh hour efforts of the Board, working through its representatives with Ambassador Steinhardt in Ankara and Istanbul.

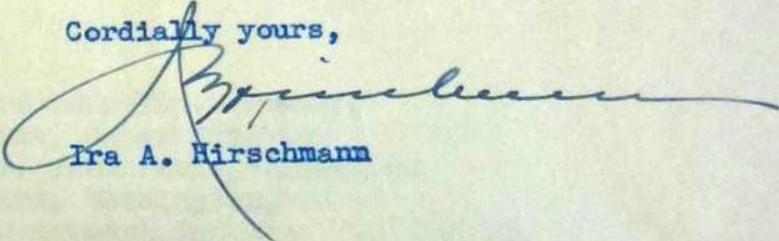
Your clothing of me with authority to deal with the enemy afforded me the opportunity of dealing with and persuading the Ministers of Bulgaria and Rumania to lessen the stricture against the oppressed minorities; to abandon the disease-ridden camp in Transnistria; to induce the Government in Bulgaria to revoke its nefarious anti-Jewish laws, reinstating a population of 45,000 citizens (who had been reduced to pariahs) to their normal state of human rights and dignity. Through the auspices of the Board, numerous other steps were taken to rescue stricken peoples in the Balkans, all of which steps are recorded in your files.

For military and political reasons, the door into Turkey is being sealed; also, the necessity for rescue is obviated in view of the liberation of Rumania and Bulgaria. My work is therefore terminated, and I herewith tender my resignation.

I cannot close, however, without again acknowledging your kindness and undeviating support of my efforts. In no single instance have you failed to support without reservation the requests and steps taken by me in the interest of the Board's program. This encouragement and assistance has been an invaluable aid to me.

In time of war, as I understand it, killing people seems to be the main job at hand. Through the Board I was privileged to undertake a job of saving people, instead of killing them. I wish to thank you for this broad and unique opportunity in the field of human welfare.

Cordially yours,

  
Ira A. Hirschmann

COPY

File  
JAP

Ankara, October 4, 1944

No. 808

**Subject:** Forwarding summary report from Mr. Ira A. Hirschmann, Representative of the War Refugee Board, to Mr. John Pehle, Executive Director of the War Refugee Board.

The following is a summary of the operations of the War Refugee Board in Turkey from the date of my arrival in Ankara, June 27, until my departure on October 4, 1944. Most of the material contained herein has been fully explained in my report furnished to you by Ambassador [Name] on September 13, and I have it available to The Honorable The Secretary of State, Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to forward herewith a summary report from Mr. Ira A. Hirschmann, Representative of the War Refugee Board, to Mr. John Pehle, Executive Director of the War Refugee Board, Washington, covering efforts made by Mr. Hirschmann and the Embassy to rescue oppressed minorities from axis-occupied Europe.

Respectfully yours,

Due to the influx in Turkey of hundreds of refugees of various political and racial groups, a situation has arisen which resulted in confusion, overlapping of efforts, and a lack of coordination. It is the purpose of this summary to describe the situation in the Turkish Republic, and to outline Ambassador [Name]'s initiative, a single overall authority was organized which includes representatives of all interested agencies in Turkey. This committee was set up to coordinate activities for the purpose of establishing information.

Enclosure:

Report as described.

CC - Mr. Gaston, Mr. Pehle, Mr. Abrahamson, Mr. DuBois  
Mr. Friedman, Miss Hodel, Mr. Lesser, Mr. Luxford

Ankara, Turkey  
October 4, 1944

██████████  
Mr. John W. Fehle, Executive Director  
War Refugee Board,  
Washington.

Dear Mr. Fehle:

The following is a summary of the operations of the War Refugee Board in Turkey from the date of my second incumbency, June 18, until my departure on October 4, 1944. Most of the material condensed herein has been fully elaborated in my report dispatched to you by Ambassador Steinhardt on September 11, but I deem it desirable to offer a resume of the Board's operations in a final report, which includes the activities in Turkey up to and including October 4, immediately prior to my departure for the United States.

1. Joel Brandt.

Following my interview of Joel Brandt in Cairo, a report was submitted to Ambassador Steinhardt and dispatched to you on July 3, covering Brandt's visit to Turkey and subsequently to Cairo. No further action was taken in this matter, following the receipt of telegrams of instruction from the Department.

2. Coordination of Organizational Activities in Istanbul

Due to the influx in Turkey of numbers of representatives of various relief and rescue agencies, a situation has arisen which resulted in confusion, overlapping of efforts, embarrassment to Ambassador Steinhardt, and an unfavorable reaction in the Turkish Foreign Office. At Ambassador Steinhardt's initiative, a single overall committee was organized which includes representatives of all interested agencies in Turkey. This committee has met on several occasions, for the purpose of interchanging information.

In addition, a small working committee, which includes the leading representatives of the most active organizations here, was established to deal with day-to-day problems. Both committees were established under War Refugee Board leadership, and continue to act under our direction. This procedure resulted in the concentration and definition of the activities of the various organizations, and placed the Consulate in Istanbul and the Embassy in Ankara in a more effective position to lend their aid and influence to the rescue work recorded hereinafter. At the same time, it added to the effective liaison and cooperation of the Embassy with the Turkish Foreign Office in these matters.

3. Rumania.

Rumania.

*Rumanian*

A. Two informal conferences with Mr. Alexander Cretzianu, Hungarian Minister to Ankara, led to the following results:

(1) The Rumanian Government, and particularly Mihai Antonescu, Rumanian Vice President of the Council of Ministers, was informed again of the outraged opinion in the United States with respect to the treatment by Rumania of the minorities and Jewish citizens in that country. As the result of our representations and the stated desire of the Rumanian Government to win some measure of good-will in the United States, it became apparent that a relatively more humane approach to the problems of the Jewish people in Rumania was resulting:

(2) In connection with the foregoing, Mr. Cretzianu was helpful on several occasions in securing information for me relating to Jewish affairs in Rumania. Impetus was given to the general relaxation of strictures against the Jews. This abatement manifested itself in a willingness and permission on the part of the Rumanian Government to condone the clandestine entry into Rumania of refugees coming from Hungary, and to grant transit facilities to Hungarian refugees. It was reported that approximately 3500 to 4000 Hungarians entered Rumania with the tacit consent of the Rumanian Government during this period, in spite of an official edict issued by Baron von Killinger, German Minister to Rumania (since deceased) to execute any refugees who have succeeded in escaping from Hungary into Rumania.

B. Without the strong representations of Ambassador Steinhardt, the War Refugee Board would not have been able to succeed in its operations in bringing 2673 persons who arrived in Istanbul by sea from Rumania during the period of January-August, 1944. These refugees arrived without Turkish visas. Such visas were issued to them upon their arrival, enabling them to continue their emigration without delay to Palestine. Part of the arrangement made by the Ambassador with the Turkish Ministry of Communications resulted in the provision of special trains to transport these refugees from Istanbul to the Syrian border.

C. In the instance of the Mefkura disaster, the Turkish Foreign Office instructed the Turkish Red Crescent to care for the safe arrival of the Mefkura survivors and the Bulbul passengers, who were permitted to proceed overland from Igneada to Istanbul under Foreign Office and Red Crescent auspices and protection. In view of the apparent dangers lurking in the Black Sea, it was essential that the passengers of the Bulbul were not exposed to further dangers of sea transport, and were provided with the means for their removal to Istanbul by land.

D. Preliminary steps were taken to secure permission to dispatch Turkish passenger vessels to Constanza for the

evacuation

evacuation of refugees from Rumania. The change in the political scene during early August, especially the Turkish-German diplomatic break, brought this initiative to a halt.

4. Bulgaria.

A. Jewish population in Bulgaria. There are about 45,000 Jews in Bulgaria. About 12,000 to 14,000 Jews have been deported, mostly from Thrace and Macedonia.

B. The exchange of Jewish Refugees for German Nationals. On July 6, 1944 an exchange of 113 Germans for 283 Jewish refugees took place in Istanbul, under the auspices of the Turkish Red Crescent. The 283 Jewish refugees were chosen by the Gestapo from a list submitted by the Jewish Agency. We are informed that there are three to four thousand such exchange certificates still outstanding.

C. Rescue by land from Bulgaria. 408 persons, including 46 children under the children's scheme, entered Turkey from Bulgaria during the first six months of 1944. The Turkish Foreign Office, at the intervention of the British and American Embassies, agreed to admit all refugees to enter Turkey in transit to Palestine.

D. Several informal conferences were arranged through Simond of the International Red Cross with Monsieur Balabanoff, Bulgarian Minister to Ankara. The apparent desire of the Bulgarian (Bagrjanov) Government to win the good-will of the American people at that time and the obvious impediments in the way of sea-transport of Jewish refugees from Bulgaria, suggested the possibility of saving the Jewish population within Bulgaria, instead of continuing the sporadic efforts to bring out a relatively few victims.

With the aid of Ambassador Steinhardt, Balabanoff was pressed during these conversations and through the intervention of other intermediaries to the elimination of the Bulgarian anti-Jewish laws and the immediate, complete reinstatement of the Bulgarian Jewish population to its former rights and liberties. These views were placed before the Bagrjanov Government. Although it was reported at one time, through most reliable source, that this question would be considered secondary to the major ones under discussion, at the special convocation of Parliament on August 17 we succeeded in having the question included on the agenda. On August 28, the famed Nuremberg Anti-Jewish laws were formally withdrawn. This constituted the first revocation of anti-Jewish legislation by any Axis country or satellite, since the nefarious campaigns preceding and following the war.

During the conversations above-mentioned, a statement in writing was secured from Balabanoff, setting forth that the Bagrjanov Government was categorically opposed to the anti-Jewish activities of the preceding Bulgarian governments, and promising that steps would be taken to annul the anti-Jewish laws at the first opportunity. Permission to

publish

publish this statement was also later secured from Balabanoff.

3. The steps in principle taken by the Bagryanov Government in connection with the reinstatement of the Jewish Bulgarian population were implemented and enforced by the succeeding Bulgarian Governments. On September 22 the present Georgieff Government issued the statement quoted below, in the radio and press:

"(1). The Bulgarian Government takes a positive attitude regarding the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine.

"(2). The Bulgarian Government has no objection and will make no difficulties for those Jews who wish to emigrate to Palestine. Regarding them as Bulgarian citizens who enjoy full rights, the Government will require of them merely that they comply with all laws or regulations obligatory for all citizens of the country.

"(3). The Government has annulled all exclusive laws of anti-Jewish character. Such an exclusive law was that establishing a surtax to the extent of 20 to 25 per cent of the value of all Jewish property. This tax, being the result of a vicious law, was discriminatory against the Jews. The excess amount will now be returned, but because of Bulgaria's difficult financial situation, such amount will be transferred into a state loan of definite maturity.

"(4). The Jews now enjoy full equality of rights, and live under the same conditions and in freedom as do other Bulgarian nationals.

"The following procedure will be applied to the property falsely sold and confiscated:

"Property, firm rights, and other assets still owned by the State will be returned to the Jews. There will remain to be settled the question of assets about which legal obligations have arisen between the State and private interest, that is, where property or firm rights have been transferred to third parties, or where other obligatory relations have been created during the course of the last few years. The Government will find the means to solve it in such fashion as not to disturb the traditional friendship and mutual understanding between Bulgarians and Jews. The solution of this problem is a question of time. The Government is being assisted in this matter by Jewish people who have confidence in it. The Government will solve the problem in accordance with national relations between a democratic State and its citizens.

"In cases where fictitious property transfers have been made by Jews to Bulgarians, such property will be automatically returned to its lawful owner. In cases of fraudulent transfers, the public authorities will make investigations and will proceed in favor of the injured party."

F. On August 23, agreement and permission were secured for the Bulgarian vessels Vita and Firin to make several voyages to carry refugees from Bulgaria to Istanbul. The realization of this scheme was interrupted by political events in the Balkans. Ultimately, the Vita was sunk, reportedly on August 24, while en route from Saitchik, Bulgaria, to Burgas, to embark passengers at the latter port. The voyage of the Firin is now uncertain. Thus far, all emigration from Bulgaria has taken place via railroad.

#### 5. Hungary.

A. A flow of refugee emigration from Hungary gave promise of fulfillment as a result of the pronouncement of Regent Horthy on July 18, 1944. It stated that Jewish people in certain categories and under certain limiting conditions were to be permitted to emigrate to Palestine, Sweden, and elsewhere. The Board assisted the Swiss Legation in Ankara in the arrangement for 2200 people to have all of their documents put in order for emigration to Palestine. Transit through Rumania and Turkey had previously been arranged for them by the American Embassy. Bulgarian transit visas were also in the process of obtention. The Rumanian Government, through Cretzianu, had agreed, in principle, at our request, to permit the Hungarian refugees to remain in Rumania for a brief period, until transportation could be arranged. Meanwhile, investigations were made as to the feasibility of transporting the refugees from Budapest via Bulgaria to Istanbul (Transylvania had become a scene of Russian military operations). As result of Nazi interference none of the Hungarian refugees to date have been permitted to leave by this route.

B. Through Simond's intervention, an informal and confidential interview was held with Baron Thierry, Counselor of the Hungarian Embassy in Ankara. A broadening of the categories of Hungarian Jewish people who might be permitted to leave Hungary was sought. Baron Thierry informed me at that time (August 8) that it would be advisable, before requesting further concessions, to determine whether the first steps contained in the decree could succeed. He expressed some skepticism regarding the practicability of Regent Horthy's plan.

C. A small but steady stream of Jewish emigration has been taking place clandestinely from Hungary into Rumania. This required the development of complicated but secure underground agencies. It is estimated that 3500 to 4000 persons entered Rumania in this manner. Several hundred of them have already reached Palestine, via the Turkish boats sailing from Constanza. The Rumanian authorities, though aware of this movement, did not interfere with it.

#### 5. Greece.

There has been a sporadic movement, which we have encouraged, of refugees from Greece to Turkey by sea. This has taken place on a more or less informal basis, as opportunity afforded. Nevertheless, since October, 1943

approximately

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approximately 900 Greek refugees have entered Turkey in this manner, and with the aid of the Turkish authorities have been expedited to Palestine. Inquiry disclosed that this movement from Greece might be accelerated and augmented if the Turkish authorities would be willing to designate a special base from which refugee rescue operations might be specifically undertaken. At our request, the Embassy discussed the matter with the Turkish Foreign Office, which agreed to issue the necessary instructions. With this assurance, inquiry into the practicability of establishing a base was made by Katski at Izmir. Informed opinion there was that the establishment of a special base in Turkey at this time to direct the evacuation of refugees from Greece is not feasible because of indications of early evacuation of Greece by the Germans.

7. Turkey.

Reference has been made previously to the cooperation of the Turkish Foreign Office in issuing Turkish transit visas to refugees who entered the country by sea. A number of other proposals were made to the Turkish Foreign Office by the American Embassy, the British Embassy, and both Embassies jointly, in which the cooperation and assistance of the Foreign Office was requested for the purpose of expanding rescue activities from Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria. In order to consolidate in an overall agreement the various understandings with the Foreign Office, it was agreed that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs would issue Turkish transit visas to any number of Jews who might apply for them at the Turkish Consulate in Budapest, who were in possession of any one of four different documents, as enumerated in the agreement. Similar instructions were to be sent to the Turkish Consulates in Constanta and Burgas, authorizing them to issue up to 400 visas between them every ten days to applicants, bearers of similar documents. At first, the Turkish Foreign Office desired to limit entry into Turkey from Rumania and Bulgaria to persons arriving by ship, but this was subsequently amended to include rail transportation, until such time as it could be demonstrated that voyages by sea could be made with some degree of regularity. The Foreign Office also undertook to request the Ministry of the Interior to admit into Turkey without delay and with <sup>out</sup> reference to Ankara any persons arriving at Turkey's land borders without Turkish visas, provided such persons were in possession of one of the four types of documents referred to above.

This broad concession on the part of the Turkish Foreign Office can be attributed also to a desire on the part of the Turkish authorities to cooperate with the United States Government program in the work under the aegis of the War Refugee Board and to the confidence and respect in which it holds Ambassador Steinhardt.

8. United States Visa Instructions.

Instructions have been received by the American Consulate General in Istanbul, as a result of War Refugee

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heard discussions with the State Department, authorizing the issuance of United States visas for which advisory approval had been granted subsequent to July 1, 1941, or the renewal of visas actually issued since that date, but which have expired. These instructions applied to visa applicants in Axis or Axis-dominated countries, and were to be issued under certain circumstances and conditions. They were subsequently amended to include specified close relatives of American citizens or of aliens legally admitted into the United States. The Turkish Foreign Office has been informed thereof, in connection with the issuance of Turkish transit visas, and such prospective visa-holders have been included among the categories of persons to whom the Foreign Office instructions, relative to the issuance of Turkish transit visas referred to above, apply. Developments in the Balkans, up to the present time, have precluded any substantial activity to implement the intent of the State Department's instructions.

Observations

The rapid and radical political and military changes in the Balkans since the capitulation of the Rumanian Government on August 23, 1944, has fundamentally altered the possibilities of rescue through Turkey. It was hoped, when Rumania and Bulgaria became "liberated areas", that access to these countries would be available without too much delay, and that information regarding the precise status of the victimized populations of their own countries, and those who had immigrated to them, would be available. For reasons well justified such has not been the case.

Rumania has become a field of military operations. At the present writing, sporadic fighting is continuing in Transylvania, which promises to become a major battle-line of the Russians. For the present, this has sealed up the possibilities of emigration from Hungary through Rumania. No information has been forthcoming from Rumania, except an occasional letter from Lissu, representing the Jewish Agency, and Wilderman, of the Joint Distribution Committee. Wilderman has urgently requested basic supplies for an impoverished Jewish population. Since the Board's definition of our activities precludes relief work, we have not pursued any efforts in this direction, although Ambassador Steinhardt is aiding, at the approved time, the efforts of Passman, the representative of the Joint Distribution Committee, to enter Rumania and Bulgaria for the purpose of surveying the situation for the purpose of introducing relief operations.

In Bulgaria, a few newspaper correspondents and informal representatives of Palestine agencies succeeded in arriving in Sofia. They reported a city, formerly populated by 300,000 people, reduced to a skeleton of some 45,000. The promise of the Bagryanov Government to the Embassy and the War Refugee Board to revoke the anti-Jewish laws was kept by the Georgieff Government. In addition, the rights and properties of the Jewish population are

being

- 8 -

being restored as rapidly as possible, under fairly chaotic conditions.

Under the above circumstances, it appears at this writing that the major program of the War Refugee Board, operating through Turkey, is concluding. There remains, in my opinion, further explorations in Bulgaria, Rumania and also Hungary when the latter is liberated. The possibility of any further operations from Turkey, however, are dependent on the newly oriented military and political situation, wherein Rumania appears to be playing a dominant role, and in which our efforts must be guided entirely by the representation of missions in Bulgaria and Rumania and, it is hoped, eventually Hungary.

#### Conclusions.

As observed in my two previous reports, the establishment of the War Refugee Board and the dispatch of representatives to Turkey working with the sympathetic and resourceful aid of Ambassador Steinhardt resulted in the rescue of thousands of refugees who were admitted into Palestine. It is doubtful if these refugees would have been permitted to enter Turkey and proceed to Palestine without the personal intervention of the Ambassador and the Board representatives on the scene in Turkey. It bears repetition that it is regrettable that the Board, which has demonstrated its vitality and the success of its operations, was not created a year or two ago. There is no doubt from the evidence at hand that additional thousands of refugees could have been saved.

It is evident that the mere existence of the Board and its representatives in Turkey acted as a catalytic agent in spurring the morale of the destitute and terrorized citizens in the Balkans, who had reached a low ebb of existence. It is consistently reported by numbers of refugees who had come through Turkey that the existence of the Board and the work by the Embassy in Turkey was known throughout the Balkans, and that it provided for the victims a ray of hope which resulted in lifting their own morale and an eleventh-hour self-sustaining effort on their own part. In retrospect, and as a precedent, the establishment of the War Refugee Board can be viewed as a sharp and vitalizing instrument for rescue in the face of the mechanisms brought to bear in warfare against non-participating, innocent populations.

The example is cited of the abandonment of the disease-ridden Transnistrian camp, through the initiative of the Board with Cretzianu, in March, 1944. Several thousand of the children released from this camp have passed through Turkey into Palestine.

The final phase of the Board's program in establishing a supplementary program of saving the populations within their own country, instead of attempting the sporadic rescue of small groups during the closing days of the war

should

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should also be emphasized. While there is reason to believe that the anti-Jewish laws in Bulgaria, for example, would have been revoked at some stage in the liberation of these countries after their capitulation, it is stated on high authority from the Bulgarians themselves that the Jewish question was considered an incidental one, and was to be treated at a convenient later hour. It is believed that every day in which the 48,000 reinstated Bulgarian Jewish citizens were given back their freedom is a day won for freedom.

Finally, as a blue-print for peace, the precedent established by Bulgaria in making its first bold and dramatic steps in the direction of the freeing of the first victims of the war, the Jewish population, is one that may not be lost in the fall of the other satellites, and in Germany itself.

Mr. Julius F. Philo  
Executive Director  
War Refugee Board  
Treasury Building  
Washington 25, D.C.

Respectfully submitted,

(Sgd.) Ira A. Hirschmann

Ira A. Hirschmann  
Attache.

Dear John:

I read an article in the National Jewish Monthly on the War Refugee Board which, I think, fails to stress the affirmative work done by the Board.

Do you think it worthwhile to have it answered as I believe in the commutation of messages it fails to do justice to your accomplishments? I will be glad to answer it if you deem it desirable.

I am coming to Washington this Thursday and will call you in the hope of seeing you.

Cordially

Ira A. Hirschmann

12/18/45

BLOOMINGDALE'S  
NEW YORK

EXECUTIVE OFFICES

November 13, 1944

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

Dear John:

I read an article in the National Jewish Monthly on the War Refugee Board which, I think, fails to stress the affirmative work done by the Board.

Do you think it worthwhile to have it answered as I believe in the connotation of messages it fails to do justice to your accomplishments? I will be glad to answer it if you deem it desirable.

I am coming to Washington this Thursday and will call you in the hope of seeing you.

Cordially

I.A. Hirschmann

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File

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JAH

BLOOMINGDALE'S  
NEW YORK 22

*Free*

EXECUTIVE OFFICES

November 10, 1944

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

Dear John:

I thought you would like to see a proof  
of our introductory ad announcing the  
opening of the Sixth War Loan.

I intend to be in Washington within the  
next week and will call you, as I should  
like to see you.

With good wishes,

Cordially yours

*I. A. Hirschmann*

iah:ret

I. A. Hirschmann

th  
**WAR  
LOAN**



*Army Signal Corps Photo*

This is a wounded American soldier on Bougainville. When you are asked to buy War Bonds during the Sixth War Loan drive, remember this picture.



EMBASSY OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Ankara, November 6, 1944.

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

My dear John:

I am indebted to you for your thoughtfulness in sending me under date of October 21st the photostatic copies of several newspaper articles which appeared following Ira Hirschmann's press conference upon his return to the United States. No one rejoices more than I do at the recognition given by the American press to the successful efforts of Ira Hirschmann and the War Refugee Board in Turkey.

Sincerely yours,

*Samuel G. Steinhardt*

*76  
274*

*March*

7 via  
JWP

Hirschmann

NEW YORK DAILY PM - OCTOBER 26, 1944

**Zionist Dinner Tonight**

The rehabilitation of rescued European Jews in Palestine will be described this evening at a dinner of the Metropolitan Zionist Fund by Ira Hirschmann, special representative of the War Refugee Board, at the Waldorf-Astoria. Hirschmann returned last week from his post in the U. S. Embassy in Ankara. The dinner is part of a campaign to raise \$100,000 to finance a campaign to obtain speedy recognition of Palestine as a Jewish Commonwealth.

*Hirschmann*

*7 via  
JWP*

# New York ~~World~~-Telegram

OCT 25 1944

## Zionists to Hear Refugee Report

Dr. Hirschmann, who resumed his post as vice president of the Bloomingdale department store last week after his return from Ankara, Turkey, where he was a representative of the War Refugee Board, will report on the efforts to aid refugee Jews at a dinner of the Metropolitan Zionist Fund in the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel Thursday night.

The dinner will be part of a campaign by the fund to raise \$100,000 to speed action for the recognition of Palestine as a Jewish Commonwealth.

not for subjugation, not for permanent inferiority, but for total and complete helpless human beings to rounder them disembark on any of its vast shores, a barbarous

File  
JWP

October 23, 1944

Dear Ira:

Thank you for your letter of October 20,  
transmitting a copy of your talk.

I heard it over the radio and it was a  
very effective job.

Keep up the good work.

Sincerely,

(Signed) John

J. W. Davis  
Executive Director

Mr. Ira A. Hirschmann,  
Vice-President,  
Bloomingdale's,  
New York 22, New York.

JWP  
JWP/dg 10/23/44

not for subjugation, but for total and complete destruction. helpless human beings to round them disembark on any of its vast shores, a barbarous

TO:

     Mr. Lesser \_\_\_\_\_

     Mr. Friedman \_\_\_\_\_

     Mr. Stewart \_\_\_\_\_

  X   Miss Hodel 2410 \_\_\_\_\_

     Mr. DuBois \_\_\_\_\_

     Mr. Luxford \_\_\_\_\_

     Mrs. Taylor \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Mr.

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government  
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For distribution. Please send me  
a copy.

*Done  
10/24*

J. W. Pehle

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
WAR REFUGEE BOARD

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board.

J. W. Pehle  
Executive Director

Mr. Ira A. Hirschmann,  
Bloomingdale Brothers, Inc.,  
New York, N. Y.

7-2  
OCT 23 1944

Dear Mr. Hirschmann:

The members of the War Refugee Board have asked me to express to you their deep appreciation for the work you have just completed as Special Representative of the Board in Ankara, Turkey. Our appreciation should also be extended to the Board of Directors of Bloomingdale Brothers, Inc. for releasing you for this special assignment for the government and for facilitating your return to Turkey to complete the great humanitarian task you had commenced on your first visit.

We are convinced that your contribution has resulted in the saving of thousands of human lives and that you may be justly proud of the part you have played in the work of the War Refugee Board.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) J. W. Pehle

J. W. Pehle  
Executive Director

Mr. Ira A. Hirschmann,  
Bloomingdale Brothers, Inc.,  
New York, N. Y.

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FH:JWP:hd 10/20/44

EXECUTIVE OFFICES

October 20, 1944

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
WAR REFUGEE BOARD

INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION

DATE October 18, 1944

TO Mr. Pehle  
FROM Mr. Hirschmann

Dear John:

I don't want to appear to be persistent, but I would appreciate it if it were possible and in order for you to get some kind of letter of acknowledgment from the Secretary or the Board regarding my efforts. The Bloomingdale Board considers that it has made a sacrifice and a contribution in permitting my absence during this period, and while no record is needed for the Directors with whom I operate, any official acknowledgment is spread on the minutes of the company so that any questioning from stockholders may be thwarted. Aside from this, I would of course appreciate having any expression which would serve as a souvenir in my old age.

*ra*

INGDALE'S  
W YORK 22

EXECUTIVE OFFICES

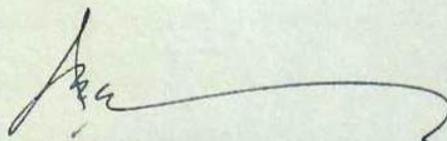
October 20, 1944

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

Dear John:

Enclosed is a copy of my talk to be  
delivered over the Columbia Broadcasting  
System network on Sunday, October 22nd,  
1944.

Cordially yours



I. A. Hirschmann  
Vice-President

iah:ret

Free  
JHP

Delivered by  
Mr. I. A. Hirschmann  
Former Special Representative of  
the U.S. War Refugee Board -  
Now returned to his civilian  
status as a Vice President of  
Bloomingdale's, New York  
Over Columbia Broadcasting System  
Sunday, October 22, 1944 1:30 PM

SAVING REFUGEES THROUGH TURKEY

During a war the main job of people connected with it, by the nature of the job, is to kill people. This may sound blunt and horrible, but none of us can avoid the fact that we have some twelve million Americans devoted to that job now, because it has to be done and, God willing, as quickly as possible.

In the light of the terrible need for destroying the enemy, which must take first place in the job of war, we seldom stop to think of the other essential job, and that is of saving people. Among the victims of the indescribable horrors of war -- and I have just returned from seeing them in the flesh -- are the innocent by-standers, who are loosely termed refugees. Millions of these people, men, women and children, are caught between the vise of war and die slow, painful deaths from being pushed around, from mal-nutrition, exposure, persecution, and just plain homelessness.

You have read a lot of statistics and some rather heart-breaking stories, I am sure, of refugees. And it is no criticism of anyone that it is impossible to picture, sitting in our comfortable security in America, what actually goes on in the countries that have been over-run by the Nazis. Nor would I attempt to open wounds by any graphic description of things I have seen, especially where children are the hapless victims. But it never hurt anyone to face reality, so we may as well know the truth.

You ~~xx~~ have seen these things, though <sup>you</sup> ~~xx~~ have seen them only in the cold, silent, colorless print of reports and newspapers. In stigmatizing the printed word as cold, silent and colorless, I have no intention of putting a slight upon the fidelity and talents of men who have provided <sup>you</sup> ~~xx~~ with words to read about the ravages of the victims in the Balkans. I only wished to suggest that in the nature of things the destitution of the victims in Germany and the Balkans has been made known to <sup>you</sup> ~~xx~~, so far, in a grey reflection of its terrible and monotonous phases of pain, death, sickness; a reflection seen in the perspective of thousands of miles, in the dim atmosphere of necessary official reticence, through the veil of inadequate words. Inadequate, I say, because what had to be reproduced happens beyond the common experience of life and our imagination, luckily for our peace of mind. This, notwithstanding the real progress of humanitarian ideas and instruments such as for example the War Refugee Board.

Turkey is a window into the Balkans. As one of the few neutral countries prior to the break in relations with Germany in August, it became a hotbed of secret agents from all the countries of the world. Espionage and counter-espionage was the most active business in Ankara, and especially in Istanbul, which directly faces the Balkans across the Bosphorus and into the Black Sea. You could almost throw a stone out of the window of any leading hotel and hit an agent -- (in fact, we should have). Here was the grand opportunity of reaching out somehow into the Balkan countries and pulling out of the fire some of the helpless victims of the Nazi wrath.

On last January 22nd the War Refugee Board was set up as an emergency war agency by President Roosevelt. The Board consists of the three Secretaries of State, Treasury and War, and chose for its Director the dynamic, sympathetic and extraordinarily able young American, John W. Pehle, about whom I think America will be hearing a great deal more. I was designated by the Board as the Special Representative in Turkey, with diplomatic status and authority to deal with the enemy. It was a privileged assignment, - and rather like leaping into the dark.

Arriving in Turkey I found that some of the spade work for rescue activities had begun. A few organizations, especially the able and efficient Joint Distribution Committee and the Jewish Agency of Palestine, were pulling out handfuls of victims from the millions of agonized human beings who were dying at the hands of the Germans, Bulgarians, Rumanians and Hungarians. It was a frightful situation, beggaring description. Only to see some of the children who managed to escape was a spur to generate whatever energy and resources one could command to set up the means for pulling more of these people out of the fire.

I will not dwell on the intricacies and obstacles put in the way of such a task. After all, we were dealing with our enemy at war, and a very ruthless enemy who seemed to be concerned first with killing <sup>its</sup> ~~their~~ own citizens -- the minorities in <sup>those</sup> ~~these~~ countries even taking priority over <sup>the</sup> ~~their~~ military enemy. My job was somehow to find the means of rescuing as many of these people as possible - whoever and wherever they were.

Clothed with the authority of our Government and the backing of our people, we were able eventually to bring out thousands of these victims. They came on little boats, trains, kayaks -- any means of transportation that we could dig up for them. All of these people went to Palestine, which was the only open door from Turkey. The Turkish and British Governments eventually cooperated, working with the vigorous aid of our Ambassador in Turkey, Lawrence A. Steinhardt. The refugees as they were extricated from the Balkans were given protection and the necessary formal documents to move immediately through Syria into Palestine. About a thousand were brought out of Greece from the adjacent islands on boats that could hold from twenty to forty people -- crossing on hazardous waters. These refugees eventually landed on the Turkish shores, were escorted to Smyrna and given transportation also to Palestine.

I saw many hundreds of these people. I shall not shock you with too much detail about them. It serves no valid purpose to attempt to picture over the radio hundreds of little boys and girls -- who are unlike any other little boys and girls in any other part of the world -- walking with legs as skinny as sticks - with distended bellies - faces with the lines of age creased into the skin - staring, bulging, empty eyes -- walking along in columns under the protection of the Turkish police into special trains which moved them into Palestine. As one train left the station, across the sea from Istanbul, these children out of pent-up emotion began to sing. I have heard a lot of music in my time, but never any sounds just like this. Here was emotion pouring out of little hearts and souls that were unlocked.

7  
JUP

I am confident that if any people who, for any direct or indirect purpose, have found themselves working against the interests of the essential freedom and security of human beings, could have seen and heard these little people coming back into the sunshine of life, they would retrace their steps and devote themselves to the great and liberating cause of freedom.

Later, on my way back to the United States, I stopped off in Palestine and saw a number of these children in the colonies where they were being nourished and reconstituted to normal life. Already they looked healthy and optimistic, were becoming a part of the community and gave promise of becoming freedom-loving citizens of the world. They had earned that right.

How did we manage to rescue these people, and why? That is a question that was put to me by numerous people in Turkey, and when I would suddenly find myself alone in the midst of a strange world, applying the resources of our great Government to bring out nameless people whom no American had ever heard of and probably never will, sometimes I would ask this same question of myself. Why did we go to rescue them? What is there in the nature of a people like us -- the people of the United States of America -- which inspires us to say: "Let us stretch out our broad arm of mercy across fourteen thousand miles of sea and earth to save human lives that have no direct connection with the immediate problems of the United States"?

Dealing with our operations in the Balkans. I had occasion to say to the General in my reply that the military was composed of some twelve million men whose essential job is to kill the enemy. My organization was composed of three people besides myself, and it was assigned not to kill, but to save people.

In answer to these questions, I was able to say that the great heart of the American people is wide enough and open enough to beat for others -- that our concern with life and liberty is not something that is confined to the borders of a state or a nation, but that we the people know somehow that what happens to one of us affects all of us -- that the pain of one is the suffering of the other -- that if some one soul in a camp in Transnistria on the Dniester River is saved for freedom, the sum total of freedom in the world is just that much more.

And so, in a time when the whole world is engulfed in a convulsion - when madness and misery had swept from Germany and Japan over mankind, the indestructible love and sympathy of the American people expressed itself when it was needed most, where it was needed most, - saving people many miles from its shores.

I have talked with a lot of soldiers, a lot of Americans - men and women - in Asia, the Middle East, and in Africa in my recent travels. It is interesting to report that in no case did I hear one fail to say in his own way "God Bless America". That used to be a song - now it's a prayer. I returned to America with a greater appreciation of our simplicity and greatness and all-embracing kindness as a people. We really care about the other fellow.

I had a letter one day in Ankara from one of our military men in which he took me lightly to task for what turned out to be a misunderstanding connected with some overlapping of activities dealing with our operations in the Balkans. I had occasion to say to the General in my reply that the military was composed of some twelve million men whose essential job is to kill the enemy. My organization was composed of three people besides myself, and it was designed not to kill, but to save people.

In the light of the wide gap of the odds of twelve million to four, I knew that the General would be tolerant - and he was. But that very thought gave me pause. The fact that a Government in war time would set up any agency with extraordinary powers to save people was in itself a significant expression of the American people - that means you! And it ought to serve as a precedent.

In Bulgaria there was a population of some 45,000 -- Jews and minorities who had opposed the fascist regimes. The previous Bulgarian Government had placed on its books the so-called Nuremberg laws which had succeeded in pauperizing these 45,000 people. We started to bring some of them out of Bulgaria by all sorts of means, which I shall not describe here. But then it seemed to me that it would be better and wiser policy to save these 45,000 people within Bulgaria than to wrench them from their own country into a strange land. Through the auspices of our Government we were able to induce the then Bulgarian Government to convoke Parliament in a special session to annul those laws and put these people back on their feet as self-respecting and self-supporting citizens. This has been done.

When Turkey broke off diplomatic relations with Germany last August, there were caught, especially in Istanbul, hundreds of anti-Nazis who had fled from Germany and who were in danger of being deported to Germany. Many of these people came to my office in the American Consulate in Istanbul for refuge. They wanted security and aid. They got both. What was gratifying to me was that these people - former German citizens who opposed the Nazi regime - came to the American Embassy for help. I questioned a number of them and asked: "Why do you come here instead of to other missions?" - and their answer was: "Where else should we go? You are a free people and you understand what freedom means to an individual more than ~~ex~~ any other people." That seemed to express the essential tradition of America more convincingly than anything that I had ever heard.

The world knows that we are a great and a free people, and we should never forget it -- not for a day, not for an hour, not for a minute, for the lesson of the French and the lesson of this whole war should teach us that freedom is something we must fight for every minute. We can't sit on it. We can't take it for granted, or we will look around and suddenly find that it has gone. The fight for freedom is now going on in the battlefields of Europe and on the Pacific islands. The same fight for freedom is continuing among the little people of the world - the truly forgotten people who were lost on the way. Here they were on the roadsides with their few belongings, their helplessness and their hopelessness, and along came a friend and gave them aid, carried them down the road, across the waters of the Black Sea and the Bosphorus into safety. The friend was you -- the great and kindly people of the United States of America. It will not be forgotten by those who were rescued. For it is etched in their minds and graven on their hearts. And for it, the heart of America is greater and the people of America are richer with a fuller supply of happiness.

\*\*\*\*\*

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
WAR REFUGEE BOARD

INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION

DATE October 18, 1944

*Handwritten initials and scribbles*

TO Mr. Pehle  
FROM Mr. Hirschmann

I know it isn't necessary, but I cannot resist the temptation of writing to tell you again how much I have been inspired by the assignment you gave me and the satisfaction I derived from working with you and your associates. I should be grateful if you would care to pass this note on to those who were so kind in their cooperation with me, so that they may know of my appreciation. Perhaps at some time in the future I may be in a position to reciprocate all your friendliness and understanding support.

*Handwritten signature and flourish*

*Notes: X.S. Y JH*

BLOOMING  
TELEGRAM

SEP 14 1944

Dear Mr. Schoff:

The following message for you from Ira Hirschmann was received through the American Legation in Ankara under date of September 8, 1944:

"As you know, although six months additional leave was generously granted to me by the Bloomingdale board, I had hoped that within three months after the date of my last departure I would be able to return to New York. In view of recent developments here Ambassador Steinhardt and I feel it is desirable that I remain here for the purpose of making explorations in this area and of taking measures elsewhere in order that my assignment may be completed.

"Unless unforeseen developments occur to delay or hasten my departure, it now appears desirable that I remain here for another four to six weeks and by that time I should be able to determine whether a definite request for permission to return can be made of Washington.

"It is sincerely hoped that changing my previous schedule will not greatly inconvenience you. Regards."

Very truly yours,

(Signed) J. W. Pehle

J. W. Pehle  
Executive Director

Mr. James Schoff,  
Bloomingdale Brothers,  
59th and Lexington Avenue,  
New York, New York.

RS  
EDrury 9/14/44

DEPARTMENT  
OF  
STATE

INCOMING  
TELEGRAM

DIVISION OF  
COMMUNICATIONS  
AND RECORDS

NYC- 662

This telegram must be paraphrased before being communicated to anyone other than a Government agency. (redacted)

Ankara

Dated September 8, 1944

Rec'd 7:43 p.m.

1944 SEP 12 AM 9:20  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
DIVISION OF COMMUNICATIONS AND RECORDS

Secretary of State,  
Washington

CONTROL COPY

1694, September 8, 3 p.m.

FROM HIRSCHMANN TO PEHLE, WRB, FOR JAMES SCHOFF,  
BLOOMINGDALE BROTHERS, 59th and LEXINGTON AVENUE,  
NEW YORK CITY.

*Message sent 9/14/44*

Ankara no. 141.

Although the Bloomingdale board generously granted me an additional six months leave, as you know I had hoped to be able to conclude return to New York within three months of the time of my last departure. The recent developments here have been such that Ambassador Steinhardt and I deem it desirable for me to remain in this area to make explorations and to take steps elsewhere in order to complete my assignment.

It now seems that unless some unforeseen development occurs to accelerate or delay my departure it will

(redacted)  
For security reasons the text of this message should be closely guarded.

DECLASSIFIED  
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72  
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 21 1972

*File*

DEPARTMENT  
OF  
STATE

INCOMING  
TELEGRAM

DIVISION OF  
COMMUNICATIONS  
AND RECORDS

PLAIN

5 copies  
Control to Stewart

1944

-2- #1694, September 8, 3 p.m., from Ankara

it will be desirable for me to remain here four  
to six weeks longer by which time I should know  
whether I can definitely request of Washington  
permission to return. I sincerely trust that this  
change in my proposed schedule will not in any way  
seriously inconvenience you. Regards.

STEINHARDT

WSB

Hirschman

DEPARTMENT  
OF  
STATE

INCOMING  
TELEGRAM

DIVISION OF  
COMMUNICATIONS  
AND RECORDS

EOC-602

PLAIN

Ankara

Dated June 17, 1944

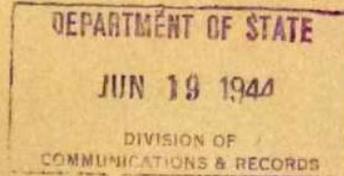
Rec'd 5:47 p.m. 18th

*5 copies  
Control to Stewart*

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

1097, seventeenth

Hirschmann arrived Ankara today. Please inform  
War Refugee Board and family.



STEINHARDT

WTD

LMS

*Miss O has notified the family.*

*W.D. 6/19*

not for subjugation, not for slavery, not for a status  
of permanent inferiority, but for total and complete  
destruction.

avenue of escape, a crazy world which sent ships with  
helpless human beings to founder rather than

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

OUTGOING TELEGRAM

DIVISION OF COMMUNICATIONS AND RECORDS

RECEIVED

June 13, 1944

6 p.m.

THIS MESSAGE IS FOR  
reading only by special  
arrangement. [REDACTED] W)

**CONTROL COPY**

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
JUN 15 1944  
RECORDS

AMEMBASSY,

ANKARA.

X 529

The cable below is WRB no. 51 and is from Pehle for the Ambassador.

Reservation of room and bath at Ankara Palace for Hirschmann who left for Ankara June 11 would be appreciated.

FOR SECURITY REASONS THE  
TEXT OF THIS MESSAGE MUST  
BE CAREFULLY SPERATED

NULL  
(GTF)

WRB:MMV:KG  
6/13/44

S/CR

NE

DECLASSIFIED  
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72  
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 21 1972

of permanent inferiority, not for slavery, not for a status  
destruction.

avenue of escape, a crazy world which sent ships with  
helpless human beings to founder rather than let  
them disembark on any of its vast shores, a barbarous

June 9, 1944

MEMORANDUM

1944

CABLE TO ANKARA

RECEIVED  
WAR REFUGEE BOARD  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

Please deliver the following message to Ambassador Steinhardt, Ankara,  
from J. W. Pehle.

Hirschmann left for Ankara June 11. Would appreciate reservation of  
room and bath at Ankara Palace.

THIS IS WRB ANKARA CABLE NO. 51

\*\*\*\*\*

June 12, 1944  
3:10 p.m.

Stewart; pdk 6/12/44

W.S.

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

June 9, 1944

MEMORANDUM

TO: MR. PEHLE

FROM: MR. LUBIN

I am herewith attaching  
the letter for Ira Hirschmann.

1944

7. 11. 44

726

File  
JWP

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

June 8, 1944.

My dear Mr. Hirschmann:

John W. Pehle, the Executive Director of the War Refugee Board, informs me that you are returning to Turkey to continue your work as the Board's representative under the able direction of Ambassador Steinhardt. The great task of mercy which the War Refugee Board is successfully undertaking is of paramount importance and I am confident that Ambassador Steinhardt and you will receive the support of the governments and individuals whose cooperation we are seeking in the interest of humanity.

In this you have our Government's full support and hearty wishes for success. I shall follow the work with great interest.

Sincerely yours,



Mr. Ira Hirschmann,  
Special Representative,  
War Refugee Board,  
Washington, D. C.

not for sul  
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struction.

them disembark on any of its vast shores, a barbarous

Hirschmann

June 8, 1944

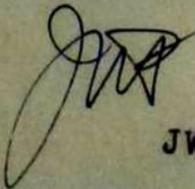
Mr. Lubin

J. W. Pehle

Attached is the proposed letter which we discussed. It would be very helpful to the work of the War Refugee Board if Hirschmann could carry such a letter back with him to Ankara.



Attachment



JWPehle:lh 6/8/44

not for subjugation, not for slavery, not for a status of permanent inferiority but for total and complete avenue of escape, a crazy world which sent ships with helpless human beings to founder rather than let

June 1, 1944

2881/2  
File  
*[Signature]*

WU9 NL

COLUMBUS OHIO JUN 6 1944

JOHN H PEHLE

1944 JUN 7 AM 8 30

WAR REFUGEE BOARD TREASURY BLDG

IF YOU CONSIDER MY DEPARTURE SUNDAY IMPERATIVE I SHALL DO SO BUT  
MY EXPERIENCE HAS BEEN THAT ONCE TWO PRIORITY IS ASSIGNED  
SCHEDULES CAN BE FLEXIBLE WITHOUT IMPAIRMENT OF STATUS I AM  
REQUESTING TWO DAYS ADDITIONAL RESPITE, DUE TO BEING CAUGHT OFF  
BALANCE IN COLUMBUS AND ILLNESS OF MY WIFE I ARRIVE IN WORTHINGTON  
~~WEDNESXX~~ WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON AND WILL SEE YOU AT ONCE MEANWHILE  
I SHALL APPRECIATE EXPLORATION OF POSSIBILITY THIS SLIGHT DELAY  
PROVIDED NO PENALTY IS INVOLVED ALSO LETTERS ABOUT WHICH I SPOKE  
AND WROTE TO YOU ~~RE~~ REGARDS

IRA HIRSCHMANN.

828 AM JUN 7 .

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1944

726

File  
JWB

BLOOMINGDALE'S  
NEW YORK  
22

EXECUTIVE OFFICES

June 1, 1944

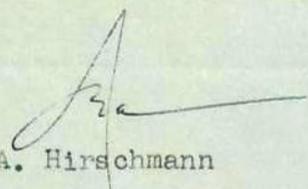
file  
JWB

Mr. John W. Pehle  
War Refugee Board  
Treasury Building  
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear John:

I am planning to be in Washington next  
Thursday and Friday, June 8th and 9th,  
at which time I hope to clear up a number  
of last-minute arrangements before pre-  
paring to leave.

Cordially yours



I. A. Hirschmann

lah:ret

No word on the pass-port, etc.  
Perhaps Pehle could push it.

not for subjugation, not for slavery, not for a status  
of permanent inferiority, but for total and complete  
destruction.

avenue of escape, a crazy world which sent ships with  
helpless human beings to founder rather than let  
them disembark on any of its vast shores, a barbarous

File  
JWBTHE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

June 1, 1944

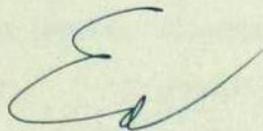
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JWB

Dear John:

As requested in your memorandum of May 30, I have been happy to address a letter to Mr. James S. Schoff, President of Bloomingdale Brothers, relative to Mr. Ira Hirschmann. I enclose a copy of this letter for your files.

With best wishes,

Sincerely yours,



Enc.

To Mr. James S. Schoff,  
June 1, 1944Mr. John W. Pehle,  
Executive Director,  
War Refugee Board,  
Treasury Department,  
Washington, D. C.

June 1, 1944

Dear Mr. Schoff:

I understand the Board of Directors of Bloomingdale's has extended Mr. Ira A. Hirschmann's leave in order that he may continue his important work in Turkey and the Near East for the War Refugee Board. Officials of the War Refugee Board have told me from time to time of their high opinion of the work Mr. Hirschmann has done for them in that area. This refugee work is of great importance and I wish to express to you my appreciation for your permitting Mr. Hirschmann to continue to serve.

With best wishes,

Sincerely yours,

E. R. STETTINIUS, JR.

Mr. James S. Schoff,  
President, Bloomingdale Brothers, Inc.,  
Lexington Avenue and 59th Street,  
New York, New York.

1000

726

7  
JWP

MEMORANDUM

MAY 30 1944

To: Mr. Stettinius<sup>v</sup>  
From: Mr. Pehle

In addition to being a gracious gesture it would smooth the way considerably for Ira Hirschmann<sup>v</sup> at Bloomingdale's if you could send them a note of appreciation along the lines of the attached. The letter could be read at a general meeting, could do no harm, and might do some good. I hope it can be arranged.

(Signed) J.W. Pehle

m.s.

WStewart; pdk 5/29/44

ay 15, 1944

e Month

DRAFT

Dear Mr. Schoff:

I should like to take this opportunity to express to the board of directors of Bloomingdale's the appreciation of this Department for the friendly spirit of cooperation which has been evidenced in granting leave to Mr. Ira A. Hirschmann to enable him to assist with the work of the War Refugee Board in Turkey and the Near East. The very substantial accomplishments which Mr. Hirschmann's efforts have made possible to date give us good reason to expect even greater achievements upon his return to Ankara in the near future.

Yours very truly,

Edward R. Stettinius, Jr.  
Under Secretary of State

Mr. James S. Schoff, President  
Bloomingdale Brothers, Inc.  
Lexington Avenue and 59th Street  
New York, New York

*m.s.*

Filed  
W. R. B.  
Filing Authority  
To: Files

ICE OF  
SCHMANN

ay 15, 1944

# e Month

Mr. I.M. Weinstein  
War Refugee Board  
Treasury Building  
Washington 25, D.C.

Dear Mr. Weinstein:

Mr. Hirschmann would like to have an article in the Jewish Frontier and suggested that I write you a letter and inquire whether you can arrange it.

Sincerely

Secretary to  
I. A. Hirschmann

ret:ama

s from Nazi-occupied Euro  
f Hitler's massacres. Standi  
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## THE LAST S AND

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ore leaving Warsaw, Jaczy  
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e restaurant. So they car  
pening in Poland."

less, the Jews of Warsaw  
hey bade Zygelbojm to u  
o to the American Emba  
Office and stay until di  
should go on a hunger s  
the message. It was not  
Jews still alive in Pola

longer a purely Jewish one. Unlike the pre-war years, the Jews today, thank Heaven, have comrades in misery. One hundred and twenty million Europeans, said Eden, would like to escape Europe if they only could.

Once the problem is posed in this way it becomes clear that nothing substantial could be done to solve it except win the war and liberate the continent. It would seem to be superfluous to show that this spurious argumentation is based on the false premise that the problem of the Jews of Europe is really identical

hand that everybody would keep on the massacre went on. Zygelbojm Jews in London were indecorous e rass the representatives of the great unseemly demonstrations. No one dramatic" hunger strikes. The fa were not neglected. And the Ber washed its hands of blood among t Easter lilies. So Zygelbojm took exist further in this well-bred world longer feel horror, or indignation,

## Comments of the Month

### AFTER BERMUDA

IF ANY hopes were yet entertained as to the outcome of the Bermuda Conference—what with the secrecy in which its decisions have been veiled, purportedly for reasons of military security—they have been completely shattered by the May 19th debate on the refugee problem in the British House of Commons. Captain Osbert Peake, Undersecretary of the Home Office and one of the British delegates to Bermuda, had nothing to add to the statement issued at the conclusion of the conference and sought to parry the sharp criticism of the House members by reiterating the by now familiar excuses and by relating Britain's past efforts in behalf of refugees. At the conclusion of the debate Anthony Eden himself declared that "though the Government is fully sensitive to the seriousness of the position of the refugees," it feared that not much could be done for them at this time.

But it is this professed sensitiveness which is very much in question. Was there really nothing that could be done? Even if negotiations with Germany are to be ruled out, could not something be done about the Jews in the satellite countries, particularly in the Balkans? At this very time some 80,000 in Bulgaria are facing expulsion which is tantamount to eventual extermination. Could not an effort have been made to remove these people to Palestine? That they could be taken out is not beyond the realm of possibility, and that an overland route, via neutral Turkey, is available—thus eliminating the need of ships altogether—must be well known to the governmental authorities.

But instead of making any effort in this direction, the British Government spokesmen chose to offer the Jews a dubious consolation: the problem is no longer a purely Jewish one. Unlike the pre-war years, the Jews today, thank Heaven, have comrades in misery. One hundred and twenty million Europeans, said Eden, would like to escape Europe if they only could.

Once the problem is posed in this way it becomes clear that nothing substantial could be done to solve it except win the war and liberate the continent. It would seem to be superfluous to show that this spurious argumentation is based on the false premise that the problem of the Jews of Europe is really identical with that of the other inhabitants of the Nazi-occupied countries. It has been proven repeatedly, but apparently to no effect, that it is the Jews, and the Jews alone, who have been marked by Hitler not for subjugation, not for slavery, not for a status of permanent inferiority, but for total and complete destruction.

Reports from Nazi-occupied Europe continue the tale of Hitler's massacres. Standing "at the bar of history, of humanity and of God,"—in the words of the Archbishop of Canterbury—the democratic world, because it has allowed precious days and weeks and months to pass in complete passivity, in "exploratory" conferences and in high-sounding apologies, will be found guilty of complicity in the greatest crime in the history of modern civilization.

### THE LAST S' AND

S'ZMUL ZYGELBOJM, a leader of the Polish Jewish socialists and a member of Sikorski's Polish National Council, committed suicide on May 12. According to the P.M. correspondent, Zygelbojm killed himself "out of chagrin." Jaczynski, a Gentile leader of the Polish underground movement, had managed to reach London. He carried a message to Zygelbojm from the remaining Jews in the Warsaw ghetto. Before leaving Warsaw, Jaczynski had been told by the still surviving Jews in the ghetto: "Jewish leaders abroad won't be interested. At eleven in the morning you will begin telling them about the anguish of the Jews in Poland, but at 1 p.m. they will ask you to halt the narrative so they can have lunch. That is a difference which cannot be bridged. They will go on lunching at the regular hour at their favorite restaurant. So they cannot understand what is happening in Poland."

Nevertheless, the Jews of Warsaw had sent a last message. They bade Zygelbojm to urge the Jews of London to go to the American Embassy and the British Foreign Office and stay until driven out. If arrested, they should go on a hunger strike until death.

That was the message. It was not sent with much hope. The Jews still alive in Poland knew beforehand that everybody would keep on lunching, while the massacre went on. Zygelbojm knew it too. No Jews in London were indecorous enough to embarrass the representatives of the great democracies by unseemly demonstrations. No one went on "melodramatic" hunger strikes. The favorite restaurants were not neglected. And the Bermuda Conference washed its hands of blood among the perfume of the Easter lilies. So Zygelbojm took poison, unable to exist further in this well-bred world which could no longer feel horror, or indignation, or sympathy.

Zygelbojm understood that he lived in an unreal world in which he had no part, a world which played an elaborate hocus-pocus game of conferences, and resolutions and declarations while it blocked every avenue of escape, a crazy world which sent ships with helpless human beings to founder rather than let them disembark on any of its vast shores, a barbarous

world which could find no room in any of its huge territories for the innocent fleeing from slaughter, an evil world which murdered or silently conspired in murder.

Zygelbojm had to leave the grimacing illusion of a civilized world in which the conventions of humanity prevailed. There was a real world from which he had shortly come and to which he was allied, the grim world of the ghetto where the assassin raged, gassing and choking efficiently, systematically so many thousands per day. Zygelbojm could not divorce himself from that reality; he could not make his peace with the gloomy world of occasional speeches, averted faces and closed doors. He belonged with the 'lead and those about to die. He belonged with those who knocked at the gate, crying, "Give sanctuary," not with those who, while pretending not to hear, rose and turned the key more securely in the lock.

Adam Czerniakow, the mayor of the Warsaw ghetto, killed himself; Zygelbojm killed himself. And people whose appetites are good, whose nights are calm, protest: "They should have kept on fighting." There are suicide dives with a bomber on the deck of an enemy battleship. The pilot perishes but he is acclaimed a hero. Deaths like Zygelbojm's are suicide dives upon the hardened conscience of the world. Perhaps the steel will be shattered; perhaps the imagination will be stirred.

The Jews in the Warsaw ghetto received no answer to their call; no one was tactless enough to besiege the embassies of the allied nations, as the perishing in their simplicity had begged, nor did any one starve himself to death as a futile gesture. Everyone behaved with admirable reason and restraint. If Zygelbojm had not killed himself, few would so much as have known of the strange request which issued from the thirty thousand Jews who were all that remained of the hundreds of thousands once shut up in the Warsaw ghetto.

But something glorious happened in the Warsaw ghetto which Zygelbojm did not live to witness. The thirty thousand made a last stand. They did not let themselves be led to slaughter. They knew what fate awaited them, and they died fighting. We do not know the details of that fierce and hopeless struggle, foredoomed from the beginning; we only know that the German murderers had to bring up tanks and artillery before they could complete their carnage. The Jews, furnished with arms smuggled to them by the Polish underground, fought fiercely—man, woman and child—barricading themselves in their houses. According to information from the Polish government, nearly a thousand Nazis were killed or wounded before the last of Warsaw Jewry was murdered.

A heroic, somber battle in which the victory is surely not to the thugs who completed their planned assassination! The Warsaw ghetto has been "liqui-

dated." Leaders of Polish Jewry are dead by their own hand. And the world which looks on passively is, in its way, dead too.

#### THE AMERICAN JEWISH CONFERENCE

**I**F ANYTHING is required to point up the crucial significance of the forthcoming American Jewish Conference, it is some of the dispatches that have been recently gracing the public press. Commitments as to the character of the post-war world are in the process of being made by those in a position to do so, and one is aware of concerted attempts to shape public opinion along predetermined lines. The Sulzberger articles in the *New York Times* in regard to the Near East are a case in point. The constant emphasis of the writer, at every opportune and inopportune moment, on the hostility of all Arabs, be they in Iraq or Morocco, to Zionism, has only one purpose: to prepare the public mind for a sell-out of Zionism on the spurious grounds that an attempt to fulfill the pledge of the Balfour Declaration would endanger the war effort. This is a theme song which is being chanted with increasing insistence.

An even plainer analysis of what the future may hold for the Jewish people is to be found in a report from Jerusalem (*New York Times*, May 24). The *Times* correspondent has this to say about the state of mind in Palestine:

"Zionism today faces its most acute and baffling deadlock since the contemporary political Zionist movement began fifty years ago. The recent Anglo-American Conference on Refugees, held in Bermuda, brought about that deadlock.

"The Bermuda conference had been widely hailed as a golden opportunity, likely to bring a large-scale refugees' settlement in Palestine within bounds of practical possibilities. But it speedily became evident that this was not feasible, owing to the British Government's special political reservations regarding further Jewish immigration into the Holy Land.

"Undoubtedly Palestine Jewry, too, has been bitterly disappointed by the outcome of the Bermuda conference. It is stated among Jews here, first, that the recommendations by American and British delegates as finally adopted by those governments were likely to be of insufficient scope to provide for the rescue of any large number of the hundreds of thousands of European Jews still surviving the Nazi holocaust. Second, they foresee that Palestine will have only a minor place among practical resettlement considerations owing to the British Government's obviously unalterable decision to adhere to its White Paper of May, 1939, under which less than 30,000 additional Jewish immigrants would be admitted to Palestine by the end of March, 1944."

The writer goes on to add that the Arabs, previously sceptical in regard to the White Paper, have drawn new faith as a result of the Bermuda Conference, and are pressing for "local independence" as a prelude to joining an Arab Federation.

726

*Filer*

BLOOMINGDALE'S  
NEW YORK 22

W. R. B. \_\_\_\_\_  
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Date \_\_\_\_\_

EXECUTIVE OFFICES

May 11, 1944

Mr. John W. Pehle  
War Refugee Board  
Treasury Building  
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear John:

I am enclosing a paraphrased copy of a telegram to the Secretary of State from Ambassador Steinhardt regarding my proposed return to Turkey. I presume you already have this. As I indicated to you last week when we met I suspected that Steinhardt was of the opinion clearly indicated in the enclosed telegram. From the point of view of the War Refugee Board's program and my ability to function in Turkey, I believe it essential that this matter be cleared with Steinhardt either through you, or the Secretary of the Treasury, or the Secretary of State, before any further plans are considered. From our telephone conversation today I understood that you would somehow clear the matter.

Aside from the above, I wish to confirm to you our arrangement under which my company is willing to grant me \$1,000. a month during my leave of absence for the War Refugee Board for a period of three months, and not to exceed six months. As I understand it, the War Refugee Board will pay me \$1,500. a month in addition to the above for the same period, which I will require in addition to my expenses.

It is also essential that I have a definite commitment assuring my return within three months

W. Fehre  
1944

of my departure, unless I then consent to a further stay not to exceed three months additional, predicated on the need of the assignment, which as I understand it you will leave to my judgment. As matters now stand, I cannot undertake the trip without assurance of this return as planned.

Do let me hear that this is satisfactory.

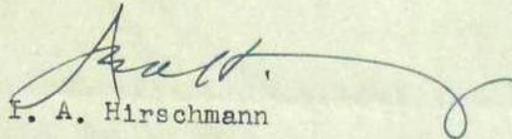
My health is a little on the ragged side and I do not want to leave for such a trip and assignment handicapped by illness or a run-down condition. Until I get clear with my doctor I will not leave. Otherwise I can plan to depart in the early part of June if that is satisfactory with you.

It may be not unwise now to begin work on the things that I will require, that is, the diplomatic passport, priority "2", telegram to Steinhardt, etc. You will know best about this.

I expect to come to Washington a number of days before I leave to work out plans and clear up some things with you and the boys. I am sure you will agree that that is essential.

With warm personal regards, I am

Cordially yours

  
F. A. Hirschmann

lah:ret

P.S. I hope you haven't forgotten our little talk about the President. Perhaps the Secretary of the Treasury would be interested in arranging this even if it were a brief moment. I think you will understand that it would give me a lot more backing in some of the things I hope to do and places I hope to be able to break through, just to be able to say that on my return I spoke and "reported" also to the President.

File  
JUP

PARAPHRASE

To the Secretary of State  
From Ambassador Steinhardt  
May 8, 1944

I should appreciate your informing Ira Hirschmann that his familiarity with conditions in Turkey makes it preferable, in my opinion, for him to remain in intimate association with the War Refugee Board in Washington, instead of returning to Turkey at this time, especially since I shall probably arrive in Washington in June.

I think it desirable, however, that a representative of the War Refugee Board be sent to Ankara as soon as possible to look after the many details which arise every day regarding war refugee matters. I have had to handle these personally since he left. This function could readily be discharged by any young man or woman of limited administrative ability. I shall be glad to talk over the question of his return to Turkey with Hirschmann when I arrive in Washington.

ret

Mr. Ira A. Hirschmann  
Kleinmiller's  
New York, New York

Enclosure

File

File

362



- Mr. Lester
- Mr. Lufford
- Mr. Stewart
- Mr. Taylor
- Miss

May 11, 1944, 1944.

Dear Ira:

By all means use the speech you prepared for the Hebrew University dinner for the Palestine Lighthouse luncheon. It seems advisable, however, that you make it clear that you are speaking as a private citizen and off-the-record. Palestine Light-  
May 16th.

I look forward to hearing from you on the major matter very soon. speech that I sent you for the ill-fated Hebrew University dinner. Sincerely yours,  
me with your authorization and commendations.

You will hear from me definitely on the major matter within a few days.

J. W. Pehle  
Executive Director

Mr. Ira A. Hirschmann  
Bloomingdale's  
New York, New York

iah:lg

Enclosure

VM:mg



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BLOOMINGDALE'S  
NEW YORK

EXECUTIVE OFFICES

May 9, 1944.

Mr. John W. Pehle,  
War Refugee Board,  
Treasury Building,  
Washington 25, D. C.

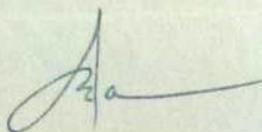
Dear John,

Mr. Weinstein tells me that your Board approved my speaking at the Palestine Lighthouse luncheon on Tuesday, May 16th.

I should like to use the same speech that I sent down to you for the ill-fated Hebrew University dinner. Will you return it to me with your authorization and emendations.

You will hear from me definitely on the major matter within a few days.

Cordially yours,



I. A. Hirschmann

iah:lg

BLOOMINGDALE'S  
NEW YORK 22

EXECUTIVE OFFICES

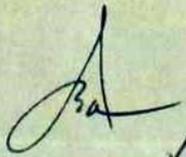
May 10, 1944

Mr. I. M. Weinstein  
War Refugee Board  
Treasury Building  
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Pete:

I think you did a swell job with  
Dorothy Thompson. Perhaps you will  
be interested in the enclosed.

Cordially yours



I. A. Hirschmann

lah:ret

copy

May 9, 1944

page two  
Miss Dorothy Thompson  
May 9, 1944  
Miss Dorothy Thompson  
237 East 48th Street,  
New York, N.Y.

Dear Miss Thompson:

I read with avid interest in the Boston Post last evening your dissertation on the subject of havens for refugees. I think your treatment of the subject was magnificent.

As you may know, I have recently returned from Turkey where I was representing the President's War Refugee Board in bringing out refugees from the Balkans. The S.S. Tari to which you kindly referred is the boat which I chartered for the United States Government. It has not yet left Constanza due to the absence of German safe conduct. The Board has urged me to return to expedite and complete this work, which I intend to do during the next few weeks.

Do you mind if I refer to one aspect of the subject of refugees which results from my observation of them in the Balkans and in Egypt?

The question of what kind of citizens these refugees will make in their newly-adopted countries and in the new world is one that is frequently posed. It seems to me that this is one of the deterrents in the minds of those who oppose opening the doors here and elsewhere. I talked with good numbers of refugees who had just emerged from the yoke of the fascists, and also spoke at length with Mr. W. T. Matthews, former director of MERRA, now merged into INRA. I am convinced from these discussions and observations that refugees with any physical

Cordially yours,

I. A. Hirshmann

BLOOMINGDALE'S  
NEW YORK 22

May 9, 1944

page two  
Miss Dorothy Thompson  
May 9, 1944

and moral stamina left in them will become among the most important freedom-loving citizens of the world. Having gone through the fire and having emerged with their heads up, their hearts and souls intact, they above all people will know the nature of the fascist disease and the need for fighting it with all the resources they possess.

Dear John:  
This was a heartening sign to me and one that I recorded in my report to the Secretary of State from Ankara on March 13, 1944. May I quote from the passage covering this aspect of the report:

asked him to get in touch with me, and that "In freeing or in helping expedite the exodus of human beings from persecuted areas to liberated lands we must remember not to throw them from the fire into the frying pan. They must not only be rescued but they must find places and means must be found to organize and rehabilitate them and to give them their freedom to live and be useful citizens of the world. It has been demonstrated that the rescued refugees have become constructive and valuable citizens in Palestine. The same is reported to me by Mr. Matthews, the Director of MERRA in Cairo, who stated that the thousands of Yugoslavs who were saved and placed in camps in Egypt were strong and healthy acquisitions to the cause of freedom-loving peoples."

With good wishes,

Cordially yours,

lah:lg

I. A. Hirschmann

1944

MOONINGDALE'S  
NEW YORK 22

*VAF*  
*[Signature]*

*Free*  
*[Signature]*

EXECUTIVE OFFICES

May 9, 1944

Mr. John W. Pehle  
War Refugee Board  
Treasury Building  
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear John:

I had a telephone call in my absence from the City from a Mr. Varian Fry<sup>✓</sup> stating that the War Refugee Board had asked him to get in touch with me, and that the Board may send him to Ankara.

Is this correct? Do you wish me to see him? I truly trust that your Board is not considering or planning to send additional people to Ankara at this time.

Cordially yours

*[Signature]*

I. A. Hirschmann<sup>✓</sup>

lah:ret

the invitation to the dinner to be given by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Thursday night, at which Mr. Hirschmann will speak.

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Sincerely,

*Ruth E. Trainor*

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*File  
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JOHN W PEHLE

WAR REFUGEE BOARD

DINNER AND SPEECH THURSDAY NIGHT POSTPONED MR HIRSCHMANN  
AWAY WILL ADVISE FURTHER ON HIS RETURN

R E TRAINOR SECRETARY BLOOMINGDALES.

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Constanza, in Romania. The usual route from Istanbul to Palestine is overland.

"The whole principle of taking human beings and putting them in one place not fit for human

say the least," Mr. Hirschmann said, but it did get under way, with assistance of the Romanian government.

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"The whole principle of taking human beings and putting them in one place not fit for human

say the least," Mr. Hirschmann said, but it did get under way, with assistance of the Romanian government.

*Hirsch*

OFFICE OF  
HIRSCHMANN

May 1, 1944.

1944

Mr. I. M. Weinstein,  
War Refugee Board,  
253 Broadway, Room 801,  
New York, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Weinstein:

I am glad to enclose a copy of the invitation to the dinner to be given by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Thursday night, at which Mr. Hirschmann will speak.

Sincerely,

*Ruth E. Trainor*

Secretary to  
I. A. Hirschmann

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Very sincerely yours,

*Samuel P. Brown*

P. S. Please note that a table of ten reservations will take care of a complete scholarship for a research student for a full year. No solicitation of funds at the dinner.

SAMUEL J. BLOOMINGDALE      DR. FRANK KINGDON      MICHAEL SCHAAP, *Hon. Chairmen*  
HARRY SCHERMAN, *Campaign Chairman*      VAN GOTSHAL      A. J. SCHUEL, *Co-Chairmen*

Enclosed please find check for \$.....  
for..... reservations at \$50 per person toward the

SCHOLARSHIP FUND DINNER  
of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Guest of Honor: IRA HIRSCHMANN

at the WALDORF-ASTORIA HOTEL  
THURSDAY, MAY 4TH, 1944, 6:30 P. M.

1944

*Name*.....  
*List guests on reverse side of card.*

*Address*.....

Checks payable to MAURICE WERTHEIM, *Treasurer*  
AMERICAN FRIENDS OF HEBREW UNIVERSITY, Inc.  
*Deductible from Income Tax, \$45 each reservation.*

Informal

No solicitation of funds at the dinner.

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..... dinner to be held at the Waldorf-Astoria  
on Thursday evening, May 4th. Since the proceeds of this dinner  
are for the Scholarship Fund of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem  
I was delighted to accept their invitation to be of service in every  
way possible.

The occasion will be particularly interesting and significant because of the address to be delivered by our guest of honor

SAMUEL J. BLOOMINGDALE

59TH ST. & LEXINGTON AVE.  
NEW YORK 22, N. Y.

*Free  
JSP*

April 18, 1944

Dear Mr. Seidenwarm:

At the request of Harry Scherman, president of the Book-of-the-Month Club, and Sylvan Gotshal, I am taking an active interest in the very important dinner to be held at the Waldorf-Astoria on Thursday evening, May 4th. Since the proceeds of this dinner are for the Scholarship Fund of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, I was delighted to accept their invitation to be of service in every way possible.

The occasion will be particularly interesting and significant because of the address to be delivered by our guest of honor, Ira Hirschmann, who has just returned to Washington from a most important assignment in the Near East. As you have noted in the press, Mr. Hirschmann has been doing a very vital and effective job in the Balkan countries for the United States government.

Mr. Hirschmann has likewise spent some time at the Hebrew University and will bring us a first-hand report of the latest developments in that area too. Like the rest of us, he is enthusiastic about the accomplishments of the University, and the tremendous contribution it is making to science and academic progress, as well as in serving the military needs of the United Nations.

It is for these compelling reasons that such men as Dr. Frank Kingdon and Michael Schaap have joined with me as honorary chairmen of this dinner, realizing that this institution will be a source of pride to our people for all time.

Won't you please fill out the enclosed reservation card, and mail it to me with your check today.

Very sincerely yours,

*Samuel Bloomingdale*

P. S. Please note that a table of ten reservations will take care of a complete scholarship for a research student for a full year. No solicitation of funds at the dinner.

route from Istanbul to Palestine  
is overland.

"The whole principle of taking  
human beings and putting them  
in one place not fit for human

say the least," Mr. Hirschmann  
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## Free U. S. Ports To Aid Refugees Are Considered

### War Refugee Board Studies Setting Up Places Where They Could Await Rescue

From the Herald Tribune Bureau  
 WASHINGTON, April 18.—The War Refugee Board is considering, among other proposals, a plan to establish free ports of temporary residence in the United States for refugees from Nazi Europe, it was disclosed today by John W. Pehle, executive director of the board.

Mr. Pehle was asked about the free port plan at a joint press conference with Ira Hirschmann, of New York, vice-president of Bloomingdale Bros., Inc., and special representative of the W. R. B. in Europe, Mr. Hirschmann returned to Washington yesterday from Turkey, where he had been since Feb. 14.

Mr. Hirschmann, whose account of his experiences in Turkey occupied most of the press conference, said that President Roosevelt is regarded as "a god" in occupied Europe because of his efforts on behalf of oppressed peoples.

Mr. Hirschmann said Mr. Roosevelt's declaration of March 24, in which he called on the free peoples of Europe and Asia "temporarily to open their frontiers to all victims of oppression," had had an "electrifying effect" in the Balkans. It was broadcast over and over again, and it gave people hope because it made them feel some one was coming to help them, he said.

Mr. Hirschmann said the Russians were also very co-operative, and he paid high praise to Laurence Steinhardt, American Ambassador to Turkey. Mr. Steinhardt "not only backed me up, he plunged into the work," said Mr. Hirschmann. "I think this board and the President and the people of this country who are interested in human beings wherever they are should be very grateful for having Mr. Steinhardt in Turkey at this time."

The War Refugee Board has been negotiating with the Turkish government to charter the S. S. Tari to carry 1,500 refugees to Haifa. Everything has been arranged, except "a safe conduct from the Germans, and it is hoped that the ship will sail any day, he said. In the last few weeks three small Bulgarian boats brought 250 refugees each to Istanbul from Constanza, in Rumania. The usual route from Istanbul to Palestine is overland.

# Palestine Door Opens to 5,000 Balkan Children

Ankara, Mar. 13 (ONA)—First steps toward mass evacuation of refugees from Rumania and Bulgaria have been completed, the Overseas News Agency was told by Ira A. Hirschmann, representative here of the War Refugee Board.

Hirschmann revealed that Turkey had agreed to passage of 5,000 children to Palestine. He added that negotiations were nearly concluded for a Turkish ship capable of carrying 1,000 children at a trip. The ship will pick up its passengers at Constanza, Black Sea port, and take them to Haifa.

British authorities, Hirschmann said, will provide Palestine visas and he is hopeful of getting a German safe conduct.

At present only 100 persons weekly are allowed exit from the Axis-controlled Balkan states.

### Arrive From Bulgaria

Haifa, Mar. 13 (JTA)—Fifty Jewish children from Bulgaria arrived here today. They were met by representatives of the Jewish Agency and taken to Jewish settlements where they will reside and be educated.



IRA HIRSCHMANN  
 Speeds Aid for Youngsters

THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY stands in the first rank. Our own sense of self-respect and dignity must impel us to vigorous support of our University. You will rejoice to put yourselves at the service of this work. Regard it not alone as a kind of charitable activity, but also as a source of strength which will profit in its turn the whole Jewish community.

—ALBERT EINSTEIN

WITH THE GRADUAL EXTINGUISHMENT of every center of Jewish learning and tradition, the role of HEBREW UNIVERSITY will be to help preserve the cultural values of our civilization. We must count on the intelligent few to recognize the necessity of maintaining those institutions which provide a home for the tradition of science and learning.

—EDWARD M. M. WARBURG

Mr. Hirschmann said the War Refugee Board had been instrumental in moving refugees from a camp in Transdnistria, the Rumanian orderland now held by the Russians, into the interior of Rumania, whence they may hope to get out through Turkey.

There were 48,000 people, mostly Jewish, crowded into the Transdnistria camp, Mr. Hirschmann said, under conditions which were too deplorable and heartrending to describe.

"The whole principle of taking human beings and putting them in one place not fit for human

life, and having that accepted as routine without protest, without an attempt by civilized people to rescue them, is one that has to be challenged, apart from the misery of the people themselves," he said.

Just as arrangements had been completed to move the 48,000 into

the interior, the Russians moved into the Transdnistria, and transportation lines were choked as a result. The movement of the refugees was "not expedited, to say the least," Mr. Hirschmann said, but it did get under way, with assistance of the Rumanian government.

with assistance of the Rumanian government.

Free  
 JWP

...ate from Istanbul overland.

Memorandum to: Mr. John W. Pehle, Executive Director  
Refugee Board

BLOOMINGDALE'S  
NEW YORK

EXECUTIVE OFFICES

May 1, 1944.

Mr. John W. Pehle,  
War Refugee Board,  
Treasury Building,  
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Mr. Pehle:

Mr. Hirschmann has gone out-of-town for a few days and has asked me to send you this rough draft for the Thursday night meeting of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, which he dictated before he left on Friday night.

Mr. Hirschmann is not sensitive about changes. He knows that he may have touched on some subjects which may be sensitive and he has no pride of authorship on any changes which you or your associates may wish to make.

Miss Hollis, in charge of our press relations here, will be available on the telephone or any way you wish for any corrections or emendations.

Sincerely,

*Ruth E. Trainor*

Secretary to  
I. A. Hirschmann

April 27, 1944

*File  
JWP*

Memorandum to: Mr. John W. Pehle, Executive Director  
War Refugee Board  
Treasury Building  
Washington 25, D. C.

BLOOMINGDALE  
NEW YORK 22

Dr. Stephen Wise called me several times asking me to speak at a public meeting. I agreed to talk in camera to a small group off-the-record, which I did yesterday at noon for about thirty minutes.

When I was requested at the end of the talk to make a recommendation to the World Jewish Congress I repeated what I have said to each group: "Back up John Pehle and his brilliant War Refugee Board organization 200%. You now have a sharp instrument. Use it intelligently and helpfully."

Mr. John W. Pehle  
Executive Director  
War Refugee Board  
Treasury Building  
Washington

I think I should further report to you that there were a number of questions with regard to the Emergency Committee. I replied that I felt that the World Jewish Congress was vitiating its energies by deflection of its efforts toward an alleged competitor; that the Congress should develop an affirmative program of its own and either collaborate with others or assume an obliviousness in its collaboration with the War Refugee Board.

Dear John:

When I was asked to speak at a dinner of the Book of the Month Club, who is a friend of mine, asking if I would speak at a dinner of the Hebrew University on my return. My friendship with him was such that I felt I could not refuse, and at that time did not consider any policy which would require permission to speak. My impression from your telegram in Ankara indicated that you were eager to have favorable publicity before and after my return. I have tried to work to that end.

*I. A. Hirschmann*

In view of our understanding and the fact that these invitations have already been sent and it is afraid there is nothing we can do about it but to go ahead with it. I assure you I have no desire to make this speech, or any other, as I am more exhausted than I can tell. (I am now getting something of a reaction from the intensity of the return trip, etc. and hope to go away for a few days to pull myself together.)

I will be glad to send you a copy of my proposed talk at this dinner for approval in Washington, or to present anything which you

...ute from Istanbul to Palestine  
overland.

"The whole principle of taking human beings and putting them in one place not fit for human

say the least." Mr. Hirschmann said, but it did get under way, with assistance of the Rumanian government.

BLOOMINGDALE'S  
NEW YORK 22

EXECUTIVE OFFICES

April 26, 1944

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

Dear John:

When I was in Turkey about six weeks ago I had a telegram from Harry Scherman, President of the Book of the Month Club, who is a friend of mine, asking if I would speak at a dinner of the Hebrew University on my return. My friendship with him was such that I felt I could not refuse, and at that time did not consider any policy which would require permission to speak. My impression from your telegrams in Ankara indicated that you were eager to have favorable publicity before and after my return. I have tried to work to that end.

In view of our understanding and the fact that these invitations have already been sent out I'm afraid there is nothing we can do about it but to go ahead with it. I assure you I have no desire to make this speech, or any other, as I am more exhausted than I can tell. (I am now getting something of a reaction from the intensity of the return trip, etc. and hope to go away for a few days to pull myself together.)

I will be glad to send you a copy of my proposed talk at this dinner for approval in Washington, or to present anything which you

COLLECTIBLES, IN ROMANIA. The route from Istanbul to Palestine is overland.

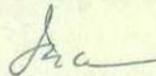
"The whole principle of taking human beings and putting them in one place not fit for human

say the least." Mr. Hirschmann said, but it did get under way, with assistance of the Romanian government.

the boys wish me to say. You can be assured that it will all be slanted at the magnificent work of the War Refugee Board and Secretary Morgenthau and Steinhardt's indispensable work.

With good wishes,

Cordially yours



iah:ret

I. A. Hirschmann  
Vice-President

Constanza, in Romania. The usual route from Istanbul to Palestine is overland.

"The whole principle of taking human beings and putting them in one place not fit for human

say the least." Mr. Hirschmann said, but it did get under way, with assistance of the Romanian government.

per person toward the  
FUND DINNER  
University of Jerusalem  
Honor: IRA HIRSCHMANN  
at the WALDORF-ASTORIA HOTEL  
THURSDAY, MAY 4TH, 1944, 6:30 P.M.

944

Name .....  
List guests on reverse side of card.  
Address .....

Checks payable to MAURICE WERTHEIM, Treasurer  
AMERICAN FRIENDS OF HEBREW UNIVERSITY, Inc.  
Deductible from Income Tax, \$45 each reservation.  
No solicitation of funds at the dinner.

At the request of Harry Scherman, president of the Book-of-the-Month Club, and Sylvan Gotshal, I am taking an active interest in the very important dinner to be held at the Waldorf-Astoria on Thursday evening, May 4th. Since the proceeds of this dinner are for the Scholarship Fund of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, I was delighted to accept their invitation to be of service in every way possible.

The occasion will be particularly interesting and significant because of the address to be delivered by our guest of honor, Ira Hirschmann, who has just returned to Washington from a most important assignment in the Near East. As you have noted in the press, Mr. Hirschmann has been doing a very vital and effective job in the Balkan countries for the United States government.

Mr. Hirschmann has likewise spent some time at the Hebrew University and will bring us a first-hand report of the latest developments in that area too. Like the rest of us, he is enthusiastic about the accomplishments of the University, and the tremendous contribution it is making to science and academic progress, as well as in serving the military needs of the United Nations.

It is for these compelling reasons that such men as Dr. Frank Kingdon and Michael Schaap have joined with me as honorary chairmen of this dinner, realizing that this institution will be a source of pride to our people for all time.

Won't you please fill out the enclosed reservation card, and mail it to me with your check today.

Very sincerely yours,  
*Samuel Bronningdale*

P. S. Please note that a table of ten reservations will take care of a complete scholarship for a research student for a full year. No solicitation of funds at the dinner.

Constanza, in Romania. The usual route from Istanbul to Palestine is overland.

"The whole principle of taking human beings and putting them in one place not fit for human

say the least," Mr. Hirschmann said, but it did get under way, with assistance of the Romanian government.

PERSONAL  
MURPHY'S PERSONAL

Hins

BLOOMINGDALE'S  
NEW YORK 22

*Files*  
*No dues reg.*  
*HSL*

EXECUTIVE OFFICES

April 24, 1944

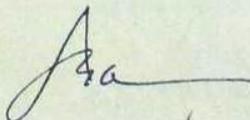
Mr. John W. Pehle, Executive Director  
War Refugee Board  
Treasury Building  
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear John:

Thank you for your note of April 22nd  
and the invitation to attend the meeting  
at the Town Hall Club on Wednesday,  
May 3, at 6:30. I shall be delighted  
to be there.

Please feel free to call on me to  
continue to participate in any way  
consistent with the Board's policy and  
program while I am in New York. It is  
not "interference" but a privilege.

Cordially yours



I. A. Hirschmann  
Vice-President

iah:ret

BLOOMINGDALE'S  
NEW YORK

22

EXECUTIVE OFFICES

April 22, 1944

*Handwritten:*  
Noted  
JUT

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

Dear John:

I found the enclosed in today's mail from Ambassador Steinhardt. The first paragraph deals with a German opera director who was called to Goering's office the day the infamous trio took over, and was invited to become the music director of the Third Reich. At the risk of his life he turned it down flat with a statement, "I am afraid the air in Germany will be a little too suffocating for me". Strangely enough, Goering who is definitely an optimist, did not decapitate him because he thought he could persuade him to come to Germany at a later time.

The rest of the letter is self-explanatory. Aside from the information, it reflects what a good guy Steinhardt is.

Cordially yours

*Handwritten signature:* I.A. Hirschmann

rl  
enc.

Dated April 1, 1944

COPY.....

AMER. ✓  
EMBASSY OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Istanbul, April 8, 1944.

Ira Hirschmann, Esquire,  
Vice President,  
Bloomingdale Brothers,  
59th St., & Lexington Ave.,  
New York, N.Y.

Dear Ira:

With reference to your letter of April 6th,--as you may not have kept a copy it contains your request concerning Carl Ebert and his family--I have taken advantage of my visit to Istanbul to discuss the matter with the Consulate General and am reasonably certain that at the appropriate time every possible facility will be rendered them in connection with their visas.

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your thoughtful personal memorandum and to tell you how highly I valued your work here and the extent to which I enjoyed our personal association. I hope we have only written the first chapter in this respect.

You will be please to learn that the Turkish authorities have today permitted the 244 refugees on the S.S. MARITZA to land and have promised to move them by rail to Palestine day after tomorrow. The resistance was less than I anticipated which may be a hopeful sign for the future with respect to illegal arrivals provided the number is kept within bounds so that the railroad is able to handle the movement. My guess is that if the illegal arrivals do not exceed 250 every two weeks, the railroad administration will find some way of moving them as the Foreign Minister has made it clear to me that he would rather move the refugees to Palestine than have them accumulate in Istanbul. There is still no word on the safe conduct for the TARI.

With every good wish and kindest regards in which Dulcie joins me,

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) Laurence A. Steinhardt

Hirschmann, Ira

WARB  
PROTECTS AND DOCUMENTS

COPY

TELEGRAM SENT

DGH-181

This telegram must be paraphrased before being communicated to anyone other than a Governmental agency. (BR)

Ankara 344

Dated April 1, 1944

Rec'd 8:10 p.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

1944, April 1, 1 p.m.

I should appreciate (reference Embassy's telegram 378, March 3, 6 p.m.) information by telegraph as to whether instructions regarding Hirschmann's salary and expenses have been forwarded.

*not in files*

STEINHARDT

HULT  
(GLW)

EJH

(OKW)

Re War Refugee Board

cc: Miss Chauncey (for the Sec'y.), Abrahamson, Akzin, Bernstein, Cohn, DuBois, Friedman, Gawton, Hodel, Laughlin, Lesser, Luxford, Mann, Mannon, Marks, McCormack, Murphy, Paul, Pehle, Pollak, Rains, Sargoy, Smith, Standish, Stewart, Weinstein, H.D. White, Files.

Administrative Matters

CO

COPY

2 - War Refugee Bd  
(m. Pehle)

TELEGRAM SENT

March 27, 1944

9 p.m.

RMN  
This telegram must be paraphrased before being communicated to anyone other than a Government agency (BR)  
AMEMBASSY ✓

ANKARA

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
DIVISION OF

MAR 29 1944

COMMUNICATIONS  
AND RECORDS

268

X

FOR THE MEMORANDUM OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE

In answer to your no. 508. Army Transport Command Cairo has been requested by War Department to grant Albrecht no. 2 priority. This is War Refugee Board's no. 18.

HULL  
(GLW)

HULL  
(GKW)

NE

3/28/44

3/7/44

2 copies

UJRB

PROJECTS AND DOCUMENTS

Administrative Matters: Personnel

March 25, 1944

3:55 p.m.

To: Mr. Warren

From: Mr. Pehle

It will be appreciated if you will have the attached cable dispatched at once to Ambassador Steinhardt.

WStewart; pdk 3/25/44

*ms*

*P.M.P.*

3/27

March 25, 1944

CABLE TO ANKARA

3:55 p.m.

From War Refugee Board to Ambassador Steinhardt.

Re your 508. Army Transport Command Cairo has been requested by War Department to grant Hirschmann No. 2 priority.

This is Ankara Cable No. 15

RS

PROTECTS AND DOCUMENTS

Administrative Matters: Personnel

WStewart; pdk 3/25/44

W.S. J.W.P.

Hirschmann

**CONTROL COPY**

RA-31  
this telegram must be  
paraphrased before being  
communicated to anyone  
other than a Governmental  
agency. (BR)

Ankara

Dated March 25, 1944

Rec'd 11:22 p.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

525, March 25, 10 p.m.

FOR DEPARTMENT AND WAR REFUGEE BOARD. Ankara's  
number six.

Hirschmann who plans to leave here March 30 en  
route to Washington has requested that there be  
available for him immediately upon his arrival a  
full set in paraphrase of all telegrams which have  
been exchanged with this Mission relating to his work.

STEINHARDT

ED/.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
DIVISION OF  
MARCH 27 1944  
COMMUNICATIONS  
AND RECORDS

2 - War Refugee  
Ad (M...)  
Bible

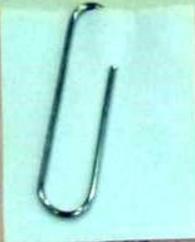
2 copies  
Control to  
H.../

JRE

PROTECT

Control to  
Habit

2 - War Refugee  
Board  
March 25, 1944  
1 p.m.  
PLAIN  
Pehle



TELEGRAM SENT

ed  
telegram must be  
retraced before being  
retransmitted to anyone  
other than a Government  
Agency. (DR)

**CONTROL COPY**

File

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
OFFICE OF THE  
SECRETARY  
MAR 27 1944

AMEMBASSY,  
ANKARA.  
256  
FOR HIRSCHMANN FROM PEHLE.

This is War Refugee Board's No. 9.

Your return to the United States to report to the War Refugee Board has our full approval. We are taking up with the War Department the matter of priority. The swell job which Ambassador Steinhardt and you have done has received the highest praise. We obviously desire the continuance of your activities on behalf of the Board and I will discuss this with you when I see you.

HULL  
(GLW)

HULL

WMB:GLW:AMM  
3/23/44  
HE

*2 copies  
Control to  
hand*

CURE

PROCEEDS AND DOCUMENTS

Administrative Matters: Personnel

March 22, 1944

March 22, 1944

11:00 am.

CABLE TO AMBASSADOR STEINHARDT, ANKARA, TURKEY.  
FOR HIRSCHMANN FROM PERLE.

Your return to the United States to report to the War Refugee Board has our full approval. We are taking up with the War Department the matter of priority. The small job which Ambassador Steinhardt and you have done has received the highest praise. We obviously desire the continuance of your activities on behalf of the Board and I will discuss this with you when I see you.

SEE Ankara Cable No. 2

*JMP*

JEDuBois:scr  
3/22/44

*W.S.*

Hirschmann

CURE

PROCEEDS AND DOCUMENTS

Administrative Matters: Personnel

Hirschmann

2 copies  
Control to  
W

March 22, 1944

11:00 am.

ORIGINAL COPY

CABLE TO AMBASSADOR STEINHARDT, ANKARA, TURKEY.  
FOR HIRSCHMANN FROM PERLE.

Your return to the United States to report to the War Refugee Board has our full approval. We are taking up with the War Department the matter of priority. The swell job which Ambassador Steinhardt and you have done has received the highest praise. We obviously desire the continuance of your activities on behalf of the Board and I will discuss this with you when I see you.

WRB Ankara Cable No. 9

JED:Bois:ecr  
3/22/44

This telegram must be paraphrased before being

Ankara

CONTROL COPY

*2 war Refugee Bd  
(Mr Peble)*

*WS*

GEM-84  
This telegram must be paraphrased before being communicated to anyone other than a Governmental agency. (BR)

Ankara  
Dated March 23, 1944  
Rec'd 2:02 p.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
MAR 24 1944  
DIVISION OF COMMUNICATIONS & RECORDS

508, March 23, noon

FOR THE DEPARTMENT AND WAR REFUGEE BOARD

My 5. As I regard it as important that Hirschmann should not be delayed on his return trip to the United States and in view of the imminence of his departure, I should appreciate being informed by telegraph as to whether the ATC in Cairo has as yet been advised with respect to his priority.

STEINHARDT

RR

*Mr. Peble's Personal*  
*Hirschman, Ira*

2 copies  
Control to  
Hohel

WRE

RCC-894  
This telegram must be  
paraphrased before being  
communicated to anyone  
other than a Governmental  
agency. (BR)

Ankara  
Dated March 17, 1944  
Rec'd 3 p.m., 19th.

Secretary of State  
Washington

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
DIVISION OF  
MAR 21 1944  
COMMUNICATIONS  
AND RECORDS

482, March 17, 10 p.m.  
PERSONAL FOR PEHLE WAR REFUGEE BOARD FROM HIESCHMANN

I would appreciate it if you would arrange with  
the War Department as soon as possible for number two  
priority for my return to the United States by air.  
I will arrive in Cairo on April 1 and would like  
to proceed to the United States immediately.

The first major steps have now been concluded in  
securing both rail and sea transportation for the  
evacuation of refugees from the Balkans either through  
Turkey or direct to Palestine. The Ambassador and I  
are both convinced that it is now essential that I bring  
to the War Refugee Board in Washington a personal  
account of the possibilities and problems of a further  
large scale refugee movement from the Balkans. Any  
telegraphic account would be deplorably inadequate.  
Furthermore, the second extension of my leave of  
absence

PROTEGS AND DOCUMENTS

Administrative Matters: Personnel

FILE

CONTROL COPY

War Refugee Bd  
(Mr. Beble)

MFG-205

PLAIN

File

PROCEEDS AND DOCUMENTS

Administrative Matters: Personnel

Firstman

-2-#482, March 17, 10 p.m., from Ankara

absence from Bloomingdales where I am under contract expires the second week in April and I am unwilling to request a further extension until I have given you a personal description of the conditions and difficulties with which we may have been and are being confronted. If you so desire, I will be prepared on my return to discuss with you the continuance of my activities on behalf of the War Refugee Board either in Washington or by returning here but not until I have made a personal report and have been afforded the opportunity of arranging my status with Bloomingdales.

STEINHARDT

RR

MAR 18 1945

**CONTROL COPY**

2 - War Refugee Bd  
(Mr. Peble)

MFG-205

PLAIN

Ankara ✓

Dated March 16, 1944

Rec'd 6:51 a.m. 17th

File  
JB7

Secretary of State,

Washington.

417, Sixteenth.

FOR WAR REFUGEE BOARD.

Department's 202 Fourteenth.

Hirschmann has received Schoff's telegram extending his leave of absence by six weeks.

STEINHARDT

RR



WRE

PROTECTS AND DOCUMENTS

Ch. Barlas  
Pera Palas

THE JEWISH AGENCY FOR PALESTINE

Immigration Department  
JERUSALEM  
P. O. B. 92

Istanbul, 15.3.1944

Mr. Ira Hirschmann  
c/o American Embassy  
Ankara

Dear Mr. Hirschmann,

I received your letter of the 14th inst. with regard to the boy whom you interviewed in my office. I took your generous proposal very seriously but in deciding upon the fate of a man one must consider not only the possible advantages of such an offer but the future of the child. Who knows, dear Mr. Hirschmann, where the boy would find happiness in his future life? It depends on so many factors, changes in life, etc. that nobody can foresee it.

The boy, like many others who are coming frequently to see me on their way to Palestine, had so much misfortune in the last years, that it would be sufficient for a lifetime tragedy. When asked the same day what he would desire now, he told me: "I want to be a Chaluz (Pioneer) in Palestine". Who can take the responsibility to deprive him from this aim? Anyhow, I shall make inquiries about his status and background and I am furthermore ready to consult his relatives in Palestine; I shall then be glad to let you know the results as soon as possible.

I am sure, dear Mr. Hirschmann, that on thinking over the matter, you will find that I am right in my judgement and I look forward to your reply on this point.

With best regards

Sincerely Yours.

Ch Barlas (signed)

Ch. Barlas

18/18/44

URB

PROTECTS AND DOCUMENTS

Administrative matters:

WIRE

War refugees

CONTROL COPY

PROTECTS AND DOCUMENTS

Administrative Matters

CO



TELEGRAM STMT

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
DIVISION OF  
MAR 16 1944  
COMMUNICATIONS  
AND RECORDS

PLAIN

March 14, 1944

AMEMBASSY,

ANKARA.

\* 202, fourteenth  
FROM WAR REFUGEE BOARD.

'RB's no. 6.

QUOTE Re your 593. Schoff of Bloomingdale cabled Hirschmann  
March 8 by RCA extending his leave of absence six weeks. Assume  
you have received message by now. UNQUOTE.

HULL  
(GLW)

WRB:GLW:KC  
3/13/44

War Refugee  
A.D. (P. 11)

1048

PROSECUTOR'S AND DOCUMENTS

Admin. in S...

CABLE TO ANKARA

March 11, 1944  
\$100 am.

To: Mr. Warren Schaff of Washington  
From: J. W. Peble

It will be appreciated if you will have the  
attached cable to Ankara despatched at once.

(Initialed) J. W. P.

; pdk 3/10/44

W.D.

J. W. Pehle

**CLASS OF SERVICE**  
 This is a full-rate Telegram or Cablegram unless its deferred character is indicated by a suitable symbol above or preceding the address.

# WESTERN UNION

1201

**SYMBOLS**  
 DL = Day Letter  
 NL = Night Letter  
 LC = Deferred Cable  
 NLT = Cable Night Letter  
 Ship Radiogram

A. N. WILLIAMS  
PRESIDENT

The filing time shown in the date line on telegrams and day letters is STANDARD TIME at point of origin. Time of receipt is STANDARD TIME at point of destination

G104N WM NL

NEW YORK NY MARCH 9 1944

JOHN W PALE

WAR REFUGEE BOARD CARE TREASURY DEPT - WASHN DC

FOLLOWING MESSAGE WAS SENT TO IRA HIRSCHMANN MARCH 8TH BY RCA.  
 YOUR REQUEST DATED FEBRUARY 24 1944 FOR EXTENSION OF YOUR LEAVE OF  
 ABSENCE RECEIVED YOUR LEAVE OF ABSENCE IS EXTENDED SIX WEEKS  
 COMPENSATION FOR EXTENSION WILL BE CONSIDERED UPON YOUR RETURN.

SIGNED JS SCHOFF

JAMES S SCHOFF

429A

THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE

28812

Hirschmann

**CONTROL COPY**

Security reasons the  
content of this message must

*War Refugee*  
*201 2 11*

*WRS*  
*PROTECTS AND DOCUMENTS*  
*FILE*

25  
BE

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
WAR REFUGEE BOARD

INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION

DATE March 9, 1944

TO Mr. Stewart  
FROM J. W. Pehle

I talked to Schoff who has already wired Hirschmann  
granting him six weeks' additional leave of absence.

J. W. Pehle

*Noted: W.S. 3/9*

**CONTROL COPY**

EE-322  
This telegram must be  
paraphrased before being  
communicated to anyone  
other than a Governmental  
agency. (SCOO)

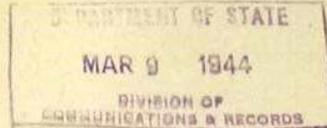
Ankara

Dated March 7, 1944

Rec'd 9:09 a.m., 8th

*War Refugee  
Board (Mr. Pehle)*

Secretary of State  
Washington



393, March 7, 4 p.m.

FOR PEHLE WAR REFUGEE BOARD FROM THE AMBASSADOR

Hirschmann is disturbed at his failure to receive a reply from Schoff, President of Bloomingdale Bros to his two telegrams requesting an extension of from four to six weeks in his leave of absence. He feels that he has no right to jeopardize his position with the company remaining in Ankara any longer unless specifically authorized to do. As Hirschmann's services in connection with the carrying out of the boards program of rescuing Jewish refugees from the Balkans are invaluable and as he has already accomplished a great deal in a very short period of time I should be extremely loath to see him depart so soon particularly as there would inevitably be considerable delay before some one could arrive here to replace him. As you are doubtless aware my small staff and I are so overwhelmed that it

DECLASSIFIED  
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72  
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 21 1972

War Refugee Board

2 - War Refugee Board  
pdf (Mr. Pehle)  
extension

CONTROL COPY

CURS  
PROTECTS AND DOCUMENTS  
FILE

Administrative Matters: Personnel

-2- #393, March 7, 4 p.m. from Ankara  
that it is essential there be at least one individual  
on my staff to devote his entire time to refugee  
matters. In view of the foregoing, I would appreciate  
it very much if you could see your way clear to  
communicating with Schoff telephonically in an endeavor  
to persuade him to telegraph to Hirschmann immediately  
granting the requested extension of his leave of  
absence.

STEINHARDT

WFS

War Refugee Board (m. +)

2 - War Refugee Bd (m. Pella) for information only

CONTROL COPY

MFC-11 This telegram must be paraphrased before being communicated to anyone other than a Governmental agency (BR)

Ankara Dated February 25, 1944 Rec'd 1:38 p.m. 25th

Secretary of State, Washington.

335

February 25, 4 p.m.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE DIVISION OF FEB 27 1944 COMMUNICATIONS AND RECORDS

File

PRO IRL PERSONNEL FOR WORTENSE HIRSCHMANN

East 85th Street, New York City:

Essential that I remain here four to six weeks longer to complete rescue work. It would be highly irresponsible ~~and~~ <sup>to leave in the midst of</sup> accomplishment. I have cabled for extension of leave. Miss you Peter fearfully no word from you. Please cable. Call Alvin. LOVE.

STEINBERG

IC - 029  
This telegram must be  
paraphrased before being  
communicated to anyone  
other than a Governmental  
agency. (BR)

Ankara

Dated February 24, 1944

Rec'd 1:11 p.m., 25th.

*Wm Refugee  
Board Inc.  
Schle for  
info only*

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

331, February 24, 9 p.m.

FROM IRA HIRSCHMANN FOR JAMES SCHOFF PRESIDENT  
BLOOMINGDALE BROTHERS LEXINGTON AVENUE AND 59th STREET  
NEW YORK CITY

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
DIVISION OF  
FEB 29 1944  
COMMUNICATIONS  
AND RECORDS

My trip to Istanbul deferred due to urgent duties  
in Ankara the capital. I am deep in work with Ambassador  
Steinhardt and negotiations with representatives of  
foreign governments here trying to secure the release  
of many innocent destitute children in satellite  
countries. I am hopeful of obtaining keys to the immediate  
situation relating to opening the doors from Bulgaria  
and Rumania also securing a ship to transport these  
children to safety. I trust you will agree with me  
that it is our humanitarian duty to probe all avenues  
in the attempt to complete these two tasks which are  
only a part

*WRE  
PROTECT  
FILE*

JAN 28 1944

PROTECTIVE FILE

Dear General George: regarding a delay which out of Miami

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Dep  
to  
and  
are  
in  
Bo  
an

-2-#331, February 24, 9 p.m. from Ankara.

only a part of a deplorable and heart-rending complex situation.

Would it be possible for you to grant me a further leave of absence from four to six weeks? Ambassador Steinhardt promises to exert efforts to secure prompt air passage for my return. If you feel that my responsibility to the company must come first and that I should return at once I shall of course do so. I should be grateful for an early reply since a great responsibility involving human life is concerned.

Warm appreciation and regards to you Rothschild Schaap and all.

STEINHARDT.

WSB

JAN 28 1944

Dear General George:

I am most concerned regarding a delay which has arisen in moving Ira Hirschmann out of Miami under travel arrangements set up by the Air Transport Command through the request of the State Department. Mr. Hirschmann is on his way to Turkey to see what can be done on the evacuation of Jews and other persecuted groups from German-occupied areas. His presence in Turkey will be most helpful in the urgent task of the President's War Refugee Board on which I serve with the Secretary of War and the Secretary of State.

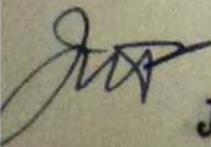
It is my understanding that Mr. Hirschmann was given a Priority 3 rating for the travel to Turkey. Will you please see what can be done to expedite his departure, by moving him into a higher priority classification, or otherwise.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) H. Morgenthau, Jr.

Secretary of the Treasury.

Maj. Gen. Harold L. George,  
Commanding General,  
Air Transport Command,  
War Department.

 JW Pehle:lh 1/28/44

Memorandum re Ira Hirschmann

January 28, 1944

Mr. Hirschmann is Vice President in charge of advertising at Bloomingdale's department store, and is presently on leave for six to eight weeks. He appears to have a very high personal reputation and is regarded as a brilliant executive. He is in his early forties and appears to be a forceful, vigorous and able person. He has been interested in civic activities and is a member of the Board of Higher Education of the City of New York. He was active in LaGuardia's first campaign for mayor of New York. He is a patron of the arts, particularly music, and founded the Friends of Music in New York. His wife is Helen Monath, noted pianist.

He has never been very active in Jewish organizations or Jewish affairs as such, but he has been intensely interested in the problem of saving the lives of the Jews of Europe and served for some time as vice president of the Emergency Committee to Save the Jews of Europe. However, he recently severed connections with this Committee.

Hirschmann has had the following experience in government service. In 1938, he was sent to the Evian Conference as an observer for this government and traveled on a diplomatic passport. There he met many of the people who are now connected with the Intergovernmental Committee, particularly Lord Winterton who is the British representative on the Executive Committee and who Hirschmann feels is thoroughly ineffective. After listening to days of discussion and exploration and realizing that nothing concrete and effective would result from the meeting, Hirschmann went to Austria and, in cooperation with friends there, he arranged for several hundred refugees to leave the country. A lengthy report was made by Hirschmann on his observations at the Conference. His most recent government service was as special assistant to William Davis of the War Labor Board when he worked on the Little Steel formula.

He has never been in Turkey before but has spent a great deal of time in Western and central Europe.

F. Hodel



Miss Morris Bell's office, called.

Miss Morris has talked to the office in charge of operations in the War Dept. They did not say they would raise Hirschmann's priority to 2. I will see that he gets out of the office and that he gets all the things he needs out for him and see that we do not delay further. Miss Morris also said that the Secretary would not worry because they have been

**MR. IRA HIRSCHMANN  
FLORIDIAN HOTEL  
MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA**

1/26/44

**RETEL TODAY EVERY EFFORT BEING MADE TO EXPEDITE YOUR DEPARTURE. IF YOU HAVE NOT LEFT BY FRIDAY MORNING PLEASE CALL ME AT THE TREASURY**

(s) *J. W. Pehle*  
**J. W. Pehle**  
Assistant to the Secretary

*Handwritten notes:*  
Hirschmann's priority  
check of his things  
for him

IT IS WRONG  
ALONG LINE  
USE SINGLE

*P\**

Miss Morris, in Charles Bell's office, called.

Re: Ira Hirschmann:

Miss Morris has talked to the office in charge of priorities in the War Dept. They did not say that they would raise Hirschmann's priority to 2 -- priority 2 is reserved for combat personnell-- but they did say that they will see that he gets out of Miami in a very short time and that he gets all the way through. They will look out for him and see that he is not delayed further. Miss Morris also said that the Secretary need not worry because they have been assured that War will move Hirschmann out quickly and that he will not be held up further.

*Do it, H.*

Hatchway Watson  
copy of the transcript  
for sure

IS IS  
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NOTES FILE

RECEIVED  
FOREIGN FUNDS CONTROL  
TREASURY

1944 JAN 26 AM 9 34

*J.W. Pehle*

*Do it,  
H.M. Jr.*

K2 NL VIA WU

MA MIAMIBEACH FLO JAN 25 44

JOHN PEHLE

TRESURY DEPT OF US

7103-875X-91

PUT OFF PLANE HERE CHARMING FOR VACATION BUT THIS IS WRONG  
YEAR AM TOLD MY THREE PRIORITY WILL DELAY ME ALL ALONG LINE  
PLEASE HELP GET ME THERE PRONTO SO WE MAY NOT LOSE SINGLE  
HOUR IN EMERGENCY NOW AT FLORIDIAN HOTEL THANKS

IRA HIRSCHMANN ✓

JAN 26 918A

*Capt. Woods  
War 74137*

*Min*

MEMORANDUM FOR THE FILES

January 24, 1944.

At the suggestion of Oscar Cox, Ira Hirschmann called today to discuss his coming trip to Turkey with Messrs. Pehle, Luxford, DuBois, Lesser, Friedman, and Miss Hodel. Mr. Hirschmann is making the trip as a private citizen for the purpose of studying the problem of evacuating Jews into Turkey and to put into effect immediately necessary operations involved in such a program. While Mr. Hirschmann has received the permission of the State Department to make the trip, he was unable to obtain a diplomatic passport. He stated that the trip was suggested by Ambassador Steinhardt who invited him to come to Turkey to see what could be done. The trip is not sponsored by any private organizations, though it is made with the understanding that, if action can be taken and money is needed, the JDC will be willing to supply the necessary funds.

Mr. Hirschmann feels that his trip would be considerably more effective if he could be clothed with some authority to act on behalf of the Government or some government agency. With this in mind, Mr. Cox suggested that he see Mr. Pehle, feeling that some authority could be given Hirschmann to act for the War Refugee Board. It was clearly stated to Mr. Hirschmann that the Board has not yet met, that no Executive Director has been appointed, and that no one had any authority to act for the Board at this point. However, it was suggested to Mr. Hirschmann that the Board would undoubtedly be interested in getting any information he might obtain concerning possible evacuations and the various obstacles thereto and that such information might be cabled to the Executive Director of the War Refugee Board.

F. Hodel

NOTES AND DOCUMENTS  
FILE

ADMINISTRATIVE