

HISTORY OF THE WAR REFUGEE BOARD, VOLUME I
PAGES 333 - 448

000001

HISTORY OF THE WAR REFUGEE BOARD

VOLUME I

PAGES 333 - 448

BOX 110

000002

IV. B. RELIEF PROGRAMS: THE BOARD'S FOOD PARCELS PROGRAM

In accordance with its directive from the President, the Board took bold and vigorous action to afford relief to the suffering victims inside Nazi territory. This was a difficult task. The British-American blockade authorities as a matter of established policy refused to permit the sending of food and other supplies through the blockade to "unassimilated" ^{1/} Jews and other minorities in Nazi hands primarily because adequate assurances were lacking that relief so provided would go to the intended beneficiaries and not to the enemy. At the time of the Board's creation a slight relaxation of this firm policy had been obtained by private relief agencies for the shipment of small quantities of food from neutral areas to specifically named detainees.^{2/} The Board undertook to expand these private schemes and to supplement them by a governmental program.

One of the Board's first steps was to call upon the International Committee of the Red Cross for suggestions and information concerning the specific needs and the possibilities of delivering food supplies to Jews and other minority groups in German-controlled areas.^{3/} The International Red Cross in February, 1944, replied with the suggestion that the Board immediately create stockpiles of food and clothing parcels, shipped from the United States, in Geneva or other neutral locations for eventual distribution exclusively to unassimilated groups in German concentration camps.^{4/} In making this request, the International Red Cross pointed out that the increasing scarcity of food and clothing in neutral markets required the shipment of supplies from other areas. In addition, the Red Cross indicated that it had been able to secure certain distribution guarantees from individual camp commanders that such relief supplies

^{1/} See Relief Programs: Efforts to Obtain Assimilated Status for Interned Civilians.

^{2/3} See Relief Programs of Private Organizations.

^{3/} Cable No. 279 to Bern dated January 27, 1944, comprising document 442.

^{4/} Letter from the International Red Cross to Minister Harrison at Bern dated February 29, 1944, comprising document 443.

would actually reach the intended beneficiaries. In transmitting this reply for the International Red Cross, Minister Harrison strongly recommended favorable action.^{1/}

ARRANGEMENTS MADE FOR EXPERIMENTAL FEEDING PROGRAM. Inquiries directed by the Board to its representatives abroad as well as to representatives of various private American relief agencies confirmed the fact that no substantial quantities of foodstuffs or clothing were available in the neutral countries of Europe for projects of this nature. In the light of the urgency created by the discriminatory Nazi food and work regulations resulting in thousands of deaths from malnutrition and slow starvation, and in view of the Red Cross assurances, the Board decided to press for the adoption on an experimental basis of a program providing for the shipment of food from the United States.

Allied blockade approval was requested, but was not forthcoming for some time. During the visit to this country in June, 1944, of Mr. Dingle M. Foote, Parliamentary Under Secretary of the British Ministry of Economic Warfare, the matter was again forcefully raised. In discussions between Mr. Foote and representatives of both the State Department and the Foreign Economic Administration, an agreement was reached at the Board's insistence with the British in June, 1944, permitting the shipment of 100,000 food parcels per month for a period of three months, for distribution by the Red Cross to persons in Nazi concentration camps where satisfactory distribution could be guaranteed. In addition, and at the Board's suggestion, it was also agreed that 25,000 clothing parcels might be prepared for later distribution to these same people when certain additional information had been obtained from the Red Cross on the clothing situation in the camps, if circumstances warranted.

Assurances were to be required from the Red Cross as to distribution to intended beneficiaries and as to adequate supervision to insure no benefit to the enemy, and reports were to be made on the delivery of all consignments. A memorandum to this effect was drawn up following conferences between British and United States officials, and was approved by representatives of both Governments.^{2/}

While the British originally had proposed that this program be limited to detained persons in what was formerly occupied

^{1/} Cable No. 1366 from Bern dated March 6, 1944, and Cable No. 2031 from Bern dated April 1, 1944, comprising document 444.

^{2/} Memorandum dated June 12, 1944, comprising document 445.

France, at the Board's insistence it was agreed that the proposed measure would not be so limited and that it would apply to any internment camp in Europe selected by the Red Cross.

Red Cross Intercession with Germans Sought. Shortly after this agreement was reached the Relief Subcommittee of the Joint Blockade Committee was asked to request the International Red Cross to approach German authorities immediately to ascertain whether they would, in principle, permit the Red Cross to distribute food and clothing parcels in all camps in German-controlled Europe holding persons not assimilated to the status of prisoners of war.

Minister Harrison and Board Representative McClelland in Bern were asked to follow this matter closely upon the receipt by the Red Cross of the Blockade Committee proposal.^{1/}

During the time formal blockade authorization was awaited Representative McClelland continued his efforts to work out with the Red Cross procedures and guarantees with respect to the distribution of such parcels. Representative McClelland had previously indicated that he was not only convinced of the adequacy of Red Cross distribution controls; in many cases he felt that the controls offered were superior to those available for assimilated groups.^{2/}

Counterproposal Advanced by the Red Cross. Joint representations along the lines proposed were made to the Red Cross on July 4, 1944, by British and American representatives. The Red Cross, however, reiterated a position it had previously assumed: any approach to the Germans for permission to distribute relief packages generally to unassimilated persons confined in camps in enemy territory, the Red Cross felt, would be flatly refused. A counterproposal was advanced by the Red Cross, the substance of which was relayed to the Board by Representative McClelland in mid-July, 1944. In this counterproposal the Red Cross pointed out that in the case of selected camps, it was able to assure the delivery of individual packages and to verify their receipt by the detainees for whom they were intended, despite the official attitude of the Germans in refusing to assimilate such detainees to the status of prisoners of war or civilian internees. In the past Red Cross delegates had been able to make unofficial visits to these camps, and it was felt that in the future they would be able to repeat such visits.

^{1/} Cable No. 2198 to Bern dated June 28, 1944, comprising document 446.

^{2/} Cable No. 3877 from Bern dated June 17, 1944, comprising document 447.

The distribution which blockade authorities had proposed individually and personally by a Red Cross delegate in the various camps was no more possible, it was asserted than it was in prisoner-of-war camps. On the other hand, the Board was assured that Red Cross delegates had many possibilities of verifying, both by means of regular visits, as in the case of prisoner-of-war camps, and through controls exercised independent of the regular visits, the fact that in the camps to be specified, relief goods were being consumed by the beneficiaries for whom they were intended and were not diverted.

For these reasons, the Red Cross asked that blockade authorities take into account the realities of the situation and permit the use of available control methods in determining whether the distribution of relief goods was being carried out satisfactorily, in place of insisting on any one form of control. In assuming responsibility for such distributions, the Red Cross indicated that in the event any irregularities were brought to its attention in connection with the receipt of relief goods, it would suspend all shipments immediately.

While the Red Cross could not reveal either the number or the names of civilian prisoners in its possession, or information regarding the size of the various camps, delivery during the initial month of a maximum of 30,000 parcels for concentration camps and 35,000 to Theresienstadt (to which a Red Cross delegate had access and which was regarded as a ghetto and not a camp) was proposed.^{1/}

Approval of Counterproposal by Blockade Authorities Sought.
On July 31, 1944, in a communication to the United States Embassy in London, the Foreign Economic Administration, the State Department, and the Board jointly asked that Ambassador Winant present the Red Cross counterproposal to the Relief Subcommittee of the London blockade authorities as soon as possible and endeavor to obtain a favorable reply. The Board pointed out that the economic warfare considerations that had previously precluded making packages available to the Red Cross for distribution under the plan suggested had become less controlling than had been the case in the past. Ambassador Winant was informed of the Board's conviction that the amount of food which might fall into enemy hands could not affect the outcome of the war nor prolong it, while the desperate situation of the people held in these camps made it increasingly necessary that an effort be made to give them some assistance even in the absence of ironclad guarantees of 100-percent receipt by the intended beneficiaries.^{2/}

^{1/} Cable No. 4578 from Bern dated July 18, 1944, comprising document 448.

^{2/} Cable No. 6035 to London dated July 31, 1944, comprising document 449.

Formal blockade authorization for the shipment of a total of 300,000 specially prepared food parcels for distribution on the basis the Red Cross proposed was eventually received on August 5, 1944, thereby enabling the Board to get the program under way.^{1/}

PARCELS FROM "S.S. CHRISTINA" MADE AVAILABLE TO INTERNEES.

Pending the formal blockade approval of the Board's proposal to ship food packages from the United States, agreement was obtained in June, 1944, to permit distribution by the International Red Cross to persons interned in German-controlled territory, of certain foodstuffs still fit for human consumption salvaged from the cargo of the "S.S. Christina" following the beaching of this vessel near C te, France. The food supplies in question were contained in some 315,000 food parcels originally intended for distribution to French and Belgian prisoners of war.^{2/} Negotiations were carried on with French and Belgian officials, who held title to the parcels and with the International Red Cross. In the course of these negotiations, the Board guaranteed to arrange for any incidental financing that might be necessary.^{3/}

Word was received from Algiers that the sale of such food packages as were available, at a price to be decided by the Red Cross, was acceptable to the French Committee of National Liberation,^{4/} and negotiations with the French were concluded in Washington.

The Belgian Government-in-Exile indicated that it preferred to forward to Geneva for ultimate allocation to Belgian war prisoners as originally planned, any supplies that could still withstand such shipment. Agreement was obtained to sell the balance of the salvageable materials, however, to the Red Cross for allocation as proposed.^{5/}

Report Received on Distribution of "Christina" Supplies. According to a report on the distribution of the "Christina" goods, subsequently submitted by the Red Cross through Board Representative McClelland, a total of 25,600 two-and-one-half kilogram

- ^{1/} Cable No. 6279 from London dated August 5, 1944, comprising document 450.
- ^{2/} Cable No. 4681 from London dated June 10, 1944, comprising document 451, and Cable No. 4829 to London dated June 19, 1944, comprising document 452.
- ^{3/} Cable No. 1925 to Algiers, Cable No. 4829 to London, and Cable No. 2102 to Bern, all dated June 19, 1944.
- ^{4/} Cable No. 2175 from Algiers dated June 29, 1944.
- ^{5/} Cable No. 5194 from London dated June 30, 1944.

parcels were made up from the 56 tons of supplies salvaged and shipped during September and October, 1944. About half were individually addressed while the remainder were in collective shipments to unassimilated persons in the concentration camps of Buchenwald, Sachsenhausen-Oranienburg, Dachau, Ravensbrueck, Hamburg-Neuengamme, Natzweiler, Weimar-Schliessfach, Mauthausen, Bergen-Belsen, and to the camp described as Feldpost 07702. Individual receipt cards used in collective shipments to the camp at Dachau alone recorded the names and numbers of 8,000 political deportees. Since German authorities had consistently refused to communicate lists of deportees to the Red Cross, the information thus obtained had a double importance. In many cases it was the source of the first news families had had from deported relatives; in a number of instances the cards even bore the names of deportees previously thought to have been executed. Moreover, possession of this information later enabled the Red Cross to address parcels later supplied directly by the Board to these individuals by name, with greater assurance of proper receipt. Red Cross delegates were able to visit all of the camps to which parcels were sent and were satisfied that the great majority of the packages reached the intended beneficiaries. Distribution of collective shipments was greatly facilitated in certain concentration camps where the Red Cross was instrumental in persuading the commanders to allow the designation of "men of confidence" for various national groups. Only a few camps were encountered where the prisoners were not allowed to return the individual receipts.^{1/}

Initial Shipment of Board Food Parcels from United States Made. As the result of a meeting between representatives of the American Red Cross and the Board, an agreement was reached in July, 1944, whereby the former was to arrange all details in connection with the packing and shipping of the 300,000 food parcels for which formal blockade authorization was then being awaited.^{2/} Appropriate arrangements were later made with the Office of Price Administration for the necessary releases from rationing controls of the food purchased for packaging.^{3/}

- ^{1/} Cable No. 7365 from Bern dated November 6, 1944, comprising document 453, and Cable No. 8044 from Bern dated December 9, 1944.
- ^{2/} Letter to the American Red Cross dated July 25, 1944, comprising document 454, and letter from the American Red Cross dated July 28, 1944, comprising document 455.
- ^{3/} Letters to the Office of Price Administration dated August 16 and 23, 1944; see also letter to the Office of Price Administration dated February 12, 1945, and letter from the Office of Price Administration dated February 28, 1945, relative to the subsequent expansion of this program.

In order to take advantage of certain shipping space made available by the American Red Cross on the "S.S. Gripsholm" before the Red Cross itself could accomplish the packing of the foodstuffs for which space was available, and in order to speed the parcels to the intended beneficiaries, the Board in cooperation with the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee in August, 1944, arranged for the purchase and packaging of 15,000 three-kilogram parcels commercially at a cost of \$41,600. These parcels went forward toward the end of August to Gothenburg, Sweden,^{1/} from which point they were distributed by delegates of the International Red Cross, as planned.^{2/}

Funds Obtained for Balance of Experimental Feeding Program.
On September 12, 1944, President Roosevelt, in a directive to the Secretary of the Treasury, the War Food Administrator, the Chairman of the American Red Cross, and the Executive Director of the Board, ordered that certain unobligated balances on allocation to the Treasury Procurement Division and the War Food Administration from Congressional appropriations for foreign war relief be obligated in the amount of \$1,068,750 for the purpose of defraying the costs of procuring and packaging food products for the remaining 285,000 parcels in the Board's initial program.^{3/} Following packaging by the American Red Cross, a total of 224,323 of these parcels were forwarded on December 1, 1944, on the "S.S. Saivo" to Gothenburg for transshipment to the German port of Lubeck.^{4/} On December 19, 1944, the American Red Cross shipped the balance of 60,672 parcels aboard the "S.S. Caritas II" to the French port of Toulon (this change of destination having been made at the suggestion of the International Red Cross because of difficulties encountered in reshipment from Gothenburg), from which point they were transhipped overland to Geneva for ultimate distribution to camps in southern Germany. The movement of all of these supplies was completed without expenditures for customs or for any form of taxation in the countries receiving such relief.

Experimental Shipments to Poland Authorized. Board Representative McClelland meanwhile reported that, in view of dire relief

- ^{1/} Cable No. 2897 to Bern dated August 23, 1944.
- ^{2/} Cable No. 6263 from Bern dated September 21, 1944.
- ^{3/} Memorandum from the President dated September 12, 1944, comprising document 456.
- ^{4/} Cable No. 4001 to Bern dated November 25, 1944. A report from Board Representative Olsen in June, 1945, described in detail the distribution of these parcels; see Cable No. 2071 from Stockholm dated June 8, 1945.

needs in Poland, the Red Cross was willing to try to send collective test shipments to several specified Polish localities. It was pointed out, however, that guarantees concerning control of the safe arrival and distribution of the parcels could not be given as there was no prospect of securing permission for Red Cross delegates to visit these camps. Representative McClelland felt that despite these circumstances test shipments to Poland were advisable, particularly in view of the frightful conditions under which many thousands of persons were reportedly living ^{1/} in these camps.

The Board in turn authorized the forwarding of such test shipments under the best obtainable distribution guarantees. No repeat shipments to Poland were to be made until reasonable assurance was obtained that supplies from the test shipments had reached the intended beneficiaries.

Equitable Distribution of Board Food Parcels Urged. The Board in late December, 1944, found occasion to emphasize that arrangements for the distribution of all its parcels should be made on an equitable basis motivated solely by need and accessibility. ^{2/}

Reiteration of this previously stated position of the Board had been prompted by reports from Representative McClelland indicating that a restricted distribution was being accorded food salvaged from the "S.S. Christina" ^{3/} as well as parcels from the initial lot shipped by the Board to Gothenburg ^{4/} and that further distribution of the Board's parcels limited to non-Jews in German internment was planned in order to compensate for feeding programs carried out by the International Red Cross and the Swedish Red Cross with funds made available by private relief agencies, in the course of which the distribution had been predominantly Jewish. ^{5/} It was the Board's feeling that distribution among potential beneficiaries on racial or religious grounds not only represented unjustified discrimination but also indicated a departure from previous agreements with the Red Cross that the distribution of relief should be motivated solely by the needs of endangered persons and by their accessibility.

^{1/} Cable No. 8169 from Bern dated December 16, 1944.

^{2/} Cable No. 4314 to Bern dated December 22, 1944, comprising document 457.

^{3/} See above.

^{4/} Cable No. 8044 from Bern dated December 9, 1944, comprising document 458.

^{5/} See Projects of Private Organizations: American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and World Jewish Congress.

In view of indications that the term "camps" was being narrowly interpreted by the Red Cross, the Board also asked Representative McClelland to urge that the term be interpreted realistically, in order that distribution might be made to all places where unassimilated persons were confined, detained, or otherwise forcibly congregated and where some reasonable assurance could be obtained that the parcels would reach the intended beneficiaries.

Board Urged To Obtain Trucks for Relief Deliveries. With the rapid deterioration of the internal rail transportation system in Germany in early 1945, the Germans became increasingly less inclined to make freight cars available to the International Red Cross for delivery of the Board's food parcels. Various shipments of relief supplies were held up for long periods before delivery could be accomplished.

On the other hand, the spread of internal disorganization in Germany and the breakdown of transportation resulted in a growing independence on the part of camp commanders and isolated S.S. groups. As the result of local arrangements, the Red Cross was able to reach camps in the Vienna area, particularly those with Jewish inmates, a willingness to collaborate in relief activities having been indicated by the S.S. commandant there and by the S.S. officer in charge of Hungarian Jewish deportees in Austria. As a further example of this trend, a delegate working out of Red Cross headquarters at Uffing, near Munich, had been admitted to the hitherto unvisited and unknown camp of Landsberg-am-Lech, in Eastern Bavaria, where there were about 15,000 internees. The delegate reported that the commander of the camp was unusually accommodating and that if he had had any means of transportation or a supply of parcels available at his headquarters, he would have encountered no difficulty in making direct personal delivery of them to this camp. The same possibilities were said to apply to the camp at Dachau near Munich.

These and other circumstances surrounding the distribution of relief supplies were outlined to the Board in a cable from Representative McClelland in January, 1945, in which he recommended that serious consideration be given to endeavoring to obtain a number of five- to seven-ton trucks since lack of transportation facilities had created a bottleneck preventing delivery of Board parcels. He expressed the conviction that if four or five such vehicles could be lent to the International Red Cross for use in delivering Board parcels to accessible camps, much could be accomplished, particularly in the Vienna area. Superior control possibilities represented a further important advantage in truck deliveries, as contrasted with the uncertain controls obtainable with shipments made via German railroads, when it was frequently difficult to trace freight cars, which might be held up on sidings.

000011

for weeks and even months without the knowledge of the Red Cross, as had occurred when cars carrying parcels from Gothenburg were detained near Luebeck.1/

Authorization Obtained for Expansion of Feeding Program. Initial reports on distribution received from the Red Cross indicated that distribution guarantees had been maintained and that nationals of all the United Nations were sharing in the distribution of these parcels. In view of these indications of success in the experimental program undertaken and because of the extreme urgency of extending additional aid to unassimilated persons in German-controlled territory, the Board in conjunction with the State Department and the Foreign Economic Administration in November 1944 again approached the Relief Subcommittee of the Joint Blockade Committee through Ambassador Winant in London for authorization for the shipment of an additional 300,000 three-kilogram parcels.2/ This authorization was promptly obtained.3/

On January 31, 1945, by Presidential directive to the Secretary of the Treasury, the Chairman of the American Red Cross, and the Executive Director of the Board, the President ordered that unobligated balances on allocation to the Treasury Procurement Division from Congressional appropriations for foreign war relief be obligated in the amount of \$1,125,000 for the proposed expansion of the Board's feeding program.4/

BROAD NEW RELIEF PROGRAM UNDERTAKEN BY BOARD. At a meeting of the members of the Board in February 1945 certain new circumstances prevailing in enemy territory were outlined and a proposed plan of action was discussed. According to the best information available, while the Germans by that time had apparently abandoned wholesale extermination of detainees, large numbers of the physically unfit were in imminent danger of death from starvation, exposure, and deliberate neglect.5/ It seemed clear that if the

- 1/ Cable No. 455 from Bern dated January 22, 1945, comprising document 459.
- 2/ Cable No. 9419 to London dated November 10, 1944, comprising document 460.
- 3/ Cable No. 10022 from London dated November 16, 1944, comprising document 461. Blockade authorization for a third shipment was obtained in March 1945. See Cable No. 1554 to London dated March 1, 1945, and Cable No. 2353 from London dated March 7, 1945.
- 4/ Memorandum from the President dated January 31, 1945, comprising document 462.
- 5/ Cable No. 416 from Bern dated January 20, 1945.

000012

lives of these persecuted groups were to be saved, food, clothing, and medicines would have to reach them at once, and if possible, they should be removed to places of safety without unnecessary delay. Approval was given at this meeting to certain proposals advanced by Executive Director O'Dwyer for obtaining the necessary cooperation of the International Red Cross and of the Swiss Government and for obtaining the necessary food, medicines, and transportation equipment. The two-fold program approved envisaged (1) furnishing food and other relief through the International Red Cross, in addition to that previously dispatched, to physically unfit unassimilated detainees within enemy-controlled territory, and (2) their removal by the Red Cross to safety in Switzerland as soon as possible.1/

Toward these ends, Board Representative McClelland was asked to reexamine the availability in Switzerland of food and other relief supplies as well as transportation equipment. He was further requested to seek the consent of the Red Cross to deliver the relief supplies in enemy territory and to organize and effectuate the removal of detainees to Switzerland. With the concurrence of the Currie Mission then in Switzerland, Representative McClelland was also authorized to approach the Swiss Government for the purpose of obtaining its consent to make available to the Red Cross immediately the necessary supplies and equipment for this relief and evacuation program against the Board's assurances of replenishment or compensation at a later time, and to admit, house, and maintain all detainees reaching Swiss borders until the Board should succeed in arranging for their evacuation to Allied territory.2/

Preparations Made in Switzerland. Appropriate arrangements were promptly made with the Red Cross by Representative McClelland and the Swiss Government. Efforts were also begun to arrange for trucking facilities so urgently required for relief deliveries. It proved unnecessary, however, to ask the Swiss to make food supplies available for deliveries to concentration camps against replacement guarantees, since the remaining 60,000 parcels in the Board's original experimental feeding program had reached Geneva from Toulon, France, by that time.3/

1/ For details concerning evacuations accomplished under this new program see Rescue to and through Switzerland.

2/ Cable No. 819 to Bern dated February 23, 1945, comprising document 88.

3/ Cable No. 1345 from Bern dated March 2, 1945.

In order that Representative McClelland might have adequate assistance in the execution of this all-out life saving project, Board Representative Katzki following his return from Turkey was dispatched to Switzerland in mid-March 1945. 1/

United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration Aid Pledged. To prepare for the eventuality of heavy last-minute evacuations of detainees from Germany to Switzerland and the problem of housing and maintaining large numbers of additional refugees in that country, Executive Director O'Dwyer approached the Director of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration for help. He proposed that it agree to make food supplies available in Switzerland for the maintenance in Switzerland of refugees evacuated from Germany. Upon being advised that the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration could not operate in Switzerland, the Board suggested that its help be offered to the International Red Cross and that the refugees succeeding in reaching Switzerland be regarded as persons in transit to refugee camps operated by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. After due consideration of the matter, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration agreed to make the supplies available to the International Red Cross, if needed. 2/

Transportation Deadlock Broken. Because of the shortage of transportation equipment available to the Red Cross for the distribution of relief supplies and in view of the fact that the Swiss Government had proved unable to provide trucks for this purpose, Representative McClelland was meanwhile authorized to make an effort to obtain the necessary trucking facilities from any possible sources. 3/ In accordance with these instructions, a number of trucks were rented from private concerns in Switzerland; more were understood to be available if tires could be obtained. The Young Men's Christian Association in Switzerland and the French Government both made trucks available to the Red Cross directly, but they could not go forward because fuel with which to operate them could not be obtained. 4/

United States Army Comes To Board's Aid. At this juncture, the Board went to the War Department for assistance in procuring

1/ Cable No. 1014 to Bern dated March 10, 1945.

2/ Letter from Executive Director O'Dwyer to General Counsel of United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration dated March 15, 1945, comprising document 463. See also Cooperation with International Organizations: United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration.

3/ Cable No. 998 to Bern dated March 9, 1945, comprising document 464.

4/ Cable No. 1740 from Bern dated March 23, 1945.

the urgently needed gasoline, tires and lubricating oils. General Eisenhower, at the personal request of Secretary Stimson, suggested that representatives of the Board proceed to Paris immediately to discuss the details of the Board's problem with the appropriate Allied military authorities at SHAEF Headquarters. Executive Director O'Dwyer immediately ordered Board Representatives Mann, McClelland, and Katzki to undertake the proposed negotiations with the military authorities. As a result of these discussions with representatives of the Allied Supreme Command, a number of truck tires and tubes were obtained and arrangements were made for the delivery of 2,000 gallons of gasoline weekly.

After his return to Bern, Representative McClelland informed the Board that the Swiss trucks which he had obtained were being equipped with the tires and tubes which had been secured but that other trucks available to the Board in Switzerland were of the type that burn Diesel oil instead of gasoline. The cooperation of both the United States and British Legations was enlisted in connection with the blockade aspects of replacement, and a quantity of Diesel oil was subsequently released from Swiss commercial sources for the use of the Red Cross in the operation of the Board's trucks.^{1/}

Food Parcels Obtained from Prisoner-of-war Stockpile. Meanwhile, in Washington, efforts were made to obtain the additional 300,000 parcels for which blockade authorization had been obtained in January 1945. Unfortunately the American Red Cross, which had arranged for the packaging as well as the shipment of the bulk of previously approved parcels, was unable to extend its packaging facilities for this second shipment but agreed to extend shipping facilities for the movement of these supplies. Accordingly, plans were made to obtain the new parcels commercially through the Procurement Division of the Treasury Department.

However, upon exploration of the commercial field interested in producing packages of this nature, it became apparent to the Board that even under the best circumstances it would take months to go through the sequence of obtaining food allocations, food priorities, the food itself, and the containers to package the food and to ship the parcels to Europe. Food conditions in this country were exceedingly stringent and restrictive and the Board lost all hope of being able to obtain the food in this country in time. Once again Executive Director O'Dwyer went to the War Department for help. At his request, the Army agreed to sell the Board the food contained in 206,000 United States prisoner-of-war parcels from its large stockpile in the Geneva warehouses of the International Red Cross, on condition that the parcels be re-packaged by the Board to remove Red Cross and Army symbols before

^{1/} Cables No. 1981 and 1982 from Bern, both dated April 5, 1945.

000015

delivery to the concentration camp inmates.1/ Appropriate instructions accordingly were sent to Board Representative McClelland 2/ and to the American Red Cross representative in Geneva.3/

Assistance to "Schutzhaeftlinge" Arranged. Despite the fact that central German authorities had categorically refused permission for the Red Cross to distribute relief parcels generally and the reception of parcels by internees had been tolerated only in a small number of camps,4/ according to a report received from Board Representative McClelland in February 1945 there were indications that the S.S. might officially permit the distribution of relief parcels to certain categories of interned schutzhaeftlinge (the term apparently applied by the Germans to all persons detained for security reasons).5/

Although there was no indication as to what had prompted the more liberal attitude which the S.S. had reportedly assumed, it obviously offered an excellent opportunity for sending into Germany not only relief to persecuted minorities but also supervisory Red Cross personnel whose presence might serve as an invaluable protection for the lives of thousands of persons as the Nazi system collapsed. The Board therefore asked Representative McClelland to work with the Red Cross toward extending the scope of the Board's feeding program to include assistance to schutzhaeftlinge if at all possible. Representative McClelland was also asked to ascertain (1) whether certain national groups to which the Germans had indicated that parcels might be sent comprised or excluded Jews and (2) whether the persons so designated included persons actively engaged in labor in Germany.6/

A written request along the lines requested was later submitted by Representative McClelland to the Red Cross, urging that visits of its delegates to places of detention of all categories of schutzhaeftlinge be increased to the greatest possible extent, that the number of its representatives in Germany be augmented as substantially and as rapidly as possible, and that its delegates

1/ Exchange of letters between Executive Director O'Dwyer and War Department dated March 30, 1945, and April 4, 1945, comprising documents 465 and 466.

2/ Cables No. 1392 and No. 1430 to Bern dated April 9 and 12, 1945.

3/ Cable No. 161 dated April 18, 1945, to Geneva comprising document 467.

4/ See Relief Programs: Efforts to Obtain Assimilated Status for Interned Civilians.

5/ Cable No. 1056 from Bern dated February 16, 1945.

6/ Cable No. 304 to Bern dated February 23, 1945, comprising document 468.

be instructed to take every advantage of the mounting confusion within Germany in order to mitigate the lot of all civilian detainees and to dissuade German officials from last-minute extremes.1/

In response, the Red Cross indicated its willingness in principle to undertake the delivery of relief supplies to any category of accessible schutzhaeftlinge subject to the provision of means of transporting such supplies. Five new delegates of the Red Cross left for Germany at about this time, and efforts were continued to arrange for the sending of others.2/

With respect to the two specific inquiries made by the Board with respect to relief to schutzhaeftlinge, Representative McClelland's investigations revealed (1) that Jews were included in the national groups designated by the Germans as eligible to receive relief and (2) that most schutzhaeftlinge who were capable of physical labor were, in fact, employed by the Nazis at tasks of varying importance to Germany's war effort, although no statistics were available as to the numbers actually engaged in such work. This being the case, plans were made whereby the Red Cross was to deliver parcels, insofar as was practically possible, only to those schutzhaeftlinge who were ill and exhausted.3/

Additional Red Cross Delegates Sent into Germany. As the result of a subsequent meeting arranged by the President of the International Red Cross with German officials, permission was obtained for Red Cross delegates to be stationed in all major camps, both for schutzhaeftlinge and for prisoners of war, to exercise personal supervision over relief distributions. This permission was on condition that the delegates remain in these camps until the end of the war and not travel back and forth to Switzerland, a condition presumably imposed for purposes of military security. The Germans further agreed to permit deliveries of relief of all types, by truck or other means of transport, to schutzhaeftlinge without regard to nationality or race, although the request was made that, in view of the difficulties of the food supply situation for the Germans themselves, any such distributions of relief, especially to marching columns along the roads, be discreetly conducted. Following receipt of this blanket approval, additional delegates for the camp posts were selected by the Red Cross and sent into Germany as rapidly as possible.4/

- 1/ Cable No. 1159 from Bern dated February 22, 1945.
- 2/ Cables No. 1159 and 1345 from Bern dated February 22 and March 2, 1945.
- 3/ Cable No. 1346 from Bern dated March 2, 1945, comprising document 469.
- 4/ Cable No. 1727 from Bern dated March 22, 1945, comprising document 470.

000017

Reports Received on Parcels Distribution. 1/ While the rapidity of military developments somewhat hampered the Board's feeding program, it redoubled the importance of measures to bring relief to detainees who otherwise might not have received even the minimum quantities of food necessary to sustain their lives. By the time of Germany's military collapse, shipments of Board food parcels had been made to concentration camps at Dachau, Buchenwald, Sachsenhausen-Oranienburg, Hamburg-Neuengamme, Mauthausen, to a camp known only as Feldpost 07702 at which a number of prominent French political deportees were held, and to Bergen-Belsen; 2/ to Ravensbrueck and to a Red Cross depot set up at Luebeck for later delivery to camps within reach; 3/ to Theresienstadt, Landsberg-am-Lech; to still other concentration camps in Wurtemberg and Bavaria, to a temporary camp for deportees set up by the Red Cross at Hoechst, to the Vienna and Bolzano areas, and for distribution along the roads to convoys of rescued detainees. 4/

As another means of speeding the delivery of food parcels to civilian internees in Germany, some 40,000 kosher food parcels from the Board's stocks at Gothenburg were released in March 1945 to representatives in Sweden of the World Jewish Congress. 5/ Except for a small number of individually addressed parcels dispatched through parcel post channels, actual distribution of these parcels was effected by the Swedish Red Cross under the usual distribution guarantees required by the Board. Principal beneficiaries were Jewish inmates of Bergen-Belsen, Ravensbrueck, and other camps in Germany, the remainder of the parcels having been used to afford relief to Danish Jews in Sweden and to a large group of evacuees from Ravensbrueck who reached Denmark in critical condition after having gone without food for several days. 6/

1/ In accordance with the directive contained in Executive Order No. 8495 of July 26, 1940, and those issued subsequently, the Board on June 25, 1945, submitted to the President a report on the receipt, transportation and distribution of all relief supplies purchased for its food parcels with funds made available under Section 40 of the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act, 1941, the Third Supplemental National Defense Appropriation Act, 1942, and the Second Deficiency Appropriation Act, 1944.

- 2/ Cable No. 3044 from Bern dated December 9, 1944, comprising document 458.
- 3/ Cable No. 2139 from Bern dated April 14, 1945, comprising document 471.
- 4/ Cable No. 2823 from Bern dated May 19, 1945, comprising document 472.
- 5/ Cable No. 1765 from Bern dated March 24, 1945, and Cable No. 566 to Stockholm dated March 23, 1945.
- 6/ Cable No. 2071 from Stockholm dated June 8, 1945, comprising document 473.

000018

In addition, trucks and fuel obtained through the Board's efforts made possible the shipment to German-controlled areas of substantial relief supplies furnished by private American relief agencies having representation in Switzerland.^{1/}

Shortly thereafter, however, Board Representatives Katzki and McClelland advised the Board that reports of Red Cross representatives returning to Switzerland from Germany, Austria, and Northern Italy indicated that, while Allied military authorities were making every effort to assure adequate relief to liberated civilian detainees and deportees, an unavoidable delay in reaching many of the persons formerly aided by the Board through the Red Cross was being experienced because of the magnitude and complexity of the task and the difficulties of transportation and distribution involved. Emergency calls for aid for liberated detainees and deportees in temporary agglomerations and on the roads had been sent by Red Cross field workers. Large numbers of sick persons remaining in concentration camps were also reported to be in need. In view of the fact that Red Cross truck convoys were still leaving Switzerland periodically so that the Red Cross was technically able to continue relief shipments to meet this situation, the Board's representatives strongly recommended that certain undistributed Board parcels remaining in Switzerland be permitted to remain at the disposal of the Red Cross in order to enable it to fill this temporary urgent demand.^{2/}

The urgency of this situation led the Board to agree that the movement of these remaining parcels (which had, in effect, already been turned over to the Red Cross) should not be interrupted, this agreement being predicated on the approval of the appropriate military authorities.^{3/} A total of 28,792 parcels subsequently went forward for distribution to the persecuted groups for which they had been intended.^{4/}

Board Disposes of Surplus Food Parcels to United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. At the time the fighting ceased in Europe, the Board had exhausted practically all of its regular parcels and would soon have been sending the prisoner-of-war parcels obtained from the United States Army. As it was, on

^{1/} Cable No. 2421 from Bern dated April 25, 1945.

^{2/} This recommendation was made by phone, telephonic communication with the Board's representatives having by that time been established; see also Cable No. 2797 from Bern dated May 18, 1945.

^{3/} Cable No. 525 to Bern dated May 17, 1945.

^{4/} Letter from Representative McClelland in Bern dated June 20, 1945.

VE-Day the parcels which had been obtained from the Army had not yet been repackaged to remove Red Cross and Army symbols.^{1/} With the approval of the Surplus Property Board,^{2/} arrangements were made with officials of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration for the sale of these parcels to the latter agency for distribution to displaced persons in liberated countries. The Foreign Economic Administration handled the procurement for the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration and the proceeds of the sale reverted to the United States Treasury.

Relief to Refugees Liberated from the Germans. Following the complete victory of Allied Armies in Europe, requests continued to reach the Board for relief and assistance to refugees liberated from the Germans. Since the Executive Order establishing the Board limited Board activities to the rescue and relief of victims of enemy oppression in enemy-occupied territory, on May 10, 1945, the Board's representatives abroad were advised that all requests concerning relief and assistance to refugees liberated from the Germans should therefore be referred to the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, appropriate military authorities, private refugee organizations, and to other national and international groups authorized to deal with matters of this nature.^{3/}

^{1/} See Cable No. 2638 from Bern dated May 10, 1945.

^{2/} Letter from Executive Director O'Dwyer to Surplus Property Board dated May 30, 1945, and reply from Administrator of Surplus Property Board dated May 30, 1945, comprising documents 474 and 475.

^{3/} Cable No. 1763 to Bern dated May 10, 1945, comprising document 476 ; repeated in substance on the following day to Stockholm.

000020

IV C. RELIEF PROGRAMS: RELIEF THROUGH THE BLOCKADE TO COOPERATING NEUTRALS

Information available to the Board early in 1944 indicated that Switzerland and other neutral countries contiguous to enemy-held territory would be in a position to receive larger numbers of children and presumably of adult refugees from enemy oppression if facilities for additional imports of clothing and foodstuffs were granted. Accordingly, with the concurrence of the State Department and the Foreign Economic Administration, the Board asked Ambassador Winant in London to undertake to obtain from the appropriate British authorities prompt concurrence in the Board's position that definite assurances should be given to Turkey, Spain, and Portugal that additional food and clothing would be allowed through the blockade, subject to appropriate safeguards, in amounts sufficient to meet increased needs arising from their reception of refugees. In the case of Switzerland and Sweden, the proposed action was to be a renewal, in stronger terms, of Anglo-American assurances extended at the instigation of the State Department some time before the establishment of the Board.^{1/}

On June 7, 1944, Ambassador Winant cabled that the British were prepared to instruct their representatives accordingly.^{2/}

Following British approval of the proposed action, United States Missions in these five countries were asked to convey such assurances to the governments to which they were accredited. These governments were also to be assured that the United States and Great Britain would make every effort to arrange for the onward movement to other havens of such refugees as might be received.^{3/}

The British Foreign Office subsequently indicated that British representatives had been directed to approach the five neutral governments concerned, acting in concert with United States representatives.^{4/}

- ^{1/} Cable No. 3953 to London dated May 18, 1944, comprising document 477.
- ^{2/} Cable No. 4560 from London dated June 7, 1944.
- ^{3/} Cable No. 2259 to Bern dated July 3, 1944, comprising document 478; repeated in substance on the same date to Stockholm, Ankara, Madrid, and Lisbon.
- ^{4/} Cable No. 5729 from London dated July 20, 1944, comprising document 479.

000021

In response to the Board's request, Board Representative Hirschmann reported that following discussions on this score with his British colleague, both were of the opinion that at that particular time, joint action of the nature suggested would not achieve the desired purpose and might in fact result in the adoption of a less liberal policy than that then being pursued by the Turks. In place of making a formal approach, Representative Hirschmann and the British representative proposed to take advantage of the first appropriate opportunity in the course of other discussions, to emphasize the readiness of the United States and British Governments to assist Turkey, whenever it might become necessary, by arranging the onward movement of refugees to other havens and by making available food and other supplies as well as funds.^{1/}

The United States Embassy in Madrid likewise deferred formal representations on the matter of transblockade relief inasmuch as the matter had been discussed with the Spanish Government in the course of previous representations on refugee aid in general. Moreover, the Embassy felt that the large quantities of food and other supplies sent to Spain from the United States during the preceding 18 months for the relief of refugees there, of which there were about 200 tons still available for distribution, were concrete indications of the willingness of this country to ease Spain's burdens.^{2/}

GENERAL POLICY ON RELIEF IN NEUTRAL AND LIBERATED AREAS.

Throughout its existence the Board received numerous requests for financial assistance in relieving refugees both in neutral areas and in areas liberated by Allied military forces. The Board's position, however, was that such activities were not properly within its prescribed functions of rescuing and relieving victims of enemy oppression "in imminent danger of death." Requests limited to the relief and assistance of refugees in areas liberated from the Germans were therefore referred to the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, to appropriate military authorities, to the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, to private refugee organizations, and to other national or international groups authorized to deal with such problems.^{3/} This interpretation of the Board's functions was not, however construed to limit its activities in connection with the removal of refugees from liberated areas where their presence served to discourage or prevent the rescue of additional refugees from enemy-occupied areas (as, for example, in the case of the evacuation of refugees from Southern

^{1/} Cable No. 1287 from Ankara dated July 15, 1944.

^{2/} Cable No. 2622 from Madrid dated July 28, 1944.

^{3/} Circular Cable to Ankara, Stockholm, Lisbon, Caserta, London, and Bern, dated September 7, 1944, comprising document 224.

000022

Italy to the emergency shelter at Oswego, New York^{1/}, nor did it serve, after the military collapse of Germany, to interrupt the onward movement of parcels dispatched by the Board from the United States, on consignment to the International Red Cross, for distribution to civilian internees in enemy territory.^{2/}

^{1/} See Rescue to and through Italy.

^{2/} See Relief Programs: Board's Food Parcels Program.

000023

IV D - 1. RELIEF PROGRAMS: PROJECTS OF PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS

AMERICAN CHRISTIAN COMMITTEE FOR REFUGEES

At the time the Board came into being the American Committee for Christian Refugees (which later became the American Christian Committee for Refugees) was carrying on a program of relief to refugees in Switzerland, the remittance of \$30,000 having been licensed by the Treasury for that purpose. In March 1944, upon the recommendation of the Board, this license was amended to permit disbursements to help sustain the lives of endangered persons in France. Additional funds totaling \$119,500 were subsequently dispatched to Switzerland by the Committee for the continuation of this work in France and to carry on rescue and relief work in other enemy territory.^{1/}

^{1/} See Rescue to and through Switzerland.

000024

IV D - 2. RELIEF PROGRAMS: PROJECTS OF PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS

AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE

Relief for Refugees in France. Upon the Board's recommendation, clearance from the London Blockade Committee was obtained with respect to two proposals on the part of the American Friends Service Committee involving the purchase in neutral countries of foodstuffs to be dispatched for the relief of particularly needy displaced persons and refugees in France.^{1/} This clearance, to which the Foreign Economic Administration also lent its support, was based on condition that the proposed purchases in Portugal and Spain be subject to the usual controls as to kinds of goods procured and firms or intermediaries dealt with, and on condition that the proposed exports from Switzerland comply with current instructions to the United States Legation at Bern. Appropriate Treasury licenses were therefore issued in June 1944 permitting the transfer of \$25,000 to the American Friends' representative at Lisbon and \$25,000 to their representative in Switzerland.

In July 1944 the license covering the Friends' operations from Switzerland was amended in order to permit the purchase, from funds already remitted, of \$10,000 worth of French francs, to be acquired as prescribed by the Board's representative in Switzerland, for use in connection with general relief work in France.^{2/} The remaining \$15,000 was used to purchase food parcels, as was the total amount remitted to Lisbon. Distribution of the foodstuffs purchased was handled by the International Red Cross.

Remittance to Sweden. In May 1944, upon the Board's recommendation, the Friends were licensed by the Treasury to send \$1,600 to Sweden for general refugee work there.

- ^{1/} Cable No. 4046 to London dated May 22, 1944; and Cable No. 4227 from London dated May 25, 1944.
^{2/} Cable No. 2785 to Bern dated August 14, 1944.

000025

IV D - 3. RELIEF PROGRAMS: PROJECTS OF PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS

AMERICAN JEWISH JOINT DISTRIBUTION COMMITTEE

Funds Remitted to Switzerland for Red Cross Feeding Project.
Shortly after its formation, the Board sent an urgent message to the International Red Cross indicating that it was prepared to see that funds were made available to the Red Cross at once to provide food and medicines for persecuted groups in German-occupied areas who were denied the facilities available to the rest of the population.^{1/} After this message was sent, the Board learned that in December 1943 the Red Cross had proposed to the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees that funds be placed at its disposal to carry out such a program in Rumania, Hungary, Croatia, and Slovakia, and in any other area where such relief action might be feasible, but the necessary funds had not been obtained.

The availability of private funds for such a program was meanwhile explored by the Board, as a result of which the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee ^{2/} indicated its willingness to make \$100,000 available to the Red Cross, to be used for the purchase of food and other supplies in neutral countries and in Rumania and Hungary. At the Board's request, a Treasury license was issued to the Committee in February 1944 permitting the remittance of \$100,000 to the International Red Cross to finance its feeding program in Rumania, Hungary, Croatia and Slovakia.

The Board then advised the Red Cross of this action, asking it to report developments and to indicate what other assistance might be needed to carry out this and similar operations.^{3/}

^{1/} Cable No. 279 to Bern dated January 27, 1944.

^{2/} A few weeks before the creation of the Board the Joint Distribution Committee had been licensed by the Treasury to finance rescue and relief operations in enemy territory through its own representatives abroad, to the extent of \$200,000.

^{3/} Cable No. 437 to Bern dated February 9, 1944, comprising document 480.

000026

At the same time Ambassador Winant in London was asked to advise the Intergovernmental Committee of what had been done in the matter.^{1/} Although the Intergovernmental Committee had previously indicated that it wished to act as intermediary for transmitting both public and private funds to the Red Cross in order that it might supervise the spending of the money and the observance of the conditions imposed by the license, Ambassador Winant was asked to advise the Committee that no such arrangement seemed warranted and that as a matter of policy the licensing of private funds from the United States for refugee projects would continue to be handled by the Treasury Department upon approval of the project by the Board.

Minister Harrison subsequently transmitted details as to how the Red Cross proposed to spend the funds provided; food parcels, pharmaceutical projects, and clothes were to be bought in Rumania, Hungary, Slovakia, and Switzerland and distributed to Jewish refugees in Transnistria, Theresienstadt, Cracow, Holland, and Upper Silesia.^{2/} Following the receipt of this information, the Joint Distribution Committee delegated full authority to the Red Cross with respect to use of the funds provided. In view of fears expressed by the Red Cross that any publicity concerning these efforts would result in German measures to thwart the entire program of relief to persecuted groups in Axis territory,^{3/} the Joint Distribution Committee agreed that no attempt would be made to publicize its role as underwriter.^{4/}

Report Received on Relief Afforded by Red Cross. In the program subsequently carried on by Red Cross delegates, funds were sent to Rumania for the purchase of food and clothing and for financial relief to Jewish refugees there, especially returning Transnistria deportees;^{5/} food shipments, both collective and in parcels, were made to Theresienstadt, Birkenau, and Bergen-Belsen, and to Cracow and Budapest; and medical supplies were shipped to Bergen-Belsen, to the Jewish community at Zagreb, to camps in Croatia, and to Theresienstadt, Birkenau, and Cracow.^{6/}

- ^{1/} Cable No. 1020 to London dated February 9, 1944.
- ^{2/} Cables No. 1334 and 1366 from Bern dated March 4 and 6, 1944, comprising documents 481 and 482.
- ^{3/} Cable No. 995 from Bern dated February 17, 1944.
- ^{4/} Cable No. 916 to Bern dated March 20, 1944, comprising document 483.
- ^{5/} See Rescue from Rumania.
- ^{6/} Cable No. 8044 from Bern dated December 9, 1944, comprising document 458.

000027

Other Feeding Programs Undertaken from Switzerland. In February 1944 the Joint Distribution Committee was licensed to send a total of \$36,000 for the purchase of food parcels in Switzerland for distribution by the International Red Cross to specific internees at Theresienstadt and elsewhere in Czechoslovakia.

In December 1944 a further remittance of \$100,000 was made by the Committee to Saly Mayer, its representative in Switzerland, for the purchase of additional food supplies of Swiss origin for general distribution to internees in enemy territory.

Relief to Refugees in Shanghai. The remittance by the Committee over a period of a year of an aggregate of \$715,000 through Switzerland for the relief of refugees stranded in Shanghai was also licensed by the Treasury.^{1/} In April 1945 application was made by the Committee for permission to dispatch food parcels on an experimental basis for the relief of these refugees in Shanghai. Treasury approval was subsequently obtained for the remittance of \$1,000 to Sweden for this purpose.

Relief Supplied through Portugal. Early in 1944 the Board was advised by private sources that some 18,000 Jews were confined in concentration camps in the Netherlands, where their lives were in danger because of insufficient food. In view of these reports, the Joint Distribution Committee in February 1944 sought Board approval of its application for a license to send funds to Portugal for the purchase of food there for distribution to internees in these camps in the Netherlands. After certain delays encountered at the Foreign Economic Administration were brought to the Board's attention, the Board was instrumental in having the matter cleared there and with the Netherlands Embassy. Arrangements were then made for immediate issuance by the Treasury of an appropriate license covering remittances totaling \$72,000.

Another license issued to the Joint Distribution Committee in April 1944 permitted the remittance of \$5,000 to Lisbon for the purchase in Portugal of food for individual parcels to be distributed to internees in enemy territory. This license enabled the Committee to send food parcels on an experimental basis to internees at Bergen-Belsen near Hannover, Germany.

Funds Remitted to Turkey. In July 1944 the Joint Distribution Committee was licensed by the Treasury to remit \$100,000 to Turkey

^{1/} See also Rescue to and through Switzerland and Projects of Private Organizations: Vaad Hahatzala Emergency Committee and Jewish Labor Committee.

for the purchase of food parcels to be distributed by the Red Cross to internees in enemy territory, particularly in Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and Rumania, including the Transnistrian area. The remittance of an additional \$50,000 was authorized shortly thereafter to cover the cost of feeding and transporting refugees from Turkey to Palestine.

Relief in Albania. In February 1945, at the Board's request, the Treasury licensed the sending of \$10,000 by the Joint Distribution Committee to its representatives in Albania, to be used to provide emergency assistance to 300 refugees in Tirana, Albania.

Relief to Jews in Rome. Substantial relief also was afforded through the Vatican to the Jewish community in Rome as the result of arrangements made by the Joint Distribution Committee.^{1/}

Combined Rescue and Relief Operations. In addition to its remittances abroad for outright relief, substantial funds were made available by the Joint Distribution Committee for rescue and incidental relief activities licensed by the Treasury at the request of the Board. The Committee was licensed by the Treasury to remit a total of \$12,728,000 to Switzerland for combined rescue and relief work carried on by Committee representatives in France, Rumania, Hungary, Slovakia, the Balkans, and throughout enemy territory in general.^{2/} The remittance of \$25,000 to the Committee's representative in Lisbon was licensed for the purpose of carrying out certain projected rescues from southern France and for relief needs incidental to such evacuations.^{3/} Remittance to Spain totaling \$150,000 were authorized for such rescue and relief work.^{4/} Funds totaling \$100,000 were sent to Stockholm for Hungarian rescue and relief operations carried on under the direction of the Board's representative in Sweden,^{5/} in addition to \$5,000 dispatched by the Committee for the maintenance of Finnish refugees in Sweden.^{6/} Remittances to Italy totaling \$341,000 were authorized for combined rescue and relief activities, \$291,000 of this amount being for straight relief purposes in Northern and Southern Italy and on behalf of endangered persons in hiding in Yugoslavia itself.^{7/}

- ^{1/} See Rescue to and through Italy.
- ^{2/} See Rescue to and through Switzerland.
- ^{3/} See Rescue to and through Portugal.
- ^{4/} See Rescue to and through Spain.
- ^{5/} See Rescue from Hungary.
- ^{6/} See Rescue to and through Sweden.
- ^{7/} See Rescue to and through Italy.

000029

Treasury licenses issued upon the recommendation of the Board also permitted the Joint Distribution Committee to reimburse the Jewish Agency in Jerusalem to the extent of \$641,353 for expenses incurred in evacuating refugees from the Balkans to Palestine.

000030

IV D-4. RELIEF PROGRAMS: PROJECTS OF PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS

AMERICAN RELIEF FOR CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Shortly after the Board was set up, it learned that since June of 1943 two labor groups had been attempting, without success, to secure the allocation of funds for rescue and relief to United Czechoslovak Relief (subsequently American Relief for Czechoslovakia) and to another private relief agency,^{1/} both of which were members of the National War Fund and entitled to consideration in the latter's allocations. The American Federation of Labor through the Labor League for Human Rights and the Congress of Industrial Organizations through its War Relief Committee jointly had a call upon the use of \$1,000,000 of the amount held by the National War Fund in its contingencies account. Although neither group was a member of the War Fund, a right to make recommendations had been acquired by virtue of their substantial contributions to the Fund.

Up until February of 1944 these labor groups had not been able to secure the allocations in which they were interested because the National War Fund could not make special appropriations without the approval of the President's War Relief Control Board, and that agency had in turn been unwilling to approve programs that did not lend themselves to the strict accounting and reportorial requirements which the War Relief Control Board had set up for its own guidance.

Following discussions between representatives of both Boards, these difficulties were resolved in a letter addressed to the War Refugee Board under date of February 12, 1944, in which the President's War Relief Control Board indicated that it was prepared to give clearance to both of the allocations proposed "immediately upon receipt of notice from the War Refugee Board that the projects can be carried out under their authorization and, as required by the Executive Order establishing the President's War Relief Control Board, in conformity with foreign policies as determined by the Secretary of State."^{2/}

- 1/ See Projects of Private Organizations: American Relief for Norway.
- 2/ Letter from the President's War Relief Control Board dated February 12, 1944, comprising document 484.

000031

Detailed proposals with respect to rescue and relief in Czechoslovakia and elsewhere in enemy territory were subsequently presented to the Board by the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations and the Board in turn expedited the release of the funds required to put the various programs into action.^{1/}

Thus in March 1944, at the Board's request, American Relief for Czechoslovakia was licensed by the Treasury to remit to Great Britain \$150,000 obtained from the National War Fund for combined rescue and relief operations in Czechoslovakia, Poland, and France. In October 1944 the remittance of an additional \$200,000 was authorized for this purpose.^{2/}

^{1/} In addition to the Czechoslovakian and Norwegian projects, funds were eventually obtained from the National War Fund for rescue and relief in Poland (see Projects of Private Organizations: Polish War Fund), in Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands (see Projects of Private Organizations: Belgian War Relief, Friends of Luxembourg, and the Queen Wilhelmina Fund), and for additional operations in France (see Projects of Private Organizations: The French Relief Fund).

^{2/} See Rescue from Czechoslovakia.

000032

IV D - 5. RELIEF PROGRAMS: PROJECTS OF PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS

AMERICAN RELIEF FOR NORWAY

Early in 1944 arrangements were made by the Board, in cooperation with the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations, for the allocation by the President's War Relief Control Board of funds from the National War Fund to cover certain Norwegian rescue and relief activities and for the relief of refugees in Sweden.^{1/} At the Board's request, the Treasury subsequently licensed the sending to Stockholm of a total of \$400,000 for these operations. A second Norwegian project was meanwhile initiated from Sweden under the direction of the Board's representative there, for which the remittance of \$120,000 was authorized.^{2/}

^{1/} For a discussion of circumstances leading to these arrangements see Projects of Private Organizations: American Relief for Czechoslovakia.

^{2/} See Rescue to and through Sweden.

000033

IV D - 6. RELIEF PROGRAMS: PROJECTS OF PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS

BELGIAN WAR RELIEF

In June 1944 the Board in cooperation with the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations made arrangements for the allocation by the President's War Relief Control Board of funds from the National War Fund to cover certain projected rescue and relief operations in enemy territory, primarily for the benefit of Belgian nationals. Funds totaling \$115,000 were authorized by Treasury license to be remitted to Switzerland for these activities.^{1/}

^{1/} See Rescues to and through Switzerland.

000034

IV D - 7. RELIEF PROGRAMS: PROJECTS OF PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS

BOARD OF NATIONAL MISSIONS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

In June and July 1944, upon the recommendation of the Board, Treasury licenses were issued authorizing the remittance to Stockholm of a total of \$15,000 for combined rescue and relief work in enemy territory under the direction of the Board's representative in Sweden. These funds were used primarily for the relief of Hebrew Christians in dire need in Hungary. The money was provided by the Board of Missions at the request of the War Refugee Board which had been advised of the special needs of this group of refugees by its Special Representative in Stockholm.^{1/}

^{1/} See Rescue to and through Sweden.

IV D - 8. RELIEF PROGRAMS: PROJECTS OF PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS

EMERGENCY COMMITTEE TO SAVE THE JEWISH PEOPLE OF EUROPE

In June 1944 the Emergency Committee To Save the Jewish People of Europe was licensed by the Treasury to send \$5,000 to Turkey for certain combined rescue and relief activities in enemy territory to be undertaken under the direction of the Board's representative in Turkey.^{1/}

^{1/} See Rescue to and through Turkey.

000036

IV D - 9. RELIEF PROGRAMS: PROJECTS OF PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS

FRENCH RELIEF FUND

With the approval of the Board, the French Relief Fund in June 1944 was licensed by the Treasury to send \$150,000 to Great Britain to be used for combined rescue and relief operations on behalf of persecuted groups in enemy territory, particularly those of French nationality. Funds for these activities were allocated by the President's War Relief Control Board from the National War Fund at the request of the Board, in cooperation with the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations.^{1/}

^{1/} See Rescue Programs: Other Projects.

000037

IV D - 10. RELIEF PROGRAMS: PROJECTS OF PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS

FRIENDS OF LUXEMBOURG

As the result of arrangements made by the Board in June 1944 in cooperation with the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations, funds were allocated by the President's War Relief Control Board from the National War Fund for combined rescue and relief activities, primarily on behalf of Luxembourg nationals in enemy territory. Treasury licenses subsequently obtained authorized remittances to Switzerland totaling \$45,000 for this purpose.^{1/}

^{1/} See Rescue to and through Switzerland.

000038

IV D - 11. RELIEF PROGRAMS: PROJECTS OF PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS

INTERNATIONAL RESCUE AND RELIEF COMMITTEE

Relief to Spanish Republican Refugees in France. In February 1944, upon the recommendation of the Board, the International Rescue and Relief Committee was licensed by the Treasury to remit funds totaling \$45,000 to Switzerland for the relief of large numbers of Spanish Republican refugees interned in southern France. These funds, as well as others remitted under a license issued in August 1944 authorizing the sending of an additional \$30,000, were dispensed under the direction of the Board's representative in Switzerland.

Combined Rescue and Relief Projects. Other licenses issued to the International Rescue and Relief Committee authorized the remittance to Switzerland of a total of \$150,000 for rescue and relief work in Axis territory, particularly in northern France;^{1/} \$35,000 for operations using Turkey as a base, to be expended under the direction of the Board's representative there;^{2/} and \$24,000 for rescue and relief activities directed by the Board's representative in Sweden.^{3/}

- ^{1/} See Rescue to and through Switzerland.
- ^{2/} See Rescue to and through Turkey.
- ^{3/} See Rescue to and through Sweden.

000039

IV D - 12. RELIEF PROGRAMS: PROJECTS OF PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS

JEWISH LABOR COMMITTEE

Relief of Refugees in Shanghai. In May 1944 the Jewish Labor was licensed by the Treasury, upon the approval of the Board, to send \$5,000 to Shanghai through the Polish Legation in Bern for the relief of Polish nationals among the refugees stranded in Shanghai.^{1/}

Combined Rescue and Relief Operations. In February 1944 the Jewish Labor Committee was licensed to send \$50,000 to Switzerland to be used to accomplish rescues from enemy territory and to sustain the lives of endangered persons pending such rescue.^{2/} Two months later the Committee was licensed to send \$10,000 to Portugal for rescue and relief work being carried out from that country.^{3/}

^{1/} See also Projects of Private Organizations: American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and Vaad Mahatzala Emergency Committee.

^{2/} See Rescue to and through Switzerland.

^{3/} See Rescue to and through Portugal.

IV D - 13. RELIEF PROGRAMS: PROJECTS OF PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS

POALE ZION ORGANIZATION AND JEWISH NATIONAL WORKERS ALLIANCE

Treasury licenses issued in August 1944 to the Poale Zion Organization and the Jewish National Workers Alliance, jointly, authorized the remittance of \$18,000 to Switzerland ^{1/} and \$33,000 to Palestine for certain combined rescue and relief activities in enemy territory, including particularly the relief and transportation of refugees from neutral areas to which they had escaped, to Palestine.

^{1/} See Rescue to and through Switzerland.

000041

IV D - 14. RELIEF PROGRAMS: PROJECTS OF PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS

POLISH WAR RELIEF

Arrangements made by the Board in August 1944 in cooperation with the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations resulted in the allocation by the President's War Relief Control Board of funds from the National War Fund to Polish War Relief for the purpose of carrying on certain combined rescue and relief operations, particularly on behalf of Polish nationals in enemy territory. Funds totaling \$400,000 were remitted to Great Britain for this purpose, pursuant to Treasury licenses; the remittance of an additional \$25,000 for the projected operations was made to Sweden, for expenditure under the direction of the Board's representative there.^{1/}

^{1/} See Other Rescue Projects. Only \$50,000 of the funds remitted for the Polish War Relief rescue and relief project were utilized, due to difficulties encountered in conversion of the funds in Great Britain and in finding a satisfactory means of transferring the funds to Poland.

000042

IV D - 15. RELIEF PROGRAMS: PROJECTS OF PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS

THE QUEEN WILHELMINA FUND

Arrangements made by the Board in the summer of 1944 in co-operation with the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations resulted in the allocation by the President's War Relief Control Board of funds from the National War Fund to the Queen Wilhelmina Fund for the purpose of carrying on certain combined rescue and relief work, particularly on behalf of Dutch nationals in enemy territory. Treasury licenses were subsequently obtained for the remittance of a total of \$215,000 to Board Representative McClelland in Switzerland for this purpose.^{1/} The local currency equivalent of \$165,000 of this amount was made available to responsible labor groups in Holland by the Netherlands Government-in-Exile per arrangements made in London between that government and representatives of the sponsoring labor groups in this country. Upon receipt of adequate assurances given by the Netherlands Government through the Netherlands Embassy in Washington that the local currency equivalent had been made available in Holland, the Board authorized Board Representative McClelland to pay the Swiss franc equivalent of \$165,000 to the Dutch Minister in Bern as payment to the Dutch Government for the advances made.^{2/}

^{1/} See Rescue to and through Switzerland.

^{2/} Cable No. 317 to Bern dated January 19, 1945.

000043

IV D - 16. RELIEF PROGRAMS: PROJECTS OF PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS

SELFHYP OF EMIGRÉS FROM CENTRAL EUROPE

In February 1944, following approval by the Board of the projected operations, a Treasury license was issued to an organization known as Selfhelp of Emigrés from Central Europe authorizing the necessary communication with enemy territory and the remittance of funds for the purpose of initiating certain combined rescue and relief operations. In all, remittances to Switzerland totaling \$40,000 were authorized for these activities.^{1/}

^{1/} See Rescue to and through Switzerland.

000044

IV D - 17. RELIEF PROGRAMS: PROJECTS OF PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS.

UNITARIAN SERVICE COMMITTEE

Relief of Refugees in Switzerland. In February 1944, at the Board's request, a Treasury license was issued to the Unitarian Service Committee permitting it to send \$51,000 to Switzerland for the purpose of affording relief to refugees from Nazi oppression who had succeeded in reaching Swiss soil.

Medical Aid to Refugees in France. A second relief project undertaken by the Unitarian Service Committee was the organization of medical aid for refugees in France. Toward this end, a Treasury license was granted the Unitarians in March 1944, authorizing the remittance of \$30,000 for the projected operations.^{1/}

Combined Rescue and Relief Work. In August 1944 the Unitarians were licensed to undertake certain combined rescue and relief operations in enemy territory, particularly in Italy, Hungary, and the Balkans; the remittance to Turkey of \$30,000 was authorized for this purpose.^{2/}

^{1/} Cable No. 851 to Bern dated March 15, 1944.

^{2/} See Rescue to and through Turkey.

000045

IV D - 18. RELIEF PROGRAMS: PROJECTS OF PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS

VAAD HAHATZALA EMERGENCY COMMITTEE OF THE UNION OF ORTHODOX RABBIS OF THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

Relief to Refugees in Shanghai.^{1/} Early in 1944 application was made by the Vaad Hahatzala Emergency Committee of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis for a Treasury license to send funds through Switzerland to Shanghai for the relief of a rabbinical group there. In March 1944, with the Board's approval, the Committee was licensed to remit \$50,000 for the immediate needs of this group. Arrangements were made in April 1944 whereby further remittances were to be effected through the Polish Legation in Bern; in subsequent months funds totaling \$188,100 were dispatched via this channel.

Feeding Project Undertaken from Tangier. In March 1944 a Treasury license was issued at the Board's request to the Vaad Hahatzala Emergency Committee for the purchase in Tangier, Morocco, of food parcels for distribution among Jewish internees in concentration camps, primarily in Czechoslovakia and Poland. This project was later expanded to include relief to internees in camps in Hungary as well. Remittances to Morocco totaling \$19,000 were authorized in this connection.^{2/}

For a period 500-gram parcels were sent from Tangier through the Spanish post office, addressed to hundreds of persons interned at Theresienstadt in Czechoslovakia and at Birkenau in Poland. Other parcels managed to reach refugees in hiding in Belgium, Holland, and France. Individual receipts were received from Theresienstadt indicating that the individuals to whom the packages had been addressed had been the recipients. Although return receipts from Birkenau were prohibited, word received through underground channels gave reasonable assurance that bona fide internees had actually received the parcels addressed to Birkenau.^{3/}

^{1/} See also Projects of Private Organizations: American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and Jewish Labor Committee.

^{2/} Cables No. 43 and 125 to Tangier dated April 6 and September 2, 1944, and Cable No. 7 dated January 10, 1945.

^{3/} Dispatch No. 2042 from Tangier dated April 10, 1944, comprising document 485.

When the Hungarian situation became worse, responsibility for the distribution of these food parcels to Jews in concentration camps in Hungary was assumed by the International Red Cross, which had previously been of assistance in effecting the shipment of some of the relief supplies through Sweden.^{1/}

Since the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee was likewise sending food parcels to Theresienstadt,^{2/} the names of the recipients of the Vaad Hahatzala food parcels were checked at the Board's request through the United States Legation in Lisbon against the list of Joint Distribution Committee recipients in order to avoid any possible duplication.^{3/}

Relief of Liberated Rabbinical Groups. In October 1944, following the liberation by Soviet armies of substantial areas of Balkan territory, the Vaad Hahatzala sought and obtained a Treasury license authorizing the remittance of \$5,200 to the Soviet Union to provide for the relief of liberated Rabbinical groups in Lithuania, Poland and Russia.

Clearance Obtained for Shipment of Passover Bread to Bergen-Belsen. In February 1945 representatives of the Vaad Hahatzala sought Board assistance in effecting the delivery of matzos to Jewish internees at Bergen-Belsen. Difficulty had been encountered in connection with the proposed purchase of 10,000 kilos of flour in Switzerland to be used for the proposed program, Swiss authorities having insisted that the purchase could not be effected until assurances were received that a corresponding amount of flour would be made available for import. Following discussions held by representatives of the Board with the State Department and the Foreign Economic Administration, and after clearance with appropriate United States officials then in Switzerland, a replacement guarantee was made to the Swiss and the proposed shipment of matzos was eventually made.^{4/}

Combined Rescue and Relief Operations Also Undertaken. In January 1944, immediately before the creation of the Board, the Union of Orthodox Rabbis was licensed to undertake a broad program of rescue and relief in enemy territory, the remittance to Switzerland of \$100,000 having been authorized in this connection. Upon

- 1/ Cable No. 295 from Tangier dated September 26, 1944.
- 2/ See Projects of Private Organizations: American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.
- 3/ Cable No. 47 to Tangier dated April 14, 1944, and Airgram No. A-76 from Tangier dated May 3, 1944.
- 4/ Cable No. 731 to Bern dated February 17, 1945.

000047

the recommendation of the Board, additional remittances for these combined rescue and relief operations totaling \$600,000 were subsequently authorized by the Treasury.^{1/}

In March 1944, upon the recommendation of the Board, the Vaad Hahatzala was licensed by the Treasury to send \$25,000 to Turkey for rescue operations in enemy territory and for relief activities incidental to such efforts.^{2/} Three months later a \$10,000 remittance was authorized to Stockholm for further rescue and relief activities particularly in the Baltic countries, under the direction of the Board's representative in Sweden.^{3/}

- ^{1/} See Rescue to and through Switzerland.
^{2/} See Rescue to and through Turkey.
^{3/} See Rescue to and through Sweden.

000048

IV D - 19. RELIEF PROGRAMS: PROJECTS OF PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS

WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS

Relief of Italian Refugees in Switzerland. Upon the recommendation of the Board, the World Jewish Congress was licensed early in April 1944 to send \$8,010 to its representative in Geneva for the relief of Italian refugees in Switzerland. These funds had been made available to the World Jewish Congress by the Italian Jewish community of Rio de Janeiro. The remittance of an additional \$4,000 made available by the Italian Jewish community of Sao Paulo was authorized in May 1944.

Parcels Sent to Internees from Sweden. In October 1944, in keeping with the Berle-Boote agreement authorizing such undertakings,^{1/} United States and British blockade authorities approved the shipment of 93 tons of food parcels from Sweden to unassimilated persons at Bergen-Belsen, Theresienstadt, and in other concentration camps in German-controlled areas.^{2/} These parcels made available by the World Jewish Congress, were distributed under the supervision of the Swedish Young Men's Christian Association.

Assistance in Distribution of Board Parcels from Sweden. Efforts were begun early in 1945 to obtain blockade approval and to make other arrangements for an expansion of the feeding program undertaken by the World Jewish Congress from Sweden, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee having indicated that it would underwrite the cost of such an expansion.^{3/} In view of the time that would have been required to procure and package such foodstuffs and in view of the serious difficulties then being encountered by the International Red Cross in effecting distribution of the Board's food parcels from Switzerland as the result of military developments in Germany and the general breakdown of internal transportation facilities, Board Representative

^{1/} See Relief Programs: Board's Food Parcels Program.

^{2/} Cable No. 8097 from London dated September 28, 1944, and Cable No. 8244 to London dated October 7, 1944.

^{3/} Cables No. 2070 and 2769 to London dated March 17 and April 10, 1945.

000049

McClelland in March 1945 authorized the release to representatives of the World Jewish Congress in Sweden of a group of 40,000 kosher food parcels from among the Board's stocks at Gothenburg, to be used for the same general purposes for which the proposed expansion had been sought. Except for a limited number of individually addressed parcels sent through parcel post channels, actual distribution of these parcels was effected through the Swedish Red Cross under the usual distribution guarantees required by the Board.1/

Combined Rescue and Relief Operations. In addition to sending these funds for outright relief, the World Jewish Congress was licensed by the Treasury during the first half of 1944 to remit an aggregate of \$225,000 for combined rescue and relief operations in enemy territory carried on from Switzerland by Congress representatives.2/

In May 1944, following approval by the Board of the proposed operations, the World Jewish Congress was licensed to remit \$50,000 to Lisbon to be used under the direction of the Board's representative there for combined rescue and relief work.3/

In June 1944, upon the recommendation of the Board, the World Jewish Congress was granted a license permitting the remittance of \$10,000 to Stockholm to be used under the direction of the Board's representative there for combined rescue and relief work in Bulgaria, Hungary, and Rumania.4/

- 1/ See Relief Programs: Board's Food Parcels Program.
- 2/ See Rescue to and through Switzerland.
- 3/ See Rescue to and through Portugal.
- 4/ See Rescue to and through Sweden.

000050

V A. COOPERATION WITH OTHER GOVERNMENTS: GREAT BRITAIN

Promptly after the establishment of the Board steps were taken to make clear to the British that the creation of the Board represented this Government's determination to carry out effectively and without further delay the policy previously agreed upon by the two governments to take all possible measures for the speedy rescue and relief of the victims of enemy persecution. At the Board's request,^{1/} Ambassador Winant conferred with the British on the possibility of their implementing the Board's program through such a statement as that released by President Roosevelt and through instructions to British representatives in the various countries comparable to those sent by the United States to its Missions upon the creation of the Board.

The British Foreign Office in the course of these discussions replied that it expected to inform its representatives, particularly in countries where the refugee question was active, of the instructions sent to United States Missions on refugee matters, and that British representatives would be instructed to cooperate in the matter. In connection with a question that had arisen in the House of Commons as to whether the British likewise intended to set up a refugee board, the Foreign Office indicated that it was unlikely that the British would make such a move inasmuch as a Cabinet Committee on Refugees was already in existence (though its composition had not yet been made public).^{2/}

On February 11, 1944, Ambassador Winant relayed to the Board the substance of conversations with Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden and referred to a statement by the latter in Parliament reaffirming the British Government's "earnest desire and practical intention of associating themselves with the United States Government and with the War Refugee Board in particular, in endeavoring to carry out the aims which the President has set before it." Mr. Eden reiterated, however, that the British did not consider it necessary to set up any additional organization for this purpose.^{3/}

^{1/} Cable No. 774 to London dated January 31, 1944.

^{2/} Cable No. 1006 from London dated February 5, 1944.

^{3/} Cable No. 1181 from London dated February 11, 1944.

000051

Later in February, in the course of a debate in the House of Commons on the question of funds for the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, critics of the Intergovernmental Committee favored the establishment of a British agency comparable to the Board. The British Government took the position that while an international body could handle some matters better than the agency of any one nation, there was a field for national action in these matters; it was therefore pleased at the establishment of the Board and voiced the intention of giving it its "very warmest support and sympathy." The conviction was reiterated, however, that the establishment of a comparable British agency was unnecessary in view of the existence of a cabinet committee already concerned with such matters. Constitutional objections to the establishment of such a board were also suggested.^{1/}

Views of Board Sought on Proposed Appeal to British Government. On February 24, 1944, Ambassador Minant informed the Board that various Jewish organizations in Great Britain as well as a committee of members of Parliament were said to be eager to approach the British Government for permission to carry on and finance operations similar to those being authorized by this Government for rescue work in occupied countries. Inquiry was made of Ambassador Minant as to whether the British Government had been officially informed of the issuance by the Treasury Department of licenses covering such operations and whether the Board had any objection to an appeal to the British Government by Jewish or other organizations there, using the precedent of the Treasury licenses as an argument.^{2/}

The Board replied that it had in preparation a statement (subsequently forwarded ^{3/}) formally advising the British, among other things, of the details of this Government's licensing policy with respect to rescue and relief operations in enemy and occupied territories. On the matter of the proposed appeals to the British Government on the part of Jewish or other private organizations, the Board expressed the hope that the British Government would welcome such appeals and that the private British agencies would press their government for permission to carry on and finance the type of rescue and relief operations being permitted by the United States Government.^{4/}

Discussions with the British re Licensing. Late in February 1944 concern was expressed by the British Embassy in Washington to

^{1/} Cable No. 1711 from London dated March 2, 1944.

^{2/} Cable No. 1541 from London dated February 24, 1944.

^{3/} Cable No. 2303 to London dated March 25, 1944.

^{4/} Cable No. 2033 to London dated March 17, 1944.

000052

the State Department over the financial aspects of this Government's licensing of purchases by the International Red Cross in enemy territory, with funds supplied by a private agency,^{1/} in the interest of sustaining lives pending the accomplishment of actual rescue. In view of this protest, the State Department urgently advised the Board that all proposed future relief transactions of this type be cleared in their "economic warfare aspects" not only with the Foreign Economic Administration but with the British Government.^{2/} In response, the Board, mindful of interim delays encountered in such clearances in the past, pointed out in a letter to the State Department that operations in this field had been in accordance with a policy of the United States Government that had been established for some time; that although the Board intended not only to keep the British informed of what it did but also to give consideration to any objections they might have, it did not contemplate clearing its programs with them, especially since that had not been its procedure in this field in the past.^{3/} An informal conference was subsequently held between Board representatives and Mr. Thorold of the British Embassy to explain the licensing policy of this Government and to affirm the Board's intentions to carry out the solemn duty assigned to it in the President's Executive Order.

Following these informal talks, Ambassador Halifax submitted an Aide Memoire to Secretary of State Hull on March 28, 1944, setting forth the formal British objections to this Government's new licensing policy with respect to the financing of refugee relief and rescue operations in enemy territory.^{4/} The British position was that the licenses issued by this Government afforded the enemy an opportunity to acquire foreign exchange for use in the prosecution of the war. The British proposed as an alternative to our system of licensing, that consideration be given to requiring all such operations to be financed by local borrowings in enemy territory against guarantees of post-war repayment. The State Department with the concurrence of the Board and the Treasury Department, replied in a formal Aide Memoire that this Government had concluded that the saving of lives far outweighed any danger involved in permitting the enemy to acquire relatively insubstantial quantities of foreign exchange and further, that this Government intended

^{1/} See Projects of Private Organizations: American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.

^{2/} Letter from the State Department to the Board dated March 4, 1944 (enclosing copy of letter to the State Department from the British Embassy dated February 29, 1944, and copy of letter to the British Embassy from the State Department dated March 4, 1944), comprising document 486.

^{3/} Letter to the State Department dated March 16, 1944, comprising document 487.

^{4/} British Embassy Aide Memoire dated March 27, 1944, comprising document 488.

000053

to continue to follow the licensing policy it had been pursuing for several months. The State Department concluded with the hope that the British Government would decide to adopt a similar policy in connection with authorizing and encouraging the sending of funds by private organizations to neutral countries for the relief and rescue of victims of enemy oppression.^{1/}

Despite the position taken by this Government, the British continued to voice the fear that funds transmitted under certain Treasury licenses for evacuation operations might benefit the enemy. They stressed the British view as to the undesirability of granting, without prior consultation with the British, licenses or terms cutting across "agreed" blockade policy and again pressed for the adoption of their suggestion that all such operations be financed under their credit scheme.^{2/}

Later, the Board was furnished with a copy of a letter addressed to the United States Embassy in London by the British Ministry of Economic Warfare under date of May 11, 1944, asking confirmation of the Ministry's understanding that under the terms of United States Treasury licenses covering refugee rescue and relief operations, the Board was authorizing the expenditure of hard currencies in occupied countries only when "strictly necessary to secure assistance in effecting actual rescues, and that it is not authorized for the purchase of relief supplies in enemy territory."^{3/}

Amount of Free Currency Sent into Enemy Territory. The British continued to press their objections despite repeated statements from this Government that its policy was clear and well established concerning these humanitarian operations. Representatives of the British Embassy in Washington in June 1944 requested information from the Board concerning the amount of free currency being sent into enemy territory under the licenses issued by the Treasury upon the Board's recommendation. As of June 1, 1944, the Board revealed, the total amount authorized by the Treasury for such operations was \$2,033,100. The Board advised the British representative that although this was the total amount authorized to be remitted to neutral countries, on the basis of reports then available to the Board it appeared that only a small fraction of the total amount authorized had been used in enemy territory.^{4/} Cables

^{1/} State Department Aide Memoire to the British Embassy, undated, comprising document 489 .

^{2/} Dispatch No. 15061 from London dated April 17, 1944.

^{3/} Airgram No. A-621 from London dated May 16, 1944.

^{4/} Letter to the British Embassy from the Board dated June 29, 1944.

000054

were subsequently sent to the United States Missions concerned,^{1/} and the reports received in response to these specific inquiries confirmed the fact that only small amounts of free currency had actually been sent into enemy territory.^{2/}

Special Representative Named for Great Britain. For some time consideration had been given by the Board to the desirability of appointing a Special Representative for Great Britain, various individuals having been considered for the contemplated post. Following the receipt of a report from a Treasury representative who returned from London in August 1944, the Board concluded that the time had come for the stationing of a Special Representative in London. Accordingly, James Mann, an Assistant Executive Director of the Board, went to London on August 31 to confer with Ambassador Winant and members of the Embassy staff, and with the Intergovernmental Committee;^{3/} he was later named Special Representative of the Board in England with the designation by the State Department as Special Attache on war refugee matters.^{4/}

Matter of License Clearance Reopened by British. In the fall of 1944 the British began to press anew for assurances on the part of the United States that licenses authorizing the expenditure of funds in enemy territory be cleared with the British. As a result of these new efforts, the Joint Anglo-American Relief Committee, meeting in London, embodied in its report of October 3, 1944, a recommendation that "licenses which involve or may involve the placing of funds in neutral territory at the disposal of enemy persons should only be issued after consultation between the United States and British Governments." ^{5/}

Despite this recommendation, no action was taken to modify the procedure already being followed by the United States with respect to such licenses, since it was the consensus of the United States agencies involved that to acquiesce in the matter would be to pave the way for endless delays in rescue and relief efforts already overburdened with time-consuming difficulties.

- ^{1/} Cable No. 2241 to Bern dated July 1, 1944; repeated in substance on the same date to Lisbon, Stockholm, and Ankara.
- ^{2/} Cable No. 136 from Ankara dated June 21, 1944; Cable No. 2481 from Stockholm dated July 5, 1944; Cable No. 4748 from Bern dated July 24, 1944; and Cable No. 5073 from Bern dated August 7, 1944.
- ^{3/} Cable No. 7035 to London dated August 31, 1944.
- ^{4/} Cable No. 8341 to London dated October 10, 1944, comprising document 490; see also Cable No. 8776 from London dated October 16, 1944.
- ^{5/} Airgram No. A-1211 from London dated October 6, 1944, comprising document 491.

000055

British Cooperation Obtained in other Matters. Although the British never agreed to join in this Government's licensing policy and aggressive program to save victims of enemy oppression, they did give assistance and requisite approvals to certain of the Board's programs and projects, but in most cases only after considerable pressure from this Government. For example, British agreement was obtained for the Board's program to send food from the United States to unassimilated persons in enemy territory and for private agency programs to send food into enemy areas from neutral countries.1/ The British also agreed to join this Government in permitting relief supplies through the blockade to neutral countries cooperating in war refugee rescue and relief.2/

British cooperation was also obtained at the Board's insistence in the issuance within quota limitations, of Palestine certificates to endangered persons within enemy territory and to many escaping to neutral soil.3/ Several German-British exchanges involving Palestine certificate holders from German-controlled territory were accomplished by the British via diplomatic channels.4/

In connection with efforts made to extend protection via diplomatic channels to persons in enemy territory holding passports or other papers issued in the name of Latin American republics, the British cooperated by supporting requests made of the various Latin American governments by the United States, asking that the validity of these papers not be denied until such time as their bearers were able to escape Nazi jurisdiction.5/

The British also joined this Government, at our insistence, in a public acceptance of the so-called Horthy offer to release to the British and American governments Jews from Hungary.6/

In June 1944 British agreement was finally obtained to a recommendation made by the Bermuda Conference in April 1943 and subsequently repeatedly urged by the Board, calling for the joint establishment and maintenance of a temporary refugee shelter at

- 1/ See Relief Programs: Board's Food Parcels Program and Projects of Private Organizations.
- 2/ See Relief Programs: Relief through the Blockade to Cooperating Neutrals.
- 3/ See especially Rescue to and through Turkey, Rescue through Italy, Rescue from Hungary, and Emergency Refugee Camps and Settlement: Palestine.
- 4/ See Rescue through Protective Measures: Exchange.
- 5/ See Rescue through Protective Measures: Recognition of Latin American Documents.
- 6/ See Rescue from Hungary.

000056

Cyrenaica in North Africa. Expansion of existing refugee camps under the direction of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, however, obviated the need for proceeding with the Cyrenaica project.^{1/}

In various other instances where it was felt that the support of the British would be helpful, particularly in connection with the psychological warfare efforts of the Board, the British responded favorably to the Board's invitation that parallel action be taken in order that the lives of innocent victims of the Nazi regime might be saved.^{2/}

^{1/} See Emergency Refugee Camps and Settlement: North Africa.

^{2/} See Psychological Warfare Programs.

000057

V B. COOPERATION WITH OTHER GOVERNMENTS: THE SOVIET UNION

Although the Board did not anticipate that the Soviet Union would be able actually to receive war refugees from other war-torn countries in view of the enormous refugee problem which Russia herself faced in connection with the millions of Soviet citizens who had been impoverished and displaced by the German invasion,^{1/} efforts were made to solicit the cooperation of the Soviet Government in general terms and in connection with certain shipping negotiations related to rescue projects on which the Board's representative was at work in Turkey.^{2/} Toward these ends Ambassador Harriman in Moscow addressed a memorandum to Soviet Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs Vyshinski requesting Russian safe-conduct for a vessel which the Board proposed to use for evacuations from the Balkans ^{3/} and outlining parallel action which both the United States and the Soviet Union might take in trying to impress on Germany and the satellite countries the fact that they would be held accountable for inhuman actions against the Jews and other minority groups.^{4/}

Russian aid was later solicited in connection with the Board's psychological warfare efforts, particularly in the campaign to bring pressure to bear on the governments of the satellite countries, notably Rumania, Bulgaria, and Hungary, to desist from their persecution of innocent minorities.^{5/}

Throughout the Board's existence efforts were made to keep the Soviet Government informed as to general measures undertaken at the instigation of this Government looking toward the rescue and relief of victims of enemy persecution. In addition, efforts were made to keep the Soviet Government advised of special measures such as the delicate negotiations in Turkey, Switzerland and Sweden for the discussion of German proposals to release Jews.^{6/} The

- ^{1/} Cable No. 775 from Moscow dated March 9, 1944, comprising document 492.
- ^{2/} Cables No. 554 and 555 to Moscow dated March 11, 1944, comprising documents 493 and 494.
- ^{3/} The requested safe-conduct was subsequently granted. See Rescue to and through Turkey.
- ^{4/} Cable No. 1020 from Moscow dated March 24, 1944.
- ^{5/} See Psychological Warfare Programs.
- ^{6/} See Special Negotiations.

000058

Soviet attitude toward negotiations of this type was firmly stated in a note of June 18, 1944, to the American Embassy in Moscow stating that the Soviet Government "does not consider it permissible or expedient to carry on any conversations whatsoever with the German Government."^{1/}

Wherever the occasion warranted, as in the case of final rescue efforts made in Rumanian territory,^{2/} Soviet assistance was solicited in specific terms, though, for security or other reasons the desired results were not always forthcoming.

^{1/} Cable No. 2184 from Moscow dated June 19, 1944.

^{2/} See Rescue from Rumania.

000059

V C. COOPERATION WITH OTHER GOVERNMENTS: THE EUROPEAN NEUTRALS

Although Turkey, Switzerland, Sweden, Spain, and Portugal had all, prior to the creation of the Board, opened their doors to limited numbers of persons fleeing from Nazi-occupied territory, it was not until the Board through the United States Missions in these various countries gave assurances with respect to relief through the Blockade proportionate to the number of refugees received 1/ and substantial guarantees as to assistance in the maintenance of these refugees and as to their ultimate evacuation or repatriation 2/ that large numbers of endangered persons were enabled to reach the safety of neutral soil.

All of the neutral countries served in varying degrees as the source of substantial quantities of food purchased by the International Red Cross or by private organizations licensed by the Treasury Department, upon the recommendation of the Board, to carry on rescue and relief programs in enemy territory. 3/

The neutral countries were also especially valuable in connection with the Board's psychological warfare programs, including the transmission, both through official and unofficial channels, of appeals designed to induce Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, and Slovakia, as well as the Germans themselves, to halt their barbaric persecutions. 4/

Switzerland, serving not only as the protecting power of this Government in dealing with the Germans but also on behalf of most of the Latin American countries, and Spain, as the protecting power of Bolivia and Paraguay, were particularly helpful in the program undertaken by the Board whereby protection was extended

1/ See Relief Programs: Relief through the Blockade to Cooperating Neutrals.

2/ See Rescue to and through Turkey, Switzerland, Sweden, Spain, and Portugal for detailed accounts of the manner in which these various governments cooperated in rescue and relief operations with which the Board was concerned.

3/ See Relief Programs: Projects of Private Organizations.

4/ See Approaches to Germany and the Satellites To Halt Persecutions: Appeals through Neutral Countries.

000060

to thousands of individuals in enemy territory holding passports and other travel documents issued in the name of various Latin American countries.^{1/}

Other negotiations carried on with Spain and Portugal ultimately insured the recognition by those governments of Sephardics in Greece and elsewhere in enemy territory claiming Spanish and Portuguese nationality who otherwise faced deportation and possible death at the hands of the Nazis.^{2/} Somewhat similar representations were made to the Turkish Government with respect to several hundred Jews in France claiming Turkish citizenship, many of whom were eventually enabled to escape general deportation measures and proceed to Turkey.^{3/}

- ^{1/} See Rescue through Protective Measures: Recognition of Latin American Passports and Exchange.
- ^{2/} See Rescue through Protective Measures: Recognition of Sephardics Claiming Spanish Nationality and Recognition of Sephardics Claiming Portuguese Nationality.
- ^{3/} See Rescue through Protective Measures: Reinstatement of Turkish Citizenship to Certain Jewish Refugees.

000061

V D. COOPERATION WITH OTHER GOVERNMENTS: THE VATICAN

The cooperation of the Vatican in the Board's program of rescue and relief was both wholehearted and effective. Constant communication was had with Vatican circles through Ambassador Myron Taylor and Harold Tittman, American representatives at Vatican City, and through the Apostolic Delegate in Washington, as a result of which requests for specific action, as the occasion arose, were promptly made and acted upon. Thus, at the Board's request in connection with its psychological warfare programs, various appeals were addressed by the Vatican to authorities in Germany and the satellite countries in an attempt to halt deportations and other forms of persecution directed against Jews and other minority groups. When the Hungarian situation became particularly acute, a personal appeal for tolerance was addressed by Pope Pius XII to Hungarian Regent Horthy.^{1/} From the United States Archbishop Francis Spellman addressed an impressive plea to the Catholics of Hungary, asking that they protect and help the persecuted.^{2/}

Vatican cooperation was likewise obtained in helping afford relief to the Jewish community in Rome throughout the German occupation, the cost of these operations having been borne by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.^{3/}

The Vatican was similarly helpful in transmitting and supporting the Board's request for alleviation of the lot of unassimilated persons detained in enemy territory, at least to the extent of permitting them to receive relief parcels under the supervision of the International Red Cross.^{4/}

Vatican support was also lent to the Board's efforts to insure protection to endangered persons in Axis territory holding Latin American papers.^{5/}

- ^{1/} See Approaches to Germany and the Satellites To Halt Persecutions: Appeals through the Vatican.
- ^{2/} See Statements and Informational Campaigns Inspired by the Board.
- ^{3/} See Rescue to and through Italy.
- ^{4/} See Relief Programs: Efforts to Obtain Assimilated Status for Interned Civilians.
- ^{5/} See Rescue through Protective Measures: Recognition of Latin American Passports.

000062

Another instance of the invaluable assistance rendered through Vatican channels was courier service for the transmission of Palestine certificates authorized by the Jewish Agency for endangered persons in enemy territory, notably the relaying of such certificates from the Apostolic Delegate in Istanbul to the Nunciature in Budapest to enable their emigration from Hungary.^{1/}

Throughout the course of the war substantial amounts of money were placed by the Vatican at the disposal of the Bishops of Hungary for the purpose of alleviating the sufferings of persecuted minorities.^{2/}

Perhaps the most unusual means of extending protection to endangered persons in enemy-controlled territory were the efforts of the Catholic Church to save lives by means of conversion to Christianity. Nazi attempts to oppose these measures met with the response that the church had authority to baptize immediately any person who was in imminent danger of death. When the situation in Hungary grew more critical, groups of Hungarian Nazis entered churches and broke up religious classes being held for Jews, with the result that many baptisms took place in Hungarian air raid shelters, where hundreds were baptized.^{3/}

Conversion to Christianity did not, however, permanently exempt persons of Jewish descent from Nazi persecution. Discriminatory and deportation measures were generally extended to such converts in short order, as well as to partners of mixed marriages and individuals who had been Christians from birth and whose families had been Christian for generations.

- ^{1/} Cable No. 1553 from Ankara dated August 24, 1944, comprising document 495, and letter from the Apostolic Delegate in Istanbul to Board Representative Hirschmann dated August 18, 1944. See also Rescue to and through Hungary.
- ^{2/} Letter from the Apostolic Delegate dated January 5, 1945, comprising document 496.
- ^{3/} Cable No. 1478 from Ankara dated August 12, 1944, comprising document 497.

000063

V E. COOPERATION WITH OTHER GOVERNMENTS: OTHERS

Soon after the establishment of the Board efforts were made through United States Missions in the various countries to ascertain existing attitudes and possibilities with respect to refugee rescue and relief. Significant responses received by the Board are summarized below. 1/

Afghanistan. According to a report from the United States Legation in Afghanistan received in March 1944, there was little chance for any substantial number of refugees to be absorbed into the Afghan economy, nor was it likely that they would be welcome in a fanatically Moslem country. Because of the primitive economy and low standard of living in Afghanistan, there was said to be practically no opportunity for Europeans in the fields of domestic commerce, agriculture, or the service trades. It was indicated, however, that since the Afghan Government in the past welcomed the coming of qualified technicians and professional men, it was possible that a small number - perhaps fifty - such refugees and their dependents might be accepted in Afghanistan. It was suggested that if the names and qualifications of refugees proposed for settlement in that country were to be submitted, the Afghan Government would be approached by the Legation and the matter discussed with them. 2/

Inasmuch as the need for utilizing this possibility never materialized, the substance of this report was turned over to representatives of private American relief agencies for such use as

1/ For accounts of more positive action taken by other governments in connection with the Board's rescue and relief efforts, see especially Rescue to and through Switzerland (offers made by various governments with respect to temporary refuge for child refugees from enemy oppression) and Rescue through Protective Measures: Recognition of Latin American Passports (affirmative action taken by various Latin American countries toward extending protection via diplomatic channels to endangered persons in enemy territory).

2/ Dispatch No. 405 from Kabul dated March 5, 1944.

might be made of it in connection with post-war resettlement.

Argentina. In April 1944 the United States Embassy at Buenos Aires reported that the consensus of persons active in Jewish rescue and relief work was that so long as the regime then in power remained no assistance whatsoever could be expected from the Argentine Government in refugee matters. Certain Jewish organizations in Argentina were said to own large tracts of land which might easily support several thousand refugee families if there should come a radical change in the Argentine Government under which such immigrants could be admitted. Argentina itself was said to be capable of absorbing millions of immigrants, but "no conceivable political change would make possible the willing acceptance of a very large proportion of Jews among those proposed millions." 1/

Australia. In February 1944 Minister Johnson reported that except for an offer to admit 150 Jewish children from Switzerland, there was little active interest on the part of the Australian Government in the problem of rescuing or assisting refugees. This 150 was in addition to a like number for whom permission had been granted over a year before but who had not been able to get to Australia. The children were to be the full responsibility of the Australian Jewish Welfare Association which, with its associates in Great Britain, had made the arrangements for their admission. 2/

Minister Johnson also reported that some time before the Australian Government had agreed to admit a small group of Poles from Russia on the understanding, apparently unwritten, that Poland would repatriate these persons after the war, paying all expenses. The arrangements for these persons were said to have been made by the Polish Consul General in Sydney. The Poles were supposed to have reached Iran, but nothing further was then known of the matter. 3/ This group subsequently reached Australia late in 1944.

Belgian Government-in-Exile. In March 1944 Ambassador Winant reported from London that officials dealing with refugee problems for the Belgian Government-in-Exile had been informed of the Board's policy as outlined and had signified their desire to cooperate to the fullest possible extent. 4/

Charge d'Affaires Schoenfeld subsequently reported the substance of discussions with an official of the Belgian Ministry of

1/ Dispatch No. 14547 from Buenos Aires dated April 21, 1944.

2/ See also Rescue to and through Switzerland.

3/ Airgram No. A-6 from Canberra received February 26, 1944.

4/ Cable No. 30 from London dated March 1, 1944.

000065

Labor and Social Welfare, who stated that although it was in general very difficult for refugees to escape from Belgium, nevertheless every few weeks a small number of people did manage to get through. Certain recommendations advanced by this official for facilitating escapes through Spain were promptly communicated to Ambassador Hayes in Madrid. 1/

Bolivia. In a communication from the United States Embassy in Bolivia received in February 1944, the Board was advised that the Bolivian Government had indicated that, as a member of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, "its conduct with respect to Semites will be in accordance with that adopted by the other nations of the continent. Within the country, nationals and foreigners shall enjoy the same guarantees under the Political Constitution of the State without distinction as to whether they are Jews or not."

The President of the Bolivian Revolutionary Junta was reported to have remarked that he had no racial prejudices; it was indicated that the only concern of the Bolivian Junta was that Bolivia obtain in future immigration persons technically qualified to fulfill the needs of the Bolivian economy. 2/

Brazil. Early in 1944 the Board was advised by the United States Embassy at Rio de Janeiro that the refugee question had been taken under active consideration by the Brazil Minister of Justice and by the National Immigration Council. It was pointed out that, while there were many conflicting currents of public opinion with respect to permitting the entry of European refugees into Brazil, that country's policy in the past had been, in general, a liberal one. The National Immigration Council only a short time before had passed a resolution urging that the Brazilian Government consent to receive a group of 500 Jewish refugee children from France. 3/

A report received by the Board from private sources, subsequently relayed to the United States Embassy in Rio, held that Juen Alberto, Brazilian Minister of Economic Coordination, in a private interview had stated his belief that Brazil could reasonably undertake a progressive five-year program for the settlement of Jewish and other European refugees beginning with 100,000 during the first year.

1/ See Rescue to and through Spain.

2/ Dispatch No. 3122 from La Paz dated February 10, 1944.

3/ Dispatches No. 14561 and 14890 from Rio dated February 12 and March 11, 1944.

Despite urgent representations subsequently made to the Brazilian Foreign Office, President Vargas, to whom refugee matters were referred, showed no inclination to commit Brazil to the reception of refugees of any kind. 1/

Canada. A report received by the Board from Toronto in March 1944 indicated that, while no specific cases of racial discrimination in the matter of immigration had been brought to the attention of the Consulate, according to a representative of the Jewish Immigrant Aid Society in Toronto, Canada's restrictive immigration policy was more rigidly enforced in the case of persons of Jewish extraction than in the case of any other race admitted to that country. 2/

A reply received from the Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs, in response to a note sent by the United States Legation in Ottawa outlining the position of this Government on the subject of aid to war refugees, called attention to the declaration of policy made some months before by the Canadian Prime Minister and reviewed steps taken by the Canadian Government in that direction. It also requested that consideration be given by the United States to permitting the entry into this country of 900 European refugees then at liberty in Canada who were anxious to proceed to the United States because of the presence here of relatives or close friends. 3/ No action was taken by the Board in this matter, however, inasmuch as any such steps would have been outside the Board's jurisdiction.

Chile. In March 1944 the United States Embassy at Santiago reported that during one period in the past, Chilean consular officials were said to have waived legal requirements frequently in the case of immigrant refugees, allegedly for considerations in some instances. As a result, the immigration laws of that country had subsequently been more rigidly enforced, although the Chilean Minister of Foreign Affairs denied any discrimination against Jews. A considerable number of victims of Nazi oppression, Jewish and otherwise, were said already to have migrated to Chile. Some latent racial feelings were reported to exist in Chile, however, owing to the fact that a large portion of the population was German or of German descent and Nazi propaganda agents had been active among this element over a period of years. 4/

- 1/ Dispatches No. 16169 and 16511 from Rio dated June 1 and June 20, 1944, and Airgram No. A-1195 from Rio dated June 27, 1944.
2/ Dispatch No. 1490 from Toronto dated March 17, 1944.
3/ Dispatch No. 835 from Ottawa dated March 18, 1944.
4/ Dispatch No. 9105 from Santiago dated March 11, 1944.

000067

China. According to reports transmitted to the Board during early 1944 from diplomatic and consular officers in Kunming, Sian, and Chengtu, the official attitude of the Chinese toward the entry of war refugees was generally negative. In view of the tremendous relief problems already faced by the Chinese Government with respect to its own homeless and destitute peoples, it was considered doubtful that the Chinese reaction would be favorable to any concrete proposal involving the acceptance and care of substantial numbers of refugees. Moreover, transportation facilities into unoccupied China were said to be so limited that any refugee traffic would probably interfere seriously with the importation of essential materials. However, so far as was known, there was no specific bar to the entry of Jews or other war refugees from Japanese-occupied areas into unoccupied China, nor had any cases been reported of the turning back of such refugees at the borders.

It was stated that no Jewish problem existed in any form in China. The condition of refugees generally in both occupied and unoccupied China was reported to be serious, but not more so than that of the Chinese themselves. There was said to be no evidence that the Japanese deliberately mistreated refugees in occupied areas, a statement seemingly borne out by the report that few, if any, refugees in Japanese-occupied Chinese cities appeared to have made any effort to emigrate to unoccupied China. 1/

The Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs, in response to an approach made by the United States Embassy in Chungking, subsequently pledged the complete support of the Chinese Government in the Board's efforts to rescue and care for the victims of enemy oppression. Full protection was promised Jews and any other European minorities who had been "rendered homeless and wandered to China."

Particularly gratifying to the Chinese Government was the mention of rescue and relief for "other victims of enemy persecution," including the victims of Japanese oppression, 2/ despite the fact that no opportunities arose whereby specific efforts could be directed by the Board to aid individuals in this category.

Colombia. The United States Embassy at Bogota in February 1944 reported that the Colombian Government had indicated a general willingness to cooperate in extending humanitarian assistance to European war refugees. According to a Foreign Office spokesman, no legal obstacles to immigration existed in Colombia at the time other than ordinary wartime controls, but transportation difficulties had prevented any great number of refugees from reaching that country.

1/ Dispatch No. 2345 from Chungking dated March 22, 1944.
2/ Dispatch No. 2436 from Chungking dated April 15, 1944.

Colombia's post-war policy was then under study, and plans were reportedly being drawn up to restrict immigration to persons fitting into the local economy. It was thus felt that any cooperation on refugee matters would be subject to the limitations imposed by this policy when definitely adopted. 1/

Cuba. According to a report received in March 1944 from the United States Embassy in Havana, immigration into Cuba had practically ceased since the early part of 1942 as a result of a decree of April 18, 1942, forbidding the granting of visas to nationals or natives of Axis or Axis-occupied countries, for security reasons. The attitude of the Cuban authorities toward the refugee problem was described as "indifferent, if not slightly hostile, with little more than lip service being accorded to its humanitarian aspects." 2/

Dominican Republic. The Dominican Foreign Office in March 1944 indicated that it would cooperate fully with the war refugee policy of this Government. The United States' policy, the Dominican note asserted, coincided with that followed by the Dominican Government since 1937 when, on the occasion of the Evian Conference on refugees, the Dominican delegation was instructed to indicate that the Dominican Republic was prepared to receive up to 100,000 European immigrants. This policy was put into practice a short time afterward, according to the Foreign Office, with the signing of a contract with the Association for the Establishment of Colonists in the Republic, by virtue of which refuge had been accorded a great number of refugees. 3/

Ecuador. In an early communication from the United States Embassy in Ecuador the Board was advised that there were no special restrictions in Ecuador against the entry of Jews into that country on national or religious grounds, although like all other immigrants they were required by law and regulations to enter for certain specified purposes, more particularly, to engage in agricultural activities or activities related to essential industries, to be technicians, or to engage in professions. Insofar as physically fit refugees were concerned, the Embassy reported that there would seem to be opportunities in Ecuador, as in other relatively undeveloped countries of the Americas having land suitable for agricultural exploitation. 4/

Egypt. A report was received in February 1944 from Minister Kirk in Egypt describing the refugee problem in that country. The Egyptian Government was reported to have adopted a benevolent attitude toward the refugee problem in the Middle East, as evidenced

- 1/ Dispatch No. 3321 from Bogota dated February 4, 1944.
2/ Dispatch No. 6149 from Havana dated March 1, 1944
3/ Dispatch No. 1635 from Ciudad Trujillo dated March 27, 1944.
4/ Dispatch No. 1041 from Quito dated February 7, 1944.

000069

by its permitting the entry of various groups of Poles, Greeks, and Yugoslavs sponsored by the Middle East Relief and Refugee Administration. Nevertheless, the Government was reported to have made it clear that the sojourn of these refugees in Egypt was to be "in transit," although it had not reached the question of defining the period meant by this term. 1/

El Salvador. According to a report received from Ambassador Thurston in February 1944, the Salvadoran Government expressed sympathy for the cause of war refugees but was said to have stated that popular antipathy and a dense population had caused it to impose certain restrictions sharply limiting the number of immigrants admitted to that country. 2/

The Salvadoran Government later, however, "for reasons of humanity and convenience," agreed to permit the entry of certain aged Jews closely related to persons having resided in San Salvador for ten years or more and able to support them. This arrangement was also said to have been extended to children under 16 under the guardianship or charge of immigrant Jews. Certain refugee experts and technicians were likewise reportedly permitted entry. 3/

Ethiopia. According to an airgram from the United States Legation in Addis Ababa, representations and repeated inquiries failed to evoke any statement from the Ethiopian Government concerning the extent to which it was prepared to cooperate in the rescue and relief of Jews and other persecuted minorities. The Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, however, was said to have informed a member of the Legation's staff that, since the country was still engaged in reconstruction efforts, the assistance it could afford refugees was necessarily limited. 4/

Finland. According to reports received from Helsinki in April 1944 no actual official discrimination against refugees existed in Finland. Although the entry of refugees was not encouraged by the Finnish Government, they were not turned back at the frontier. 5/

France. In February 1944 Counselor Chapin of the United States Consulate in Algiers advised the Board that a spokesman for the French Committee of National Liberation had indicated that the Committee would gladly associate itself with the relief and rescue work with which the Board was concerned. Counselor Chapin reported

- 1/ Airgram No. A-84 from Cairo dated February 18, 1944.
- 2/ Dispatch No. 1230 from San Salvador dated February 2, 1944.
- 3/ Dispatch No. 1261 from San Salvador dated February 8, 1944.
- 4/ Airgram No. A-20 from Addis Ababa dated May 24, 1944.
- 5/ Cables No. 303 and 341 from Helsinki dated April 3, and 20, 1944.

000070

that, at the same time, the spokesman pointed out that one of the chief preoccupations of the Committee was, of necessity, the problem of refugees from France then in North Africa and the general displacement of French nationals. 1/

French cooperation was later obtained in connection with the admission to Camp Lyautey in North Africa of refugees evacuated from Spain. 2/

Guatemala. In April 1944 Ambassador Long advised the Board that little was being done officially in Guatemala toward the rescue and relief of persecuted elements in Europe, although since 1933 permission had been granted for the entrance of some 800 to 1,000 refugees. The Guatemalan Government reportedly permitted the entry of refugees for permanent residence where such refugees were able to obtain a guarantee of support from relatives already residents or nationals of the country. In a few instances refugees had been able to gain entry for permanent residence without such local sponsors. However, in all cases entry was granted only under the provisions of the Guatemalan Immigration Law, which forbade immigrants to open new commercial establishments, to act as agents, or to engage in any remunerative occupation except agriculture without express permission from the Guatemalan Government. 3/

Haiti. Soon after the creation of the Board Ambassador White reported that a Committee of Aid for Refugees had been appointed by the Haitian Government, an initial contribution of \$500 having been made by President Lescot. At its first meeting in February 1944 the Committee not only endorsed the objectives of this Government with respect to refugees but also voted to obtain funds by a special state lottery for \$10,000 and by a special issue of five-centime postage stamps. Monies obtained in these ways were to be devoted to the relief of United Nations' refugees through the National War Fund which had already been set up in this country to control solicitations for war-created relief needs.

According to Ambassador White, there were no restrictions upon the entry of Jews as such into Haiti. With respect to settling refugees in Haiti, Ambassador White felt that in view of the low cost and abundance of labor and the existence of considerable unemployment in the towns, the evacuation to Haiti of refugees without some capital of their own "would be most unfortunate." 4/

- 1/ Dispatch No. 122 from Algiers dated February 23, 1944.
2/ See Emergency Refugee Camps and Settlement: North Africa.
3/ Dispatch No. 1002 from Guatemala dated April 5, 1944.
4/ Dispatches No. 2521, 2559, and 2710 from Port-au-Prince dated January 31, February 10, and April 3, 1944, respectively.

000071

Honduras. In February 1944, the United States Embassy in Honduras reported to the Board that the immigration of Jews into Honduras was not encouraged because of previous experience with what were described as other "incompatible" groups. 1/

Iceland. In a report from Minister Morris the Board was advised that the Icelandic Minister for Foreign Affairs, in an informal discussion of the refugee problem, had pointed out that Iceland was a country "of poor economic resources with a small homogeneous population who had lived in a state of semi-exclusion from other Europeans for centuries. It, therefore, could not be expected that the Icelanders could quickly adjust themselves to a basically different viewpoint in respect to foreigners. On the other hand, he felt that there was no anti-Semitic feeling here and that Icelanders in common with other decent free people sympathized with and deplored the fate of Jewish and other victims of Nazi and Fascist mistreatment." 2/

India. In March 1944 the Board was advised of the receipt of a reply from the Indian Government in response to a note addressed to it by the United States Mission in New Delhi requesting cooperation in war refugee matters. India's refugee problem, according to this reply, was "probably greater than that of any other allied or neutral country." An official statement accompanying the reply indicated that in addition to some 500,000 evacuees from British colonies in southeast Asia and from China, an estimated 3,500 Poles and a scattering of Europeans of various other nationalities had been given refuge in India following the outbreak of hostilities. The Indian reply pointed to the possibility of a "further liability for 8,000 additional Poles." It also suggested that the advance of the Allied armies into Burma might well result in a renewed flow of refugees from Burma into India. "In the light of the present food and accommodation problems and the general economic situation," the Indian Government concluded that it was not in a position to accept more war refugees. 3/

Iraq. Minister Henderson reported that "so far as the Legation has been able to ascertain no Jewish or other refugees from Nazi persecution desire or have desired to find a refuge or to establish a domicile in this country. The only refugee problem which has faced Iraq, therefore, has been that of refugees in transit. The Iraqi Government has in general pursued a policy of permitting these refugees to pass through the country unless they happened to be Jews traveling to Palestine to settle there

- 1/ Airgram No. A-38 from Tegucigalpa dated February 1, 1944.
- 2/ Airgram No. A-19 from Reykjavik dated February 19, 1944.
- 3/ Dispatch No. 404 from New Delhi dated March 30, 1944.

000072

"The considerations which prompt the Iraqi Government to refuse visas to Jewish refugees bound for Palestine appear to be based on national policies of so vital a nature that in my opinion no approaches of the character suggested . . . would alter them. The main objective of Iraqi foreign policy is to promote closer Arab cooperation with a view to the formation in the not distant future of some kind of a union of Arab states in this area. The Iraqi Government is convinced that if the Zionists are able to achieve their goal of setting up a National Jewish State in Palestine this objective cannot be accomplished and that the success of the Zionist program would mean the non-realization of Arab hopes for the future . . . It is believed that unless backed by foreign armed forces it would be almost impossible for any Government to survive in Iraq just now which would take steps to facilitate the travel of Jewish settlers to Palestine, and it would be difficult to convince local Arabs that Jewish refugees bound for Palestine will not eventually settle there." 1/

Mexico. In February 1944 Ambassador Messersmith, in outlining the Mexican attitude with respect to the rescue and relief of refugees, reported to the Board the substance of certain discussions with a spokesman for the Mexican Ministry for Foreign Affairs. So far as the question of Mexican hospitality to Jews was concerned, Ambassador Messersmith reported that there was no particular problem, Mexico having afforded refuge to large numbers of refugees without question as to their religion. Ambassador Messersmith felt, however, that while Mexico was entirely in sympathy with the proposed rescue and relief activities, it probably would be unable to take any active part in the transportation of refugees to this continent or to assume any responsibility for the maintenance of such refugees in Mexico. In this connection it was pointed out that Mexico was already affording hospitality to large groups of Spanish refugees, as well as to large numbers of other refugees from Europe, many of them Jews, in addition to cooperating in the settlement in Mexico of approximately 1,500 Polish refugees. Ambassador Messersmith therefore felt that it would be unwise to solicit Mexican cooperation in other than general terms. 2/

In August 1944 Ambassador Messersmith relayed to the Board the substance of a statement appearing in the Mexican press to the effect that the Mexican Government had indicated its willingness to establish a "port of refuge." This statement issued by the Minister of Interior, indicated that Mexico was prepared to set up a safety port for Jewish refugees from Europe, particularly women and children; it was not, however, prepared to accept financial responsibility for their transportation and maintenance. The statement also

1/ Airgram No. A-8 from Baghdad dated February 13, 1944.

2/ Dispatches No. 15781, 16011, and 17235 from Mexico City dated February 8, February 18, and April 27, 1944.

000073

stipulated that the repatriation of any refugees so accepted would be expected upon the termination of the war. 1/

Inasmuch as the Mexican Government's offer had resulted from the visit of two representatives of private American relief organizations on a mission to Mexico and other American republics undertaken with the approval of the Board, Ambassador Messersmith was asked, in his discretion, to convey to Mexican authorities the Board's appreciation of their humanitarian action. Ambassador Messersmith was also requested to assure Mexico that, should refugees be so admitted, the Board would make the necessary financial arrangements for their maintenance and care while in Mexico. 2/

Netherlands Government-in-Exile. In March 1944 Ambassador Winant reported from London that officials dealing with refugee problems for the Netherlands Government-in-Exile had been informed of the Board's policy as outlined and had signified their desire to cooperate to the fullest possible extent. 3/

A subsequent report from Charge d'Affaires Schoenfeld in London indicated the substance of a conversation with an official in the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who reiterated that Dutch authorities were in agreement with the policy expressed in the President's Executive Order and would be glad to support any action that might be originated by the Board. It was stated that, of the 180,000 Jews originally living in Holland, about 140,000 had been deported to Poland; only about 8,000 Jews, recognized as such, remained in Holland. The other 32,000 had just dropped from sight. It was thought that some might have found refuge in France or made their way to Switzerland, but most of them were probably still living in Holland in concealment with the help of the non-Jewish population.

In response to the question as to whether any instances were known where refugees had been turned back at the borders of neutral countries, this spokesman indicated that some such instances were known to the Dutch authorities - Switzerland, for example - but for the most part he felt that neutral countries, while they had not actively encouraged escape across their borders, had not put any special obstacles in the way. 4/

The Netherlands Government-in-Exile later cooperated in making currency available to enable rescue and relief operations, notably

- 1/ Dispatches No. 19191, 19249, and 19376 from Mexico City dated August 3, 5, and 9, 1944, respectively.
- 2/ Cables No. 1493 to Mexico City dated August 10, 1944.
- 3/ Cable No. 30 from London dated March 1, 1944.
- 4/ Dispatch No. 127 from London dated March 6, 1944.

000074

on behalf of Dutch nationals in enemy territory, under the terms of a Treasury license granted to the Queen Wilhelmina Fund. 1/

New Zealand. In March 1944 the United States Legation in Wellington reported the receipt of a note from the Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs stating that the policy of the New Zealand Government with respect to refugees "has been and continues to be one of affording these people the maximum possible assistance consistent with the resources and the security of the Dominion."

In the granting of immigration permits during recent years, the Prime Minister stated, New Zealand had looked sympathetically on the applications of persons suffering persecution or displaced from their countries or residences. It was estimated that between 1933 and 1941 the total number of immigration permits issued was in excess of 3,700, including permits for nearly 500 Chinese refugee women and children. This total did not include evacuees from Pacific territories afforded hospitality in New Zealand, who were estimated to number between 500 and 600, nor did it include some 65 Poles from Japan to whom New Zealand agreed to give temporary refuge. The granting of permits since 1941 had, of course, been affected by the spread of the war in the Pacific, but it was indicated that only a short time before New Zealand had agreed to receive and provide accommodations for up to 700 Polish refugee children from the Middle East. 2/

Nicaragua. In February 1944 the Nicaraguan Government, according to a report to the Board from Chargé d' Affaires Finley of the United States Embassy in Nicaragua, indicated that it would permit the entry of war refugees "under the same conditions as the United States and in a number proportionate to the population of both countries." 3/

In a later communication the Board was advised that while no doubts were entertained there as to the sincerity of the Nicaraguan Government's offer with respect to refugees, under the conditions named technical difficulties could well prevent the arrival of any considerable number of such persons in Nicaragua. 4/

Norwegian Government-in-Exile. In March 1944 Ambassador Winant reported from London that officials dealing with refugee problems for the Norwegian Government-in-Exile had been informed of the Board's policy as outlined and had signified their desire to cooperate to the fullest possible extent. 5/

1/ See Projects of Private Organizations: the Queen Wilhelmina Fund.

2/ Airgram No. A-30 from Wellington dated March 9, 1944, and Dispatch No. 251 from Wellington dated April 5, 1944.

3/ Airgram No. A-85 from Managua dated February 25, 1944.

4/ Dispatch No. 2045 from Managua dated March 6, 1944.

5/ Cable No. 30 from London dated March 1, 1944.

000075

A subsequent report from Charge d'Affaires Schoenfeld described conversations with an official in charge of refugee matters for the Norwegian Government-in-Exile, who reiterated that this Government's refugee policy had the full sympathy of the Norwegian authorities and that they would cooperate in every way possible. He stated that there was no special difficulty in the way of Norwegians escaping to Sweden once they reached the frontier. The chief obstacle in achieving their escape lay in their inability to move about within Norway itself. According to this spokesman, approximately 24,000 Norwegians had by that time escaped to Sweden; another 2,000 had fled to the United Kingdom and to other areas. Practically all of the Jewish population of Norway, amounting to about 870 persons, had been deported to Poland by the Nazis, it was stated, and the Norwegian Government had no knowledge of their fate. Between 6,000 and 8,000 Norwegians were said to be in Germany; 2,000 of these were being held as prisoners of war, while the remainder were held in concentration camps or were in prison as the result of courts-martial. 1/

Panama. According to a report received from the United States Embassy in Panama in February 1944, the Panamanian Government had allegedly experienced considerable difficulty with Jewish refugees previously admitted because of competition with established businesses, and both the people and the Government were reported to be unsympathetic to a request to receive any more. A strict Panamanian decree was cited as barring refugees from all enemy or enemy-occupied territory. Charge d'Affaires Muccio suggested the likelihood that only persons capable of and agreeable to the opening of new agricultural territory would be acceptable; he felt that it would be impolitic to exert pressure for any other concessions at that time. 2/

A memorandum from the Panamanian Foreign Office subsequently transmitted by the Embassy, however, in connection with the proposal that Panama cooperate with this Government in war refugee matters indicated that it would lend its "decided cooperation" to the realization of the principles represented in the Board's work. 3/

Paraguay. In February 1944 the United States Embassy in Paraguay was informed by the Paraguayan Government that it was anxious to accept such refugees as would be qualified to open up new agricultural lands, according to a report to the Board from Ambassador Frost. 4/ A later message stated that the colonization and immigra-

1/ Dispatch No. 76 from London dated March 3, 1944. See also Rescue to and through Sweden.

2/ Dispatch No. 5133 from Panama dated February 4, 1944.

3/ Dispatch No. 5166 from Panama dated February 12, 1944.

4/ Airgram No. A-45 from Asuncion dated February 12, 1944.

000076

tion plans of Paraguay were in the hands of the Minister of Agriculture. Definite recommendations were expected, which would serve as a basis for Paraguay's position on the refugee problem. 1/

The substance of these recommendations was made available to Ambassador Frost in May 1944, in a letter from the Paraguayan Foreign Office. In this letter it was indicated that Paraguay might possibly receive more than 100,000 families as immigrants. The proposed immigrant groups would be offered the opportunity of establishing themselves in partially developed agricultural colonies. Preliminary to this program, it was stated, would be the systematic classification of would-be immigrants before embarkation, for the purpose of giving preference to young families of farmers or artisans skilled in small industries. The families of merchants or workmen without special talent would not be accepted. 2/

Peru. In February 1944 a report was received from Charge d'Affaires Butler of the United States Embassy in Peru with respect to the Peruvian attitude toward the rescue and relief of the Jews of Europe and other victims of enemy persecution. Pending the receipt of a formal reply on refugee policy from the Peruvian Ministry for Foreign Affairs (which the Embassy expected to be non-committal or negative as well as delayed), the Board was advised that little assistance or real sympathy could be expected from Peru. According to report, the governing class in Peru feared Communism, disliked Jews, and did not want to admit into the country any elements that might aggravate national, religious, or social problems. For all practical purposes, the Board was advised, Jewish refugees were not permitted entry into Peru. So far as was known, there was no restrictive policy operating against other non-Axis nationals, but in actual practice all applications for visas were closely scrutinized for security reasons. Moreover, Peru reportedly gave no encouragement to the entry of political refugees, particularly Jews, its cooperation in this problem being limited to a routine participation in the activities of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees. 3/

The Embassy was later informally advised by a Foreign Office official that the admissibility into Peru of war refugees had not changed since 1938, when the Peruvian Government informed the Intergovernmental Committee of the inability of Peru to absorb any refugees other than agriculturists. 4/

Polish Government-in-Exile. In March 1944 Ambassador Winant reported from London that officials dealing with refugee problems

- 1/ Airgram No. A-85 from Asuncion dated March 11, 1944.
- 2/ Dispatch No. 2093 from Asuncion dated May 13, 1944.
- 3/ Dispatch No. 9017 dated February 11, 1944.
- 4/ Dispatch No. 9203 from Lima dated March 10, 1944.

000077

for the Polish Government-in-Exile were informed of the Board's policy as outlined and signified their desire to cooperate to the fullest possible extent. 1/

The Board was later advised by Charge d'Affaires Schoenfeld of the substance of conversations he had with an official of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who was said to be in full accord with the policy set forth in the Board's Executive Order and who reiterated that the Board would receive the fullest possible cooperation from his Government. It was stated that because of the great number of Poles held in concentration camps by the Germans, the small percentage who did manage to escape constituted a considerable number of people. After citing certain obstacles interfering with the rescue and relief of Nazi victims, this spokesman stated that the most helpful measures the Board could take for the rescue and relief of refugees would be to intercede with the governments of those countries in which the United States had representation, to assist with the passport and visa problem, and to permit funds to be transferred from this country to Europe for relief and rescue work. 2/

There was subsequently forwarded from London a copy of a declaration issued by the Polish Government and approved by the Council of Ministers, in which full support was pledged to every endeavor made by the United States in connection with the rescue and relief of refugees. 3/

Saudi-Arabia. In February 1944 Minister Moose reported that there were no Jews in Saudi-Arabia. 4/ According to this report, "The nature of the country, the nature of its inhabitants, the tenets of the prevailing religion (Islam) and the local adverse reaction to Zionism, combine to make it certain that no Jews will be permitted to enter Saudi-Arabia unless a special reason exists for doing so. Those same reasons make it unlikely that Jews will apply for admission into Saudi Arabia."

South Africa. The Board was advised early in March 1944 by the United States Legation in Capetown that no official reply had been received from the South African Government with respect to possible cooperation in war refugee matters. The question of post-war immigration into the Union had meanwhile been raised in the South African House of Assembly, however, in a motion introduced by a majority party member calling for large-scale European immigration, to which an amendment was added specifically barring Jews. Such a restriction was said to be favored by the majority of both leading

1/ Cable No. 30 from London dated March 1, 1944.

2/ Dispatch No. 539 from London dated March 2, 1944.

3/ Dispatch No. 599 from London dated May 23, 1944.

4/ Airgram No. A-10 from Jidda dated February 16, 1944.

000078

political parties. Another amendment provided for the immigration of orphans under 10 years of age "from countries from which the people of the Union have sprung." Debate on the proposed legislation was reported to be in progress. 1/ No further information of this matter was ever received by the Board and in the absence of any great number of refugees for whom havens needed to be sought, the matter was not pursued.

Uruguay. The Uruguayan Government, while indicating its willingness to cooperate in war refugee matters, stated in a note to the United States Embassy at Montevideo in February 1944 that it would prefer to have this country take the initiative and acquaint Uruguay with the nature of the program in connection with which her cooperation was sought. 2/ Specific requests for cooperative action were subsequently addressed to Uruguay in connection with the Board's efforts to extend protection to endangered persons in enemy territory holding documents issued in the name of Uruguay and other Latin American republics. 3/

The Uruguayan Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs meanwhile informed the United States Embassy at Montevideo that an officer of the Foreign Office had been directed to prepare a declaration of policy to be issued by the Uruguayan Government similar to the declaration issued by President Roosevelt upon the creation of the War Refugee Board. 4/

Venezuela. The United States Embassy at Caracas in February 1944 reported to the Board that since 1937 the number of Jews entering Venezuela had been small and generally limited to persons having relatives or influential contacts there. Even transit visas for Jews were reported to have been discontinued. Application for visas of any kind were said to be required to state race, religion, and nationality; if the applicant was Jewish or of Jewish origin the applications were denied. 5/

1/ Dispatch No. 483 from Capetown dated March 11, 1944.

2/ Airgram No. A-96 dated February 23, 1944.

3/ See Rescue through Protective Measures: Recognition of Latin American Passports.

4/ Airgram No. A-183 from Montevideo dated March 28, 1944.

5/ Dispatch No. 5464 from Caracas dated February 4, 1944.

000079

VI A. COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL AND GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES:
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE ON REFUGEES

Throughout the War Refugee Board's existence close working relations were maintained with the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, with headquarters in London. ^{1/} Despite the apparent similarity in the functions of the two organizations, the Board was essentially an emergency short-term agency set up to accomplish speedily and, if need be, by informal and even unconventional methods the outright removal from enemy territory of victims of Nazi persecution, as well as to help enable the survival of persons who could not be so rescued. The Intergovernmental Committee, on the other hand, and especially prior to the summer of 1944, was a long-term planning rather than an operational agency, whose international nature ^{2/} and lack of working relationships with private welfare and relief agencies rendered impossible the prompt accomplishment of rescue and relief operations of this type.

Previous Intergovernmental Efforts. The Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees was established as an outgrowth of the Evian Conference held in France in July 1938. This meeting, held at the initiative of President Roosevelt, was called to consider ways and means of introducing order into the "forced migration of political and religious refugees from Central Europe."

During the first year of its existence, the Intergovernmental Committee was thus chiefly concerned with efforts to negotiate with the Germans in order to work out some orderly plan of migration

^{1/} As of September 1945, 36 governments were members of the Intergovernmental Committee, these being the United States, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Eire, France, Greece, Haiti, Honduras, Iceland, India, Luxembourg, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, the Union of South Africa, and Venezuela.

^{2/} As of the time the Board was created, there were 35 member governments with whom the Intergovernmental Committee necessarily maintained working arrangements.

000080

for persons who, because of their race, religion, or political beliefs, were being oppressed by the Nazis. Before any major accomplishments were achieved, however, war broke out and the Committee's activities fell victim to conditions imposed by the war. Intergovernmental Committee efforts thereafter consisted largely of negotiations with various governments for places of resettlement.

The Bermuda Conference. During the early part of 1943 the British and United States Governments decided to call a meeting to examine all possible methods of relieving the distress of those in Europe who were victims of Nazi aggression. Following this Bermuda Conference, held in April 1943, the mandate of the Intergovernmental Committee as originally defined was extended "so as to include, as may be found necessary and practicable, in addition to those already within the mandate, those persons, wherever they may be, who as a result of events in Europe have had to leave, or may have to leave, their countries of residence because of the danger to their lives or liberties on account of their race, religion or political beliefs" and the Committee was empowered by the member states "to undertake negotiations with neutral or allied states or with organizations, and to take such steps as may be necessary to preserve, maintain and transport" persons coming within the mandate as extended. 1/

United States Government Financial Contributions to Intergovernmental Committee. In February 1944 the Department of State advised the Board of this Government's commitment to supply one-half of the operational expenses of the Intergovernmental Committee for the first quarter of 1944. In order "to avoid any possible misunderstanding and possible consequent weakening of the status of the Intergovernmental Committee," payment of £50,000 from the Board's allotment from the President's Emergency Fund was recommended. 2/

Such a payment (£50,000 plus £1,998 for administrative expenses for the last quarter of 1943) shortly thereafter was arranged by the Board, \$209,811.93 being transmitted to cover both payments. At the same time, however, the Board in a letter to the State Department indicated that this action was not to be construed as a commitment that the Board would continue to make funds available to the Intergovernmental Committee. With respect to the amount

1/ Resolution adopted at a meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee Executive Committee on August 4, 1938.

2/ Letter from the State Department dated February 7, 1944, comprising document 498.

made available, the Board stated that it was assuming that all projects financed from operational funds of the Committee and submitted to this Government for approval would be undertaken only after clearance with the Board. 1/

Subsequently, the Board requested and on May 15, 1944, obtained an additional allotment of \$2,000,000 from the President's Emergency Fund. \$1,800,000 of this amount was for payment to the Intergovernmental Committee as the balance of this government's commitment for 1944 and \$200,000 was for repayment to the Board for the \$50,000 advanced to the Committee in February 1944 from the Board's funds. 2/

In November 1944 arrangements were made at the request of the State Department 3/ for the transfer of another \$1,998 to the Intergovernmental Committee from the Board's own allotment from the President's Emergency Fund. This payment constituted this Government's share in the quarterly administrative expenses of the Committee. 4/ Subsequent requests from the Committee for contributions from the United States Government for the Committee's operational and administrative funds were handled by the State Department.

Understanding Reached on Respective Jurisdictions. In March 1944, in order to insure against the possibility of overlapping operations, the Board invited Sir Herbert Emerson and Patrick Kalin, Director and Vice-Director of the Intergovernmental Committee, to come to Washington for general discussions with the Board members, Executive Director Pehle, and others concerning refugee problems. 5/ In the course of discussions held in Washington the following month, complete agreement was reached with regard to respective fields of operation. Copies of an exchange of memoranda between the Intergovernmental Committee and the Board were subse-

- 1/ Letter to the State Department dated February 26, 1944, comprising document 499.
- 2/ Memorandum to the President from the Board members comprising document 500, and letter dated May 15, 1944, from President Roosevelt to the Secretary of the Treasury, comprising document 501.
- 3/ Letter from the State Department dated November 11, 1944, comprising document 502.
- 4/ Letter to the State Department dated November 15, 1944, comprising document 502.
- 5/ Cable No. 2943 to London dated March 17, 1944.

000082

quently sent abroad to representatives of both agencies, reinforcing a mutual desire for the closest cooperation between the staffs of the Intergovernmental Committee and the Board. 1/

"Credit Scheme" Approved. In the course of the Intergovernmental Committee discussions in Washington there was considered the substance of a proposal advanced by the British, asking that the Board jointly supplement certain refugee projects already in operation by setting up a "guarantee fund" in Switzerland in the hands of the Intergovernmental Committee. It was proposed that the British and the United States Government contribute equally to such a fund. 2/

The United States subsequently approved the proposed scheme, and the use of its \$2,000,000 1944 contribution for such purposes. It was further agreed that if the needs of the Committee should require additional sums, sympathetic consideration would be given toward making the necessary funds available. 3/

Shortly thereafter, in a message to the Director of the Intergovernmental Committee the Board indicated its earnest hope, particularly in view of the urgency of the situation in the Balkans, that it would be possible for the Intergovernmental Committee to initiate immediate operations under the credit scheme. In this connection the Board indicated that the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee had the opportunity to spend at least an additional \$4,000,000 on productive rescue operations in the Balkans. The Board stressed the general conviction on the part of all responsible agencies in the Near East that substantial numbers of people might be saved. For these reasons the Intergovernmental Committee was urged to agree to underwrite certain credit operations already organized by the Joint Distribution Committee in several countries where the need was desperate, so as to enable that organization to proceed immediately, as an agent of the Intergovernmental Committee, to take full advantage of the newly presented rescue opportunities. 4/ Intergovernmental Committee agreement to assume these obligations was subsequently obtained, 5/ and sub-

- 1/ Memorandum from the Director of the Intergovernmental Committee dated April 14, 1944, comprising document 504, and memorandum to the Director of the Intergovernmental Committee dated April 17, 1944, comprising document 505.
- 2/ British Embassy Aide Memoire to the State Department dated March 27, 1944, comprising document 488.
- 3/ State Department Aide Memoire to the British Embassy, undated, comprising document 489.
- 4/ Cable No. 5594 to London dated July 13, 1944, comprising document 506.
- 5/ Cable No. 5734 from London dated July 20, 1944, comprising document 507.

stantial funds were subsequently made available by the Intergovernmental Committee for refugee relief in Hungary, France, Rumania, and Northern Italy.

Assistance Extended in Selections for Oswego. At the request of the Board in connection with the removal to this country of 1,000 refugees who had fled to Italy, the Intergovernmental Committee representative in Italy assumed charge of the receipt of applications from refugees in the Rome area and initiated the selection in that area of families and individuals later brought to the Emergency Refugee Shelter at Oswego, New York. 1/

Responsibility Assumed for Refugees on Iberian Peninsula. In the spring of 1945, upon the joint recommendation of this Government, the British, and various private relief agencies that had borne the expense of maintaining refugees from Axis oppression in Spain and Portugal, the Intergovernmental Committee agreed to assume responsibility for the maintenance and ultimate resettlement of all refugees of other than Spanish and Portuguese nationalities on the Iberian Peninsula. 2/

1/ See Emergency Refugee Camps and Settlement: United States.
2/ See Rescue to and through Portugal.

000084

VI B. COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL AND GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES:
INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS

Throughout its rescue and relief activities the Board made efforts to enlist the active cooperation of the International Committee of the Red Cross, in view of the humanitarian objectives to which that organization is dedicated and because its neutral status enabled it to operate in enemy territory. Furthermore, the International Red Cross was a channel of communications with enemy territory.

Cooperation of International Red Cross Delegates Obtained. Delegates of the International Red Cross in Turkey and Switzerland, for example, cooperated fully with Board representatives there in attempting to secure safe-conducts for ships scheduled for Balkan evacuation operations, in facilitating informal discussions with influential satellite officials, and in relaying information on the plight of refugees in enemy territory.^{1/} The Delegate of the International Committee in Washington was also helpful in transmitting information received concerning significant conditions encountered by Red Cross representatives abroad in the course of their operations in enemy territory.

Assistance Rendered in Feeding Programs. Most successful of all the cooperative efforts on the part of the Red Cross, however, was the assistance rendered in the field of outright relief. One of the first actions of the Board upon its formation was to send an urgent message to the International Red Cross asking for a report with respect to what operational areas in occupied Europe were feasible in connection with providing food and medicines to Jews and other persecuted minorities denied the facilities made available to the rest of the population.^{2/} The Board in effect took over from the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, to which the Red Cross had addressed an appeal some time before for funds to finance relief activities on behalf of suffering civilians

^{1/} See especially Rescue to and through Turkey.

^{2/} Cable No. 279 to Bern dated January 27, 1944, comprising document 508.

000085

in war-ravaged areas. In February 1944, upon the receipt of a preliminary reply from the Red Cross,^{1/} arrangements were made by the Board for the prompt transmission to Switzerland of \$100,000 contributed by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, with which the Red Cross was able to purchase food and other supplies in neutral countries and in Hungary and Rumania for distribution, where reasonable controls could be exercised to persecuted groups in Rumania, Croatia, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia.

Two other Joint Distribution Committee relief projects recommended by the Board were accomplished with the aid of the International Red Cross. \$100,000 was made available by the Joint Distribution Committee for the purchase by representatives of that organization of foodstuffs in Turkey, from which parcels were made up and distributed by the Red Cross to internees in enemy territory, particularly in the Balkans and the Transnistrian area. Distribution of some \$36,000 worth of foodstuffs similarly obtained in Switzerland for the relief of persons interned in Czechoslovakia, was also effected through the Red Cross.^{2/}

Red Cross assistance was also enlisted in connection with two feeding programs undertaken from Switzerland and Portugal in the summer of 1944 by the American Friends Service Committee. Some \$40,000 worth of food parcels were dispatched from these two neutral countries for the relief of displaced persons in France, while another \$10,000 was used for the purchase of French francs later utilized for relief purposes in France under Red Cross supervision.^{3/}

In addition to the assistance rendered by the Red Cross in distributing relief supplies provided by the private agencies, the Red Cross handled the distribution of all Board food parcels in enemy territory, working closely with the Board's representatives in Bern and Stockholm.^{4/}

Red Cross Intercession Urged on Behalf of Unassimilated Groups.
Efforts were also made by the Board to obtain assurance from the German and satellite governments through the International Red Cross, that Jews and other persons detained, interned, or otherwise

- ^{1/} Cable No. 1028 from Bern dated February 18, 1944, comprising document 509.
- ^{2/} See Projects of Private Organizations: American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee for further details concerning all three of these projects.
- ^{3/} See Projects of Private Organizations: American Friends Service Committee.
- ^{4/} See Relief Programs: Board's Food Parcels Program.

000086

confined because of race, religion, or political belief, would be accorded treatment equal to that of civilian internees. The Red Cross for many months declined to make the proposed representations, predicating this refusal to act on its own assumption that the Germans would undoubtedly reject any such appeal.^{1/} Shortly before the German military collapse, however, when it had become almost a foregone conclusion that German officials would be eager to curry Allied favor by acceding to such an appeal, the Red Cross asked the Germans to grant assimilated status to schutzhaeftlinge (persons detained for security reasons), at least to the extent of permitting the receipt of food parcels. Thus, toward the end of 1944 and in early 1945, following German approval of such general relief action (in place of distribution to a limited number of camps previously permitted by individual commandants), substantial quantities of food made available by the Board and by private relief agencies were dispatched to German and German-occupied areas through Red Cross channels to help enable the survival of persons victimized by the Nazi regime.^{2/}

Other Red Cross Aid in Hungary and Rumania. Upon the German occupation of Hungary in March 1944 the Board asked the International Red Cross to send effective representation to Hungary in order to protect the well-being of groups there facing persecution at the hands of German and Hungarian Nazis. The Red Cross at first declined on the ground that such a delegation might be considered inconsistent with its traditional functions. After repeated urging, however, a special Red Cross delegation was sent into Hungary and widespread relief was eventually undertaken under Red Cross auspices, along with efforts on a diplomatic level designed to persuade Hungarian authorities to ameliorate their treatment of civilian internees and to accord less harsh treatment to minority groups in general.^{3/}

Similar intervention with Rumanian authorities was attempted by delegates of the International Red Cross stationed in Bucharest following the occurrence of excesses there in the treatment of minority groups.^{4/}

Efforts Made to Obtain International Red Cross Assistance in the Protection of Internees. In view of the success of Allied military developments and the well-known inclinations in certain official German circles to exterminate the maximum number of Jews before the end of the war, the Board early in September 1944

- ^{1/} See Relief Programs: Efforts to Obtain Assimilated Status for Interned Civilians.
- ^{2/} See Relief Programs: Board's Food Parcels Program.
- ^{3/} See Rescue from Hungary.
- ^{4/} See Rescue from Rumania.

000087

instructed Representative McClelland in Bern to urge the International Red Cross to take preventive as well as corrective measures toward insuring protection to persons interned in such camps as Theresienstadt, with its 40,000 to 60,000 inmates. Toward that end, the Board proposed that the Red Cross endeavor to extend general supervision to Theresienstadt and to other German camps previously regarded by the Red Cross as more or less privileged in character. Mindful of the reply previously received from the Red Cross in response to the Board's request that a special delegation be dispatched in the Hungarian crisis to exercise whatever moral influence might be inherent in the presence of such delegates, the Board pointed out that even if the proposed line of action were beyond the traditional pattern of Red Cross activities and hence unprecedented, so was the situation.^{1/}

Again in January 1945 the attention of International Red Cross authorities was once again drawn to the danger faced by Jewish survivors in German-controlled territory, particularly in view of renewed reports from a variety of sources that mass exterminations were planned by the Germans. In making representations to Red Cross authorities, Board Representative McClelland was asked to refer specifically to two other major concentrations of Jews known to exist in Axis territory in addition to Theresienstadt: Lodz with 60,000 to 80,000 inmates, and certain camps in Vienna with 18,000 inmates, as well as to any other localities or regions where Jews were believed to survive. The Board felt that frequent and extended visits on the part of Red Cross and other neutral representatives to places and regions where Jews were concentrated constituted one of the most effective means of preventing further exterminations, and pointed to the proved efficacy of this method in Budapest where, thanks to the presence of Red Cross and Swedish personnel, many lives were saved.^{2/}

Referring to the German's consent some months before to permit the International Red Cross to inspect and care for Hungarian Jews engaged in forced labor in German and German-occupied territory, the Board asked that Representative McClelland urge immediate and continuing Red Cross action to safeguard the lives of these persons. Representative McClelland was further advised that this entire approach to the Red Cross was not to be construed as a plea for one-time acts of intercession but was a request for unremitting pursuit of the suggested activities as long as the danger remained.^{3/}

- ^{1/} Cable No. 3074 to Bern dated September 6, 1944, comprising document 510, and Cable No. 3235 to Bern dated September 19, 1944.
- ^{2/} Efforts were also directed toward getting Switzerland and Sweden to send additional representatives to places where Jews were concentrated as a means of preventing further exterminations; see Approaches to Germany and the Satellites to Halt Persecution: Appeals through Neutral Countries.
- ^{3/} Cable No. 127 to Bern dated January 9, 1945, comprising document 398.

100088

Although the Red Cross had repeatedly been denied permission to visit various German camps to which relief had been extended, including particularly the camp of Bergen-Belsen,^{1/} Representative McClelland in the course of new representations on the matter late in January 1945 was assured by the President of the International Red Cross that efforts in this direction would not be relaxed. Toward that end the Red Cross indicated that it was still endeavoring to effect a general enlargement of its delegation in Germany. With respect to the supervision of labor deportees, the Red Cross indicated that it had been able to exercise fairly satisfactory supervision over Hungarian Jews sent to work in Austria but that such efforts with respect to workers in Germany proper had been less effective.^{2/}

Red Cross representation in Germany was eventually substantially increased, the new delegates being stationed principally in or near camps to which the Board's feeding program had been extended, where their presence undoubtedly exercised a deterrent effect on the supervisory personnel of the various camps.^{3/}

Expressions of Mutual Appreciation. Following the surrender of Germany, the President of the International Red Cross in a letter transmitted through its Washington Delegate in July 1945, thanked the Board for its part in having made possible the extensive relief work undertaken on behalf of unassimilated groups. The letter went on to recite the fact that the Board, "called into being under the wise and memorable leadership of President Roosevelt, enabled some tens of thousands of the most sorely tried war victims to receive some degree of help, although this was on a modest scale, in comparison to the stupendous needs of the sufferers. According to testimonies received repeatedly from the latter, this help, however, in many cases spelt rescue from death by starvation."^{4/}

An expression of thanks to the International Red Cross for its various cooperative efforts was later transmitted by the Board, expressing particular gratitude for the role played by the Red Cross in affording relief to the suffering inmates of German concentration camps.^{5/}

^{1/} Cable No. 415 from Bern dated January 20, 1945.

^{2/} Cable No: 581 from Bern dated January 27, 1945, comprising document 399.

^{3/} See Relief Programs: Board's Food Parcels Program.

^{4/} Letter from the International Red Cross in Geneva dated May 30, 1945, comprising document 511.

^{5/} Letter to the International Red Cross dated August 11, 1945, comprising document 512.

VI C. COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL AND GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES:
UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND REHABILITATION ADMINISTRATION.

Another organization with which close working relationships were maintained by the Board was the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. Whereas the Board was an agency set up by one government and dedicated to measures designed to secure the speedy rescue and relief of victims of enemy persecution, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration was an organization of international character ^{1/} whose jurisdiction with respect to persons escaping from enemy territory in effect began where the Board's ended. The Board's rescue efforts were directed toward helping endangered persons reach safe territory. The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration was charged with the responsibility of assisting such rescued persons pending their repatriation or resettlement. For many months, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration took the position that it was not authorized to care for refugees escaping to neutral territory. In the last months of the war, however, when the Board was engaged in a special all-out effort to save innocent people from last-minute Nazi persecutions, Executive Director O'Dwyer succeeded in obtaining agreement from the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration to provide relief supplies to the International Red Cross in Switzerland for refugees escaping from Germany to Switzerland, on the theory that such refugees were in transit to United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration camps and hence wards of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration.^{2/}

^{1/} As of September 1945 there were 44 member governments of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. These were the United States, the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union, Australia, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, the French Provisional Government, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Iceland, India, Iran, Iraq, Liberia, Luxembourg, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Philippine Commonwealth, Poland, the Union of South Africa, Uruguay, Venezuela and Yugoslavia.

^{2/} See Relief Programs: Board's Food Parcel Programs.

000090

During the course of the Board's existence arrangements were made for the temporary care of thousands of refugees in United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration camps in Allied territory. As the result of general agreement on the part of the British and United States Governments, early in 1944 responsibility for the maintenance and operation of the newly established Camp Lyautey near Fedhala in North Africa was transferred to the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. Following arrangements made by this Government with the French Committee of National Liberation in North Africa later in 1944, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration took over the establishment and administration of a second camp for refugees at Philippeville in North Africa.^{1/} Subsequently several refugee camps in Italy were turned over to or established by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. Thousands who escaped across the Adriatic from Yugoslavia were maintained in these centers.

The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration also cooperated with the Board by making available relevant information obtained by its representatives abroad, particularly data concerning existing refugee camps, transient and otherwise, in the Middle East, North Africa and Italy, and their estimated capacities.

The Board sought and obtained in May 1945 United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration help in connection with the repatriation of refugees at the Emergency Refugee Shelter in Oswego, New York. The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration agreed to arrange for and finance the transportation of those refugees who could and were willing to return to their homelands in Europe.^{2/}

^{1/} See Emergency Camps and Settlement: North Africa for further details concerning these two camps and the part played by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration in their operation.

^{2/} See Emergency Camps and Settlement: United States.

VI D. COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL AND GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES:
UNITED NATIONS WAR CRIMES COMMISSION

The threat of punishment for all those who participated in the Axis persecution of innocent minorities was the basis of the Board's psychological warfare program. Threats of this kind had been made by the United Nations ^{1/} even before the Board's establishment. In March 1943, the Congress of the United States passed a concurrent resolution which, after reciting the atrocities inflicted on the Jews by the Nazis, resolved as follows:

"That these brutal and indefensible outrages against millions of helpless men, women, and children should be, and they are hereby, condemned as unworthy of any nation or any regime which pretends to be civilized;

"RESOLVED FURTHER, That the dictates of humanity and honorable conduct in war demand that this inexcusable slaughter and mistreatment shall cease and that it is the sense of this Congress that those guilty, directly or indirectly, of these criminal acts shall be held accountable and punished in a manner commensurate with the offenses for which they are responsible."

Following the creation of the Board such threats were repeated in increasing tempo.^{2/} It was assumed by the Board that one of the primary functions of the United Nations Commission for the Investigation of War Crimes, set up in 1943, would be to gather evidence of such crimes and devise procedures for trying and punishing those enemy nationals who participated in the persecution of minorities.

^{1/} See, for example, the Moscow Conference Declaration of German Atrocities dated November 1, 1943, comprising document 424, and the United Nations Declaration dated December 17, 1942, comprising document 422.

^{2/} See Psychological Warfare Programs.

In the summer of 1944, however, the Board learned informally that the Commission had taken the view that inasmuch as there was no precedent under international law for including as war crimes acts committed by an enemy nation or its nationals against its own subjects or the subjects of another enemy nation, no plans were to be made for the trial and punishment of persons guilty of such acts.

Board Urged Sending Appropriate Instructions to Commission.

In view of this absence of efforts on the part of the Commission to make provision for the just punishment of such war criminals, the Board at once addressed a memorandum to Under Secretary of State Stettinius under date of August 28, 1944, reviewing the Board's interest in the matter of war crimes and expressing the conviction that it would be a fearful miscarriage of justice if war criminals in this category should be permitted to escape punishment for their inhuman crimes. The Board also pointed out that failure to implement the numerous previous threats of punishment made by the United Nations and by this Government would not only discredit those having originated such statements but would undoubtedly render it far more difficult to deter similar criminal conduct in the future.

While the Board's investigation of the matter had revealed that Mr. Herbert Pell, the United States Representative on the Commission,^{1/} was not satisfied with the position which the Commission had taken, it was also learned that the State Department had failed to instruct Mr. Pell on the matter. The Board therefore strongly urged that the State Department cable Mr. Pell, indicating clearly that the declared policy of the United States Government was to insure the just punishment of all Axis war criminals, including those guilty of crimes against the Jews and other minorities whether or not the victims of such crimes were of the same nationality as their oppressors, and instructing that he insist upon the formulation of a program by the Commission designed to effectuate this policy.^{2/}

Despite repeated requests on the part of the Board in subsequent months asking that such instructions be dispatched by the

^{1/} In January 1945 Mr. Pell ceased to function as a member of the Commission, being succeeded by his deputy, Lt. Col. J. V. Hodgson. In announcing this change, the State Department explained that Congress had failed to appropriate money to pay the salary and expenses of a full-time delegate. Although Mr. Pell subsequently offered to serve in his former capacity without compensation, no action was taken by the State Department on this offer.

^{2/} Memorandum to Under Secretary of State Stettinius dated August 28, 1944, comprising document 513.

State Department and that a statement to that effect be made public, the State Department postponed making a decision in the matter on the ground that the whole war crimes situation was still "under active consideration" by the Department and other interested agencies.^{1/}

Last-Minute Warnings Issued on Punishment for War Crimes. In view of the continued absence of any definitive statement by the State Department on the matter of war crimes and in view of the fact that, ironically enough, the dangers of last-minute extermination of civilian internees in Germany and German-occupied territory increased as the Germans were forced to yield more territory to advancing Allied armies, the Board toward the end of 1944 drafted a proposed statement for issuance by General Eisenhower as Supreme Allied Commander, cautioning all Germans against further ruthlessness in the treatment of men "in concentration camps and forced labor battalions" and warning that heavy punishment awaited those bearing any degree of responsibility for the mistreatment of internees. The statement was issued on November 7, 1944.

In April 1945, shortly before the German military collapse, a last declaration along these lines was made by the Governments of the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union, warning that any German guilty of maltreating detainees or prisoners of war would be "ruthlessly pursued and brought to punishment."^{2/}

Final Decision of Commission Paralleled Board's Recommendations. Following the issuance of these last-minute warnings by the Allied Supreme Command and by the "Big Three" Governments, an affirmative position on the punishment of all persons guilty of crimes against Jews and other minorities was taken by the State Department and conveyed to the representative of this Government on the United Nations War Crimes Commission.

Board's Files Furnish War Crimes Data. Through its representatives abroad and tested contacts in Europe, the Board was kept fully advised concerning the German campaign of extermination and torture. Reports and accounts from these sources accumulated evidence in the files of the Board detailing atrocities and naming

^{1/} Letter from the State Department dated December 14, 1944, comprising document 514.

^{2/} See Psychological Warfare Programs: Statements and Informational Campaigns Inspired by the Board for a further discussion of these and other warnings directed to the German and satellite nations.

their perpetrators. (Two such reports, eye-witness accounts of events which occurred at the notorious extermination centers established by the Germans at Auschwitz and Birkenau in southwestern Poland, were released to the public in November 1944.^{1/})

When the war in Europe ended and the cases against Nazi war criminals were under preparation the War Department liaison groups investigating and developing such cases for the United Nations War Crimes Commission sought permission to study these Board files. The Board immediately made available its files in Washington and Switzerland ^{2/} (all other Board offices abroad had been closed by then) for study and possible use as evidence in the war crimes cases.

^{1/} See Public Relations.

^{2/} Cable No. 1980 to Bern dated June 7, 1945.

000095

VI E - 1. COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL AND GOVERNMENTAL
AGENCIES: OTHER UNITED STATES AGENCIES

THE AMERICAN RED CROSS

In connection with the Board's program of shipping food parcels abroad for distribution by the International Red Cross to enable the survival of unassimilated civilians held in enemy territory, the assistance of the American National Red Cross was helpfully enlisted, on a reimbursable basis, in the packaging of 285,000 food parcels and in making shipping space available to the Board. 1/

Mutually helpful discussions were also held between representatives of the Board and the American Red Cross, particularly on the matter of ways and means of extending relief to civilians interned in enemy territory but not assimilated to the status of prisoners of war under the Geneva Convention.

1/ See Relief Programs: Board's Food Parcels Program.

000096

VI E - 2. COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL AND GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES:
OTHER UNITED STATES AGENCIES

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Glose cooperation between the Department of State and the Board was maintained throughout the life of the Board as a first essential to the success of its rescue and relief efforts. In order that the aid of United States diplomatic and consular representatives throughout the world might be enlisted, the State Department in January 1944, at the Board's request, dispatched a circular cable to all United States Missions, advising them of the creation of the Board and of its objectives and requesting their assistance in effectuating the rescue policy set forth in the Board's Executive Order.^{1/} A follow-up circular airgram was later dispatched by the Department with respect to the work of the Board.^{2/}

As the result of these initial instructions and others dispatched by the Board itself from time to time, the framework was established whereby the aid of many governments was eventually enlisted in specific rescue and relief work undertaken by the Board. The guidance and assistance of United States diplomatic officers was of invaluable help to the Board's Special Representatives abroad and to the private agencies in dealings involving negotiation with foreign governments. The success of War Refugee Board operations in Turkey, Switzerland, Sweden and London were due in large measure to the personal help and interest of Ambassador Steinhardt, Minister Harrison, Minister Johnson and Ambassador Winant.

In accordance with the terms of the Executive Order establishing the Board, all Board representatives abroad, with the exception of its representative for Italy and North Africa, were appointed

- ^{1/} Cable No. 634 to London dated January 25, 1944, comprising document 5; subsequently repeated to all other United States Missions.
- ^{2/} Cable No. 774 to London dated January 31, 1944; repeated in substance on February 29, 1944, as a Circular Airgram to other United States Missions comprising document 6.

000097

special attaches of the respective United States Missions with diplomatic status. Office space and other facilities were generously provided the Board's representatives in the legations and embassies to which they were attached.

Mr. George Warren, Adviser to the Secretary of State on Refugees and Displaced Persons, was designated by the State Department to act as its liaison officer with the Board and to handle all war refugee matters for the Department. The Board in turn designated various members of its staff to act as Board liaison officer with the State Department. Through the direct channels of these liaison officers, it was possible to cut red tape and save valuable time in clearing and expediting important Board policies and operations.

Transmission of Board Cables. Until the last months of the Board's existence, the only means of communication between the Board and its representatives abroad was by cable. As with other government agencies, the Board transmitted and received all its messages through the cable facilities of the State Department. Originally State Department secret codes were used for Board messages. Later, when the volume of Board cables became very great, a special War Refugee Board secret code was devised and used for all Board messages. The coding and decoding of these cables was handled entirely by State Department personnel in Washington and in the legations and embassies abroad. State Department facilities were not only availed of for the Board's own messages but also for the transmission of private agency messages concerning the rescue and relief of victims in enemy territory. By channeling all such messages through the Board, valuable information was obtained by the Department and the Board and coordination of private agency operations greatly facilitated.

In June 1945, as the process of liquidating the Board began, a change was effected in the manner in which the messages of private rescue and relief agencies were transmitted. At the request of the Board, the State Department resumed the function of receiving and relaying by code such messages as the private agencies could not, for satisfactory reasons, dispatch effectively by means of ordinary commercial cable facilities.

State Department Clearance of Board Measures. Since the Board's work was only a part of the total war against Nazi principles, its programs and projects had to be carried out within the framework of the over-all United Nations war effort. State Department concurrence in Board proposals involving political and foreign economic problems was essential. In addition, State Department approval and support of Board proposals to United States Missions abroad was vital to obtaining effective action on the part of the Missions. Accordingly, all Board cables and important policy matters were submitted to the State Department for clearance and consideration in the light of

existing relationships and dealings between the United States and the particular governments involved. In the beginning this procedure frequently resulted in modification and delays. Later, although most of the Board's proposals were bold and unprecedented because of the very nature of its work, clearances were obtained quickly. In working with the State Department the Board constantly emphasized the basic humanitarian purposes of its proposed measures and pressed for quick action. In most instances the humanitarian considerations prevailed and prompt action by the Department of State was forthcoming.

000099

VI E - 3. COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL AND GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES:
OTHER UNITED STATES AGENCIES

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Extremely close working relationships were maintained between the Board and the Treasury Department in carrying out the policy of immediate rescue and relief to victims of enemy persecution. Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau, Jr., whose intense interest and vision were in large measure responsible for the establishment of the Board, placed the full force of his department as well as his own active daily support and ideas behind the work of the Board. Key Treasury Department personnel from the Foreign Funds Control and the Office of the General Counsel were assigned to the Board in Washington at the request of the Secretary of the Treasury. The Treasury Department Public Relations staff and facilities were placed at the Board's disposal and the Administrative Services Division of Foreign Funds Control was designated to handle all administrative services, including budget, payroll, personnel and general office management problems, for the Board. Office space in the Main Treasury Building in Washington was made available to the Board.

Immediately after the creation of the Board, the Secretary of the Treasury sent personal cables to the Treasury Department representatives in London, Stockholm, Ankara, Lisbon, Cairo and Algiers requesting them to do everything possible to assist the Board and the United States Missions in their efforts to accomplish the purposes of the Order establishing the Board. In three instances, experienced Treasury representatives already stationed abroad were named Special Representatives of the Board, with the approval of the Secretary of the Treasury. They were Iver C. Olsen in Stockholm and Leonard Ackermann and James Saxon in Algiers.

Board Programs Facilitated by Close Working Relations Established with Foreign Funds Control. The financing from the United States of rescue and relief operations in enemy territory was possible only as authorized by the Treasury Department under the Trading with the enemy Act. Shortly before the Board was established, the Treasury and State Departments had decided that the United States Government as a part of its licensing policy would

000100

permit the financing of private projects of this kind under specified safeguards designed to bring no benefit to the enemy. A basic license was devised authorizing the financial transactions involved as well as the necessary communication with persons in enemy or enemy-occupied territory. This form of license was issued by the Treasury Department to three private agencies prior to the establishment of the Board. With the creation of the Board, all requests for Treasury licenses permitting rescue and relief operations in enemy-controlled areas were channelled through the Board and licenses were issued for such operations only upon the Board's recommendation. A special liaison officer was appointed by the Treasury's Foreign Funds Control to handle and expedite all licensing problems relating to War Refugee Board matters. In this way, it was possible for the government to coordinate private rescue and relief operations, ensure against unnecessary duplication and generally to guide the private agencies in financing and executing Board programs.

The original basic licenses 1/ issued by the Treasury specified the amounts that might be remitted abroad to finance the operations authorized. Later, all basic licenses issued by the Treasury 2/ merely authorized the basic rescue and relief operations. The actual transmission of funds to finance the operations was controlled by separate remittance licenses. Twenty private organizations applied for and received basic licenses from the Treasury for War Refugee Board rescue and relief projects. Special remittance licenses were also issued permitting the transfer of approximately \$20,000,000 from the United States for this work.

Treasury Department Provides Large Amounts of Swiss Franc Exchange. Since Switzerland was the most important center abroad for War Refugee Board operations, the major part of the \$20,000,000 remitted from this country was sent to Switzerland. This called for the acquisition of large amounts of Swiss francs which were very scarce during the months of active Board operations. By special arrangement with the Treasury all private agencies licensed to carry on and finance Board projects from Switzerland were authorized to acquire the necessary Swiss francs from the Treasury Department. In a few cases calling for individual remittances of several million dollars each, special arrangements

- 1/ See, for example, Foreign Funds Control License No. W-2106, as amended, dated February 4, 1944, comprising document 515.
- 2/ See, for example, Foreign Funds Control License No. W-2177, dated April 12, 1944, comprising document 516.

000101

were made with the Swiss Government for the acquisition by the United States Treasury of extra quota amounts of Swiss franc exchange to be made available to private American agencies carrying on special Board programs.

Basic Treasury Licenses Permitted Use of Free Exchange in Enemy Territory. The basic licenses under which private organizations carried on rescue and relief operations in enemy and enemy-occupied territory authorized the private agency representatives in neutral countries to acquire the necessary local currencies by any one of three stipulated methods. The first method permitted the acquisition from reliable persons in the neutral countries against reimbursement in the neutral currency, the second permitted the acquisition from persons in enemy or enemy-occupied territory against reimbursement after the war, the third permitted the acquisition of the requisite local currency from persons in enemy territory against payment in free exchange or free currency notes. The licenses specified, however, that the third method should not be used if it were feasible to obtain the local funds by either of the first two methods. It was the position of the State and Treasury Departments and the Board that in these cases the saving of lives was paramount to the possibility that small amounts of free exchange might become available in enemy territory. As a matter of fact, of the \$20,000,000 authorized for expenditure on War Refugee Board projects only a very small part in free exchange ever reached enemy territory and most of this went into the hands and private hoards of individual border guards and lesser officials.

No license was ever issued for War Refugee Board purposes permitting the payment of ransom to the Germans.

000102

VI E - 4. COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL AND GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES:
OTHER UNITED STATES AGENCIES

FOREIGN ECONOMIC ADMINISTRATION

At the request of the Board, the Foreign Economic Administration in March 1944 advised its representatives abroad of the creation and objectives of the Board and enumerated various cooperative steps that might be taken toward aiding the Board's program of rescue and relief. 1/

Assistance Afforded in Various Ways. Throughout the life of the Board the views of the Foreign Economic Administration were sought in connection with various matters with which that agency was concerned. Extended discussions were held in connection with the policy of licensing purchases in enemy territory for relief purposes; on the matter of guaranteeing transblockade relief to European neutrals cooperating in rescue and relief efforts; 2/ and in connection with blockade clearance for all War Refugee Board food parcels programs. 3/

The Foreign Economic Administration was also helpful in supplying background information on such matters as the capacity of Turkish railway facilities and in connection with negotiations which eventually led to the making of a vessel-replacement guarantee to the Turkish Government in the course of the Board's efforts to accomplish rescues from Bulgaria and Rumania through Turkey. 4/

- 1/ Letter from the Foreign Economic Administration dated March 27, 1944.
2/ See Relief Programs: Relief through the Blockade to Cooperating Neutrals.
3/ See Relief Programs.
4/ See Rescues to and through Turkey.

000103

VI E - 5. COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL AND GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES:
OTHER UNITED STATES AGENCIES

OFFICE OF CENSORSHIP

In a letter dated May 13, 1944, it was proposed by the Office of Censorship that the Board should assume the responsibility, from a security standpoint, for the transmission to and from various foreign points of all messages having to do in any way with refugees. Under the procedure proposed, the Office of Censorship would pass incoming and outgoing messages only with the specific approval of the Board.

In a reply dated May 27, 1944, and in the course of a subsequent conference held in June 1944 representatives of the Board pointed out that by its nature the Board was not primarily a regulatory body, nor was it the only Federal agency concerned with refugee matters. While the Board dealt only with those private agencies which it believed were sincerely interested in rescuing and helping victims of enemy oppression and which it believed to be thoroughly reliable, it did not have intelligence reports on the addressees and senders of such messages, nor did it have facilities for such reports. In order to insure cooperation to the greatest extent possible, however, it was agreed that the Board would designate someone to serve as liaison officer with the Office of Censorship, to examine selected communications and to indicate whether the Board had any special concern with them. Ultimate responsibility, from the security point of view, would remain with the Office of Censorship.^{1/}

Trial Review Made of All Cables. Arrangements were subsequently made for the liaison already established with the Office of Censorship by the Foreign Funds Control of the Treasury Department to function for the Board as well.^{2/} A trial review of all cables

- ^{1/} The details of this agreement were summarized in a letter from the Office of Censorship dated June 3, 1944, comprising document 517.
- ^{2/} Letter to the Office of Censorship dated June 14, 1944.

000104

relating to refugee matters was later undertaken in order to determine whether or not such a review of the total daily cable traffic was warranted.

As a result of this trial review, the Board on July 21, 1944, advised the Office of Censorship that in the future it would be interested only in the allocation of intercepts dealing with the broader aspects of refugee activity as exemplified in exchanges between private agencies and their field personnel, with specific reference to refugee activity within enemy and enemy-occupied countries; to planned, proposed, and possible means of escape; and to conditions prevailing in refugee camps and concentration areas.^{1/} Such intercepts were subsequently furnished the Board.

The Foreign Funds Control liaison continued to function for general consultation as well as for the referral of cable messages which, in the opinion of the Office of Censorship, warranted individual referral. Background material relative to various refugee organizations and projects was meanwhile made available by the Board to the Office of Censorship as of possible value to that agency in the carrying out of its mandate.

^{1/} Letter to the Office of Censorship dated July 21, 1944.

000105

VI E - 6. COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL AND GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES:
OTHER UNITED STATES AGENCIES

OFFICE OF WAR INFORMATION

As a first step toward insuring effective, coordinated action between the Board and the Office of War Information, the Board in February 1944 suggested that a policy directive be issued by the Office of War Information for the guidance of persons engaged in the preparation and dissemination by radio and otherwise of information for enemy territory. In this policy directive it was proposed that those responsible for program formulation be instructed to make every effort to keep before the German people the brutal facts concerning Nazi persecution of innocent minorities, as well as the Allies' intention of bringing to justice all persons in any way connected with such crimes. The Board further proposed that the innocent in Axis and satellite territory be asked to demonstrate their good faith by humanitarian deeds and by keeping evidence against the guilty. Finally, the Board asked that it be made clear wherever possible that this Government was taking positive action to aid the victims of Nazi persecution and solicited the cooperation of neutral European countries in the evacuation of refugees to places of safety.

Such a directive was promptly issued.^{1/}

As a result of this directive and of repeated conferences subsequently held by representatives of the two agencies, invaluable cooperation was obtained on the part of Office of War Information representatives, both in the United States and abroad, toward accomplishing the Board's psychological warfare objectives. Programs appealing for tolerance and decency on the one hand and warning of intended retribution on the other, were continuously beamed to Germany and to German-occupied territory by the Office of War Information, and leaflets along the same lines were dropped from the air over Hungary and other satellite countries.^{2/}

^{1/} Office of War Information Central Directive dated February 1944, comprising document 518.

^{2/} For a more detailed account of these efforts see Psychological Warfare Programs: Statements and Informational Campaigns Inspired by the Board.

VI E - 7. COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL AND GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES:
OTHER UNITED STATES AGENCIES

PRESIDENT'S WAR RELIEF CONTROL BOARD

Under date of February 9, 1944, the Board was advised by the President's War Relief Control Board that a part of the procedure set up in 1943 in connection with the National War Fund ^{1/} was the review of budgets or programs of member agencies by the War Relief Control Board, with the advice of an informal committee composed of representatives of various government agencies interested in war relief matters. Budgets of member agencies of the National War Fund for 1944 having been presented, the War Relief Control Board was inviting its Advisory Committee to meet with it for review purposes. Since a number of the budgets included projects for refugee relief, the War Refugee Board was invited to designate a representative to serve on the War Relief Control Board's Advisory Committee.^{2/} This invitation was accepted, and a Board representative subsequently participated in the Fund's budget reviews.

Recommendations Made re Allocation of Funds. Early in 1944 the Board learned that since June of 1943 the American Federation of Labor through its Labor League for Human Rights and the Congress of Industrial Organizations through its War Relief Committee had been attempting, without success, to obtain allocations from the National War Fund for rescue and relief work in Czechoslovakia and Norway. When certain difficulties which had held up these allocations were brought to the attention of the War Refugee Board, discussions were undertaken with representatives of the War Relief Control Board, the difficulties were resolved, and the allocations obtained.^{3/}

- ^{1/} The National War Fund was set up to control solicitations, collections, receipts, and distributions of funds and contributions for charities for war-created needs in the United States or foreign countries, with the exception of the American Red Cross, certain religious organizations, and local relief and welfare activities.
- ^{2/} Letter from the War Relief Control Board dated February 9, 1944, comprising document 519.
- ^{3/} See Relief Programs: Projects of Private Organizations (American Relief for Czechoslovakia and American Relief for Norway) for a more detailed account of these negotiations.

000107

The War Refugee Board subsequently facilitated the carrying out of a number of other war relief programs proposed by private agencies operating under the supervision of the War Relief Control Board. After reviewing the projected operations, the War Refugee Board made recommendations as a result of which substantial allocations were obtained for rescue and relief purposes.^{1/} The recommendations of the War Refugee Board were also solicited in connection with allocations made to the American Christian Committee for Refugees, the International Rescue and Relief Committee, and the Unitarian Service Committee, all of which were members of the National War Fund.^{2/}

Doubts Resolved re Overlapping of Authority. In March 1944 the War Refugee Board was informally advised by the War Relief Control Board that certain persons had asserted that the provisions of Executive Order 9417, under which the War Refugee Board operated, exempted persons and agencies concerned with refugee relief from complying with requirements made by the President's War Relief Control Board under the provisions of its Executive Order 9205.

In a letter dated March 6, 1944, the War Refugee Board indicated that it saw no overlapping between the two Executive Orders, as it understood them. At the same time, however, in order to resolve any doubts in the minds of the third parties, the Board delegated to the President's War Relief Control Board "such authority, if any, as may have been transferred by Executive Order 9417 from the President's War Relief Control Board to the War Refugee Board."^{3/}

- ^{1/} See Rescue Programs: Other Projects (French Relief Fund) and Relief Programs: Projects of Private Organizations (Belgian War Relief, Friends of Luxembourg, Polish War Relief, and the Queen Wilhelmina Fund.)
- ^{2/} See Relief Programs: Projects of Private Organizations (American Christian Committee for Refugees, International Rescue and Relief Committee, and Unitarian Service Committee).
- ^{3/} Letter to the War Relief Control Board dated March 6, 1944, comprising document 520. At the request of the War Relief Control Board, this action was later confirmed in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding dated March 4, 1944, subsequently signed by members of both Boards, comprising document 521.

000108

VI E - 8. COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL AND GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES:
OTHER UNITED STATES AGENCIES

THE WAR DEPARTMENT

In January 1944 the Board furnished the War Department with suggested instructions to the appropriate Theatre Commanders concerning the establishment and responsibilities of the Board. Following clearance with the Joint Chiefs of Staffs, a message similar to that proposed was dispatched.^{1/}

Specific requests for assistance were later addressed to the Army in connection with various rescue and relief projects, and in several instances the Army's provision of transportation for refugees rescued from enemy hands proved invaluable, especially in the case of the removal from Italy of refugees destined for the Emergency Refugee Shelter set up by this Government at Oswego, New York;^{2/} in connection with the removal of a group of Latin American passport holders from Switzerland to a refugee camp at Philippeville in North Africa;^{3/} and in the case of another group of 700 refugees evacuated by the Army from Switzerland to Italy as the first step in their emigration to Palestine.^{4/} Vital assistance was obtained from the War Department in the closing months of the war in connection with the delivery of War Refugee Board food parcels to the starving inmates of German concentration camps. The United States Army at the request of the Secretary of War made available to the Board from Army stocks in France quantities of gasoline, lubricating oils and tires needed for trucks obtained by the Board in Switzerland.^{5/} War Department personnel, both military and civilian, were made available to the Board from time to time for consultation and special assignments.

The Board in turn cooperated with the War Department and with liaison groups set up by the Army to work with the United Nations

^{1/} Letter from the War Department dated March 3, 1944, comprising document 522.

^{2/} See Emergency Refugee Camps and Settlement: United States.

^{3/} See Rescue through Protective Measures: Exchange.

^{4/} See Rescue to and through Switzerland.

^{5/} See Relief Programs: Board's Food Parcels Program.

War Crimes Commission, by making relevant portions of its files available as the source of information and possible evidence relating to European war crimes.^{1/}

^{1/} See Cooperation with International and Governmental Agencies: United Nations War Crimes Commission.

000110

VI E - 9. COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL AND GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES:
OTHER UNITED STATES AGENCIES

WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY

The War Relocation Authority in the Department of the Interior and the Board maintained close working relationships because of their joint responsibilities in connection with the Emergency Refugee Shelter established at Oswego, New York, for refugees evacuated to this country from Southern Italy. Up until the process of the Board's liquidation was begun, over-all responsibility for the operation of the Shelter had been vested in the Board, while actual administrative responsibility had been assigned to the War Relocation Authority. In June 1945 over-all responsibility for the Oswego project was transferred to the War Relocation Authority on the Board's recommendation. 1/

1/ See Emergency Refugee Camps and Settlement: United States.

VI E - 10. COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL AND GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES:
OTHER UNITED STATES AGENCIES

WAR SHIPPING ADMINISTRATION

Invaluable aid was rendered the Board's program of rescue and relief by the War Shipping Administration. Early in 1944, when negotiations with the Turkish Government reached a deadlock because of the Turks' refusal to permit the use of a Turkish vessel for evacuation purposes unless assurances were received that the ship, if lost, would be replaced with a comparable vessel, the Board appealed to the War Shipping Administration, through which a replacement guarantee was promptly obtained. 1/

The War Shipping Administration also materially aided the Board's efforts by detailing a field representative from Cairo to Ankara to assist the Board's representative there in efforts to solve other shipping problems encountered in the Black Sea area. After repeatedly unsuccessful efforts by others to obtain an evacuation ship, another War Shipping Administration representative was detailed to assist the Board's representative in the Mediterranean area, as the result of which a ship was promptly obtained to accomplish the removal of hundreds of refugees from Spain to Camp Lyautey in North Africa. 2/ War Shipping Administration efforts were likewise enlisted in attempts to solve shipping problems involved in evacuating refugees from Yugoslav territory to Italy. 3/

The War Shipping Administration further aided the Board by providing background information on such matters as prevailing insurance and charter rates.

1/ See Rescue to and through Turkey.

2/ See Emergency Refugee Camps and Settlement: North Africa.

3/ See Rescue to and through Italy.

VII. COOPERATION WITH PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS

Established private American relief agencies concerned with refugee problems had for many years before the beginning of the war in Europe endeavored to save and bring relief to the victims of Nazi persecution. With the outbreak of hostilities, however, resulting in the economic blockade of Europe and prohibitions against trading or communicating with the enemy, it became impossible for these agencies to continue to finance and conduct effective relief and rescue work inside German-controlled areas.

The creation of the War Refugee Board and the pronouncement of a firm national policy to save the persecuted minorities of Europe immediately placed the full force and prestige of the United States Government behind all efforts to save these innocent people. One of the most important functions of the Board was to enable these private agencies fully to utilize their resources for such relief and rescue work, and one of the first steps taken by the Board was to invite private organizations concerned with refugee problems to submit their suggestions for specific action which might be taken to effectuate the objectives for which the Board was established. 1/

In response, detailed proposals were received by the Board from the following organizations: Agudas Israel of America, the American Committee of OSE (a French child-care group), the American Friends of Polish Jews, the American Friends Service Committee, the American Jewish Conference, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, the Catholic Committee for Refugees, the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society, the Jewish Labor Committee, the Joint Emergency Committee for European Jewish Affairs, the League for the Liberation of Lithuania, the National Council of Jewish Women, the Netherlands-Jewish Society, the Refugee Economic Corporation, the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada, the United Palestine Appeal, and the World Jewish Congress.

1/ Letter dated February 8, 1944, addressed to 94 private welfare organizations, comprising document 523.

According to a detailed analysis prepared on the basis of these responses, the measures proposed fell into eight general categories: appeals by this Government directly and through intermediaries to the German Government for cooperation in the evacuation of European Jews; warnings to the German people and their officials and to the satellites generally; efforts directed especially toward the satellite countries; special relations with neutral European countries; temporary havens and permanent resettlement; proposals implementing evacuation; programs for persons who could not be evacuated; and general suggestions designed to implement the work of the Board financially and through cooperation with other nations and organizations.

Full and impartial consideration was given to all proposals submitted to the Board, from whatever source. Every proposal was carefully weighed by the Board and, where practicable, immediately acted upon.

From the outset, the staff of the Board was always available for consultation with representatives of private agencies, and there was a continuous interchange of information and advice concerning the development of techniques and programs. The work of the Board thus became a joint undertaking of government and private agencies, with the Board operating where only a government could operate, the private agencies wherever they could, and valuable time was gained by making immediate use of all readily available facilities.

For this joint undertaking, a modus operandi was developed whereby the Board obtained for the private agencies governmental permission to send funds into enemy territory, governmental permission to communicate with persons in enemy territory, the help of United States diplomatic personnel in dealing with other governments, the use of government communication channels, and the guidance of government officials in developing and organizing the programs of rescue and relief in enemy territory. The private agencies, on their part, rendered invaluable and outstanding service to the Board in evolving, financing, and executing rescue and relief plans and projects. They were in effect instruments of the government in this field. The agencies had seasoned personnel in the neutral countries, established contacts with underground and resistance workers in enemy territory, deep concern for the problem, and quickly available funds. Largely because of the generosity of the private agencies, principally the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, no feasible program suffered for lack of money.

Every facility was extended for the transmission of messages relating to rescue and relief operations and of funds to finance such operations. Nearly fifteen hundred communications for private organizations were transmitted through the Board to and from their agents and representatives abroad. All requests for licenses

000114

to effect financial transactions incident to rescue and relief activities were channeled through the Board, and a completely coordinated program was thus obtained for such private projects, which were carried out under the guidance and control of the Board's representatives abroad. Approximately \$20,000,000 in private funds was licensed for transfer abroad, over \$15,000,000 of which was provided by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, over \$1,000,000 by the Vaad Hahatzala Emergency Committee, and over \$300,000 by the World Jewish Congress.^{1/}

As a matter of policy, an early decision was made that the Board would not undertake to act on proposals looking to the rescue or assistance of specific individuals except in instances where it was felt that a particular case offered an opportunity to test the workability of a proposal for its possible use in rescuing or assisting groups of refugees.^{2/} Many private agencies had the facilities and the personnel to perform a valuable service in assisting individuals and in reuniting families. Accordingly, all persons submitting requests to the Board, and there were many, to initiate action on behalf of any specific individual or individuals were referred to such private organizations.

Many of the organizations which worked with the Board depended almost entirely upon contributions from the general public for their operating funds. Their campaigns to raise these funds represented a vital part of their operations and were important to the Board in proportion to the services rendered by such agencies in the Board's task. Meetings for fund-raising purposes were attended by Secretary Morgenthau, as a member of the Board, and by Executive Directors Pehle and O'Dwyer, all of whom delivered addresses describing the use to which such private agency funds were being put and the urgent need for the continued availability of funds for operations in the refugee rescue and relief field.^{3/}

The Board also gave assistance to private agencies in obtaining travel priorities and facilities for representatives whom they desired to send abroad to assist in the development and execution of their rescue and relief programs.

^{1/} See Schedule of Private Agency Remittances Authorized by United States Treasury for War Refugee Board Purposes, comprising document 524.

^{2/} War Refugee Board Press Release No. 3 dated February 9, 1944, comprising document 525.

^{3/} See also Public Relations.

VIII. PUBLIC REGULATIONS

The work of the War Refugee Board was of such a nature that frequent news releases proved unnecessary. Upon the creation of the Board, a radio and press release was issued by the White House describing the Board's establishment and functions ^{1/} Significant developments concerning the Board's program were subsequently made known to the public in a series of press releases. ^{2/}

In addition to these regular releases, other announcements of public interest were made by the Board from time to time. In June 1944, at the time of the establishment of the Emergency Refugee Shelter at Oswego, New York, for refugees subsequently evacuated from Southern Italy, there were released to the press copies of President Roosevelt's instructive cable to Ambassador Robert Murphy and of his memorandum to the Secretaries of War, Navy, and Interior, the Director of the Budget, and the Executive Director of the Board concerning this action. The text of the President's message to Congress on June 12, 1944, describing the necessity for opening the camp at Oswego, was similarly released. ^{3/}

In August 1944 the joint statement of the United States and British Governments concerning acceptance of the Hungarian proposal with respect to the release of Jews was likewise released to the press. ^{4/}

Atrocities Reports Released. Throughout the Board's existence innumerable reports were received from a variety of sources concerning inhuman persecutions inflicted upon minority groups in German and satellite territory. Many of these reports were eyewitness

- ^{1/} Unnumbered White House Release dated January 22, 1944, comprising document 2.
- ^{2/} War Refugee Board Press Releases No. 1 through 18, comprising documents 525 through 543. These releases dealt with such matters as the appointment of Board representatives abroad, the text of addresses made by Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau (Release No. 14), Executive Director Pehle (Releases No. 7, 12, and 15), and Executive Director O'Dwyer (Release No. 18), and the change in the Board's directorship (Release No. 17).
- ^{3/} See Emergency Refugee Camps and Settlement: United States.
- ^{4/} See Rescue from Hungary.

accounts obtained through diplomatic and other channels of unquestioned reliability. Others were reports forwarded through underground channels or made by the victims themselves following their escape to safety outside enemy territory.

Two reports typical of those in the latter category were forwarded to the Board from Bern by Representative McClelland in the summer of 1944 and dealt with conditions in the German concentration and extermination camps at Auschwitz (Oswiecim) and Birkenau.^{1/} These reports, which reached Switzerland from Bratislava through Czech underground channels, were independently prepared by prisoners who had escaped from the Nazis, the first by two young Slovak Jews, the second by a Polish major. Seeking to confirm their authenticity before submitting these reports to the Board, Representative McClelland talked with a member of the Bratislava Papal Nuncio in Bern who had personally interviewed the two Jewish youths and pronounced their story convincing. The report of the Polish major was forwarded by the Czech resistance movement in Slovakia to the representative of the Czechoslovakian Government in Geneva, who vouched for the reliability of its author. Moreover, the statements concerning periods of arrival and the countries of origin of Jewish convoys were found by Representative McClelland to check closely with information in the possession of reliable Jewish and non-Jewish organizations in Switzerland as to the departure of such deportees from various European countries.

In the belief that these eyewitness accounts presented truthful descriptions of typical conditions and atrocities with which the public should be acquainted, the Board in November 1944 released copies to the press.^{2/} Widespread coverage was afforded the release in newspapers throughout the United States. Editorial coverage was likewise extensive, and several radio programs were devoted to discussions of the reports.

^{1/} Dispatch No. 4295 from Bern dated July 6, 1944.

^{2/} Unnumbered War Refugee Board press release dated November 26, 1944, comprising document 526.

000117

000118