

Joel Brandt Proposal

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THE FOREIGN SERVICE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

AMERICAN EMBASSY

Ankara - July 3, 1944.

Dear Mr. Pehle:

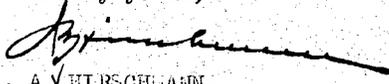
In pursuance of instructions from Ambassador Steinhardt, on June 21st I left Ankara for Cairo for the express purpose of interviewing Joel Brandt following the instructions you gave me in Washington.

Enclosed is the report which I submitted to Ambassador Steinhardt upon my return from Cairo to Ankara on June 25th.

At that time I was informed by Ambassador Steinhardt of the Department's telegram No. 557, of June 21st, to take no further action in the matter pending further instructions. We are taking no further steps whatever in this matter unless and until we receive further instructions from you. May I add that I consider it of utmost importance that Brandt be returned to Hungary without delay.

With kind personal regards,

Cordially yours,


I. A. HIRSCHMANN,
Special Attache.

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

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State Dept. Letter, 1-11-73
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 27 1972

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Executive Director,
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Treasury Building,
Washington, D.C.

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Cairo, June 24, 1944.

Dear Mr. Ambassador,

The attached memorandum was dictated "piece-meal" as developments and conferences ensued in Cairo under the pressure of time and ~~18~~ degrees temperature. On reading the typed draft I am inclined to the opinion that it somewhat reflects the above-mentioned conditions. At the same time it fairly completely reflects the observations and views obtained from these explorations in Cairo which are believed by me to have been most useful.

Not referred to herein are telegrams which I am informed were despatched by (a) Lord Moyne to London covering the subject of our discussions. These telegrams were not shown to me but referred to in discussions. (b) Telegram from Mr. Tuck to the Department, a paraphrase of which is attached. I recommended that the latter should not be sent but I was overruled. Mr. Tuck requested of me a copy of the Interrogation of Joel Brand by me which I handed to him.

It occurs to me that en route from Cairo you may consider it desirable to confer with Lord Moyne on this matter.

Cordially yours,



I. A. Hirschmann
Special Attache

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MEMORANDUM TO AMBASSADOR STEINHARDT

Date: June 22, 1944.

Subject: Interview with Joel Brand, Observations
and Recommendations.

Acting under your instructions I arrived in Cairo on Wednesday, June 21, 1944, at approximately 5:00 p.m. and repaired at once to the American Legation. When I requested an audience with Minister Tuck I was informed by his secretary that Mr. Doolittle, First Secretary of Legation, had been working during the day on the matter which had brought me from Ankara. Upon presenting the letter from you to Minister Tuck a conference was arranged between the Minister, Mr. Doolittle and myself.

The Minister introduced the subject by asserting that Lord Moyne, British Minister Resident in the Middle East, had conferred that day with him on the subject under discussion and that Lord Moyne was acting under instructions from London on the highest levels. He emphasized that any decisions that were to be taken would be centralized by both the British and American Governments in London and that I was being requested by the British Government to proceed at once from Cairo to London.

Here I demurred, asserting that I had instructions from the War Refugee Board, Washington and my superior officer in Turkey, Ambassador Steinhardt to interview Joel Brand at the earliest possible moment and that I had been despatched to Cairo with the express understanding

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that I would be able to do so. I also stated that I could not accede to the request of the British Government to direct me to proceed thousands of miles to London to interview Brand when Brand was in Cairo at this moment, and the fact that I had come to Cairo for the express purpose of seeing him here.

I informed Mr. Tuck that the British Minister to Turkey, Mr. St. Bennett, had requested me to communicate with a Mr. Hamilton at the Office of the Minister of State. Mr. Doolittle informed us that he had been in communication with Mr. Hamilton that day.

At the conclusion of our conference it was agreed that Mr. Doolittle would impress upon Mr. Hamilton on the following day the necessity of my interview with Joel Brand in Cairo after which I was to return to Ankara to submit my report to Ambassador Steinhardt. Mr. Tuck concluded the conference by stating that it was difficult to move the British once they had developed a program of strategy.

In the meanwhile Mr. Doolittle informed me of the fact that Mr. Joseph Schwartz of the JDC had arrived from Algiers to Cairo and that Schwartz had also requested an interview with Joel Brand, Schwartz having been unaware of my presence in Cairo for that purpose.

At ten o'clock on Thursday, June 22nd, Mr. Doolittle invited me to meet with Joseph Schwartz in the former's office. After disclosing my instructions on the subject of Joel Brand, Schwartz agreed to withdraw from active participation in the matter
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at this time. In Schwartz's presence Mr. Doolittle informed me that he had discussed the matter with Lord Moyne by telephone that morning and ~~thereafter~~ that it was agreed that I was to visit with Lord Moyne at twelve noon, after which arrangements would be made by the British for me to interview Joel Brand.

At the meeting with Lord Moyne there were present, in addition to Lord Moyne, Brigadier R.J. Maunsell, Sir William Croft, First Assistant to Lord Moyne, John Hamilton, Assistant Minister Resident, Mr. Doolittle and myself. Lord Moyne informed me that Shertok had requested of the British Government that he be permitted to proceed at once to London on the subject at hand and Lord Moyne suggested that I prepare to accompany Shertok in order to have the discussions, and possible decisions, centralized in London. I emphasized that I could not make any decision regarding my movements until I had (a) talked with Brand, (b) reported the results of my interview with Brand to Ambassador Steinhardt in Ankara and (c) received instructions for my next steps from Ambassador Steinhardt through Washington.

At the outset of this conference I referred to the interest which was being taken in this matter on the highest level in Washington. I referred to the active interest of Under Secretary of State Stettinius, the interest disclosed by President Roosevelt and the active exploratory efforts towards which I was directed by Ambassador Steinhardt. At the suggestion of Mr.

Doolittle

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Doolittle I took the occasion to show the letter of President Roosevelt addressed to me to Lord Moyne. I indicated that the War Refugee Board and Ambassador Steinhardt were intent in their desire to explore all the facts with a view to (a) determining the authority from which the offer emanated, (b) possibly "keeping the door open," (c) the remote possibility of saving lives in accordance with the American and British established policy, and (d) the possibility of determining information that might be otherwise helpful. I referred also to the need of keeping the Russians informed.

Lord Moyne asserted that the next steps connected with this proposal could only be taken in London and that the moves would be out of his jurisdiction. He referred to the implications from Brand's interviews conducted by the British Intelligence. He and his associates were clear in indicating that they did not credit Brand with any unworthy motives although there were some slight discrepancies in his stories which they were inclined to believe had sprung from nervousness and apprehension. When the subject of Gross was introduced I maintained that this man was in a different category and that we were not interested in him except for possible additional disclosures which might relate either to our efforts in behalf of refugees or revelations which might be of value in other aspects of our explorations.

Brigadier Maunsell, who is in charge of Intelligence, questioned me on this point and wanted to know what

other

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other explorations we had in mind. I referred to the possibilities of other implications in the visit of Brand which might arise from his disclosures and which of course the British Intelligence would be able to ferret out.

It was agreed (1) that I was to meet first with Brigadier Maunsell to be briefed on the background of the British Intelligence investigations to date and the operations of the Gestapo, (2) that I was to meet in a private home by arrangement of Brigadier Maunsell with Mr. Brand, Major Martin Forrest and a stenographer (I suggested the desirability of a transcript), and (3) that I was to meet with Lord Moyne on Friday, June 23 at 11 a.m., (4) I was to return to Ankara to report to Ambassador Steinhardt on June 25.

In view of the emphasis which I had put on the need for returning Brand to Hungary at the first possible moment it was suggested as an alternative that a message could be sent at once through BARKAS in Istanbul to the Hungarians and the Germans referring to "the consideration which is being given the matter." It was determined that this would be decided after my meeting with Brand in the afternoon. Lord Moyne reiterated his fear of the dangers involved in the Germans exposing and exploiting the "offer" and announcing that the Allies had flatly refused by silence and delay. I replied that I thought that we would have to take this chance now until our conclusions had been reached and cleared through Ambassador Steinhardt and London.

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At 4:00 p.m. I met Mr. Brand at the private apartment at which there were also present Major Martin Forrest, a British agent whose name was not disclosed as well as Brigadier Maunsell's secretary, Miss Read. Attached as Exhibit A is a fairly verbatim report of the interview. After the interview tea was served and Brand disclosed the following which was not reported in the attached notes:

Brand stated that it was of interest and ironical that the representatives of the Jewish organizations who had been dealing illegally with the Germans had now been asked to act in an official capacity by the Germans; that apparently the Germans respected those who resisted or took action against them.

In reply to my question to Brand: "Did you see any evidence on the part of the German leaders that they were becoming fearful or desperate?" Brand replied: "Yes, decidedly, I see it in their talk and protestations; in the fact that a high German officer tells to the Jew, Brand, 'We need things--go and get them.'" This, Brand said, appeared to him to be a great confession of weakness.

Brand asserted that Eichman represents the "top"; that Eichman has the rank of Minister representing the Government for activities against the Jews. Brand also asserted that

Hitler's

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Hitler's special representatives had been present at one of the four conferences. They were Wesenmeyer and Winckelman. (The British Intelligence Officer confirmed that these men were Hitler's top representatives.) Brand further asserted that the German Minister for Foreign Affairs was not interested in this activity but that the German military and SS all the way up to the head "are in this thing." Brand stated that Wislezein is next to Himmler.

Observations and Recommendations:

Brand impressed me as honest, clear, incisive, blunt and completely frank. In my talk with him, which occupied over an hour's time, I could find no shadow of evidence to support the reservations contained in the report of Mr. Rueben B. Resnik to Ambassador Steinhardt of June 5th which asserted "I had the impression that he was not sincere and straightforward as other observers thought him to be." My impressions were distinctly the reverse. I do not wish to labor this point except that I believe it to be of utmost importance in evaluating the veracity and informative nature of Brand's disclosures.

In spite of the pressure of the British Intelligence's questioning under which he was operating during the last ten days (the questioning ensued some days for ten hours) he was open, clear, affirmative and high minded. His concern with his own family, his relatives and the possibility of reprisals for others, were he

not

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not to be able to return, was genuine and moving, in my opinion. In short, Brand's disclosures are to be accepted in my view as truthful, without reservations.

On the above premises I am of the opinion that we can offer a number of conclusions and possibilities:

(1) The proposals were made as a result of four separate interviews by Brand with Eichman and the latter's collaborators. They cannot be considered in the realm of fantasy. They are serious, and we must probe for the point of view on which to explore further. (2) In at least one of the conversations with Eichman there appeared two representatives of the Nazi SS who are said and believed by the British Intelligence to be "high up". It seems that the proposals have the sanction of Nazi officials from somewhere near the top level. (3) Brand's statement that the proposal connected with ten thousand lorries and other commodities was mentioned in an off-hand way and in effect "pulled out of the hat" by one of the German officers is a clear indication that this is not concrete or to be taken seriously. Immunity or some reference to immunity may be considered seriously as a bargaining point. (4) Brand's explanation of the Nazi's recommendation to send the refugees through Spain seems to justify the contentions already established in other quarters that the Nazis, for various reasons, wish to discourage additions to the population of Palestine and do not wish to offend the Arabs. There may be other reasons for this suggestion regarding Spain as the proposed refuge, which may have military and political connotations which are self evident. (5) Brand's strong conviction that something tangible could result from
a skillful

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a skillful manoeuvre in this situation, impressed me.

Conjectures from the above:

A. A clique is making a bold and desperate attempt to secure large sums of money for itself or to save their skins; or possibly to pull a deal which would impress the top Nazi officials.

B. Under political warfare it may be a device to separate the three Allied Governments and create a misunderstanding between them.

C. It is remotely possible that the proposals have the sanction of some top authorities who were of the opinion that they might succeed in receiving the money, lorries, commodities, et cetera.

D. It is a bold effort to embarrass the Allies by publishing to the world the fact that a bona fide offer had been made through a representative and responsible Jew and had been postponed and finally denied.

E. On the positive side it is possible that some kind of deal might be executed, if the matter is pursued without delay. Brand indicated rather strongly such a possibility and it was my impression that he would not have left on so perilous a mission unless he could see a door which was open even though it may be a small aperture.

F. It is not outside the realm of possibility that the Nazi rulers really believe their own propaganda and have considered the Jews a soft spot in the armor of the Allies through whom they could engage the Allies in discussions that begin with the refugee subject and lead to proposals of peace. Lord Moyne does not reject this latter.

Recommendations

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Recommendations

1. I respectfully suggested to Lord Moyne in my second conference today, June 23, at 11:00 a.m. that a message be transmitted at once which would reach the Hungarians and the Germans. To this he responded that a message had already been drafted and was being sent to BARLAS in Istanbul. I approved the despatch of the attached Exhibit B. I further suggested that Brand, for his peace of mind and for constructive purposes in the keeping up of his morale, be informed immediately that a message had been sent through BARLAS.
2. Lord Moyne in his conversation with me referred to Anthony Eden, the British Foreign Minister's alleged interest in "keeping the door open in this situation". It is indicated that the British will collaborate in pursuing this "open door policy". This should be exploited.
3. That Brand be retained in Cairo. There was some question in the British circles of sending Brand to London. I pressed Lord Moyne and he agreed that Brand was to remain in Cairo. Obviously the nearer he is to Hungary and his eventual destination, the better.
4. That Ambassador Steinhardt invite instructions from Washington with regard to the American representative to be despatched to London to confer with authorities along with Shertok who has been given permission and high priority to proceed to London June 25 arriving on Wednesday June 28.
5. That Brand be given careful verbal instructions to take back to Hungary at the first possible moment, indicating that consideration is being given the proposals in connection with money and possible immunity; if the
Germans

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Germans, as Brand indicated, were prepared to make the first steps in releasing minorities and Jews this would be received by the Allies as an earnest ~~gesture~~ of their good will and could lead to more conclusive negotiations.

6. That no efforts be made on our part with regard to interrogating Georgy (Gross). He is in a different category, an agent with a perfidious record. He should be kept outside this situation, as the introduction of his testimony or activities can serve no useful purpose.

7. Plans should be considered for a possible meeting between the Nazi representatives and British and Americans at some neutral point as soon as desirable. Brand should attend this meeting.

8. The suggestion made by Ben Gurion and Shertok to the Palestine High Commissioner, which was transmitted to London by the latter, suggesting a committee of the Inter Governmental Committee, the International Red Cross and other organizations to sit with German representatives contains dangerous features. I informed Shertok and Lord Moyne that nothing expeditious could come of such a large scale organizational group meeting and suggested that any such conversations should be held in the strictest confidence by highly authorized Governmental representatives in a small circle. Lord Moyne concurred.

9. In this connection it is of utmost importance to avoid the disclosure of any of these negotiations, as publicity would explode the entire matter and result in a boomerang effect. I am informed by Mr. Hamilton

that

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Enclosures:

- 1- Exhibit A: Text of Interview between Mr. I.A. Hirschmann and Mr. Joel Brandt.
- 2- Exhibit B: Telegram from Shertok to BARKAS.
- 3- Exhibit C: Memorandum concerning telegram from the High Commissioner of Palestine to London.
- 4- Exhibit D: Copies of telegrams left with Mr. I.A. Hirschmann by Shertok:
 - (1) Shertok to N. Goldmann.
 - (2) Shertok to Dr. Weizman.
 - (3) Shertok to Russell.

ADDENDUM

Upon returning to the Legation on Saturday, June 24 following the return of the plane en route from Cairo to Adana due to mechanical difficulties I was handed your telegram of June 22. Mr. Doolittle suggested that we transmit the information contained therein to the British which was done through Mr. Kirk of the British Intelligence. It was suggested that efforts be made to question Brand regarding Shroder, whose name was not mentioned in Brand's interview with me but who was mentioned by Brand frequently in testimony to the British Intelligence.

Mr. Hamilton visited Mr. Doolittle and me at the Legation at 5:00 p.m. He requested that in view of my enforced incarceration in Cairo and the new possible developments contained in your telegram from BARIAS of June 22 that Lord Moyne desired a further conference to which I assented.

I met with Lord Moyne at his office at 5:45 p.m. Also in attendance were Mr. Hamilton, Colonel Kirk and Sir William Croft. Lord Moyne informed me that he had received a telegram from London authorizing the telegram from Shertok to BARIAS, Exhibit B. The situation was then explored further in view of the above-mentioned telegram from BARIAS. Shroder's real name, it appears, is Lauffer. Lauffer is apparently the leading Gestapo agent in Hungary. I reiterated my view that if it was agreed to send Brand to Hungary it should be done without unnecessary delay and that Brand be despatched with coached information in which

he would

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he would (a) explain that no munitions or material can be considered as part of any discussions, (b) promise nothing, (c) ask the Nazis to make the first step in ceasing persecutions and deportations, (d) following the above he could return and suggest discussions concerning money or immunity.

To this Lord Moyne replied that he was strongly of the opinion that the British Government would not consent to the offer of money. I emphasized that such money would be put in a block account and not be used in connection with the war but for individuals. On this point he was somewhat open-minded.

Lord Moyne requested if he might impart my views above stated telegraphically to London. Whereupon I requested that he would not do so as they represented only my personal views and not the Ambassador's nor the Government's. I agreed to recommend to Ambassador Steinhardt that the British Ambassador in Ankara be informed of our recommendations to be transmitted to Lord Moyne.

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Exhibit "A"

INTERROGATION OF MR. JOEL BRANDT BY MR. IRA HIRSCHMAN.

22 June 44

- H. I understand you speak English.
- B. Not very well.
- H. I am delighted to have the opportunity of speaking to you, because I hope that I can be helpful to you - as you know I come from America.
- B. Yes, I heard that just now.
- H. My only reason for being here is to try to be helpful in the refugee situation - you understand.
- B. You are not Mr. HIRSCHMAN are you.
- H. No - I wanted to talk with you to see if there was not some way that we could be helpful.
- B. If there was something you could do for me I should be very pleased.
- H. Because you have had rather a difficult time -
- B. I have had a very difficult time; everyone has been very polite but it is as though I have been put in a prison - but I can understand it is necessary to keep me away from other people - I can quite understand it.
- H. My impression is that you have nothing to fear - you have done a great deal of very valuable philanthropic work in Hungary for many years.
- B. I have done what it was possible to do.
- H. You have a reputation for being very helpful.
- B. I have done what I could do - it was not easy.
- H. I am sure it was not easy and it is to your credit that you are interested in doing such things. Are conditions in Hungary very bad?
- B. Very bad, yes very bad.
- H. Could you tell me something about them.
- B. Well, what has been done in Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland in years has been done in Hungary in a few weeks' time - it all came about very quickly, all the laws and oppressions against the Jews came in Hungary in a very short time.
- H. Are the women and children being persecuted as well as the men.
- B. No difference between women and children and men - though children under six years do not have to wear the Ghetto star.
- H. Why did you leave Hungary?
- B. Because I had been sent to come and try to make -
- H. Who sent you.

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- B. Two different sources sent me, on the one side the Germans to make a bargain, and on the other side the Jews selected me to be their emissary.
- H. It seems that the Germans made arrangements with the Jewish leaders -
- B. I was taken on first by the Jewish leaders, who had debates with the Germans that I should keep up the contact between the official German authorities and the Jewish representatives, and if it came out that somebody should be allowed to go and try to come to some arrangement about the persecution of Jews, I should be picked by the Jews as the person to go.
- H. What were the names of the Jewish representatives?
- B. STERN, Philip von FREUDIGER - President of the orthodox Jews - KOMOLY.
- H. You had been active in these organisations for a number of years - with the Zionist movement?
- B. Yes, I was active in the Zionist movement for many years and I have been active in general Jewish charities.
- H. You were a business man?
- B. Yes.
- H. The Germans also picked you-
- B. Yes, because I had been the negotiating link between -
- H. Did you know many of these German leaders?
- B. No-- I did know some of them by name, but I did not know them well.
- H. Who are the German leaders?
- B. EICHMANN, who is in Hungary now - he marched in with the German troops.
- H. Who are some of the other leaders?
- B. KLAGES, KRUMEY, Willi von WISLIZENI. WISLIZENI started to make some negotiations with our friends -
- H. What friends?
- B. Our Jewish friends - about a year ago.
- H. What kind of negotiations?
- B. The same kind as the one I have been doing now, for the Jews in Bratislava. I spoke about these negotiations - I tried this already about a year ago.
- H. Didn't you see any danger in dealing with these people?
- B. I did, but there was no other way outside the illegal way which we were already doing to try to help these people.
- H. So you decided to try.
- B. I did, yes.

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- H. What kind of relations did you have with EICHNER and his party?
- B. EICHMANN - I spoke to him in his office, I went at his invitation - or rather at his order!
- H. Who suggested this idea that you should come here - where was it suggested?
- B. EICHMANN called me, that was the first time I was speaking to him and there he suggested that I should go and he would give an offer -
- H. Who suggested the idea of the offer?
- B. The idea of making some arrangement with the Germans - we tried to do the same type of thing - EICHNER did - about a year ago.
- H. What kind of offer was that - money?
- B. Money. We only offered money.
- H. What kind of offer did you bring from EICHMANN - a written offer?
- B. I did not have a clear offer - he only told me some kinds of goods and money which I should bring. He told me that he would be willing to set the Jews free.
- H. Was there any specific offer.
- B. Nothing specific. He did not specify that I should bring any money.
- H. How would you know what to say?
- B. He said I would find out for myself - he did not want to commit himself.
- H. Did he commit himself on things or money?
- B. Both.
- H. What did he suggest to you that he wanted?
- B. The main thing was trucks.
- H. How many?
- B. He once said ten thousand, but -
- H. What else?
- B. He only spoke about trucks. Another gentleman, I did not know his name, who was present - I believe his name was BEISMEYER (?), said once I should ask also for coffee, chocolate and tea and soap. And EICHMANN once mentioned money - dollars, Swiss francs and some South American money.
- H. You felt that you had some kind of basis for an offer to discuss in Istanbul.
- B. Yes, I had for this reason some basis, because a year ago they had already fixed this up on a basis of two million

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dollars. When I started the negotiations I did not speak with EICHMANN, I spoke with WISLIZENI and I also suggested that this old offer should be accepted now.

H. What was the old offer -

In Slovakia, Bratislava - we had the same difficulties as we have now. The offer was two million dollars for stopping deportation and punishment for those Jews who are still living in Czechoslovakia and Poland. For my part negotiations were different. No deportation, no concentration and allowing to come to Palestine - and no shooting.

H. What happened to the original negotiations?

B. They were accepted on paper but not carried through - neither from them nor from us. For our part because we did not pay - we did not get any amount which we could pay. In Slovakia there are only sixty or eighty thousand Jews, in Hungary there are one million Jews; we wanted to make negotiations not only for the Hungarian Jews, we wanted to make negotiations for all Jews. The original negotiation was only from Slovakia. WISLIZENI -

H. He now wanted to make a plan for all the Jews?

B. Yes, not only the Hungarian Jews.

H. Where did you expect to get this money or these trucks?

B. The trucks I did not know I would be able to get, but I thought I must try and get them from the English and American governments. The money I thought I would be able to get from Jewish organisations.

H. How much money did you have in mind?

B. I thought that I could get about one million dollars, in payment, not with me but to my credit, somewhere, and that I should be able to open negotiations and it would not be necessary for me to go back with money or with goods because I had the promise from EICHMANN that it would be all right if the offer was accepted and I could make some bargain with them; he agreed before I went away that he would make the first move, that he would let out at first a certain number, ten, twenty, fifty thousand Jews, and for this reason alone it would have been a great thing -

H. That gave you confidence. Did you have confidence in his word?

B. When he is making the first move -

H. Did you have confidence that he would keep his word with you?

B. I did not have the right to question my own conscience. There is no other way besides legal means in which we can help - we cannot wait for that invasion of Budapest -

H. Then it was a matter of conscience with you, not a matter of confidence - is that correct?

B. No - there is only one chance, perhaps it is no good, but there is no other chance.

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- H. What is your opinion of the chances of this working?
- B. My opinion is that they would keep their word.
- H. Why?
- B. First of all because they need things -
- H. How do you know?
- B. When I left Hungary, I know that they were needing all kinds of things.
- H. Things or money.
- B. At first I thought, I know they need things. I know from years of work that everyone of them can be bought. I know this from years of work - I am not saying that I have bought EICHMANN or WISLIZENI. In my work very many of them have been bought and I do believe that criminals of such a low sort as these men are always receptive to offers of money. It is natural that people who do such terrible things will not have clean hands where money is concerned either.
- H. You refer to some of these people having been bought before - in what connection?
- B. Not these people particularly, but German officials, SS and Nazi officials. We had our main work before the Germans came in - bringing men from Poland and from other countries illegally to Hungary.
- H. I would like your opinion Mr. BRANDT on what you think will happen to this money if such money were available - I do not know if it in fact would be, I do not know anything about it - but supposing something should happen and money were available.
- B. Believing that it is done on a very large scale, somebody must go to some official places, I am certain many men will be there who will settle personally and make it their own business.
- H. Do you mean high-up sources?
- B. I have the opinion that there are very many different cliques within the Nazi movement and that there are certain circles who want to make money or more business for themselves or their circle and that they will not get punished or anything like that. I can imagine them saying quite brutally, well you have had eight million Jews, we have killed more than six million, we will give you the rest if you do not punish us for killing the others.
- H. How did Mr. GIORGY come into this matter?
- B. Mr. GROSS is his real name. He brought letters from our friends in Istanbul and from us for a year and a half - two years about - that is where I met him. I knew him to be an official of the Hungarian General Staff at the time when the Hungarians' politics were considered to be fairly favourable to the Allies. Though I think he went over to the Germans he had nothing to do with this except that he came with me.

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- H. I wonder how you and he got together.
- B. He was bringing letters from Turkey for us for the last year and a half.
- H. Who was he working for really?
- B. I do not understand you - he was working for money.
- H. Are you associated with him this affair of yours?
- B. He has nothing to do with this affair - he says there is some other reason why he has come here, at least I wanted to assume it this way. It is possible that the Germans have sent him for this reason too- but not to my knowledge. He was not sent by the Jews.
- H. He was not working in collaboration with you in this matter?
- B. No. He had nothing to do with my mission, and I had nothing to do with his.
- H. It seems that GIORGY said that you had a paper to show with an actual offer. What is this paper, where is it?
- B. The paper is with me.
- H. No - did you leave it in Istanbul?
- B. What kind of paper - to bring back or did I bring it here- it is not true. I only remember a list of goods which they are needing. I did not bring a written offer for you from them. I remember a list of things they are needing -
- H. Who wrote this paper?
- B. I got it from Mr. SCHROEDER.
- H. Where is it?
- B. When I reached Istanbul I gave it in the first instance to Mr. BARLAS - he has it. It is not an important thing- only a list of things.
- H. I know - I only mentioned it offhand. What do you expect to happen now?
- B. Nothing good. I am very much afraid of it.
- H. Aren't you optimistic?
- B. I have had to leave my wife and family - I am very much afraid - it is not easy to talk about the things they are capable of doing - the Germans. They are my kids and my wife and my mother and I am getting a little nervous -
- H. What is making you nervous -
- B. I cannot speak about these things.
- H. You mean that if this does not work out -
- B. Yes, it is already more than five weeks since I left Germany.
- H. Did they say anything to you about when they expected you to return, the Germans?

000359

- B. No. They said I could take my time if I saw that I had possibilities of success.
- H. Then you should not be certain-
- B. You asked me ten minutes ago if I believed everything they said. I know that I have had no contact with my wife for three or four weeks and I know what they are capable of doing.
- H. You are afraid they will do something because you are delayed?
- B. Very much afraid that they will. They always take their revenge on others. I beg your pardon for getting nervous. I know what they are like. We had problems to solve. If we did steal one man away from a camp - if one man got away they would shoot ten or twenty or fifty. We had many discussions about it, whether we should try to stop getting men away. We decided that we should go on, because we knew that they were shooting and killing them anyway.
- H. Were the Germans definite in saying that they would release these people through Spain?
- B. Yes....there are things which I know through years of work, and other things which I am only guessing, and I believe that they want to do something legal. I think perhaps they want to do some big propaganda. To say that they wanted to set the Jews free and the Allies did not want it, and so there was no other way but for them to kill them off. Understand?
- H. Yes. Now what about Spain?
- B. That is one of the reasons. It is very hard to get people over to Germany when there is an invasion going on. The mass of the Jews have to go to Spain. That is one of the reasons why I say that they are making a bargain which it would be very hard for us to fulfill, and they will have in their propaganda one more reason for killing the Jews: "Well we wanted to give you this and you did not want to take it".
- H. They might do that anyhow.
- B. There is one other reason for Spain. That is that of the Arab question - they do not want to have the Arabs against them if they sent Jews to Palestine. They did mention that to me.
- H. Did they mention any connection with Spain?
- B. Not in connection with Spain but in connection with an argument against Palestine.
- H. How often did you see EICHMANN?
- B. I saw him four times in his office. The other officers I saw very many times.
- H. I have just one or two more questions. If you were in a position now to ask and to get what you wanted to make this a successful venture, what would you ask?

000360

- B. Nothing. I only ask permission to offer, not to give, and I would ask my Jewish authorities for money for the Jews in Hungary and in Poland to to help them there. But I would not ask anything much from the Germans. I would go back and ask EICHMANN, will you release, as you said once, a hundred men for one truck, send the first transport to Spain; then you would get these things. That would be logical.
- H. Do you think that you could get what you want with money and without any of these trucks or goods?
- B. I do not know. Perhaps I can -
- H. And that some suggestion of the possibility of this might secure immunity?
- B. Immunity I have got for myself.
- H. I do not want you to think that these things could be done, I have no reason to know about it - I do not want you to have any false hopes. What do you think would be the best thing to do?
- B. The best thing I think would be that one, two or three officers from Hungary should come to a neutral country, say Spain, or Turkey or Switzerland, and English and American people, and myself too, and we should try to come to some sort of bargain. That is my recommendation.
- H. You feel that if you went back with such a recommendation -
- B. I believe I could stop persecutions - the worst persecutions - that are going on at once.
- H. Are these persecutions still going on?
- B. I am sorry to say that they were going on.
- H. What number of people have been deported?
- B. Until the week I went away, the week I went away they started deporting about 12,000 every day.
- H. Where?
- B. Kaschau, Klausenburg, Munkacs, Hust.
- H. Were they in camps.
- B. They were concentrated in places in such terrible conditions that they have never been known before.
- H. What kind of transportation - trucks?
- B. No, railway lorries, 60 and 80 men in a lorry, the lorry sealed down.
- H. Did any die on the way?
- B. I am certain of it.
- H. Where were they taken to?
- B. Auschwitz and Birkenau.

000361

- H. What other Germans were implicated.
- B. Some of the highest representatives of the German military command as well as EICHMANN - the military and the SS are in this thing. WISLIZENI is a near relative of HIMMLER's.
- H. Is there any evidence of desparation amongst them?
- B. There is an indication of some change of attitude.
- H. Does persecution of other minorities go on besides the Jews?
- B. Yes - they have persecuted and have arrested all the Socialist leaders and little political leaders. The Socialist and the Liberals are feeling it as much as we are feeling it and being sent into concentration camps. They are not concentrating only on the Jews. Prisoners-of-war in Hungary who had run away from Germany - English, French prisoners-of-war have been treated pretty well. They have only to register and are allowed to live quite freely.
- H. If you were detained here for a long time - though I have no reason to think that you would be - what do you think would happen?
- B. I am afraid that in the first place my family will get persecuted in the most terrible way. Secondly my friends will get punished. Thirdly I fear that they will have executions and deportations. If for some reason or other I personally should not be allowed to be sent back, then at lease somebody else should be sent.
- H. You think it would be necessary to send someone, or could a message be sent?
- B. Perhaps a message on the radio or in a letter - it is terrible for me with my family there - they will take it that I have run away.
- H. Your family will?
- B. No, my family know - my wife knows pretty well what I am doing.

000362

EXHIBIT B

TO :- BARLAS ISTANBUL

FROM :- SHERTOK JERUSALEM

Am summoned to London on high Government priority (.) HIRSCHMANN
may follow (.) Meanwhile BRANDT is detained by British
authorities in MIDDLE EAST (.)

000363

NOTE.

E. Shertok

During his conversation with the High Commissioner for Palestine, subsequent to his interview with Brandt at Aleppo, Mr. Shertok, after reporting his talk, stressed the vital need to explore every avenue to help these Jews in Hungary. He thought that it was most important to arrange a meeting with German representatives, it being understood that political discussions were completely barred. He suggested that these discussions might take place on the Allied side thro' the head of the refugee organisation or the Red Cross authorities, or the U.S.A. War Refugee Board.

000364

Exhibit D
(2)

19.6.1944.

Following for Dr. Weizmann from Sartok

According text telegram from friends in Budapest transmitted by Istanbul unless Brandt and other person who accompanied him to Istanbul return to Hungary immediately everything will be lost. Both Brandt and other person are now in Cairo. We hold no brief for other person and must leave his fate to be decided by competent British authorities. But Brandt came as emissary remnant European Jewry who in interests its rescue accepted mission from enemies on clear understanding that he return with reply. Although realising that his return alone and with definite answer may cause his death immediately he is desperately anxious carry out bargain and return in hope that his report about delivery message and its consideration in high quarters will help gain time and prevent precipitation calamity. We consider his return most imperative if slightest chance rescue is to be preserved. We regard this as first indispensable step giving effect to line agreed by Mr. Eden of gaining time and not closing door. For same reason we consider it equally essential that some immediate indication be given to other side of readiness negotiate regarding rescue Jews urging same time immediate discontinuation deportations and slaughter pending meeting. Please do utmost regarding both matters also about my quickest return London as we all believe my first hand contact with Brandt will help clarify matters more than any telegraphic report. Cable.

000365

Exhibit D
(1)

Copy

19.6.1944

For Nahum Goldmann from Shertok

You have probably been informed by British Embassy of Nazi offer evacuate remnants European Jewry primarily from Hungary. Message was brought by Joel Brandt trusted Hungarian Zionist who was sent on Wehrmacht plane to Istanbul May 19th, view returning with reply within two three weeks. Ostensibly offer was exchange Jews for goods specified kinds quantities. Evacuees to proceed Spain. First substantial transport to be sent out without consideration on receipt favourable reply regarding whole scheme. Exchange conditions sounded fantastic but we decided explore. Informed immediately High Commissioner who reported fully London with request inform Washington and you. High Commissioner did everything help me proceed Turkey view interviewing Brandt. Visa difficulties delayed my departure. Eventually met Brandt Aleppo. Originally it was agreed by British authorities Istanbul Jerusalem that Brandt should return Turkey view proceeding thence Hungary but higher quarters ordered his transportation Cairo where he is detained. Our friends Budapest now informing Istanbul unless Brandt returns immediately everything will be lost. Executives conclusions after my report are that though exchange proposition may be mere eyewash and possibility ulterior motives must be assumed it is not improbable that even preliminary negotiations might result in salvation substantial number. We are informed Eden in conversation with Weizmann agreed policy should be gain time avoid other side getting impression Allies are slamming door refusing even consider matter. Whilst appreciating helpfulness this attitude we consider more is warranted. Have proposed steps should immediately be taken view exploring possibility meeting with German representatives say in Lisbon or Madrid to discuss rescue Jews urging same time immediate discontinuation deportations and slaughter pending meeting. Body appearing behalf Allies might be intergovernmental Refugee Committee or War Refugee Board or Redcross or any other suitable agency. Have also urged Brandts immediate return to report that message has been delivered is under active consideration. Also asked for urgent priority for me to fly London. Please act accordingly.

000366

E. L. (3)

C O P Y

15. 6. 1944

MR LINTON 77 Greatrussell London

208 Waited Aleppo four days for authority see friend who arrived
Wednesday 4/6 stop Interviewed him Sunday six hours found him
onehundred percent reliable was deeply impressed by his parity
character spirit selfsacrifice factual exactness soberness stop
Same conclusion active steps now imperative view exploring
possibility achieving practical results stop After interview
friend transported Cairo myself returned Jerusalem Tuesday night
reported Executive Wednesday saw High Commissioner with Ben Gurion
today stop High Commissioner cabling London we asked him for
transmission Weizmann list our evaluation and proposals including
first immediate facilities for my flying London second arrange-
ments for friends return home stop You will learn our main proposal
regarding line action from Colonial or Foreign stop High Commissioner
informed us regarding Charles interview stop Agreed line of keeping
door open makes friends return absolutely imperative please do utmost
your part expedite my journey stop Inform Nahum

Shertok

000367

(2)
copy letter

C O P Y

TELEGRAM SENT

To: Department of State

Date: June 22, 5 p.m. 1944

No. 1740

Charge: Legation

P A R A P H R A S E

MOST IMMEDIATE - US URGENT

REPEATED TO ANKARA.

Ira Hirschmann of War Refugee Board was presented today by the Legation to Lord Moyne, British Minister Resident through whom at the request of Steinhardt arrangements were made to interview Joel Brandt. In regard to the same matter Shertok of the Jewish Agency arrived Cairo today also en route London. Hirschmann acting on instructions from Steinhardt feels that it is essential to return to Ankara first in spite of Lord Moyne's suggestion that Hirschmann should also proceed to London, but he was willing to go there at a future date if necessary.

It was pointed out by Lord Moyne that London was place where complete coordination could be most quickly obtained as any decisions in this matter are for highest levels.

The twenty-fourth is the date arranged for Hirschmann's return to Ankara.

TUCK

HAD:lw

000368

ATWHER

Dealing with -
Human Intelligence - Corrupt - want to make money -
a no. have given up - taken over by themselves

Security People

Zecherchordinst (S.D.)

Partop
in time

Overseas Body -

to keep her informants
abroad -

overseas arm of Hummel -
have taken over AFVWA -

Party Body - fanatic -
anti-Soviet - also anti
Corrupt members -

Brandt has probably had dealings directly or ind.

R.I. Mansell, Brig.

Col. Kirk

Martin Farrell

Phone # 49600-9.4 /
Ext 348

49159

000369

28

000370

POINTS TO BE MADE TO THE BRITISH

1. Upon the basis of present information, we are inclined to agree with the British analysis of the Brandt proposal. We agree with procedure suggested in point 3 (b) of the Eden telegram - i.e. that Brandt should be permitted to return. We are also prepared to make a representation to the Germans through the Swiss government along the lines suggested by the British. We feel that the particular language suggested in the British cable might be construed as limiting unduly the number of Jews which the two governments would be prepared to receive under their protection. It is the view of this Government that the Swiss should advise the Germans that the United States and the United Kingdom governments will make arrangements for the reception from German occupied territory of all Jews who can be received consistently with military necessities. As presently worded, the proposed cable to the Swiss is subject to the interpretation, and perhaps would be so interpreted by the Germans, as merely an offer to consider any proposal to release the limited number of Jews for the reception of which in Palestine and elsewhere there are present commitments. This interpretation would under the present circumstances be highly unfortunate and it is assumed that such was not intended. It is suggested that the following language be substituted for the third and fourth sentences of the proposed cable to the Swiss:

"Such cooperation would it appears take the form of transferring Jews now in German controlled territory to the responsibility of other countries. The United Kingdom and United States Governments would be willing, with due regard to military necessities, to consider measures for the reception of all Jews permitted to leave areas under the control of Germany, and would be glad if the Swiss Government would so inform the German Government."

2. We should indicate to the British our view that the matter must be cleared in advance with the Russians and we should ask for their approval of the proposed cable to Moscow.

3. The British should be asked to have Sir Samuel Hoare immediately approach the Spanish Government with the request that that government admit into Spain temporarily all Jewish refugees permitted to leave areas under the control of the Germans. This Government is prepared, in conjunction with the British government, to arrange for the maintenance and care of all such refugees during their stay in Spain and to arrange for their prompt removal to temporary havens of refuge elsewhere. This attitude of the United States Government has already been communicated to our Ambassador in Madrid. Sir Samuel should be requested to advise the Spanish government of these facts upon making his request.

4. Explain to the British that Shertok's reference to the Board's authority to communicate with the enemy refers to the authorization given Board's representative under the Trading With the Enemy Act. Indicate that only use made of this authority have been discussions solely on refugee matters with Bulgarian and Rumanian Ambassadors, of which British are aware.

John F. M. ...
file

000371

COPY

Text of a telegram from Mr. Eden dated July 1st, 1944.

Please inform the United States Government that first discussions have been held here with Shertok. They have strengthened our conviction, supported by much independent evidence including detailed report placed at our disposal by United States Ambassador Angera, that however influential the Germans who authorized the offer, it was designed (a) to extract material concessions of war material from Allied Government, (b) to embroil United Kingdom and United States Governments with the Soviet Government by representing to the latter that the former were negotiating with the enemy (c) to elicit a rejection which would then be represented as justification for extreme measures against the Jews. Shertok appeared to agree with this analysis.

2. The offer in fact was not serious and especially as coming through such insignificant or suspected channels, should on its merits have been contemptuously ignored. But we have kept it in play in the hope of staving off disaster and seeing whether something acceptable might not emerge.

3. We must now consider our next steps. Choice appears to lie between (a) keeping Brandt and doing nothing in expectation that Gestapo may produce further offer, (b) sending Brandt back with message that he had found Allied circles concerned with the fate of the Jews and ready to consider any practicable scheme for alleviating the fate of the Jews and that he understood the Allies were conveying their views through the protecting power, and the German Government might shortly expect to hear something.

4. If (b) is decided upon, as we would propose, then we suggest that British and American Ministers in Berne should be instructed to address Swiss Government as follows:-

Begins.

Reports of further extreme measures by the German authorities against the Jews are reaching the United Kingdom and United States Governments. At the same time both Governments have been informed from what appear to be authoritative German quarters that the German Government might be disposed to modify their policy if Allied cooperation in a solution could be obtained. Such cooperation would it appears take the form of transferring a stated number of Jews in conditions of particular distress to the responsibility of other countries. The United Kingdom and United States Governments would be willing with due regard to military necessities to consider practical measures in this connection and would be glad if the Swiss Government would so inform the German Government. Swiss Government should then state in particular that: (a) Swiss Government has invited the German Government to give facilities for the departure of 1500 Jewish children who would be given temporary hospitality in Switzerland. Similar offers have been made by other neutral Governments. As an earnest of good faith the German Government shall

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COPY

Text of a telegram from Mr. Eden dated July 1st, 1944

Mr. Shertok agreed in suggested method of approach to Germans but urged (a) the United Kingdom and United States Governments should make a further offer to approach the Spanish Government regarding reception and temporary maintenance of some manageable number of Jewish refugees; (b) a "carrot" should be dangled before the Germans in the shape of agreement by the United Kingdom and United States to discuss with them the question of Jewish rescue; (c) in advance of such discussion we should decide what quid pro quo could be offered to the Germans.

2. In regard to (a) subject to views of His Majesty's Ambassador Madrid I see no difficulty. On (b) and (c) the reply given Shertok was that there could be no direct contact between the Allies and the Germans, to which he retorted that direct contact with the enemy was he understood in certain circumstances permissible to the War Refugee Board. On this the observation was made that, whatever the truth about the War Refugee Board's powers (on which I should be glad to be enlightened) such a conversation would ruin Soviet confidence in the Allies unless they had been asked and had agreed. The idea of compensation, trading in concert with a Gestapo agent, Jewish blood against Allied goods, looked equally dangerous. S. agreed, and said the Russians should, of course, be asked to concur, and that only compensation contemplated was that of no military or economic importance. It would be for us to discover such.

000375

2 - War Ref. Bd.
Mr. Pehle

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Consulate, Jerusalem
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATED: June 29, 1944
NUMBER: 89

CONTROL COPY

8/13

The War Refugee Board is requested by Isaac Gruenbaum, Jewish Agency, to send the following to Rabbi Wise.

We have received information from Istanbul that confirms deportation of 400,000 Hungarian Jews to Poland and the imminent deportation of remaining 350,000 now concentrated in Budapest and neighborhood. Information that we have received expressly states that direct causes of intensified deportation is the detention of two men. Competent authorities are urged to be impressed their assistance was asked fully trusting, if they are not able to help at least it will not make things worse which they did by the detention two men. Urge therefore, first, immediate return of the two men; second, immediate agreement meeting Lisbon; and third, adoption meanwhile of extraordinary measures, including retaliatory measures, repeatedly suggested with view to interfering with deportation.

PINKERTON

DCR: VAG 7/1/44

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 27 1972

000376

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000377

June 28, 1944

MEMORANDUM FOR FILES

On June 26, Mr. Fehle gave copies of the attached proposed cables to Moscow and Ankara to Mr. Warren.

Warren agreed to find out if the British plan to release Brandt and to find out where Gyergy is presently located.

FH

F. Hodel

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

000370

June 28, 1944

MEMORANDUM FOR FILES

On June 26, Mr. Pehle gave copies of the attached proposed cables to Moscow and Ankara to Mr. Warren.

Warren agreed to find out if the British plan to release Brandt and to find out where Gyorgy is presently located.

F. Hodel

000379

DRAFT OF CABLE TO STEINHARDT AND HIRSCHMANN AT ANKARA

There is repeated to you herewith cable being sent to Moscow today, which is self-explanatory. Please forward promptly to Harriman and Winant your despatches Nos. 676 of June 5 and 679 of June 8.

We would appreciate a full report on recent developments in this matter and your recommendations as to how we can proceed from here.

000380

DRAFT OF CABLE TO MOSCOW FOR AMBASSADOR HARRIMAN'S PERSONAL ATTENTION.

PART ONE

Reference is made to our cables to you No. 1460 of June 9 and No. of June 21 and to your cable No. 2184 of June 19. The following additional facts are now available with reference to this matter:

(1) Joel Brandt is presently being held in custody at Cairo after having previously proceeded to Jerusalem for discussions there. There have been discussions in Cairo between the American and British authorities, Brandt and Shertok of the Jewish agency.

(2) Gyorgy, who arrived from Vienna with Brandt on May 19, was taken into custody by Turkish officials on May 25, released in a few hours, pleaded for assistance in "escaping" to Syria, was documented for entrance into Allied territory, and departed on a southbound Taurus express. His present whereabouts are not definitely known here.

(3) Shertok of the Jewish agency is proceeding to London presumably for further discussions of this matter.

(4) Word has been received that the Gestapo are very angry about the failure of Brandt and Gyorgy to return to German territory. The Gestapo is alleged to have indicated that Brandt's journey was merely a preliminary to future discussions to be carried on in Lisbon by Schroeder, presumably a Gestapo agent.

(5) Although no such information was contained in our earlier reports with regard to this matter, it now appears that Brandt has indicated in several informal conversations that the German Government would be willing to agree that the 10,000 trucks would not (repeat not) be used on the Western front.

(6) We are requesting Ambassador Steinhardt to forward to you promptly Ankara despatches Nos. 676 of June 5 and 679 of June 8 which supply additional background information with respect to this matter.

000381

SECTION TWO

It is requested that this matter be taken up with the Soviet Government in such manner as you deem appropriate and all of the facts brought to the attention of the Soviet Government promptly.

It should be emphasized to the Soviet Government that neither this Government nor the British Government has been deceived as to the character of this alleged offer of the German Government and that we have been convinced from the outset that the offer is part and parcel of the German psychological warfare effort. This is borne out particularly by the facts which have now come to light on the alleged German willingness to guarantee that the trucks would not be used on the Western front.

On the other hand, we do not wish definitively and preemptorily to refuse even to consider such offers as are made. It is our view that by appearing to explore such matters we not only have the possibility of saving lives while the discussions are going on, but also clearly leave the way open for further offers which we anticipate and which might possibly be made ~~in good faith~~. *acceptable*.

Any further developments will, of course, be promptly brought to your attention for the information of the Soviet Government and no action will be taken without prior agreement with the Soviet and British Governments.

It is suggested that you consult fully with the British Ambassador with respect to this matter and in discussions with the Soviet Government make it clear, if the British Ambassador is in agreement, that the views expressed by you are also the views of the British Government. The British authorities here are in agreement.

Repeat to Ankara, Cairo, and London. If London has not already been furnished with such cables it should be sent repeats of the following cables: (1) Cable to Moscow, No. 1460 of June 9; (2) No. to Moscow of June 21; and (3) Cable to Moscow, No. 2184 of June 19.

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000383

DEPARTMENT
OF
STATE

INCOMING
TELEGRAM

DIVISION OF
COMMUNICATIONS
AND RECORDS

CONTROL COPY

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

Ankara

Dated June 27, 1944

Rec'd 8:50 p.m.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

JUN 29 1944

DIVISION OF
COMMUNICATIONS & RECORDS

Secretary of State,

Washington.

1173, June 27, 3 p.m.

FOR THE WAR REFUGEE BOARD FROM THE AMBASSADOR

Ankara's 80.

Hirschmann has returned to Ankara after talking with
Brand in Cairo. His report will be forwarded by pouch
as soon as possible.

STEINHARDT

RR REP

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000385

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CONTROL COPY

Copy

PARAGRAPHS OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Legation, Cairo
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATED: June 23, 1944
REF ID: 1767

Schwartz sends the following for Leavitt of JEC for War Refugee Board.

Discussions have been held here by me with Hirschmann regarding Brandt, who according to Shertok and Hirschmann after he was interviewed by them, is believed to be entirely trustworthy and reliable. Hirschmann is now pursuing the matter vigorously with Steinhardt and highest authorities. I believe it important that Brandt should be allowed to return to Budapest. In accordance I ask that it be recommended.

TUCK

RECEIVED
JUL 1 1944

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 27 1972

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DEPARTMENT
OF
STATE

INCOMING
TELEGRAM
CONTROL COPY

War Rf Bl - Able
DIVISION OF
COMMUNICATIONS
AND RECORDS

GEM-112
Distribution of
true reading only by
special arrangement
(~~SECRET~~-W)

Lisbon

Dated June 23, 1944

Rec'd 9:15 a.m.

*6 Copies
Control to Home*

Secretary of State,
Washington.

1941, June 23, 10 p.m.

Referring JDC 19 Mayer states 100,000 Swiss
francs were intended for purchase clothing which
Barlas made through Red Cross not for Shanghai. This
JDC 22 WRB 79 referring JDC 14 from Pilpil for Leavitt.

Understand WRB attache Bern wiring Washington latest
news Joel Brandt's proposition. Schwartz consulting
Hirschman and others Palestine and Turkey. He is
hoping to clear with Saly.

NORWEB

BB
RR

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-73
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 27 1972

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22

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DEPARTMENT
OF
STATE

**INCOMING
TELEGRAM**

DIVISION OF
COMMUNICATIONS
AND RECORDS

CONTROL COPY

GEM-42
Distribution of
true heading only by
special arrangement.
(GEM-42/W)

Ankara

Dated June 22, 1944

Rec'd 11:45 p.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

1131, June 22, 4 p.m.

FOR THE WRB FROM THE AMBASSADOR

Ankara No. 79.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
JUN 24 1944
DIVISION OF

Barlas of the Jewish Agency has informed me today that he is in receipt of a telegram from the representative of the Jewish Agency in Budapest to the effect that the deportation of Jews from Hungary is continuing and that the Gestapo is "very angry" at developments as the journey of Brand and Georgy was intended "only as a preliminary to future discussions to be carried on in Lisbon by Schroder of the Gestapo". The message concludes with the statement that unless Brand and Georgy return immediately to Budapest "all efforts are useless".

STEINEARDT

WSB
RR

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 27 1972

000390

21

000391

*2 - War Ref. Board
J.W. Pelt*

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Legation, Cairo
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATED: June 22, 1944
NUMBER: 1746

CONTROL COPY

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Following has been repeated to Ankara.

Today Ira Hirschmann of the War Refugee Board was presented by the Legation to Lord Moyne, British Minister Resident, with whom arrangements were made to interview Joel Brandt at Steinhardt's request. Also on the same affair, Shertok of the Jewish Agency/in Cairo today at noon en route to London. It was suggested by Lord Moyne that Hirschmann should also proceed there but Hirschmann is acting under instructions from Steinhardt to consider (*) Ankara first although if necessary he was willing to proceed to London.

It was pointed out by Lord Moyne that as many decisions in this matter are for highest levels, London was the place where complete coordination could be secured most readily.

For the 24th we have arranged Hirschmann's return to Ankara.

TUCK

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 27 1972

000392

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000393

MEMORANDUM FOR THE FILE

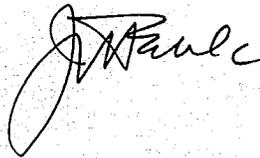
June 21, 1944

Cable No. 2184 of June 19, 1944, from Moscow, was brought to my attention about 5 P. M. on June 21, 1944.

The matter was promptly discussed and at 5:30 P. M. on June 21 I called Hayden Raynor and asked him to send the following cable immediately to Steinhardt and repeat it to Harriman in Moscow:

"There is repeated to you herewith cable No. 2184 from the American Embassy at Moscow. In this connection you will refer to our cable No. 514 of June 9.

"Please take no, repeat no, further action of any nature with respect to this matter pending further instructions."



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*2- War Refugee Board
Hull,*

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM SENT

CONTROL COPY

68 11 11 15 MUL A

FROM: Secretary of State, Washington
TO: American Embassy, Ankara
DATED: June 20, 1944
NUMBER: 556

*Declassified per
Kogan letter 12/9/70*

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

The following is for Steinhardt's information.

Moscow has been sent Department's message Number 1460 of June 9, 9 a.m., which is a repetition of Department's Number 514 of June 9, 9 a.m. For Ankara's information, we repeat herewith Moscow's message Number 2184 of June 19, midnight.

With reference to Embassy's message Number 2142 of June 15, 3 p.m. and Department's Number 1460 of June 9, 9 a.m. in connection with proposals of War Refugee Board, a secret note from Vyshinski dated June 18 has reached the Embassy. The note declares that the details of Embassy's communication of June 15 were called to the attention of the Soviet Government and Vyshinski has been told by the Soviet Government to say that any discussions whatsoever with the German Government on the matters mentioned in the Embassy's communication are deemed neither wise nor allowable.

HULL

DCR/GEN
GEN
6-23-44

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000397

*J. Van Dyke
m. Hill*

CORRECTED COPY OF PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Consulate General, Jerusalem
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATED: June 19, 1944
NUMBER: 82

CONTROL COPY

It is requested by Shertok that Nahum Goldmann receive the substance of the following message:

The British Embassy has probably informed you of the offer by the Nazis to evacuate, primarily from Hungary, the remnants of European Jewry. Joel Brandt, trusted Hungarian Zionist, brought the message and was sent to Istanbul May 19 on Wehrmacht plane with a view to return within two or three weeks with the reply. The offer ostensibly was to exchange Jews for goods of specified kinds and amounts. The evacuees were to proceed to Spain. On receipt of favorable reply concerning the whole scheme the first substantial transport was to be sent out without consideration. The conditions of the exchange sounded fantastic but it was decided to explore it. We immediately informed the High Commissioner who reported to London in full with request that Washington and you be advised. Every possible aid was given by the Commissioner to assist me to proceed to Turkey for the purpose of interviewing Brandt. My
departure

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 27 1972

000398

departure was delayed because of visa difficulties. At Aleppo I eventually met Brandt. It was originally agreed by British authorities Jerusalem Istanbul that Brandt should return to Turkey with a view to ^{proceeding} ~~proceeding~~ to Hungary from there but his transportation to Cairo, where he is detained, was ordered by higher quarters. Istanbul is now being informed by our friends in Budapest that everything will be lost unless Brandt returns at once. Following my report the conclusions of the executives are that while the exchange proposition may be mere eye wash and that there is a possibility of ulterior motives, it must be assumed that it is not improbable that even preliminary negotiations might result in a substantial number being saved. According to information received by us it was agreed by Eden during conversation with Weitzman that the policy should be to gain time to avoid the other side obtaining the impression that the Allies are slamming the door and refusing to even give the matter consideration. Although the helpfulness of this attitude is appreciated, it is felt by us that more is warranted. It has been proposed that steps should be taken at once with a view to ^{exploring} ~~exploring~~ the possibility of meeting with German representatives say in Madrid or Lisbon for the purpose of discussing the rescue of Jews urging at the same time that pending the meeting

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meeting deportations and slaughter be discontinued at once. Intergovernmental Refugee Committee, War Refugee Board, Red Cross or any other suitable agency might be the body sponsoring on behalf of the Allies. It has also been urged that Brandt return at once to report that the message has been delivered and that active consideration is being given to it. I have also requested urgent priority for me to fly to London. It is requested that you act in accordance with this.

A message similar to this has been sent through the British Government to Weizmann.

PINKERTON

JAB

DCR:YDB:HL

6/28/44

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000401

CONTROL COPY

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM SENT

TO: Amembassy, Ankara
FROM: Secretary of State, Washington
DATED: June 19, 1944
NUMBER: 546

FOR ATTENTION OF THE AMBASSADOR.

The Department was today informed by the British Embassy here that Joel Brand arrived Cairo June 14 and that on June 20 Shertok of the Jewish Agency is expected there. The British Embassy presumes that Brand and Shertok are proceeding to Cairo with the expectation of conferring with the British Resident Minister, Lord Moyne.

HULL

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 27 1972

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000403

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Consulate General, Jerusalem
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATE: June 17, 1944
REF: 81

RECEIVED
REFUGEE BOARD
WASHINGTON, D.C.
JUN 23 11 55 AM '44
CONTROL COPY

The following repeated to Ankara.
With reference to the offer which it is reported that the Germans recently made for release of Jews, details of which have been given to the High Commissioner for transmission to London also for repetition to the Department, Joel Brandt, who acted as intermediary, has been interviewed by Shertok of the Jewish Agency. The interview took place at Aleppo in the presence of a British Army officer after the Foreign Office had been consulted and subsequently Brandt was taken to Cairo under British escort where he is now being held. It is stated by Shertok that his release for return to Hungary is questionable but representations have been made to the High Commissioner by the Jewish Agency that he should be permitted to return in order to prevent breaking off negotiations thus gaining time to ascertain the true motives of the Germans in making the offer. It has also been suggested by the Agency that meeting occur between Allied and German delegations but that the Allied delegation be selected so that no implication might be drawn that any subject other than refugees was being discussed. The High Commissioner agreed to send these views to London and facilities for early traveling to London have been requested by Shertok.

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-73
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 27 1972 PINWERTON

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JUN 19 1944

My dear Mr. Secretary:

I am pleased to send you herewith a copy of the report of the War Refugee Board for June 5 to June 10, 1944.

I should like to point out for the record one development of the past week which does not appear in the enclosed report because of its extremely secret nature. Through Ambassador Steinhardt and the British we have been advised of a German proposal for the release of Jews from enemy territory submitted to the Jewish Agency in Palestine by Joel Brandt, a Zionist representative in Hungary who recently arrived in Istanbul accompanied by a Hungarian Gestapo agent. Brandt's message is that the Nazis are ready to evacuate one million Jews from Hungary, Rumania, Czechoslovakia and Poland to Spain and Portugal in return for the delivery of 10,000 motor trucks and certain quantities of coffee, tea, cocoa and soap. Since it is felt that serious suggestions by the Germans to release Jews which are compatible with the prosecution of the war should not be rejected outright but should be given consideration, and since we have not been able to make a definitive judgment as to the character of this offer, Ambassador Steinhardt has been advised that we feel it is important to keep the door open while the matter is being explored. The problem was discussed with Hirschmann before he departed for Turkey and Steinhardt is advising Brandt of Hirschmann's expected arrival and the fact that he is acquainted with this Government's views on the proposal. The sole purpose of conveying this fact to Brandt is to let it be known that this Government has not closed the door on the proposition. The British and Soviet Embassies have been advised of our action and it is expected that the representatives in Turkey of these countries will discuss the whole matter with Steinhardt. Incidentally, we have just received a cable from Steinhardt indicating that he understands our position and that he is personally handling the matter in Ankara.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) J.W. Pehle

J. W. Pehle
Executive Director

The Honorable,
The Secretary of War.

Enclosure.

JH
PH:lab 6/17/44
Cleared with Mr. Boris

000401

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000407

JUN 19 1944

My dear Mr. Secretary:

I am pleased to send you herewith a copy of the report of the War Refugee Board for June 5 to June 10, 1944.

I should like to point out for the record one development of the past week which does not appear in the enclosed report because of its extremely secret nature. Through Ambassador Steinhardt and the British we have been advised of a German proposal for the release of Jews from enemy territory submitted to the Jewish Agency in Palestine by Joel Brandt, a Zionist representative in Hungary who recently arrived in Istanbul accompanied by a Hungarian Gestapo agent. Brandt's message is that the Nazis are ready to evacuate one million Jews from Hungary, Rumania, Czechoslovakia and Poland to Spain and Portugal in return for the delivery of 10,000 motor trucks and certain quantities of coffee, tea, cocoa and soap. Since it is felt that serious suggestions by the Germans to release Jews which are compatible with the prosecution of the war should not be rejected outright but should be given consideration, and since we have not been able to make a definitive judgment as to the character of this offer, Ambassador Steinhardt has been advised that we feel it is important to keep the door open while the matter is being explored. The problem was discussed with Hirschmann before he departed for Turkey and Steinhardt is advising Brandt of Hirschmann's expected arrival and the fact that he is acquainted with this Government's views on the proposal. The sole purpose of conveying this fact to Brandt is to let it be known that this Government has not closed the door on the proposition. The British and Soviet Embassies have been advised of our action and it is expected that the representatives in Turkey of these countries will discuss the whole matter with Steinhardt. Incidentally, we have just received a cable from Steinhardt indicating that he understands our position and that he is personally handling the matter in Ankara.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) J. W. Pehle

J. W. Pehle
Executive Director

The Honorable,

The Secretary of State.

Enclosure.

J.A. Cleary
6/17/44 *Boris*

000408

000409

JUN 19 1944

My dear Mr. Secretary:

I am enclosing herewith a copy of the report of the War Refugee Board for June 5 to June 10, 1944.

I should like to point out for the record one development of the past week which does not appear in the enclosed report because of its extremely secret nature. Through Ambassador Steinhardt and the British we have been advised of a German proposal for the release of Jews from enemy territory submitted to the Jewish Agency in Palestine by Joel Brandt, a Zionist representative in Hungary who recently arrived in Istanbul accompanied by a Hungarian Gestapo agent. Brandt's message is that the Nazis are ready to evacuate one million Jews from Hungary, Rumania, Czechoslovakia and Poland to Spain and Portugal in return for the delivery of 10,000 motor trucks and certain quantities of coffee, tea, cocoa and soap. Since it is felt that serious suggestions by the Germans to release Jews which are compatible with the prosecution of the war should not be rejected outright but should be given consideration, and since we have not been able to make a definitive judgment as to the character of this offer, Ambassador Steinhardt has been advised that we feel it is important to keep the door open while the matter is being explored. The problem was discussed with Hirschmann before he departed for Turkey and Steinhardt is advising Brandt of Hirschmann's expected arrival and the fact that he is acquainted with this Government's views on the proposal. The sole purpose of conveying this fact to Brandt is to let it be known that this Government has not closed the door on the proposition. The British and Soviet Embassies have been advised of our action and it is expected that the representatives in Turkey of these countries

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will discuss the whole matter with Steinhardt. Incidentally, we have just received a cable from Steinhardt indicating that he understands our position and that he is personally handling the matter in Ankara.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) J. W. Pehle

J. W. Pehle
Executive Director

The Honorable,

The Secretary of the Treasury.

Enclosure.

JH - Cleared with Mr. Bris
FH:lab 6/17/44

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000412

J - War by BA

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

Refile

FROM: American Embassy, Moscow
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATE: June 19, 1942
FILE NO: 9184

COMMUNICATIONS SECTION

CONTROL COPY

Reference is made herewith to Department's cable of June 9, 1942, and Embassy's cable of June 15, 1942, concerning proposals of the War Refugee Board.

There has been received by the Embassy from Vysinski a secret note dated June 13 stating that there has been brought to the attention of the Soviet Government the contents of Embassy's note dated June 15, and that Vysinski has been instructed by the Soviet Government to state that it does not consider it permissible or expedient to carry on any conversations whatsoever with the German Government on the questions which the note from the Embassy touched upon.

GARRINAN

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-73
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 27 1972

000413

000414

Budapest, den 15.3.44

Im Zusammenhang mit den Verhandlungen die Joel Brand gefuehrt hat, uebernahmen wir die Verpflichtung an jenen Stellen, welche die Judenfrage in Haenden haben, gewisse Warenmengen zur Verfuegung zu stellen. Als Gegenleistung fuer die Warenlieferungen, waeren "Menschenleben" d.h. die Deportierungen wuerden abgestellt werden.

Unter den beanspruchten Waren sind hauptsaechlich solche, welche von der Zivilbevoelkerung benoetigt werden, wie z.B. Cacao, Medikamente, Waeenhemden, etc.

Unsere Kontrahenten versprochen wir, diese Waren vom Ausland zu besorgen, haben aber dort sofort Erhebungen eingeleitet und Aktionen unternommen, diese Ware auf den Gebieten, welche unter Kontrolle der Achse stehen, aufzubringen. Diese Aktion, welche von Julius Link geleitet wird (er selbst hat die Sache in dieser Form angeregt) verspricht auch Erfolg. Wohlgemerkt: es handelt sich nicht um Waren, welche von Uebersee eingefuehrt werden sollen (auch diese Frage war Gegenstand der Beratung von Brand, welche Vereinbarungen er diesbezuglich draussen getroffen hat, wissen wir noch nicht) sondern um Waren, welche auf hiesigen Gebieten bereits vorhanden sind und nur eingesammelt und von uns bezahlt werden muessen.

Die Bezahlung dieser Waren muss in Sfr. erfolgen zumal nur auf diese Weise Waren gekauft werden koennen. Die erste Tranche soll in allerkuerzester Zeit zur Abwicklung gelangen und hiezu wird ein Rahmen von ca. 8.000.000 Frs. erforderlich zu sein. In jenem Ausmasse, wie wir diese Ware bereitstellen werden, wird seitens des Kontrahenten in der Judensache gewisse Erleichterungen gestattet werden, Zunaechst geht es um die Errettung von vielen 100.000den vor der Deportation und der damit verbundenen Folgen, es muss daher uns geholfen werden, diese Aktion zur Ausfuehrung zu bringen.

Von JDC erwartet man die Hilfe in der Hoehe von 10.000.000 \$ ein Betrag, der wohl als hoch angesehen werden kann, im

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Verhaeltnis zur Grosse der Hoffnungen die daran geknuepft sind, doch als ganz minimal angesehen werden muss.

In beiden Faellen also in den ersten erwaehten 8.000.000 Frs. also auch in der Dollarfrage, handelt es sich, wenn anders nicht moeglich, um ein Darlehen, welches nach Kriegsende von dem Judenvermoegen zurueckgezahlt werden koennte.

Mein Vorschlag waere:

Einige Finanzkapazitaeten moegen in beiden Faellen die erforderlichen Summen in Form von Darlehen zur Verfuegung stellen. Als Deckung fuer diese Darlehen wuerde die jued. Gemeinde in Budapest, deren unbewegliches Vermoegen allein weit ueber fuenfzig-sechzig Millionen Dollar ausmacht, mit ihrem gesamten Vermoegen haften. Die Details moegen kuernerseits raschest ausgearbeitet werden.

Noch ist die Moeglichkeit vielen Hunderttausenden von Juden zu helfen, bzw. am Leben zu erhalten, es darf keine Zeit verloren gehen, versuchen Sie alles im Interesse des Gelingens dieser Aktion zu unternehmen.

Wir muessen annehmen, dass unsere Kontrahenten es mit dem Antrag ernst meinen.

Joe

10

000417

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Embassy, Moscow
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATED: June 15, 1944
NUMBER: ~~2142~~
2152
x

CONTROL COPY

We have transmitted to the Soviet Government by a note dated June 15 the pertinent information contained in Department's cable of June 9, No. 1460, to Ankara with respect to the proposal for the release of Jews from enemy territory.

HARRIMAN

RECEIVED
JUN 17 1944

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 27 1972

000418

CORRECTION ON

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Embassy, Moscow
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATED: June 15, 1944
NUMBER: 2152

CONTROL COPY

This message was erroneously marked 2142. Please change the serial number from 2142 to 2152.

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 27 1972

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DEPARTMENT
OF
STATE

INCOMING
TELEGRAM

DIVISION OF
COMMUNICATIONS
AND RECORDS

For security reasons the
text of this telegram must
be closely guarded

MJB-950
Distribution of
true reading only by
special arrangement
(SECRET).

Lisbon

CONTROL COPY

Date: June 13, 1944

Rec'd 6:30 p.m.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DIVISION OF
JUN 16 1944
COMMUNICATIONS
AND RECORDS

Secretary of State,
Washington.

1815, June 13, 4 p.m.

Proposal referred to our May 4, your May 15
came from Joel Brand from Hungary visitor Mayers.
Brand just visited Resnik Istanbul and presumably
now talking Jewish agency Palestine. Saly knows
of these travels of Brands and thinks Brand officially
represents Jewish communities Hungary and Slovakia
possibly also Roumania. This from ^{ps}Leavitt from Pilpel
WDC 14 WRB 68. Saly thinks Brand reliable. ^{Payment}(Comment)
after war not possible.

Union orthodox Rabbis United States Canada asked
for huge sum this purpose by Rabbi Joseph Sternbusch
in behalf Rabbi Freudiger Hungary. Brand Freudiger
members same committee but unable combine efforts.
Schwartz has all information. WRB Switzerland knows
of reference to Washington of Freudiger -Sternbusch
proposition. Sternbusch waiting for answer.

BB RR

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
NORWEB By R. H. Parks Date SEP 27 1972

000421



000422

DEPARTMENT
OF
STATE

INCOMING
TELEGRAM

DIVISION OF
COMMUNICATIONS
AND RECORDS

GEM-77
Distribution of this
true reading only be
special arrangement.
[REDACTED] (W)

Ankara

Dated June 12, 1944

Rec'd 11:07 p.m. 13th

CONTROL COPY

Secretary of State,
Washington.

1055, June 12, 10 p.m.

FOR THE WAR REFUGEE BOARD FROM THE AMBASSADOR

Department's 514, June 9.

Ankara No. 74.

I have discussed the subject matter of the Department's telegram under reference with the British Ambassador who informs me that Brand and Gyorgy proceeded to Syria, the former on June 1 and the latter on June 5. Although a Turkish visa for Shertok of the Jewish agency was telegraphed to Jerusalem a week ago, he has informed Barlas in Istanbul that he is not (repeat not) coming to Turkey. While neither the British Embassy nor we are informed as to Brand's present whereabouts, we assume that he is now either in Jerusalem or in touch with the Jewish Agency there. If Brand has not returned to Turkey by the time Hirschmann arrives here or is not expected immediately thereafter, it may be desirable

for Hirschmann

DECLASSIFIED

State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72

By R. H. Parks Date SEP 27 1972

000423

-2-#1055, June 12, 10 p.m., from Ankara.

for Hirschmann to go to see him.

I am entirely in accord with the view expressed by the board that until a definitive judgment as to the character of the offer in question has been arrived at, it is important that the door be kept open for further exploration of the matter and that every effort be made to convince the Germans that our government is seriously concerned with the problem of the rescue and relief of the Jews and other victims and is willing to consider any genuine proposals.

I have informed Barlas today of Hirschmann's impending arrival and that he will be fully acquainted with the views of the board concerning the proposal and have requested him to convey the foregoing to Brand.

STEINHARDT

WSB
CSB

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000425

Mr. Pehle

ORIGINAL TEXT OF TELEGRAM SENT

FROM: Secretary of State, Washington
TO: American Embassy, Moscow
DATED: June 9, 1944
NUMBER: 1460

CONTROL COPY

There follows a repetition of the Department's 514,
of June 9, 1944 to Ambassador Steinhardt at Ankara:

(Here quotes Department's No. 514 of June 9 to Ankara).

The foregoing information should be conveyed to the
Soviet Government whose particular attention should be called
to the fact that the United States Government is interested
primarily in keeping the question open and that consultation
with the British and Soviet Governments will take place before
any understanding with the Germans is entered into.

HULL

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 27 1972

000421

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000427

ORIGINAL TEXT OF TELEGRAM SENT

FROM: Secretary of State, Washington
TO: American Embassy, Ankara
DATED: June 9, 1944
NUMBER: 514

(R.H.C.)
Secret
no copies distributed

CONTROL COPY

FOR ABB DDADOR STEINHARDT'S, ATTENTION, ANKARA, TURKEY

Reference is made to your Ankara No. 83, dated May 25, for the War Refugee Board, concerning a proposal for the release of Jews from enemy territory submitted to Barlas by Joel Brandt.

This proposal was the subject of an Aide Memoire delivered to the Department by Lord Halifax on June 5. With the Aide Memoire there was transmitted the text of a telegram received by the British Foreign Office from the High Commissioner, Jerusalem, concerning the proposal in question. For your information the following is the text of the said telegram:

Telegram No. 683

From: High Commissioner, Jerusalem

To: Foreign Office

Ben Gurion and Shertok came to see me this morning and stated as follows:

Special messenger started from Turkey on May 22nd and reached Jerusalem May 24th bringing them statement from their representatives in Istanbul (Barlas etc.) to following effect.

On May 19th well known and trusted Zionist representative in Hungary Joel Brandt arrived in German aircraft in Istanbul from Vienna accompanied by a Hungarian Gestapo agent who has several aliases (e.g. Andrew George, Andrew Gross) and who so far as is known is still in Turkey. Brandt has been sent to Turkey with this man as watchdog by high German Gestapo chiefs

in Budapest

DECLASSIFIED

State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72

By R. H. Parks Date SEP 27 1972

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in Budapest to place the following order before Jewish leaders in Palestine, England and America, and before the High Allied authorities.

As an alternative to complete annihilation of all Jews remaining in Hungary, Rumania, Czechoslovakia and Poland, the Nazis are ready to evacuate one million Jews from these countries to Spain and Portugal (though not, as they specifically stated, to Palestine). In return they require delivery of 10,000 motor lorries and certain quantities of coffee, tea, cocoa and soap. As an act of good faith they are prepared, once the offer has been accepted in principle to release first batch of five to ten thousand Jews before receipt of corresponding consideration. They are also prepared to exchange Jews against German prisoners of war. If the offer is rejected they will proceed with their programme of wholesale liquidation. The emissary must return to Budapest with a reply within a fortnight from May 19th.

2. Brandt has the impression that these negotiations can be prolonged if evidence is forthcoming that scheme is being earnestly considered in high Allied quarters. It is also believed that substitution of cash payments in Switzerland for deliveries in kind wholly or in part is not to be excluded and both sides barter transaction, namely evacuation and compensation can be realized by successive stages.

3. Brandt reports that 300,000 Hungarian Jews are already herded in concentration camps as a preliminary to deportation. The rounding up of other Jews is in progress. Plans have been made for daily deportation to Polish slaughter houses of 12,000 Jews of beans but this is presumed to have been deferred pending negotiations. This report of the position in Hungary is said to be fully corroborated by various Hungarian Jewish eye witnesses who reached Palestine on May 24th.

4. In the light of the above and past experience agency fears that the fate of Hungarian, Czechoslovak and Rumanian Jews is sealed unless they can be saved in time and "they firmly hope that the magnitude and seemingly fantastic character of the proposition will not deter the high Allied authorities from undertaking a concerted and determined effort to save the greatest possible number. They fully realize the over-whelming difficulties but believe they might not prove insurmountable if the task is faced with boldness demanded by unprecedented catastrophe".

5. Shertok is proceeding to Istanbul as soon as he can (i.e. probably within a few days) for a more complete elucidation of the facts and will report to His Majesty's Ambassador Ankara.

6. Agency

6. Agency is keeping all the above information strictly secret and wishes us to do likewise but they ask that His Majesty's Government should at once communicate it on the same terms to Washington and that the sole exceptions to the official secret should be

(A) Dr. Weizman personally to be informed by His Majesty's Government.

(B) Dr. Goldman personally to be informed by the United States authorities.

I enquired whether the agency desired any other specific action than communications referred to in preceding paragraph pending Shertok's enquiries and report to His Majesty's Ambassador Ankara, and they replied in the negative.

We are informed that the British Ambassador at Ankara has been instructed to discuss this matter with you in the strictest confidence.

We have discussed this matter with Ira Hirschmann who is scheduled to leave for Turkey on June 11. He will convey our views more fully to you when he arrives.

We agree with the British that serious suggestions by the Germans to release Jews and other persecuted minorities which are compatible with the successful prosecution of the war should not be rejected outright but should be given consideration. While we have not, of course, been able to make a definitive judgment as to the character of the offer in question, we feel that it is important to keep the door open while this matter is being explored.

Although we obviously could not enter into any understanding with the Germans in a matter of this kind except after consultation with both the British and the Soviet Governments, we feel strongly that pending further developments and

discussions with

and discussions with these two governments every effort should be made to convince the Germans that this Government is sufficiently concerned with the problem that it is willing to consider genuine proposals for the rescue and relief of the Jews and other victims.

Accordingly, you should arrange to convey to Joel Brandt at once through Berlas or otherwise the fact that this Government is sending a Special Representative of the War Refugee Board to Ankara, who is fully acquainted with the views of this Government concerning the proposal. It should be indicated that this representative will arrive in Ankara within a fortnight.

For your information, the sole purpose of conveying this fact to Brandt is to let it be known that this Government has not closed the door. Hirschmann will, of course, act only under your instructions.

We are advising the British Embassy here of this action. Please advise us urgently of all developments and any further information which you may have. Foregoing was repeated to American Embassy, Moscow to be transmitted to Soviet Government.

HULL

AND URGENT

GERALD R. ALBA, ADYK STEINHAUS, ANKARA, TURKEY.

Reference is made to your Ankara No. 63, dated May 25, for the War Refugee Board, concerning a proposal for the release of Jews from enemy territory submitted to Barlas by Joel Brandt.

This proposal was the subject of an Aide Memoire delivered to the Department by Lord Halifax on June 5. With the Aide Memoire there was transmitted the text of a telegram received by the British Foreign Office from the High Commissioner, Jerusalem, concerning the proposal in question. For your information the following is the text of the said telegram:

[Here take in text of attached telegram]

We are informed that the British Ambassador at Ankara has been instructed to discuss this matter with you in the strictest confidence.

We have discussed this matter with Ira Hirschmann who is scheduled to leave for Turkey on June 11. He will convey our views more fully to you when he arrives.

We agree with the British that serious suggestions by the Germans to release Jews and other persecuted minorities which are compatible with the successful prosecution of the war should not be rejected outright but should be given consideration. While we have not, of course, been able to make a definitive judgment as to the character of the offer in question, we feel that it is important to keep the door open while this matter is being explored.

Although we obviously could not enter into any understanding with the Germans in a matter of this kind except after consultation with both the British and the Soviet Governments, we feel strongly that pending further developments and discussions with these two governments every effort should be made to convince the Germans that this Government is sufficiently concerned with the problem that it is willing to consider genuine proposals for the rescue and relief of the Jews and other victims.

Accordingly, you should arrange to convey to Joel Brandt at once through Barlas or otherwise the fact that this Government is sending a Special Representative of the War Refugee Board to Ankara, who is fully acquainted with the views of this Government concerning the proposal. It should be indicated that this representative will arrive in Ankara within a fortnight.

For your information, the sole purpose of conveying this fact to Brandt is to let it be known that this Government has not closed the door. Hirschmann will, of course, act only under your instructions.

We are advising the British and Soviet Embassies here of this action. Please advise us urgently of all developments and any further information which you may have.

6/7/44



DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 27 1972

*Handed to Mrs. Skittles
June 9, 1944*

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000433

Enclosure No. 1 to Despatch No. 679, dated June 8, 1944
from the American Embassy at Ankara.

C O P Y

AMERICAN CONSULATE, GENERAL
ISTANBUL, TURKEY

MEMORANDUM

Subject: Activities of André Antol Gyorgy and Joel Brand.

Date: June 4, 1944.

Introduction

On May 19, 1944, the German courier plane from Vienna arrived in Istanbul with the following persons as unlisted passengers: André Gross, alias André Antol Gyorgy, a Hungarian Jew with a long record as a double agent; and Joel Brand, a Hungarian Jew, by vocation a small manufacturer, but by choice an active Zionist and an agent in the Jewish underground.

Gyorgy arrived on a Hungarian special passport. Brand used a German travel document, issued a few days previously in Vienna. Brand did not have a Turkish visa. Gyorgy's credentials in this connection are uncertain. Both, however, entered Turkey without difficulty, and remained free until May 25, 1944. On that date they were picked up by the Turkish secret police for questioning, Gyorgy on a smuggling charge, Brand for entering Turkey without a visa.

Within the next few hours, Gyorgy was released from custody, announced that the Gestapo had ordered his return to Germany, pleaded on bended knee before Allied intelligence officers for assistance in "escaping" to Syria, was documented for entrance into Allied territory, and departed on a southbound Taurus express.

During the same period, Brand remained under the nominal supervision of the Turkish secret police, but returned to the Pera Palas Hotel each evening under guard. He was released from custody on May 31, 1944, and departed for Syria and Palestine on June 5, 1944.

He left behind "the Brand proposals," allegedly an official German program to free the Jews in occupied Europe in exchange for nominal shipments of food supplies, soap and 10,000 trucks "to be used only on the Russian front."

Background of Gyorgy

André Gross, alias André Antol Gyorgy, was born about forty years ago in Hungary. Little is known of his background, but he has been accepted as a double agent by both sides. (Note: A full dossier on Gyorgy should be available through Allied intelligence channels in Istanbul).

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 27 1972 During . . .

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During the past six months he has been used by Allied intelligence agencies, has certainly cooperated with the Gestapo, has operated as a contact man between Jewish agencies in Istanbul and underground Jewish channels in German-occupied Europe, and has engaged in profitable gold and diamond smuggling on his own account.

Early in 1944 Gyorgy was used by an Allied intelligence agency in Istanbul in connection with an attempt to plant a radio in Hungary. Included in this conspiracy were Colonel Hatz, then Military Attaché of the Hungarian Embassy at Ankara, and General Kadar, head of the counter-espionage section of the Hungarian General Staff.

While all details of the events transpiring after Gyorgy's departure from Istanbul with the radio set are not clear, it is at least certain that General Kadar was liquidated; his mistress, in whose apartment the radio was found by the Gestapo, was placed under arrest; and Colonel Hatz, who was recalled to Hungary, was placed in a concentration camp. Of all those involved in the conspiracy, only Gyorgy appears to have escaped with a whole skin and a new job under Gestapo supervision.

The conclusion is inevitable and unescapable. It seems clear that Gyorgy, already known as a double agent, sold out to the Gestapo, either of his own choice, or under pressure. The resulting seizure of the radio by the Gestapo led to the apprehension of all other active participants in the action. Gyorgy, on the other hand, turned up some weeks later in the German courier plane at Istanbul.

Background of Brand

Joel Brand was born in Transylvania about thirty-eight years ago. At an early age he moved to Germany with his family, and remained a resident of German territory until 1935. In that year he returned to Hungary where he has since resided.

Brand speaks very little Hungarian. When questioned in Hungarian, he answers in German. In explanation he states that his long residence in Germany, where he spoke German, and his relatively recent return to Hungary, have made German his mother tongue.

Following his return to Budapest in 1935, Brand established a small knit-wear factory. This plant employs a maximum of 40 employees, and appears never to have been a financial success. Brand himself states he has always been more interested in Jewish affairs than in his business.

Brand is married and has two children, a mother and three sisters in Hungary.

Shortly after his return to Hungary from Germany, Brand appears to have become interested in the Zionist movement and in other phases of Jewish affairs. Following the beginning of the

war . . .

war, he became an active member of the Jewish underground, receiving money from Jewish leaders in Istanbul, and assisting in the rescue of Jews from Poland.

Brand himself states: "I have saved many Polish Jews from the very doors of the gas chamber."

In the course of this work for the Jews, Brand came into frequent contact with the counter-espionage section of the Hungarian General Staff. He not only admits that he has been in touch with the Deuxieme Bureau in connection with Jewish matters, but implies that he has been of service on more than one occasion. This is interesting in that the Hungarian Staff has been, at least since 1939, a center of pro-German activity. Brand's admission that he was in frequent touch with the G-2 of the Hungarian General Staff is the first link connecting him with the Gestapo.

Within recent months Brand has been actively engaged in Jewish rescue work in Hungary. In this connection he has been in touch with Jewish leaders in Istanbul, and has been supplied by them with funds. One such contact was made by Gyorgy on one of his trips for an Allied intelligence agency and Colonel Hatz, at that time Hungarian Military Attaché in Ankara.

While exact dates are not available, it appears probable that this was the same trip Gyorgy made to plant an Allied radio in Hungary. Since it is known that the Gestapo broke up this combination, it seems probable that the Germans were informed of the rôle played by Brand, and of the fact that he was receiving money and documents from Istanbul through Gyorgy.

This belief is confirmed by Brand's admission on one occasion that he had been arrested by the Gestapo, and that they had found gold, American currency and correspondence from Jewish leaders in Istanbul in his possession.

In any event it seems certain that Brand is linked to the Gestapo by a second bond through the discovery of his illegal pro-Jewish activities.

Explanation of Brand's Trip

Brand states that he came to Istanbul in an attempt to save the Jews of Hungary. He reports that all Jews in south and south-western Hungary have been placed in concentration camps or ghettos, and that this procedure will be extended to the other parts of the country as soon as possible. He adds that 12,000 Jews are being shipped to Poland for liquidation each day.

When asked why he was chosen for this mission rather than a prominent Hungarian Jewish leader, Brand gave this reply:

"The Jews in Hungary are divided into several camps. If any prominent leader had come, he would have represented only his camp."

If . . .

If this assumption is correct, Brand was chosen as a "dark horse," as an "unknown" who could speak, not for one group, but for all Hungarian Jews.

Whether this is an accurate explanation is perhaps open to question. Brand's obvious position in the Zionist camp, and his admission that he has been a leader, if a minor leader, in the Jewish movement in Hungary, makes his explanation a trifle illogical.

Brand's documentation indicates that he has the backing of at least some important Jewish leaders in Hungary. He brought with him two letters of introduction of a "To whom it may concern" nature from Baron Freudinger and Samuel Stern. Freudinger is believed to be the President of the Central Rader Juden, the Jewish control organization established by the Germans. Samuel Stern, the second sponsor, has always been considered one of the leaders of the Jewish community in Hungary. He has been president of the Budapest Jewish Council and served as head of the Hungarian Jewish Committee at one time.

Brand's documentation as a Jewish emissary appears to be fairly satisfactory. It cannot be ascertained, however, whether his letters represent German manipulation or Jewish desire. It is possible that his communications are part of the German plot. It is more probable, of course, that the Jewish leaders in Hungary, aware of the peril of their situation, were willing to use the emissary provided by the Gestapo and accordingly granted him appropriate documentation.

Details of Brand's Trip

It is obvious from the details of Brand's trip to Turkey that his journey was actively sponsored by the Gestapo.

Brand left Budapest in the private car of Oberstandartenführer Krummei, a S.S. official. Gyorgy made the trip with him. Gyorgy held a Hungarian service passport, but Brand was without documentation of any sort. Despite this fact, the car crossed the border into Austria without delay or hesitation.

In Vienna, Brand was equipped at Gestapo headquarters with a German passport in the name of Engineer Eugene Band. Arrangements were quickly made, and there was no difficulty.

Brand and Gyorgy, who remained together in Vienna, were then taken to the airport and placed on the German courier plane for Istanbul. Their names were not included in the passenger list.

Brand was given documents and letters by the Gestapo for use in crossing the German checking stations en route to Turkey. For example, the Sofia Gestapo headquarters passed him, upon presentation of his documents, without difficulty.

Two points are of special interest here:

1. . .

1. The fact that Gyorgy was with Brand during the entire trip, including the automobile ride from Budapest to Vienna, in which they were the only non-Gestapo passengers in the car. This admission labels Brand's statement that he did not know Gyorgy, and had only met him once on the plane, as an obvious falsehood. It is certain that Brand and Gyorgy began and finished the trip together, and that their association was not accidental.

2. The fact that Gestapo agents at a number of points were obviously acting on instructions to assist Brand and Gyorgy, and facilitate their departure from German-occupied territory. Since the Gestapo in Budapest, at the Hungarian-Austrian frontier, in Vienna and en route to Turkey, all were obviously acting under orders, it is certain that Brand's mission is not the brain-storm of a minor Gestapo leader in Budapest. The orders could not have been so widespread and sure unless they came from a relatively high source.

On the basis of Brand's own account of his trip, it can be concluded that:

1. Brand and Gyorgy were fellow travelers.
2. Their mission had active Gestapo sponsorship and support.
3. The source of this support was a point relatively high in the Gestapo, rather than some local agent.

Nature of Brand's proposals

According to Brand, he was instructed to come to Istanbul with the following proposal:

1. The Germans are willing to consider the release of the Jewish population of Hungary as fast as the Jews can be admitted into Spain, Portugal and Turkey.
2. In exchange, the Germans expect to receive the following from the Allies:
 - a. 2,000,000 bars of soap.
 - b. 800 tons of coffee.
 - c. 200 tons of cocoa.
 - d. 800 tons of tea.
 - e. 10,000 trucks.
3. Of special interest is the fact, not stressed in some reports, that Brand made clear that the Germans were willing to give a guarantee to the effect that the 10,000 trucks would be used only against the Russians, and would not, under any circumstances, be sent to the Italian or "second" fronts.

Two factors are of importance in determining the validity of this offer: (1) Does Brand take it seriously; (2) Do the German sponsors take it seriously.

As . . .

As to the first question, Brand himself seems to hesitate in making a decision. He clearly indicated, in his last interview before leaving Istanbul, that he had little hope of actually getting many Jews out of Europe. He implied that he was playing his present rôle in the hope that by "playing for time," the Jews in Hungary might be assisted. He seemed to feel that, while the proposals will have no definite result, the time consumed in connection with them may postpone the liquidation of Jews in Hungary for a sufficient period to see the turn of the tide in Europe.

When asked whether he believed the Germans would abide by their part of the proposal, Brand made an evasive answer. It seems probable that Brand himself has little faith in the success of his proposals, or in the German intention to keep their part of the bargain, even if the proposals are accepted by the Allies. He is clearly "playing for time," hoping that the time saved will be the margin that may prevent the liquidation of the Jews in Hungary.

The second question, as to the seriousness of the Germans in making the proposals, can be divided into two parts:

1. Does the proposal come from responsible German leaders?

Brand states that his proposal originated with Vessenmayer, the highest German authority in Hungary, who bears the official title of Trustee of the Greater German Reich in Hungary. While Brand did not have direct contact with Vessenmayer, he did, according to his report, secure his proposals directly from Eichman, a S.S. leader in charge of Jewish affairs in Vessenmayer's headquarters.

Brand also made it clear that the proposal came, not from the Hungarians, or from the Germans through the Hungarians, but directly from the Germans. He categorically stated, on the contrary, that the Hungarians had no knowledge of the proposals, and that his instructions came directly from the German leaders in Hungary.

If Brand is correct in stating that his proposals came from Vessenmayer through Eichman, and there is apparently no reason why this should not be considered to be factual, then it can be assumed that the Brand proposals originated with responsible German leaders.

2. Were the responsible German leaders serious in making the proposals?

From a realistic viewpoint, it is hard to see how responsible German leaders, at this stage of the war, could have the slightest belief that the Brand proposals would be accepted by the Allies, even as a basis for negotiation, much less in their entirety. Is it possible to assume that the Gestapo leaders in Hungary, who are certainly not fools, would expect the Allies to agree to the shipment of 10,000 trucks to Germany, regardless of the conditions? Is it possible to assume that the German occupiers of Hungary, whose plan of occupation was as masterful as that used in Norway, are naive enough to believe that the Brand proposals will be successful?

On . . .

On the basis of logic, it is necessary to answer both of these questions in the negative. Leaving aside, for the moment, the real reason for the Brand proposals - and there was a realistic reason since the Germans do not inaugurate elaborate plans such as this without reason - it can safely be said that the fabricators of the plan must have known that it would not be taken seriously in Allied capitals.

It follows that the German originators either expected the plan to gain its ends before it reached Allied capitals, i.e.: it was intended only for the ears of the Jewish leaders in Istanbul and Palestine; or the plan was not intended to be successful, and its success had no part in the German plans.

Following this line of logic, a strictly sensible conclusion is possible. It can be assumed that the Brand proposals did originate in responsible German sources, that they were placed on the table in Istanbul through the active cooperation and assistance of the Gestapo, and that, at the same time, the originators knew that the plan had no possible chance of acceptance in Allied capitals.

If such is the case, then the Brand proposals are part of an elaborate German propaganda campaign. They will not be accepted and they were not intended to be accepted. They will not bring Germany soap, coffee, tea or trucks, and they were not intended to bring Germany these products. They will not free any Hungarian Jews, for the Germans had no intention of seeing the Jews of Hungary go free.

As to just where the Brand proposals fit into the German propaganda program, a number of theories are valid. One suggestion is that they form part of the German attempt to split the Allies from the Russians.

The handling of the guarantee that the 10,000 trucks will not be used on the Italian or "second" fronts has been tricky and careful. Brand has placed it definitely in the record, so definitely as to guarantee that it has been recorded. On the other hand, he has not pushed the theme, and has tended to leave it out of his conversation as occasion demands.

It seems possible that the German propaganda machine has planted the Brand proposals in Istanbul in the hope that they will be given sufficient attention and acceptance by the Allied representatives to enable the Germans to say to the Russians: "Look at your Allies. They are seriously considering (or even giving semi-serious attention to) a proposal that involves sending us 10,000 military trucks to be used only against you!"

At a moment when the only hope of German success lies in splitting the Allies from the Russians, it is not too far-fetched to believe that the Brand proposals form part of an elaborate propaganda campaign designed to produce the desired result.

Relationship . . .

Relationship of Brand and Gyorgy

In examining the relationship between these two men, it is important to note that Gyorgy was a regular courier between the Jewish leaders in Istanbul and the Jewish underground in Hungary. Since it appears certain that he placed himself in Gestapo hands or was caught, as proven by the radio affair, it seems probable that the Gestapo secured knowledge of the fact that he was a courier between Brand and Jewish leaders in Istanbul. There is some evidence that Brand was actually caught by the Gestapo with gold, American currency and letters brought by Gyorgy in his possession.

In any event, it is almost certain that Gyorgy led the Gestapo to Brand at the same time as he led them to Colonel Hatz and General Kadar.

If such is the case, the participation of Gyorgy and Brand in the present activity is explained. On the basis of available information and logic, it can be assumed that:

1. Gyorgy either surrendered voluntarily to the Gestapo or was caught and forced to talk.
2. The information placed in the hands of the Gestapo by Gyorgy included word of the link between Brand and the Jewish leaders in Istanbul.
3. When it became essential to the German plans that these Jewish leaders should be contacted, Gyorgy and Brand became obvious choices, since both were under obligation to the Gestapo, and in no position to claim the immunities of free agents.
4. Brand was chosen to carry the message, since he was known to have been in contact with the recipients, and since he was, by discovery of his underground actions, under the complete control of the Gestapo. He was certain to remain tractable since his wife, two children, mother and sisters would remain in Hungary under Gestapo control.
5. Gyorgy was chosen as the "escort" since he had already made contact with Allied intelligence circles in Istanbul, was known to many people here, and was persona grata with the Jewish leaders in Istanbul by virtue of his service to them as a courier.

This reconstruction satisfactorily explains the use of Gyorgy and Brand by the Gestapo and clarifies their relationship. It is corroborated by the refusal of Brand to return to Hungary without Gyorgy, and by his admission that Gyorgy was sent with him "as an escort and guardian."

Conclusions

It has been suggested that the following interpretations of this affair are possible:

1. . .

1. The proposals are the effort of a small group of Germans, in control of the situation in Hungary, to secure valuable supplies, and to experiment with the possibilities of gaining ransom for the release of the Jews in Hungary.

Comment: As noted above, the numerous points at which the Gestapo acted on instructions indicates that orders must have come from a relatively high source. This makes it appear improbable that the Brand proposals are the brain children of German officials in Hungary.

While it is not impossible that the element of personal profit has entered into the considerations of the German originators of the Brand proposals, it does not appear probable that this element was the dominant factor in placing in action the complicated campaign of which Brand and Gyorgy are elements.

2. The proposals are a cover for the beginning of peace proposals, and are designed to enlist the interest of persons who might be used in this connection.

Comment: Two negative factors dominate this possibility:

(A) If peace proposals are being considered, would a minor Jewish industrialist and a proven double agent be entrusted with even the preliminary negotiations?

(B) Is it likely that the Germans would consider Jewish organizations such as the Jewish Agency for Palestine a suitable intermediary with the Allies?

It seems unlikely that the Germans, even in a most repentant mood, would seek to open a channel to peace through the Jewish organizations operating in Istanbul, or, in the event such a program was in order, would use such minor characters as Brand and Gyorgy, even as preliminary negotiators.

3. The proposals are an effort to use Jewish influence to halt the Allied campaign to divert raw materials from the Axis, and to halt the flow of trade from neutral countries to Germany and her satellites.

Comment: It would certainly invalidate the Allied suggestion that the neutrals halt shipments to Germany, if the Allies suddenly made available shipments of coffee, cocoa, soap and trucks on their own account. It would certainly be bad propaganda for the Allies; and good propaganda for the Nazis, if they could even suggest that such a proposal was being considered. It would certainly call for a reconsideration of the entire Allied economic warfare program if supplies of the type indicated were made available to the Germans.

These considerations can be of value, however, only if it is assumed that the German originators of the plan actually believed that it had a chance of acceptance. Since it is clear that the Germans based their actions on the belief that the plan would not be acceptable, this suggestion does not appear to be valid, since it has value only if the Germans believed the plan would be accepted by the Allies.

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4. The proposals are a plot to place the Allies in a bad light, since they are designed to refusal, and will permit the German propagandists to say: "We offered to save the Jews, but the Allies turned us down!"

Comment: There is a possible element of truth in this supposition. It accepts the basic premise that the German originators made the Brand proposals intentionally unacceptable. It also accepts the premise that the Brand proposals are basically propagandistic in nature, a conclusion both logical and valid.

The disadvantage lies in the importance of the conclusion. Is it of sufficient value to the Germans, at this stage of the game, to be able to say: "We offered to save the Jews, but the Allies refused"?

There would be an advantage in lightening the burden on the German conscience. There would be a possible advantage in preparing for the peace table. The actual benefits, however, in war terms, would be minor. If we assume that the Germans are still placing their bets on, if not victory, at least a stalemate, then it is improbable that they would elaborate a propaganda campaign to prove a point of validity only in case of defeat.

5. The proposals are essentially an effort to prove that Germany is altering its anti-Jewish policy and is adopting a policy more favorable to the Jews.

Comment: The Brand proposals are essentially under-cover and secret in nature. They do not give the appearance of being an open propaganda attack, or of developing in that direction. Would the single Brand proposal, if revealed, counterbalance the scores of anti-Semitic actions taken in Hungary alone in recent months? Would the Brand proposal, even if blared forth with propaganda trumpets, overbalance the death cries of the Jews still being murdered in many sections of Europe? The Brand proposal is of too minor a nature to mean a complete shift in German policy. Its rightful position can be found within the framework of current German policy.

6. The proposals are an effort to lift from the Germans the burden of providing even a minimum subsistence for the Jews of Europe.

Comment: There is this possibility, that the Germans will say: "We have offered you the opportunity of saving the Jews of Europe. You have turned it down. Your action relieves us of responsibility. From here on, we are not responsible for what happens."

It is this fear that has, I am certain, led the Jewish leaders in Istanbul to consider the Brand proposals seriously. It is a valid fear, and one which fits into the basic requirements. It explains the unreasonableness of the proposals, the certainty that the Germans did not make the proposals acceptable and did not want them to be acceptable. It also explains the direction of the proposals and the means used to put them in the hands of the Jewish leaders in Istanbul.

It . . .

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It does not, however, explain the fact that the Brand proposals are essentially under-cover in nature. Had this been the German plan, it seems probable that the proposals would have been broadcast, would have been put before the maximum audience possible, would have been placed in action as part of a propaganda campaign. This failure to capitalize the Brand proposals leads to the conclusion that the proposals are intended, not as the end, as they would be in this case, but as the means to the propaganda result for which they were designed.

7. The proposals are part of an effort to split the Allies, to divide Russia from Great Britain and the United States.

Comment: If it is accepted that Germany can win a stalemate only by dividing the Allies, then it can be assumed that every effort will be made, up to the last minute, to split Russia away from the Allied camp. Such an end can be achieved best, if it can be achieved at all, only by convincing the Russians that the Allies are not playing an open and honest game. How better could this be attained than by demonstrating that the Allies were considering a proposal that made military equipment available to the Germans for use against the Russians.

This analysis of the basis for the Brand proposals fills most if not all of the qualifications:

1. It explains the use of Brand and Gyorgy, since it is essential that men be used who can return to German-occupied territory and there give "evidence" that their proposals were listened to by Allied leaders in the Middle East.
2. It explains the obvious design of the plan, and the peculiar emphasis on "10,000 trucks" for use "only on the Eastern front."
3. It explains the elaborate campaign to put in Allied hands a plan which the Germans obviously must have considered impossible of acceptance from the first. If the Brand proposals are propagandistic in nature, it is essential that they not be accepted. It is not acceptance that interests the Germans, but a hearing.

(Signed)
LESLIE ALBION SQUIRES
American Vice Consul

Copied by AFH

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ADD MEMOIRE

Attached to this Add Memoire is the text of a telegram received by the Foreign Office from the High Commissioner, Jerusalem. His Majesty's Ambassador is instructed to inform the United States Government of the proposal set out in that telegram and to put before them the reactions of His Majesty's Government which are as follows:

(a) Assuming suggestion was put forward by Gestapo in form conveyed to us, then it seems to be sheer case of blackmail or political warfare. Implied suggestion that we should accept responsibility for maintenance of additional million persons is equivalent to asking the Allies to suspend essential military operations.

(b) We could not bargain over any scheme with Gestapo and agree to trade lives against military and economic concessions calculated to stave off Germany's defeat. Demand that we should in effect raise blockade is totally inadvisable; to give Germany 10,000 lorries would bring important access of military strength to the enemy, and German stipulation of Spain and Portugal as sole exodus seems clearly designed to embarrass Allied military operations.

(c) Once committed to this kind of blackmail coupled with raising of blockade, which seems inseparably connected with it, the Allies would be driven to even further lengths.

/(d) It would appear

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(d) It would appear that selection of persons, if exchange were agreed, is to be in Hitler's hands. On this we think should be borne in mind that immense numbers of Allies are held by the Germans under terrible conditions and that to arrange any exchange on a basis to be determined by Hitler, leaving Allied internees and prisoners in German hands, would lay Governments open to extremely serious protest.

(e) While however refusing to deal with this scheme and channels through which it has come, we realize importance of not opposing a mere negotiation to any genuine proposals involving rescue of any Jews and other victims which merit serious consideration by Allied Governments. Whole record of United States Government and His Majesty's Government over refugees is a proof of their active sympathy with victims of Nazi terror. Accordingly if the German Government were willing to release Jews in position of extreme distress or danger, His Majesty's Government and United States Government would be willing to examine the possibilities of moving to and accommodating in Spain and Portugal such persons as could be handled without prejudice to vital military operations.

2. His Majesty's Government are informing Dr. Weizmann in strictest confidence of this proposal, but are making no comment beyond saying that they are in touch with the

/United States Government.

United States Government. It is presumed that the latter will finally inform Mr. Tolson. His Majesty's Government are anxious to learn at the earliest opportunity the views of the United States Government on what action, if any, should be taken. In particular they would be glad to know whether the United States Government would agree to instruct their Ambassador at Ankara, if he is approached by the Turkish Agency, to associate himself in a reply on the lines set forth above. His Majesty's Government would suggest that Mr. Tolson should be told that we cannot sanction him or any other allied citizen having any dealings with the Gestapo, but that we would agree to his conveying the substance of our observations to his Zionist friend from Hungary. This would show that, although we cannot enter into the monstrous bargain now proposed by the Gestapo, we are not far from indifferent to the sufferings of the Jews and have not shut the door to any serious suggestions which may be made and which are compatible with the successful prosecution of the war.

5. His Majesty's Ambassador at Ankara has been instructed to communicate the foregoing information in strictest confidence to his United States colleague, informing him that it has been transmitted to Washington in order that the reaction of His Majesty's Government may be coordinated with that of the United States Government. His Majesty's Ambassador has been instructed to return no definite reply to Mr. Tolson until the essential common line of action has been established between the two Governments.

/s/ The Secretant

4. The Department of State may be interested to know that, on being informed of the Gestapo's proposal, Dr. Baizmann merely observed that it looked like one more German attempt to embarrass the United States and United Kingdom Governments. He said, however, that he would like to reflect on the affair and receive news of any developments.

BRITISH EMBASSY,
WASHINGTON, D.C.
5th June, 1944

Copy of Cypher Telegram No. 683

To: Foreign Office

From: High Commissioner, Jerusalem.

Ben Gurion and Chertok came to see me this morning and stated as follows:

Special messenger started from Turkey on May 22nd and reached Jerusalem on 24th bringing them statement from their representatives in Istanbul (Barlas etc.) to following effect.

On May 19th well known and trusted Zionist representative in Hungary Joel Brandt arrived in German aircraft in Istanbul from Vienna accompanied by a Hungarian Gestapo agent who has several aliases (e.g. Andrew George, Andrew Gross) and who so far as is known is still in Turkey. Brandt has been sent to Turkey with this man as watchdog by high German Gestapo chiefs in Budapest to place the following order before Jewish leaders in Palestine, in land and America, and before the high Allied authorities.

As an alternative to complete annihilation of all Jews remaining in Hungary, Rumania, Czechoslovakia and Poland, the Axis are ready to evacuate one million Jews from these countries to Spain and Portugal (though not, as they specifically stated, to Palestine). In return they require delivery of 10,000 motor lorries and certain quantities of coffee, tea, cocoa and soap. As an act of good faith they are prepared, once the offer has been accepted in principle to release first batch of five to ten thousand Jews before receipt of corresponding consideration. They are also prepared to exchange Jews against German prisoners of war. If the offer is rejected they will proceed with their programme of wholesale liquidation. The emissary must return to Budapest with a reply within a fortnight from May 19th.

2. Brandt has the impression that these negotiations can be advanced if evidence is forthcoming that scheme is being earnestly considered in high Allied quarters. It is also believed that substitution of cash payments in Switzerland for deliveries in kind wholly or in part is not to be excluded and both sides barter transaction, namely evacuation and compensation can be realized by successive stages.

3. Brandt reports that 300,000 Hungarian Jews are already herded in concentration camps as a preliminary to deportation. The rounding up of other Jews is in progress. Plans have been made for daily deportation to Polish slaughter houses of 12,000 Jews of means but this has presumed to have been deferred pending negotiations. This report of the position in Hungary is said to be fully corroborated by various Hungarian Jewish eye witnesses who reached Palestine on May 24th.

4. In the light of the above and past experience agency fears that the fate of Hungarian, Czechoslovak and Rumanian Jews is sealed unless they can be saved in time and they firmly hope that the magnitude and seemingly fantastic character of the proposition will not deter the high Allied authorities from undertaking a concerted and determined effort to save the greatest

/possible

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possible number. They fully realize the overwhelming difficulties but believe they might not prove insurmountable if the task is faced with boldness demanded by unprecedented catastrophe".

5. Bertoz is proceeding to Istanbul as soon as he can (i.e. probably within a few days) for a more complete elucidation of the facts and will report to His Majesty's Ambassador Ankara.

6. Agency is keeping all the above information strictly secret and wishes us to do likewise but they ask that His Majesty's Government should as soon communicate it on the same terms to Washington and that the sole exceptions to the official secret should be

(A) Mr. Weizman personally to be informed by His Majesty's Government.

(B) Mr. Goldman personally to be informed by the United States authorities.

I enquired whether the agency desired any other specific act on than communications referred to in preceding paragraphs regarding Bertoz's enquiries and report to His Majesty's Ambassador Ankara, and they replied in the negative.

Copy of Cypher Telegram No. 583

To: Foreign Office

From: High Commissioner, Jerusalem.

Ben Gurion and Hertok came to see me this morning and stated as follows:

Special messenger started from Turkey on May 22nd and reached Jerusalem May 24th bringing them statement from their representatives in Istanbul (Darlas etc.) to following effect.

On May 19th well known and trusted Zionist representative in Hungary Joel Brandt arrived in German aircraft in Istanbul from Vienna accompanied by a Hungarian Gestapo agent who has several aliases (e.g. Andrew George, Andrew Gross) and who so far as is known is still in Turkey. Brandt has been sent to Turkey with this man as watchdog by high German Gestapo chiefs in Budapest to place the following order before Jewish leaders in Palestine, England and America, and before the high Allied authorities.

As an alternative to complete annihilation of all Jews remaining in Hungary, Rumania, Czechoslovakia and Poland, the Nazis are ready to evacuate one million Jews from these countries to Spain and Portugal (though not, as they specifically stated, to Palestine). In return they require delivery of 10,000 motor lorries and certain quantities of coffee, tea, cocoa and soap. As an act of good faith they are prepared, once the offer has been accepted in principle to release first batch of five to ten thousand Jews before receipt of corresponding consideration. They are also prepared to exchange Jews against German prisoners of war. If the offer is rejected they will proceed with their programme of wholesale liquidation. The emissary must return to Budapest with a reply within a fortnight from May 19th.

2. Brandt has the impression that these negotiations can be prolonged if evidence is forthcoming that scheme is being earnestly considered in high Allied quarters. It is also believed that substitution of cash payments in Switzerland for deliveries in kind wholly or in part is not to be excluded and both sides barter transaction, namely evacuation and compensation can be realised by successive stages.

3. Brandt reports that 300,000 Hungarian Jews are already herded in concentration camps as a preliminary to deportation. The rounding up of other Jews is in progress. Plans have been made for daily deportation to Polish slaughter houses of 12,000 Jews of means but this is presumed to have been deferred pending negotiations. This report of the position in Hungary is said to be fully corroborated by various Hungarian Jewish eye witnesses who reached Palestine on May 24th.

4. In the light of the above and past experience agency fears that the fate of Hungarian, Czechoslovak and Rumanian Jews is sealed unless they can be saved in time and "they firmly hope that the magnitude and seemingly fantastic character of the proposition will not deter the high Allied authorities from undertaking a concerted and determined effort to save the greatest possible number. They fully realise the overwhelming difficulties but believe they might not prove insurmountable if the task is faced with boldness demanded by unprecedented catastrophe".

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B. Shertok is proceeding to Istanbul as soon as he can (i.e. probably within a few days) for a more complete elucidation of the facts and will report to His Majesty's Ambassador Ankara.

C. Agency is keeping all the above information strictly secret and wishes us to do likewise but they ask that His Majesty's Government should at once communicate it on the same terms to Washington and that the sole exceptions to the official secret should be

(A) Dr. Weizman personally to be informed by His Majesty's Government.

(B) Dr. Goldman personally to be informed by the United States authorities.

I enquired whether the Agency desired any other specific action than communications referred to in preceding paragraph pending Shertok's enquiries and report to His Majesty's Ambassador Ankara, and they replied in the negative.

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CONTROL COPY

No. 676.

Ankara, June 5, 1944.

Subject: Transmitting Memorandum on the Arrival
in Istanbul of Representatives of the
Jewish Community of Budapest.

~~_____~~
6 WRB
3 War Refugee
Board (reas)
Wa (Mr. Steinhardt)
CH

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to enclose as of interest to the Department and the War Refugee Board a copy of a memorandum prepared for me by Mr. Rueben B. Resnik, the able representative in Istanbul of the American Joint Distribution Committee, dealing with the recent arrival in Istanbul of Joel Brand and Andre Gyorgy (alias Gross), bearing the proposal referred to in my telegram No. 950 of May 25th.

Respectfully yours,

Laurence A. Steinhardt
Laurence A. Steinhardt.

Enclosure: 011

1. Copy of Memorandum.

File No. 840.1

LAS/pe

Original only (for Ozalid machine)

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State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 27 1972

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Enclosure No. 1 to Despatch No. 676, dated June 1944
from the American Embassy at Ankara.

C O P Y

MEMORANDUM

I. INTRODUCTION

This report is being prepared at the request of His Excellency, Laurence A. Steinhardt, Ambassador of the United States to Turkey. It is based on personal interviews with Mr. Brand and interviews and conferences with persons who have had close contact with Mr. Brand during his visit in Istanbul and while he was a resident of Budapest. The report is incomplete in some details, especially with respect to the activities of one André Gyorgy, alias André Gross, but the United States Military Intelligence, the American Consulate General of Istanbul and other allied services have fuller details on the nature and scope of his varied operations and his possible relationship to the subject matter of this report.

II. This report will contain the following:

- A. Statement of Facts.
- B. Description of the Principals.
- C. Possible Interpretations.
- D. Developments and Likely Developments.

III. STATEMENT OF FACTS

On Friday, May 19, 1944, one Joel Brand and André Gyorgy, alias Gross, arrived on a German courier plane in Istanbul, Turkey. These men, it is reported, were placed on this plane at Vienna, Austria, after having been taken to the airport in a Gestapo car from Budapest to Vienna. Their names were not added to the official passenger list and it is reported that Mr. Brand had a letter of instructions from the Gestapo or their representatives to German Government and Military representatives in Sofia to facilitate his movement to Turkey. I do not know whether Mr. Gyorgy had similar credentials. In addition, Mr. Brand had letters of introduction from the Central Rat der Juden, Budapest, signed by Samuel Stern and Baron Freudinger. These letters were in the nature of "To whom it may concern" and were designed to place a badge of authenticity on Joel Brand, at least from the standpoint of that Jewish organization. In connection with this and other letters in Brand's possession, it is important to make the following observations. It is quite possible that this letter was given under duress. It conceivably could have been prepared by the Gestapo or it might have been given freely and voluntarily. In any event, the important fact is that the Gestapo and/or other German government or military organizations were fully aware of the contents of this letter. In addition, Brand had two other letters, one from a relief committee with whom certain persons in Istanbul had established a contact beginning in March, 1943 for purposes of extending relief and assistance to needy persons in Hungary and also for the transmission

of relief

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of relief to other occupied areas. This letter said in effect that everything possible be done to carry out the major proposal which Brand was bringing because according to the committee it was serious and it represented the only means of rescuing a large number of people who might otherwise be doomed. The third letter was from a United Youth Movement urging favorable consideration of the major plan and urging that specific plans for youth be carried out, among which was the transfer of substantial numbers from Hungary to Roumania through underground methods. Brand was permitted to take all of these letters and was not searched; as a matter of fact, he was instructed to say that if he were asked if he had anything on his person to say that he had nothing. He was also permitted to carry twenty-five hundred American dollars.

Brand travelled on a German passport issued in Vienna in the name of Engineer Eugene Band. He did not have a Turkish visa although efforts were made here by people whom he was to see to secure such a visa for him immediately upon his arrival. Brand had previously cabled to one of the persons in Istanbul with whom he had previously established contact when he was a member of a relief committee in Hungary. For several days after Brand arrived, he was free to make contact with persons with whom he had previously established relationships but on May 25 he was taken into custody by the Turkish police because he did not have a Turkish visa. A series of negotiations followed which ultimately released him from custody on Wednesday, May 31, 1944, although during the time he was under protective custody, he was permitted to sleep at the Pera Palas Hotel in Istanbul.

Shortly after Brand arrived a cable was received from Bratislava sent by a person regarded as trustworthy and with whom contact had been previously established by local persons. This cable requested large scale assistance for Hungarian Jews, reported that 10,000 Jews (Brand said 12,000) were being deported daily to concentration centers in Poland and that the railroads carrying these persons between Budapest and the Polish frontier be bombed by the Allies in order to decelerate, if not stop, the deportation.

On June 1, 1944, another cable was received from Bratislava urging that the suggestions in the first cable be implemented simultaneously, that is to say, that relief be sent and that the railroads be bombed and further that the proposals that Brand brings be given serious consideration.

The proposal, which is known to you and which was made by the German Bureau for Jewish Affairs in Hungary and had the consent and approval of one Eichmann (a leading figure in carrying out Nazi policy with respect to Jewish matters) is as follows: for goods, including 10,000 trucks, 2,000,000 bars of soap, 800 tons of

coffee

coffee, 200 tons of cocoa, and 800 tons of tea, etc., the Germans would liberate all of the Jews in Nazi-occupied countries and permit them to travel to neutral areas, mainly in the west; for example, Spain and Portugal and a limited number to Turkey. They are willing to permit the first transport of Jews to leave immediately after negotiations are completed between a responsible person representing the German bureau and a representative of responsible Jewish organization and/ or the Allied governments. (There seems to be a difference of opinion with respect to the latter matter. Brand claims that his instructions were to have a representative of a so-called responsible Jewish organization negotiate with the representative of the German bureau. Gyorgy claims that the German bureau insisted that a representative of the Allied governments be designated as the person to negotiate). It is understood that the first shipment of goods would follow immediately after the first transport of Jewish persons left the border of German-occupied territory.

The Germans also added that they would agree not to use the trucks on the western front.

IV. DESCRIPTION OF PRINCIPALS

I did not meet Gyorgy. He left Turkey for some point in the Middle East on June 1, 1944. André Antol Gyorgy, also known as André Gross, is said to be in his early forties. He is known to the British and American Intelligence and it is also reported that he has worked for the German Intelligence. Because Gyorgy acted as a courier for persons in Istanbul who were responsible for extending relief to occupied areas, he had established contact with a relief committee in Hungary of which Brand was one of the leading members. The reports are that Gyorgy performed his duties without difficulty and carried them through in a satisfactory and helpful manner. It is reported that he assisted Jewish persons to perform underground activities in occupied areas on numerous occasions. It is significant, however, that on his recent visit persons with whom he has had previous contact did not see him. It is said that American and British Intelligence regard him as a Gestapo agent and as completely unreliable.

Joel Brand appears to be in his late thirties, is a well-dressed, neat appearing, articulate person who speaks English fairly fluently. He was born in Budapest, but lived during the greater part of his life in Germany and returned to Budapest about nine years ago. In recent years he operated a small knit-wear factory which employs about forty persons. He is married, has two children, and the other members of his family who reside in Hungary include a mother and three sisters. He has been associated with a relief committee in Budapest for about two years, and during the past year and a half has taken a leading part in its activities. He has had contact with people in Turkey and in Switzerland and has received relief funds for use in occupied areas. He impressed most observers here as straight-forward, sincere and direct. I had several interviews with Brand and saw him shortly after

he was

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he was released from custody and after he had been under considerable pressure, both by the authorities and by the people with whom he conferred. I had the impression that he was not as sincere and straight-forward as other observers thought him to be. He had ready and direct answers for all questions and was apparently very cooperative and reiterated on several occasions the seriousness with which he was carrying out this mission. It is important, of course, to observe that Brand is not completely without anxiety and fear about his assignment and its possible consequences and any subjective judgments about him should be evaluated in terms of this man's present uneasiness.

The question naturally arises as to why Brand and Gyorgy were chosen for the present assignment. The Gestapo had known that Brand had received funds from sources in neutral countries for relief purposes in Hungary and other occupied territory and was regarded by persons in neutral areas as a responsible person. Therefore, any proposal addressed to the Jewish interests would have to be made to a person known to these interests, and regarded as responsible by them.

The German authorities knew that André Gyorgy had acted as a courier for persons in Turkey calling Brand and others in Hungary and it was known that these persons regarded Gyorgy as having performed his functions satisfactorily. It appears also that the German authorities regarded Gyorgy as a trustworthy person from their standpoint and finally it appears Gyorgy had other functions to perform on this trip of which Brand claims he did not know the details.

V. Possible Interpretations

A. These proposals, if carried out in their entirety or partially, would inure to the benefit of a small group of Germans in control of Hungarian matters.

B. The proposals brought by Brand and Gyorgy are a cover for the beginning of peace proposals and they are designed to enlist the interest of persons who might ultimately be used for these purposes.

C. These proposals may be designed to enlist so-called Jewish influence to disrupt the present efforts on the part of the Allies to have neutrals break commercial relationships with the Axis.

D. These proposals may be designed to:

1. Place the Allied Governments in a position of being unable to comply with the demands and therefore the Germans would be in a position to say that the Allies too are refusing to assist the Jewish people and therefore the anti-Jewish policy of the

Germans . . .

Germans has validity in that the Jewish people of Europe are in effect being ignored by the Allies.

2. Underground propaganda in Germany and other occupied areas says that Germany is losing the war, among other reasons, because of its strong anti-Jewish policy. By these proposals it can be said that Germany is adopting a new policy favoring the Jews and it would follow then that those who were responsible for carrying out the strong anti-Jewish policy could have it said later in mitigation of their acts that they ultimately established a program favoring the Jewish people.
3. Used as a means of effecting a split between the Allies -- that is -- United States and Great Britain from Russia.

E. It is conceivable that if the Germans are more or less serious about these proposals, they desire the large-scale transfer of Jews from occupied territory because they want to be relieved of the responsibility of providing even a minimum subsistence for these persons while they may be in concentration centers or even awaiting death. Moreover, if the present proposals are not carried out, it is thought that these might lead to other offers of assistance to the Jewish persons who may remain in occupied areas, and in this way the Germans will be relieved of the responsibility of whatever care they might be compelled to give.

F. It is also conceivable that a sharper conflict has developed between the various German groups and that one group is prepared to effect some type of "Putsch" and in order to swing Allied sympathy to their contemplated plans, have made this offer. In this connection, it is thought that possibly Gyorgy may have carried word about the plans for this "Putsch."

VI. Developments and Likely Developments

A. Gyorgy left for some point in the Middle East with the full knowledge of American and British Intelligence. Brand expects to leave for Palestine on June 5, 1944, to confer with leaders of the Jewish Agency.

B. The American and British Embassies in Turkey and the Palestine Government have more or less full knowledge of these proposals.

C. These proposals are known to American and Palestinian philanthropic agencies in Turkey and also in Switzerland.

D. Brand . . .

D. Brand states that he must not return to Hungary without Gyorgy.

E. Brand claims that he has the approval of the German authorities and of his own group in Budapest to travel further to carry on these negotiations and while time is of the essence no definite deadline has been set. Brand or persons acting for Brand at his request, or with his consent and approval, have communicated with persons in Budapest indicating that Brand has been received and that his proposals are being examined and that one of the first conditions toward further exploration is that there be immediate cessation of deportation of Jews from Hungary. Brand, or others for him, also intends to inform Budapest that he will leave for Palestine and perhaps other centers where he believes his proposal can receive more authoritative consideration. It is clear that the United States Government and His Majesty's Government will have to be kept fully informed of all developments as they occur and that any proposals should first be discussed with representatives of these governments.

F. It has been suggested that the German Gerschaefsdienst for southeastern Europe is probably completely informed of these proposals and possibly some representative of that group should be authorized to come to a neutral country for further discussion with persons designated by the governments interested.

G. It is clear that it appears advisable to keep all avenues for negotiation open, first because of major military and political implications involved and also because of the possibility of effecting the rescue of a substantial number of Jews.

H. Everyone with whom I have talked recognizes the impossibility of carrying out the proposals as they have been stated, but everyone believes that all should be done to continue exploration until it is definitely determined that no further good can be served by its continuance.

Finally, I wish to state that this report represents an analysis of the views of persons with whom I have talked and my own views. I cannot vouch for all of the facts but I am reporting them as I learned them.

May I also say that the report has been prepared in great haste and under considerable pressure and I should ask your indulgence on that score.

Respectfully submitted,

(Signed)

RUEBEN B. RESNIK

June 4, 1944.

In case of the American Consulate General,
Istanbul, Turkey.

RBR/MCS

Copied: HAS-AFH

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Handed to the High Commissioner for Transmission to London

26.5.1944.

The Executive of the Jewish Agency in Jerusalem has received the following authentic report from its representatives in Istanbul, which was brought by a special messenger.

A well-known Zionist representative in Hungary, Joel Brandt, arrived on 19th May by a German plane in Istanbul and reported to the representatives of the Jewish Agency as follows:

He had been sent to Turkey by high German Gestapo chiefs in Budapest to place the following offer before the Jewish leaders in Palestine, England and America, as well as the high Allied authorities. As an alternative to a complete annihilation, the Nazis are ready to evacuate one million Jews from Hungary, Roumania, Slovakia and Poland to Spain or Portugal. In return they ask for the delivery of ten thousand motor lorries and of quantities of coffee, tea, cocoa and soap. As an earnest of their good faith they are prepared, once the offer has been accepted, to release a transport of five to ten thousand Jews without immediately receiving the corresponding consideration. They are also prepared to exchange Jews against German prisoners of war. If the offer is rejected they will proceed with their programme of wholesale liquidation. The emissary must return to Budapest with a reply within a fortnight.

According to Mr. Brandt's impression the term of negotiations can be prolonged if evidence is forthcoming that the scheme is being earnestly considered in high Allied quarters. It is also believed that the substitution of cash payments in Switzerland and for deliveries in kind, wholly or in part, is not to be excluded and that both sides of the transaction, viz. evacuation and compensation, can be realised by successive stages.

Mr. Brandt reports that 300,000 Hungarian Jews are already herded in concentration camps prior to deportation. The rounding up of other Jews is in progress. Eight thousand Jews have already been deported to Poland. Plans had been made for the daily deportation to Poland of 12,000 Jews as from the 22nd May but presumably this has been deferred pending negotiations. This report of the position in Hungary is fully corroborated by eye witness accounts of several Hungarian Jews who managed to escape over the Roumanian border, embarked at Constanza and reached Palestine on the 24th May.

The Jewish Agency fear that in the light of past experience and of this fresh authentic information there cannot be the slightest doubt that the fate of the Hungarian Jewry is sealed and that Slovakia and Roumanian Jews will follow suit into the Polish slaughter houses unless saved in time. They firmly hope that the magnitude and the seemingly fantastic character of the proposition will not deter the high allied authorities from undertaking a concerted and determined effort to save the greatest possible number. They fully realise the overwhelming difficulties but believe they might not prove insurmountable if the task is faced with the boldness demanded by the unprecedented catastrophe. They have decided that Mr. Shertok should proceed to Istanbul for a more

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careful elucidation of the facts than is possible from Jerusalem.
Mr. Shertok will report to His Majesty's Ambassador in Ankara.

The Jewish Agency are keeping all this information strictly
secret.



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War Ref Bd
(Jm. Bille)

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM SENT

FROM: American Embassy, Ankara
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATE: May 26, 1944
RE: 950
x

1 copy only

CONTROL COPY

Following is Ankara No. 53 from the Ambassador for the War Refugee Board.

Reference is made herewith to Department's cable dated May 23, No. 458.

I am informed by the Turk authorities that their information regarding treatment of Jews in Hungary is limited because of the fact that since former minister ^{and} took refuge in the Turk Legation in Budapest, the Turkish Consul has guarded the building and controlled movements of the Turk minister and his staff have been severely restricted.

It is estimated from such information as the Turk authorities have been able to furnish me, supplemented by information from other authoritative sources, that at the time of the German occupation there were about 750,000 Jews in Hungary including about 25,000 Jewish refugees mostly from Slovakia and some from Poland. Approximately 200,000 of this total are to be in various concentration camps in Hungary. It is ^{said} that large deportations to Poland have begun from these concentration camps. Up to May 15 it is believed that no Jews have been removed from Budapest or its environs. However, a report has been received since that date to the effect that the transfer of Jews from Budapest to concentration camps in Hungary is imminent.

Two days ago an individual by the name of Joel Brand, documented as the representative of the Jewish Community of Budapest, arrived in Istanbul

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Intentional and submitted to Berlas of the Jewish Agency a proposal which it
 is said originated with the Commissioner for Jewish Affairs, Eichman, to
 the effect that in exchange for two million cakes of soap, two hundred tons
 of cocoa, eight hundred tons of coffee, two hundred tons of tea, and ten
 thousand trucks Eichman would agree to stop the deportation and extermination
 of Jews in all areas which the Germans occupied including Rumania, and he
 would further agree to permit the exit of Jewish limited numbers to
 Palestine and unlimited numbers to Spain.

STREIBER

DCR:VAB:100 5/29/44

JOEL BRANDT PROPOSAL

WAR REFUGEE BOARD RECORDS

CONTAINER 70

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