

History of the War Refugee Board with Selected Documents,  
Volume II, Pages 449-571

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HISTORY OF THE WAR REFUGEE BOARD WITH SELECTED DOCUMENTS

VOLUME II

DOCUMENTS

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IX. DOCUMENTS

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS APPEARING IN CABLES

AFHQ	Allied Force Headquarters
AMEROCSS	American Red Cross
CICR	International Committee of the Red Cross
EALM	Greek Liberation Front
FEA	Foreign Economic Administration
HMG	His Majesty's Government
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IGC	Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees
INTERCROSS	International Committee of the Red Cross
JDC	Joint Distribution Committee
MEBBO	Mediterranean Shipping Board
MERRA	Middle East Relief and Refugee Administration
MEW	Ministry of Economic Warfare
OSS	Office of Strategic Services
OVI	Office of War Information
POW	Prisoner of War
SH	Schutzhaeftlinge
SHAEP	Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Expeditionary Forces
UNRRA	United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration
WJC	World Jewish Congress
WRB	War Refugee Board
WSA	War Shipping Administration

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No charge.

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DOCUMENT

EXECUTIVE ORDER 9417

ESTABLISHING A WAR REFUGEE BOARD

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

NOW, THEREFORE, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the statutes of the United States, as President of the United States and as Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy, and in order to effectuate with all possible speed the rescue and relief of such victims of enemy oppression, it is hereby ordered as follows:

1. There is established in the Executive Office of the President a War Refugee Board (hereinafter referred to as the Board). The Board shall consist of the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Treasury and the Secretary of War. The Board may request the heads of other agencies or departments to participate in its deliberations whenever matters specially affecting such agencies or departments are under consideration.

2. The Board shall be charged with the responsibility for seeing that the policy of the Government, as stated in the Preamble, is carried out. The functions of the Board shall include without limitation the development of plans and programs and the inauguration of effective measures for (a) the rescue, transportation, maintenance and relief of the victims of enemy oppression, and (b) the establishment of havens of temporary refuge for such victims. To this end the Board, through appropriate channels, shall take the necessary steps to enlist the cooperation of foreign governments and obtain their participation in the execution of such plans and programs.

3. It shall be the duty of the State, Treasury and War Departments, within their respective spheres, to execute at the request of the Board, the plans and programs so developed and the measures so inaugurated. It shall be the duty of the heads of all agencies and departments to supply or obtain for the Board such information and to extend to the Board such supplies, shipping and other specified assistance and facilities as the Board may require in carrying out the provisions of this Order. The State Department shall appoint special attachés with diplomatic status, on the recommendation of the Board,

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to be stationed abroad in places where it is likely that assistance can be rendered to war refugees, the duties and responsibilities of such attaches to be defined by the Board in consultation with the State Department.

4. The Board and the State, Treasury and War Departments are authorized to accept the services or contributions of any private persons, private organizations, State agencies, or agencies of foreign governments in carrying out the purposes of this Order. The Board shall cooperate with all existing and future international organizations concerned with the problems of refugee rescue, maintenance, transportation, relief, rehabilitation, and resettlement.

5. To the extent possible the Board shall utilize the personnel, supplies, facilities and services of the State, Treasury and War Departments. In addition the Board, within the limits of funds which may be made available, may employ necessary personnel without regard for the Civil Service laws and regulations and the Classification Act of 1923, as amended, and make provisions for supplies, facilities and services necessary to discharge its responsibilities. The Board shall appoint an Executive Director who shall serve as its principal executive officer. It shall be the duty of the Executive Director to arrange for the prompt execution of the plans and programs developed and the measures inaugurated by the Board, to supervise the activities of the special attaches and to submit frequent reports to the Board on the steps taken for the rescue and relief of war refugees.

6. The Board shall be directly responsible to the President in carrying out the policy of this Government, as stated in the Preamble, and the Board shall report to him at frequent intervals concerning the steps taken for the rescue and relief of war refugees and shall make such recommendations as the Board may deem appropriate for further action to overcome any difficulties encountered in the rescue and relief of war refugees.

(Signed)  
FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

THE WHITE HOUSE,  
January 22, 1944.

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Text of Press Release Issued  
by the White House Simultane-  
ously with Executive Order  
No. 9417, Establishing the  
War Refugee Board.

January 22, 1944

The President today, by Executive Order, set up a War Refugee Board consisting of the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Treasury and the Secretary of War, to take action for the immediate rescue from the Nazis of as many as possible of the persecuted minorities of Europe -- racial, religious or political -- all civilian victims of enemy savagery.

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

The Board is charged with direct responsibility to the President in seeing that the announced policy is carried out. The President indicated that while he would look directly to the Board for the successful execution of this policy, the Board, of course, would cooperate fully with the Intergovernmental Committee, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, and other interested international organizations.

The President stated that he expected to obtain the cooperation of all members of the United Nations and other foreign governments in carrying out this difficult but important task. He stated that the existing facilities of the State, Treasury and War Departments would be employed to aid Axis victims to the fullest extent possible. He stressed that it was urgent that action be taken at once to forestall the plan of the Nazis to exterminate all the Jews and other persecuted minorities in Europe.

It will be the duty of a full-time Executive Director of the Board to arrange for the prompt execution of the plans and programs developed and the measures inaugurated by the Board.

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TELEGRAM SENT

BJR

February 12, 1944

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

American Embassy  
Ankara  
120

Please refer to the Department's 68 January 25 in regard to the establishment of the War Refugee Board. The Acting Executive Director of the Board, John W. Pehle, has informed the Department that in conformity with the President's order of January 22, the Board proposes to appoint Mr. Ira Hirschmann, who is now in Turkey in a private capacity, as the Acting Special Representative of the Board with the designation by the Department as Special Attaché to the Embassy on war refugee matters. The President's order provides that the State Department shall appoint such Special Attachés on the recommendation of the Board, that they shall have diplomatic status, and that their duties and responsibilities shall be defined by the Board in consultation with the State Department.

If this meets with your approval, you should immediately advise Hirschmann that he is so designated and that he is to have diplomatic status. It is assumed that there will be no objection on the part of the Turkish Government to this designation, although you may in your discretion approach the Turkish authorities informally if you consider it necessary or advisable to do so. You are requested to confirm by telegram Hirschmann's designation or to advise us promptly if there is any reason why the designation should not be effective at once.

You should advise Hirschmann that:

- (a) He is charged with the duty and responsibility of carrying out the Board's policies and programs in Turkey;
- (b) He is responsible to the Ambassador and should discuss his activities and problems with him regularly and fully;
- (c) The Embassy will provide him with the necessary communications facilities in carrying on his official duties;
- (d) He shall extend all possible assistance to the Ambassador in carrying out the instructions contained in the Department's reference telegram;

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(e) He shall work with and give all possible assistance to public and private agencies operating in Turkey in this field regardless of whether such organizations are American, foreign or international;

(f) He shall develop and assist in the development of programs and implementation of measures for the rescue, transportation, maintenance and relief of refugees;

(g) He shall forward to the Board recommendations and frequent reports on progress of work and difficulties encountered;

(h) In so far as the Trading with the Enemy Act is concerned, the Secretary of the Treasury has vested in the War Refugee Board and its representatives in the field full authority to communicate with enemy territory to carry out the purposes of the Order. The Secretary of the Treasury has also delegated to the War Refugee Board and its representatives the power to authorize any public or private agencies, who may be subject to the provisions of our Trading with the Enemy Act, to communicate with enemy territory for the purpose of carrying out the Order. Hirschmann is authorized to act accordingly.

After receipt of confirmation of approval of Hirschmann's designation further detailed instruction will follow from time to time, including instructions concerning fiscal and administrative matters.

STETTINIUS  
(Acting)

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DOCUMENT

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LIST OF WASHINGTON STAFF OF WAR REFUGEE BOARD \*

Length of Service

Executive Director

John W. Pehle                      January 23, 1944 - January 27, 1945  
William C'Dwyer                    January 27, 1945 - September 15, 1945

General Counsel

Josiah E. DuBois, Jr.              January 22, 1944 - January 27, 1945

Assistant Executive Directors

Albert Abrahamson                  February 9, 1944 - December 31, 1944  
Joseph B. Friedman                 January 22, 1944 - January 15, 1945  
Florence Hodel                      January 22, 1944 - September 15, 1945  
Lawrence S. Lesser                 January 22, 1944 - January 31, 1945  
James H. Mann                        May 1, 1944        - February 28, 1945  
Ward Stewart                         January 22, 1944 - December 14, 1944

Special Assistant to the Executive Director

Isadore K. Weinstein                March 24, 1944    - September 29, 1944

Special Assistants

Anne Laughlin                        February 21, 1944 - January 12, 1945  
Benjamin Arzin                        March 11, 1944    - March 15, 1945  
Paul McCormack                        March 6, 1944     - July 11, 1945

Attorneys

Matthew Marks                        January 22, 1944 - January 31, 1945  
Milton Sarroy                         March 27, 1944    - October 10, 1944

\* Exclusive of clerical and stenographic employees.

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LIST OF WASHINGTON STAFF OF WAR REFUGEE BOARD (cont.)

Length of Service

Staff Assistants

Emanuel Borenstein	June 16, 1944	- September 2, 1944
Myles Standish	March 8, 1944	- November 12, 1944

Administrative Officer

David White	February 26, 1944	- August 31, 1945
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Information Specialist

Kathryn C. Cohn	March 1, 1944	- September 15, 1945
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Reporter and Correspondence  
Specialist

Elizabeth B. Towler	January 22, 1944	- September 15, 1945
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This telegram must be paraphrased before being communicated to anyone other than a Governmental agency. (BR)

January 25, 1944  
Midnight

Amembassy  
London  
634

The President has instructed the Secretaries of State, Treasury and War to take action for the immediate rescue and relief of the Jews of Europe and other victims of enemy persecution. In an executive order issued January 22 the President declared QUOTE it is the policy of this Government to take all measures within its power to rescue the victims of enemy oppression who are in imminent danger of death and otherwise to afford such victims all possible relief and assistance consistent with the successful prosecution of the war UNQUOTE. The order establishes special governmental machinery for executing this policy. It creates a War Refugee Board consisting of the Secretaries of State, Treasury and War. The Board is charged with direct responsibility to the President in seeing that the announced policy is carried out. The President indicated that while he would look directly to the Board for the execution of this policy, the Board would cooperate with the Intergovernmental Committee, UNRRA, and other interested international organizations. The President stated that he expected the cooperation of all members of the United Nations and other governments in carrying out this difficult but important task. He stated that the existing facilities of the State, Treasury and War Departments would be employed to furnish aid to Axis victims to the fullest extent possible. He stressed that it was urgent that action be taken to forestall the plot of the Nazis to exterminate the Jews and other persecuted minorities in Europe.

You should do everything possible to effectuate this policy of this Government, bearing in mind that time is of the essence. You should cooperate closely with all public and established private agencies who are active in your area in this field, aiding them in the development of coordinated programs and in the effectuation of integrated measures for the rescue, transportation, maintenance and relief of victims of enemy oppression, etc.

The communication facilities should be made freely available to these private agencies for all appropriate messages for carrying out the policy of this Government herein stated, keeping the War Refugee Board advised through the Department. You should give them every assistance in obtaining and verifying information.

You are requested to render an immediate report concerning the actual situation as it exists today in the country to which you are accredited. This report should include a full statement as to what

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is being done to rescue the Jews and other persecuted minorities from Hitler, including particularly (a) the extent to which these war refugees are permitted to enter the country to which you are accredited (b) the extent to which such country actually encourages and cooperates in their entry and (c) the extent to which such refugees are not able to enter such country because of the failure of such country to cooperate in their entry. This report should cover actual cases which have come to your attention involving refugees being turned back at the border and the reasons why such refugees were turned back. You should also report periodically on cases of this character which come to your attention in the future.

You should include in your report your recommendations as to what you feel this Government can do to effectuate with all possible speed the rescue and relief of the victims of enemy oppression, including particularly what can be done to make the government of the country to which you are accredited cooperate more fully in carrying out this policy. Your report should cover any special obstacles which you feel are interfering with the rescue and relief of these victims and your recommendations as to what can be done to remove these obstacles.

You are requested to approach the Government to which you are accredited, explain the policy expressed in the President's Executive Order referred to above, and ascertain from such Government the extent to which it is prepared to cooperate.

Diplomatic and consular officers are instructed to do everything possible to carry out the policy expressed in the President's Executive Order. This cablegram has been transmitted by telegram or airgram to all diplomatic and consular offices.

Repeat to consular offices under your jurisdiction.

HULL  
(ES)

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AIRGRAM SENT

HEL

February 29, 1944  
7:30 p.m.

CIRCULAR AIRGRAM TO BE SENT TO ALL AMERICAN MISSIONS EXCEPT LONDON, CIUDAD TRUJILLO, SAN SALVADOR, PORT-AU-PRINCE, TEGUCIGALPA, LA PAZ, AND BUENOS AIRES.

The following airgram is sent at the request of the President's War Refugee Board:

Refer to Department's cable of January 25 concerning the President's Executive Order establishing the War Refugee Board and declaring the policy of this Government.

In discussing this matter with the Foreign Office of the government to which you are accredited, you are requested to make it clear that the establishment of the War Refugee Board represents this Government's determination effectively to carry out without delay the policy to take all possible measures for the speedy rescue and relief of the refugees of Europe.

Although this Government on its part intends to take all possible action with all possible speed, we feel certain that this effort will not be unilateral and we wish to make it clear that it continues to be the policy of this Government to encourage and participate in effective cooperative efforts with other governments.

As the President has stated, the Board of course will cooperate fully with all interested international organizations.

You are requested to make clear to the Government to which you are accredited the position of this Government and our desire for its cooperative action. You should explore with the appropriate officials of the Foreign Office the possibility of implementing such cooperation through the issuance by their Government of a declaration of policy similar to that made by the President and the issuance by the Foreign Office of instructions to its representatives in other countries comparable to the instructions contained in the Department's telegram of January 25.

Please keep us informed on this matter.

STETTINIUS  
(Acting)

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DOCUMENT

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COPY

Allocation No. 44-58

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

January 29, 1944

My dear Mr. Secretary:

By virtue of the authority vested in me by law I hereby allocate from the appropriation entitled "Emergency Fund for the President, National Defense, 1942-1944,"

<u>To</u>	<u>Amount</u>
War Refugee Board	\$1,000,000

to be expended by said Board in connection with emergencies affecting the national security and defense for carrying out the functions of the Board as prescribed by Executive Order 9417 of January 22, 1944.

The funds hereby allocated shall be available, without regard to Section 3709 of the Revised Statutes (41 U.S.C.5), for all necessary expenses of the War Refugee Board in carrying out Executive Order 9417, including employment of persons (including aliens) or organizations, by contract or otherwise, in the District of Columbia and elsewhere without regard to the civil service and classification laws; acceptance and utilization of voluntary and uncompensated services; transportation expenses outside the United States without regard to the Standardized Government Travel Regulations; actual transportation and other necessary expenses, and not to exceed \$10 per diem in lieu of subsistence, of persons serving while away from their permanent homes or regular places of business in an advisory capacity to or employed by the Board without other compensation from the United States; purchase and exchange of law books and books of reference; purchase of or subscription to newspapers and periodicals; purchase of food, clothing, and medical supplies within or outside the United States; cash payments to and for the benefit of victims of war, without the necessity for cash receipts where receipts are not obtainable; purchase, without regard to statutory limitations as to price, maintenance, operation, repair, and hire of motor-propelled or horse-drawn trucks and passenger-carrying vehicles; payment of premiums on fidelity or other bonds for employees or others engaged in carrying out the purposes hereof; advances of monies without regard to Section 3648 of the Revised Statutes (31 U.S.C. 529); exchange of funds without regard to Section 3651 of the Revised Statutes (31. U.S.C. 543); printing and binding without regard to Section 11 of the Act of March 1, 1919 (44 U.S.C. 111); and the reimbursement of other appropriations from which payment may have been made for the purposes hereof: Provided, That

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not to exceed \$500,000 of the funds hereby allocated shall be available for objects of a confidential nature and shall be charged against the limitation for such purposes under said appropriation, and shall be accounted for solely on the certificate of the Executive Director of the Board.

Please arrange for the necessary transfer of funds and advise the War Refugee Board accordingly.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed)  
FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

The Honorable  
The Secretary of the Treasury

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DOCUMENT

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PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM SENT

FROM: Secretary of State, Washington  
TO: American Embassy, Ankara  
DATED: February 26, 1944  
NUMBER: 147

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

The following, for your information and guidance, is the substance of a letter sent to the Secretary of State on September 9, 1943, by the British Embassy in Washington. The British Embassy has recently transmitted a copy of this letter to me.

Recently it was decided by the Government of Great Britain that all Jews, in the future, whether children or adults, who managed to leave Axis dominated territories and entered Turkey since the border between Bulgaria and Turkey was closed last Spring, will be permitted (after a check for security purposes in Turkey) to go to Palestine where camps will be provided for them and where for security reasons, they will be checked further. If found satisfactory, they will be gradually released as legal immigrants and will be permitted to enter Palestine against the half-yearly current immigration quotas. The method of transporting these Jewish persons will be either by sea or rail as may be decided upon by cooperation between the diplomatic mission involved and the Government of Great Britain.

Jews who are able to enter other countries which are neutral will also be in this category, but those persons who escape to territories where they find a refuge of safety will, under normal circumstances, not leave there. Under these arrangements, Jews who are, at the present time, in Spain, Mauritius or Cyprus will not leave there (excepting if, in the case of Spain, plans may be made to transport them to Allied Government territory in North Africa, as is hoped, for such time as hostilities shall continue) and onward passage to Palestine would be considered only in cases deserving special consideration and for more particular reasons.

It is not intended that the number of persons, for the period ending March 31, 1944, admitted to Palestine under the proposals outlined above shall increase the total number of immigrants allowable for that period.

It is most essential that secrecy be maintained concerning these proposals and His Majesty's Government contemplates no public announcement of them. However, in strict confidence, the Palestinian Jewish Agency will be advised of the plans.

DECLASSIFIED  
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72  
By R. H. Parks Date FEB 8 1972

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To Mr. Myron C. Taylor at Washington, D. C., a letter similar to this one is being written. It is assumed in view of the policy indicated in the letter, that the Turkish Government now has sufficient assurances that refugees entering Turkey will have an ultimate destination open to them and will be willing therefore to lend full cooperation in measures designed to increase the flow of refugees through Turkey. However, if such is not the case you should immediately advise the Board.

In the interest of the refugees themselves, you should respect the British request that this policy be kept confidential.

This message from Pehle for Mirschmann.

STETTINIUS

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TELEGRAM SENT

EWE

This telegram must be paraphrased before being communicated to anyone other than a Government agency. (SC-00)

February 25, 1944  
7 p.m.

Amembassy  
Ankara  
L46

For the Ambassador and Hirschman.

Department's 68, January 25, concerning War Refugee Board and L20 of February 12, 8 p.m., concerning appointment Special Attaché Hirschmann.

Special attention should be given to the following matter.

The War Refugee Board has resolved that one of the projects which should be pushed with greatest speed is an effort to facilitate the evacuation of as many refugees as possible from occupied areas to Turkey.

The Board feels that the most feasible way of accomplishing this extremely urgent task is to obtain from the Turkish Government effective measures to encourage the entry of more refugees. Concretely that government should be requested (a) to relax border and other controls and take such other action as will facilitate the entry of the largest possible number of refugees from Bulgaria, Rumania, and other areas adjacent to the Black Sea, and (b) to make an announcement in as nearly an official manner as possible indicating what is being done, and above all, that entry of refugees into the country is permitted.

The Department desires to support the above program of the Board and you are requested at the earliest possible moment to approach the Turkish Government with a view to obtaining their agreement to the plan and immediate action on their part. In addition to making clear this Government's determination to do everything within its power to rescue refugees and its hope for full cooperation from the Turkish Government you may, if you deem it advisable, indicate that (a) the War Refugee Board is prepared to take all possible measures, financial and otherwise, to aid the evacuation of refugees to Turkey; (b) the Board is prepared to render full assistance in the maintenance of refugees in Turkey; and (c) if the Turkish Government takes necessary steps to facilitate the entry of a substantial number of refugees the Board

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will make all efforts to move refugees from Turkey to other places if such action becomes desirable. You may wish to discuss specifically the possibility of setting up camps in Turkey in which refugees entering the country could live. The Board would, if necessary, make arrangements for financing the establishment and maintenance of these camps and the support of the refugees in them. This plan may facilitate the removal, on a compulsory basis if necessary, of refugees from Turkey to other places if such action becomes desirable in order to permit the entry of more refugees into Turkey from occupied areas.

In connection with the foregoing, you are, of course, aware of the fact that the refugees remaining in Transnistria are in imminent danger of extermination by the retreating German armies, and that the evacuation of these refugees is a problem of the greatest urgency. Accordingly, you should do everything possible to aid in the development and execution of measures to effect the evacuation of these people to Turkey. Various private organizations are deeply interested in this problem and are anxious to assist in financing and otherwise carrying out the project. Representatives of at least some of such organizations in Turkey have been requested to get in touch at once with Mr. Hirschmann for the purpose of formulating a plan of action. You have previously indicated that the basic difficulty of evacuation is one of transportation. The private organizations interested in this project are making all efforts to secure ships and you should give them every assistance. In addition, you should advise us promptly of any measures which can be taken by the United States Government to see that necessary shipping, neutral or otherwise, is available. Above all, you should attempt to secure the full cooperation of the Turkish Government in this matter.

Efforts should, of course, also be made as soon as possible to increase the flow of refugees from Rumania to Turkey.

The Department appreciates that your own activities regarding this matter may be somewhat restricted by the terms of the Department's 103, February 7, 7 p.m., and that it may be necessary for you to arrange for Hirschmann to take the principal initiatives. You should use your best judgment in this regard. You will realize, however, that these negotiations are on an entirely different level than those relative to Turkey's role in the war; and that this Government is simply addressing a humanitarian appeal to the Turkish Government, as to other governments, rather than a request that they take certain action favorable to us at some sacrifice to them.

Please report to the Department the progress that it is being made in this matter, indicating the practical measures that will be necessary to put the plan in operation, obstacles encountered, and such action as you think the Government of the United States should take to facilitate the operation.

STETTINIUS  
(Acting)  
(GLW)

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PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Embassy, Ankara  
TO: Secretary of State, Washington  
DATED: March 4, 1944  
NUMBER: 388

[REDACTED]  
Following for Pehle from Hirschmann.

There arrived today in Istanbul the first group of Jewish children from Bulgaria and on Monday they leave for Aleppo by train for Jerusalem.

Bulgarian and Gestapo officials and bureaucratic delays held up certificates of release for these children for 8 months. It is our belief that this constitutes the beginning of a fairly continuous movement of children provided new obstacles do not interfere. We were assured today by Turkish authorities that they have issued instructions for 140 children with 10 adults to pass from Rumania through Turkey in two groups of 75 each every 10 days until further notice.

In the last 10 days ninety refugees came from Bulgaria via Istanbul to Palestine in addition to the above. Furthermore, seventy-four refugees came to Izmir from Greece. The stoppage in refugee movement through Turkey which had existed since the first of January has been overcome. We are now directing our efforts towards increasing the movement. We are hopeful of obtaining steadily increasing results with the War Refugee Board's continuing uncompromising support of our daily efforts. Moreover, a solution in Turkey of a more difficult and complex situation than can possibly be understood in Washington could serve as a formula for other parts of the world where similar humanitarian efforts are being made by the Board.

This morning Ambassador Steinhardt was notified by the Foreign Office that the immediate charter of the SS VATAN for a single voyage from Constanza was approved in principle by the Foreign Office and that the earliest possible moment the matter would be submitted with a favorable recommendation to the Council of Ministers (the equivalent of our cabinet) without the approval of which no vessel may be chartered.

The Ambassador was further informed by the Foreign Office that they had taken this action as a personal courtesy to him subject to the understanding that if the vessel is desired for additional trips it will be necessary for the Ambassador to discuss with the Foreign Office reimbursement for the financial loss resulting from the Turkish Government's continued sacrifice of one of the very few ships which it has available for carrying its products.

DECLASSIFIED

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It is estimated by us that on each trip the SS VATAN should be able to carry a maximum of eight-hundred and a minimum of six-hundred refugees. As yet we have received no information concerning changes which may have to be made in the vessel to accommodate passengers since it is a freighter. A substantial agreement has been reached with the owner as regards the charter price. However, there will be the matter of obtaining from the Russian and German Governments safe conduct for the vessel and attempts to obtain this through Geneva are being made by the International Red Cross representative here. Information regarding the progress of this matter will be sent to you.

STEINHARDT

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DOCUMENT

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RA-377

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

Ankara

DATED: February 18, 1944

REC'D: 2:24 a.m., 19th

Secretary of State  
Washington  
282, February 18, 11 a.m.

For John Pehle Director of War Refugee Board  
from Hirschmann.

I am gradually getting a picture of some of the possibilities and of the enormous difficulties facing our work. Although the Turks express themselves as sympathetic thus far they have been helpful only to a limited extent. They /sic/ may be due to some of the circumstances recited below. In dealing with the Turks I shall rely entirely on Ambassador Steinhardt who enjoys their full confidence.

Bulgaria through which almost all refugees from Europe and the Balkans must pass in transit to Turkey or beyond has for quite some time past been withholding transit visas for those coming from other parts of Europe and the Balkans and withholds exit visas from Jews residing in Bulgaria. In the past fortnight only one Jewish family succeeded in leaving Bulgaria and reaching Istanbul.

While I hoped that we would not have to avail ourselves immediately of the special authority to deal with the enemy I feel that you in Washington and we here will be compelled to use this means.

The Satellite countries namely Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria are most anxious to whitewash themselves in the eyes of the Allies. We must exploit this anxiety at once: We must bring every pressure brought to bear through neutral agencies or any other means at your disposal, as well as by direct contact with the representative of the above mentioned satellites. They must be given to understand in no uncertain terms that unless they take immediate steps which will facilitate our work the Allies will look upon them as real enemies who are fully collaborating with the Nazis in their work of extermination and that this will be held against them when the war is over. It should be made clear to them that no apologies or extenuations will be accepted. I expect to telegraph you more fully about the Bulgarian bottle /sic/ in a few days.

I think it would be helpful if you would call on the Turkish Ambassador in Washington to request of him that he cable his government the determination of the United States Government to carry out its rescue program with all energy and resources and that immediate aid on the part of the Turkish Government will be highly evaluated.

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I am informed that in view of the Bulgarian impasse the Jewish agency officially dealing with transportation of Jewish refugees from the Balkans has extreme difficulties with land route bottlenecked in Bulgaria. They obtained promise of provisional charter for S.S. VATAN 3,700 tons owned by Kalkawan Riza Turkish shipowner who is willing to take her with Turkish sic to Constanza to bring out to Istanbul 800 to 1,000 refugees, mainly children from Transnistria whom Rumanians are at present willing to release, but who may at any moment be in danger of starvation and death. International Red Cross promises to procure safe conduct for this ship from all belligerent powers concerned. The Turkish Government fully controls all private shipping and is faced with extreme transport difficulties of its own. It refuses to permit owner to enter into Charter Agreement because of danger of loss of ship even when under safe conduct as has occurred.

To over come anxiety as to possible loss of ship, we strongly urge immediate offer of guarantee by the United States to the Turkish Government to replace ship. Will you cable us authority to offer this specific guarantee of ship replacement immediately from nearest waters which please designate in your reply in order to reopen negotiations on this question of Turkish ship. Have reasons to believe that this guarantee would offer basis for reopening question. As an alternative there are Swedish ships carrying food from Canada to Greece under the auspices of Swedish Red Cross. The exact number is unknown here. Complete information on this is available only at Stockholm which I suggest you procure at once. These empty Swedish ships could possibly proceed from Greece to Constanza and transport some refugees. Turkish officials suggest this alternative plan. We prefer first plan as it would save time in a situation which can disintegrate quickly. Also once this ship is allowed the first voyage and accomplishes voyage successfully we can work to continue these trips to save additional refugees.

Please also explore at once the possible use of other neutral ships from Portugal or Spain. The point is that we must under all circumstances get a ship at once.

Please advise.

STEINHARDT

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

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O  
P  
Y

OFFICE OF THE  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

February 23, 1944

MEMORANDUM FOR ADMIRAL LAND

Attached is a cable received from Hirschmann, representative of the War Refugee Board in Turkey who was appointed pursuant to the President's Executive Order of January 22 declaring that it is the policy of this Government to take all measures within its power consistent with the successful prosecution of the war to rescue the victims of enemy oppression who are in imminent danger of death.

You will note that Hirschmann indicates that it is possible to rescue 800 to 1,000 refugees, mainly children, from Transnistria who are in danger of starvation and death if the charter of the S. S. VATAN owned by Kalkawan Riza, Turkish shipowner, can be obtained at once. It appears that the Turkish Government refuses to permit the owner to enter into the charter because of the danger of the loss of the ship. The International Red Cross has promised to secure safe conduct of this ship from all the belligerent powers concerned. Hirschmann indicates that if we could offer to the Turkish Government a guarantee to replace the ship if lost, there are good reasons to believe that the Turkish Government might permit the use of the ship for the purpose indicated.

(Signed)  
J.W. PEELE

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DOCUMENT  
WAR SHIPPING ADMINISTRATION  
WASHINGTON

13

ADMINISTRATOR

February 23, 1944

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

Dear Sir:

This is in reply to your memorandum of February 23, attaching a copy of the cable received from Hirschmann, representative of the War Refugee Board in Turkey.

In said cable it is indicated that if the United States can offer to the Turkish Government a guaranty to replace the vessel referred to therein, if the same is lost, it is believed that the Turkish Government might permit the use of the ship for the purposes indicated.

The War Shipping Administration may, as a lend lease transaction, with the approval of the Foreign Economic Administration, replace this vessel if the same is lost, with a vessel as similar and from as nearby waters as may be available. The War Shipping Administration will replace the vessel under those circumstances and you are authorized to commit this Administration to such a replacement plan. It is understood that before the vessel is actually replaced, the consent of the Foreign Economic Administration will be obtained and the War Shipping Administration will be reimbursed for the reasonable value of any vessel delivered as a replacement.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed)  
E.S. LAND

E.S. Land  
Administrator

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FOREIGN ECONOMIC ADMINISTRATION  
OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR  
Washington 25, D.C.

February 24, 1944

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

Dear Mr. Pehle:

I am enclosing for your information a copy of a letter sent to the War Shipping Administrator in which the Foreign Economic Administration has assured the War Shipping Administration that if the S. S. Vatan is chartered for the War Refugee Board the vessel may be replaced under lend-lease authority upon the request of the Turkish Government and that the War Shipping Administration will be reimbursed by the Foreign Economic Administration for the reasonable value of the replacement vessel.

Very truly yours,

(Signed)  
LEO CROWLEY  
Leo T. Crowley  
Administrator

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- 476 -

[Enclosure No. 1 to letter from  
the Foreign Economic Administration]

February 24, 1944

Honorable Emory S. Land  
Administrator  
War Shipping Administration  
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Admiral Land:

We have seen a copy of your letter of February 23, 1944, to Mr. John W. Pehle, Acting Executive Director of the War Refugee Board and a cable dated February 18, 1944, from Mr. Hirschmann, representative of the War Refugee Board in Turkey to Mr. Pehle, concerning the chartering of the S. S. Vatan, a Turkish vessel, for use in rescuing refugees.

According to Mr. Hirschmann, it is believed that the Turkish Government will permit the S. S. Vatan to be chartered for the purpose of transporting refugees providing that the United States can offer to the Turkish Government a guaranty that this vessel will be replaced if it is lost while under charter. We understand that the War Shipping Administration has authorized Mr. Pehle, subject to approval by the Foreign Economic Administration, to commit it to replace this vessel, in the event of its loss, with a vessel as similar and from as nearby waters as may be available. We understand further that you wish assurance both that lend-lease authorization for such a replacement will be forthcoming and that lend-lease funds will be made available to the War Shipping Administration for reimbursement for the reasonable value of any vessel delivered as replacement.

The Foreign Economic Administration concurs in the desirability of effectuating the charter of the S. S. Vatan for the purpose mentioned and is prepared to give assurance both that upon the request of the Turkish Government, this vessel may be replaced under lend-lease authority, and that in such a case you will be reimbursed for the reasonable value of any vessel which you may deliver as a replacement. All questions between ourselves and the Turkish Government, however, as to the terms of replacement are reserved.

Very truly yours,

(Signed)  
LEO T. CROWLEY  
Leo T. Crowley  
Administrator

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TELEGRAM SENT

This telegram must be paraphrased before being communicated to anyone other than a Governmental agency. (SC-00)

February 25, 1944  
4 p.m.

Amembassy,  
Ankara.  
144

Refer your 282, February 18, and your 299, February 19.

The United States Government through the War Shipping Administration and the Foreign Economic Administration guarantees to replace the vessel referred to in your 282 if the same is lost. Although we can not furnish you with an exact description at this time of any specific vessel which will be used as a replacement, the Turkish Government may be assured that this vessel will be as good or better than the S.S. VATAN and that it will be obtained from as nearby waters as possible.

It is assumed that the S.S. VATAN will be insured against loss thus enabling the proceeds of the insurance to be used in connection with the replacement. For your information, the War Refugee Board can, if necessary, arrange for the insurance of the S.S. VATAN.

The Foreign Economic Administration has advised us that their representative in Ankara, Michel Cardoza, can be of assistance to you in effecting necessary arrangements with the Turkish Government.

For your information and the information of Cardoza, we have been advised that if the S.S. VATAN is actually replaced, the replacement will be done under lend lease authority and could be done in one of two ways. Either the replacing vessel could be turned over as a normal lend lease transaction or could be sold to the Turkish Government for cash.

It is expected that you will take this opportunity to emphasize to the Turkish Government the significance of the concrete offers which this Government has already made to them in connection with the program of the War Refugee Board. In addition to the present guaranty to replace the S.S. VATAN if lost in connection with the carrying out of this program, we have previously offered to arrange for financing the support and maintenance of refugees coming into Turkey. We hope that the Turkish Government will accordingly make the S.S. VATAN immediately available for this mission of mercy.

STETTINIUS  
(Acting)  
(GLW)  
Acting

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16

Paraphrase

Secretary of State  
Washington  
380, March 3, 5 p.m.

Ankara  
March 3, 1944  
Rec'd 4:55 p.m., 4th

Re your cable No. 146 of February 25, 1944.

Judging from telegrams which I have received and also Hirschmann, it appears that the War Refugee Board is under the mistaken impression that the principal obstacle to date has been the Turkish Government's reluctance to cooperate. This is not so. Our greatest obstacle to date has been the Axis authorities in the Balkans who refuse to grant exit visas to Jewish refugees. Although transportation is, of course, a serious problem, it is not impossible to solve it so long as it is possible to bring about the departure of Jewish refugees from the Balkans in increasing numbers.

In regard to sea transportation, negotiations have been entered into with the Minister of Communications with whom I conferred yesterday. We discussed the proposed purchase of the S.S. NECAT by the War Refugee Board at a cost of approximately \$400,000. It is contemplated that the ship will be given as a gift to the Turkish Red Crescent after the completion of the transfer to Palestine of 5,000 Jewish refugee children from Roumania under the auspices of the International Red Cross. The purchase price of this vessel is estimated to amount to the same sum as it would cost to carry the 5,000 children on a chartered vessel. We are hopeful that if this ship is donated to the Turkish Red Crescent, that society may be persuaded to continue to use the vessel to carry additional refugees after the completion of the transfer of these 5,000.

Re evacuation of Jewish refugees from Roumanian or Bulgarian ports, the Turkish representatives are amenable to reopening negotiations relating to the chartering of the S.S. VATAN, provided that such negotiations are conducted on the basis of the guarantee of replacement of such vessel in case of loss. I have made such a guarantee to the Turkish Government in writing.

I strongly urge that a Swedish vessel, particularly if there is one in Near Eastern waters, be chartered at once by the War Refugee Board and sent to Istanbul as soon as possible. The negotiations for the S.S. VATAN and the S.S. NECAT are likely to be bogged down for a long time, as is customary in the carrying on of negotiations in this part of the world.

Re rail transportation, the Turkish authorities have granted transportation visas for 5,000 Jewish refugees on their way to Palestine but until now, because of the reluctance of the authorities in the

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Axis occupied countries to grant exit visas and because of administrative delays, only a small portion of such transit visas have been utilized. Bulgaria has very recently relaxed somewhat the restrictions which hitherto have prevented departure of Jewish refugees. It is hoped therefore that unless new obstacles are encountered, it will be possible to increase the refugee movements to a large degree, in the near future.

The Turkish authorities have authorized the issuance of many more transit visas and also have offered to provide rail transportation facilities for many more persons than have been utilized until now. They are of the opinion that until the visa and rail facilities already offered have been utilized, it serves no useful purpose to discuss the possibility of additional visas and rail facilities or the establishment of refugee camps. The Turkish authorities have assured me that when the visa and railway facilities already offered have been utilized they will be prepared to enter into negotiations for a further increase in such facilities.

This whole subject matter has been discussed thoroughly with the Minister of Communications, the Foreign Office and other high Turkish officials. I felt free to do this in view of the Department's opinion that these discussions are unrelated to the Turkish role in the war. The policy of this Government, of which the War Refugee Board is an instrument, has been made very clear to the Turkish authorities and I have felt free to press them for the most complete cooperation.

In the short time that he has been here Hirschmann has acquired a complete grasp of the situation and is extremely active and diligent. It is my opinion that in the past two weeks considerable progress has been made.

STEINHARDT

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PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Embassy, Ankara  
TO: Secretary of State, Washington  
DATED: March 15, 1944  
NUMBER: 455

From Hirschmann for the attention of Pehle.

This morning Ambassador Steinhardt and the Foreign Minister held a personal conference and as a result the latter definitely committed the Turk Government to making available to the Ambassador as a personal courtesy a Turk passenger vessel with a capacity for carrying 1500 people, to make a single trip as soon as possible, to and from Constanza to evacuate refugees of Jewish nationality. I have been informed by the Ambassador that the Foreign Minister gave the necessary instructions in his presence to the Minister of Communications by telephone. As they are both cargo vessels, it would appear from the Minister's promise of a passenger vessel that neither the VATAN nor the NECAT will be used. Valuable time will be saved by placing a passenger instead of a cargo vessel at our disposal as refitting of a cargo vessel for passenger service in this area would involve inordinate delay in view of shortage of material and labor available for that purpose.

The Ambassador was informed by Numan that as the vessel being placed at his disposal was one of the very few ships available to the Turk Government for its vital commerce it could not continue to evacuate refugees from Balkan ports after the trip in question unless the United States Government made available to the Turk Government a substitute vessel by the time of termination of the initial trip. It was categorically stated by him that if the United States Government would make a ship available on a loan basis to the Turk Government by the time the initial trip is completed, he would put it in operation to carry Turk commerce after placing the Turk flag on the vessel so loaned.

By this means he would be permitting the vessel assigned to us for the initial trip to make further trips to Balkan ports to evacuate refugees, but that failing, a substitute vessel only as in the voyage to and from Constanza could be permitted. Because of the desperate situation in which the Turk Government finds itself for lack of ships, he added that no amount of money could be accepted in lieu of a substitute vessel and that if we desired the ship about to be made available to us to make repeated trips it would be necessary, as soon as possible, to provide a substitute vessel. Numan referred to the fact that even

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a single voyage to and from Constanza represented a genuine sacrifice on the part of the Turk Government. If the representatives of the International Red Cross encountered new difficulties in regard to obtaining safe conduct for the vessel, the Foreign Minister agreed, at the conclusion of their talk, to intervene with the German Ambassador in Ankara.

The foregoing information has been communicated to Simond, of the International Red Cross who is at once taking up the matter of safe conduct for the vessel with the belligerents.

Barlas of the Jewish agency has also been informed by me of the imperative necessity of having the refugees available at the port of Constanza on the arrival of the vessel so that there may be no undue delay.

Incumbent upon us is the burden to continue this Turk vessel in regular operation for the evacuation of refugees by the prompt loan to the Turk Government of an American vessel in substitution therefor, as we have now reached a point at which the Turk Government has given evidence of its willingness to cooperate by placing one of the very few vessels available to it at our disposal for the first trip. After the first trip has been completed by a Turk vessel it will be (\*) if not impossible to persuade the Turk Government that the United States Government with its large merchant fleet and construction of over 1,500,000 tons per month is not in a position to provide one vessel of 6,000 to 7,000 tons to evacuate refugees which it desires to rescue. I have no doubt that such a vessel would be made available promptly if it were possible for an American vessel to proceed to Constanza. Satisfactory explanation to the Turk Government why an American vessel unable to proceed to Constanza should not be placed at the disposal of the Turkish Government while its vessel undertakes the regular and continued evacuation of the refugees, would for this reason be difficult.

STEINHARDT

\* Apparent omission.

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ORIGINAL TEXT OF TELEGRAM SENT

FROM: Secretary of State, Washington  
TO: American Embassy, Ankara  
DATED: March 24, 1944  
NUMBER: 250

From the War Refugee Board for the Ambassador and Hirschmann.

Refer your No. 501 March 21. You are authorized to enter into charter party for S.S. TARI at price indicated. Place insurance in Turkey. Advise us total amount of funds needed for charter and insurance and form in which such funds should be remitted.

Although the price indicated seems to be almost double that at which other neutral vessels have been chartered, it is assumed that you have consulted with Myron Black who has had much experience in similar negotiations and that you feel that we cannot do better under the circumstances.

You are also authorized to confirm to the Turkish Government that the guarantee of replacement given in the case of S.S. VATAN is applicable to S.S. TARI. That is if the S.S. TARI is lost on the projected voyage the United States Government will replace her with a cargo vessel of comparable tonnage and age.

It is assumed that there is some assurance that when the voyage is undertaken there will be refugees available for evacuation. In view of your estimate as to possible duration of voyage, it is also assumed that the Board's liability under the charter will not be unlimited as to time.

[Unsigned]

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PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM SENT

FROM: Secretary of State, Washington  
TO: Amembassy, Ankara  
DATED: March 23, 1944  
NUMBER: 243

The following is War Refugee Board's no. 10 for Hirschmann and concerns the matter of obtaining shipping for evacuating refugees from the Balkans referred to in your cables no. 455, 458, 471 and 472.

A request is being made of the Swiss Government to support in its own name the efforts which the International Red Cross is making to obtain safe conduct for the S.S. TARI which has been placed at your disposal to evacuate Jewish refugees from Constanza. Also the Swiss Government and International Red Cross have been informed by us that this Government agrees to whatever safeconduct the British grants.

We have had discussions with War Shipping Administration with respect to the proposal that a substitute vessel be made available by this Government so that repeated voyages to evacuate refugees may be made by the S.S. TARI. War Shipping Administration has cabled Myron Black requesting further information as to one, the type of vessel needed and where it will trade; two, information as to whether the vessel will be considered by the enemy as a Turkish vessel if it is to trade in enemy controlled areas and also whether safe conduct will be needed. Information has been received by us to the effect that sympathetic consideration will be given by War Shipping Administration to such recommendations as Black may make even if they involve practical difficulties. However, War Shipping Administration believes that the situation could be best handled by treating it as a problem of allocation by which an attempt could be made to work out an arrangement by which the use of Turkish ships would be conserved through making equivalent space available on an Allied vessel proceeding to a port in the Eastern Mediterranean. War Shipping Administration is also sending a cable to Kallock, their representative in Algiers, asking that they be informed whether there is available in the Mediterranean any small freighter which could be used under charter by the Government of Turkey.

In cooperation with Black you should investigate all the possibilities of this situation. Whatever plan is finally proposed must be one involving the least delay since time is most essential in view of the military situation. War Shipping Administration has pointed out the practical difficulties regarding the obtaining, without delay, of a ship now available in the Mediterranean which could be chartered to

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the Turkish Government for the above mentioned purpose.

We will be glad to do whatever we can to carry out whatever recommendation you may make after all the difficulties involved have been considered by you and Black. Should the first voyage of the S.S. TARI be completed within a short period of time, you will realize that an attempt actually to supply the Turkish Government with a vessel by that time would encounter considerable difficulties. Taking into consideration the shipping situation, we believe that a much more feasible arrangement would be to reach an agreement, if possible, with the Government of Turkey whereby this Government would give assurances that should the S.S. TARI be made available say for a period of three months, there would be made available to the Turkish Government equivalent space on an Allied vessel for a comparable length of time not however necessarily concurrent with the period during which the S.S. TARI would be used.

With respect to the suggested purchase of the S.S. NECAT for donation to the Turkish Red Crescent, it has been indicated by the Government of Turkey that it would not be possible to withdraw a second vessel from those at the disposal of that Government. If it develops that it is not possible to arrange for repeated voyages by the S.S. TARI, please advise us if you have investigated the possibility of making the S.S. NECAT available immediately after the first voyage of the S.S. TARI has been completed.

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PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Embassy, Ankara  
TO: Secretary of State, Washington  
DATED: March 15, 1944  
NUMBER: 468

Reference is made herein to my cables of March 3, No. 380 and 455, dated March 15.

Reference was made in my conversation this morning with the Minister for Foreign Affairs to my previous conversation with the Minister of Communications concerning the possibility of the purchase by the War Refugee Board of the S.S. NECAT at a cost of approximately \$400,000, the vessel to be donated to the Turkish Red Crescent and to become its property after completing the transportation to Palestine of 5,000 Jewish refugee children from Rumania under auspices of the International Red Cross. In reply Numan stated that the Minister of Communications had discussed the subject with him and that as the Turkish Government had now agreed to make a passenger vessel available to me at once, to withdraw a second vessel from the very few ships at the disposal of the Turkish Government would be impossible. Numan added that there was some question as to whether the Red Crescent could accept the donation of a vessel under the conditions suggested by me. Inquiry was then made by me as to whether he could devise a means whereby the Red Crescent could operate a vessel under the Turkish flag for the continuous evacuation from Balkan ports of Jewish refugees. Later in the day the Foreign Minister telephoned me and said that he had obtained the consent of the Council of Ministers to proposing that the American Government donate a vessel to the Turkish Red Crescent which would undertake to operate it under the Turkish flag for the purpose of evacuating refugees from Balkan ports during the continuance of the war, the vessel thereafter to remain the property of the Red Crescent.

Hirschmann and I recommend that the foregoing proposal be accepted and in considering this proposal the War Refugee Board may wish to bear in mind the present exorbitant cost per capita of evacuating refugees either by rail or sea from the Balkans. The cost of evacuating a few thousand refugees, at the existing rates, from the Balkans to Turkey or Palestine by sea would probably be as much as the value of the ship on which they were carried which would clearly justify its donation.

The Department's instructions in this matter will be appreciated.

STEINHARDT

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BJR - 874  
This telegram must be  
paraphrased before being  
communicated to anyone  
other than a Governmental  
agency. (SCOO)

Ankara  
DATED: March 27, 1944  
REC'D: 9 a.m. 29th

Secretary of State,  
Washington.  
Priority  
547, March 27, midnight

From the Ambassador and Hirschmann for the WRB.

Department's 250, March 24, 10 p.m.

Ankara's 9.

(One) The Turk authorities have now agreed to a charter price of 175,000 Turk pounds (approximately \$97,200) for the projected voyage, eight days being allowed for embarkation and debarkation. For any period of time in excess of eight days required for embarkation or debarkation we will be required to pay 5,833 Turk pounds (approximately \$3,245) per day. In view of the fact that the Jewish Agency for Palestine had made a firm offer of \$250,000 (repeat dollars) for the charter of the S.S. VATAN for the projected voyage and was merely awaiting the consent of the Turk Government to the charter, and that we have obtained a desirable passenger vessel in lieu of an old cargo ship which would have required the installation of passenger facilities entailing a delay of two months, and which could not have carried more than half the passengers the S.S. TARI will take, we consider the price now agreed upon to be extremely favorable having regard to the exorbitant prices demanded for charters in these waters. Our financial negotiations were made difficult by the price offered the Turks for the S.S. VATAN. Black, who has been present throughout the negotiations, regards the price finally agreed upon as reasonable under all of the circumstances.

(Two) The Turk Government will not (repeat not) accept a replacement guarantee on the basis of "a cargo vessel of comparable age and tonnage" for the S.S. TARI, which is one of its six available desirable passenger vessels. The Turk Government requires a guarantee that the S.S. TARI will be replaced with a similar passenger vessel of comparable age and tonnage.

(Threes) We, too, are assuming that there will be refugees available for evacuation when the voyage is undertaken and are relying on assurances to this effect from the representative of the Jewish Agency in Istanbul, the representative of the International Red Cross

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in Bucharest and the Rumanian Minister in Ankara. Obviously having no control over the movement and departure of refugees Rumania at this time, we are in no better position than the Board to give positive assurances on this subject.

(Four) In view of the conditions of the charter which provides, as stated above, for additional payments in the event of delays in embarkation or debarkation on a daily basis, the Board will be in a position to terminate excessive delays should the cost become too great. In this connection based on experience in this part of the world and existing conditions, we feel obligated to invite the attention of the Board to the probability of very great delay in connection with embarkation resulting either from failure of safe conducts to arrive, difficulties in moving prospective refugees to the port of Constanza, or other difficulties in connection with the documentation of refugees. In our opinion only exceptionally favorable circumstances will permit of the completion of the projected voyage within two months.

(Five) We invite the attention of the Board to the fact that we have now taken every step which it is within our power to take to obtain the German safe conduct. As the representative of the International Red Cross in Ankara informs us that he has received word from Geneva that there will be considerable delay in obtaining the German safe conduct and as the TARI which will be prepared to sail within a week, will not be permitted to depart until the German safe conduct is forthcoming, we urge the Board to exert every possible effort towards expediting the German safe conduct.

STEINHARDT

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ORIGINAL TEXT OF TELEGRAM SENT

FROM: Secretary of State, Washington  
TO: Amembassy, Ankara  
DATED: April 13, 1944  
NUMBER: 324

From War Refugee Board for Ambassador Steinhardt.  
This WRB cable to Ankara no. 20.  
Please refer to your Nos. 585 and 594 of April 4.

1. We talked last week with Turkish Ambassador in Washington regarding impossibility of replacing TARI with passenger ship and Ambassador cabled his Government accordingly. Turkish Ambassador here now understands that the Turkish Government is no longer insisting on guarantee to replace TARI with passenger boat but will accept guarantee of cargo vessel. Ambassador is asking confirmation of this from his government. As we advised in No. 250 of March 24 the United States Government, in view of military necessities is not (repeat not) in a position to replace the SS TARI with a passenger vessel. It was accordingly suggested that you put the issue squarely to the Turkish Government whether it is prepared to cooperate by chartering the SS TARI without further delay and upon the basis of the guarantee already offered, namely a cargo vessel of comparable age and tonnage.
2. Transfer of \$160,000 to Kelley as requested in your no. 594 has been arranged. These are confidential funds from the Emergency Fund of the President and may be disbursed without following the procedure usually required in government disbursements. Kelley will be responsible to Mr. Pehle, Executive Director of the Board, alone for expenditures but should keep careful records and obtain receipts.
3. The charter party should be signed in the name of the War Refugee Board. Ambassador Steinhardt or any member of his staff designated by him is hereby authorized to sign the charter party in the name of the War Refugee Board.
4. With reference to German and Russian safe conduct the following steps have been taken by the Board. The Governments of Switzerland and Sweden have been asked to support the request of the International Red Cross for a German safe conduct. The Apostolic Delegate in Washington has been requested to ask

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similar action by the Holy See. The Swedish Government has already indicated its willingness to approach the German Government. Minister Harrison is awaiting a reply from the Swiss Foreign Office. As you know, the Board requested Ambassador Harriman to approach the Russian Government with respect to obtaining safe conduct from that Government. No reply has as yet been received in Washington. None of your cables with respect to the TARI indicate clearly the exact nature of the safe conduct that has been requested from the Germans. However, we have been advised by Minister Harrison in Bern that the International Red Cross has requested a safe conduct for the TARI on a voyage from Istanbul to Constanza and return. Accordingly our requests to the Swiss and the Swedes have been couched in the same terms. In view of the one indication contained in your No. 501 of March 21 that the voyage may be from Constanza to Haifa it is suggested that you check immediately with the International Red Cross delegate with a view to seeing whether the safe conduct request has been properly couched and advise the Board.

5. The Board fully concurs that the signing of the charter party should be delayed as long as possible pending more definite news about German safe conduct. However you are given full authority to act as in your judgment circumstances dictate. We realize the difficulty of the situation and that risks must be taken and you are fully authorized to charter the TARI when and if you deem it desirable. We feel that you are in a better position than we to make a judgment on the matter and we accept and have full confidence in whatever decisions you reach.

(Unsigned)

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23

ORIGINAL TEXT OF TELEGRAM SENT

FROM: Secretary of State, Washington  
TO: American Embassy, Ankara  
DATED: April 17, 1944  
NUMBER: 342

From the War Refugee Board to Ambassador Steinhardt, Ankara.

The following refers to your no. 657 of April 12 from Ankara to the War Refugee Board.

With respect to the replacement of a passenger vessel of QUOTE an equivalent vessel of similar age, size and general characteristics UNQUOTE for the "S.S. TARI" as designated in Article 4 of the proposed charter with the Turkish Government for the aforesaid ship, Hirschmann is in full agreement with the position you have taken in your telegram above mentioned.

Hirschmann and I conferred with Admiral Land of the War Shipping Administration today. The War Shipping Administration and the Foreign Economic Administration have authorized you to commit this Government to the replacement of the "S.S. TARI" in the event of loss with a passenger repeat passenger vessel as requested by the Turkish Government.

At this point every recommendation submitted by you and Hirschmann to complete the negotiations for you to sign the Charter agreement for the War Refugee Board with the Turkish Government for the "S.S. TARI" has been authorized. Please refer to War Refugee Board cable to Ankara No. 20 relating to all the conditions mentioned in your numbers 585 and 594. The single obstacle remaining is the granting of safe-conduct by the German Government. We have taken every available measure to expedite this safe-conduct in Washington as reported in our War Refugee Board Cable No. 20.

Hirschmann informs me that Simond has expressed to him unequivocally, unreserved confidence that von Papen would arrange to obtain this safe-conduct without delay. He also informs me that Simond agreed personally to see von Papen within a few days after his first meeting with him in Ankara on this subject. Assuming that the German safe-conduct has not been obtained Hirschmann urges that both Simond and the Apostolic Delegate from Istanbul arrange to see von Papen in person in order to again urge granting of safe-conduct without delay. Hirschmann reports that Simond expressed the view that he can succeed in securing the safe-conduct and he suggests that you personally confer with Simond along the above lines without delay.

[Unsigned]

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ORIGINAL TEXT OF TELEGRAM SENT

FROM: Secretary of State, Washington  
TO: Amembassy, Ankara  
DATED: April 27, 1944  
NUMBER: 377

From War Refugee Board to Ambassador Steinhardt, Ankara, Turkey.

This is WRB Cable to Ankara No. 31.

Please refer to your No. 725 of April 22 with respect to safe-conduct for S.S. TARI. Your action is approved. However, for your information, the Joint Distribution Committee here has advised us that Barlas of Jewish agency can probably arrange for coastal schooners to convey refugees from Iskenderun to Haifa if voyage of TARI were to terminate at Iskenderun. Accordingly it is suggested that you take this matter up at once with Barlas in order to see if he can arrange transportation of refugees from Iskenderun to Haifa. If this can be done it may be advisable to arrange with Turks and Intercross to change route of S.S. TARI in order that German safe-conduct may be obtained promptly.

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PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Embassy, Ankara  
TO: Secretary of State, Washington  
DATED: May 5, 1944  
NUMBER: 815

The Ambassador transmits the following message for the attention of WRB.

Reference is made herein to the Department's no. 388 (WRB'S 33), dated May 3.

It is with regret that I must inform the Board that our offer to change the destination of the S.S. TARI from Haifa to a Turkish port, which was communicated to the German Government, has not thus far been productive of results even though this offer was made some time ago. Apparently Simond's belief was unfounded, that such a proposal would expedite the granting of a German safe-conduct.

I do not anticipate any great difficulty in transporting the refugees who might arrive on the TARI at a Turkish port to Palestine and this will be borne out by my discussion of the matter with Barlas as will be seen by the Board from my 795, May 2, Ankara 51. If and when they arrive, I should regard it as inadvisable to approach the Turkish authorities with a request to transport this particular group of refugees from a Turkish port to Palestine by rail when they can be transported by coastal schooners at this season of the year. The agreement of the Turkish authorities to transport these 1,500 refugees by rail would of necessity interfere with and probably reduce the movement by rail of the refugees arriving on so-called illegal boats in Istanbul. We doubt Austrian's opinion that railroad facilities in Turkey are sufficient to enable the transportation of many more refugees than are presently being accommodated from Istanbul across the country, was based on conditions prior to his departure from Istanbul. As the Board has been informed, since Austrian's departure, the Minister for Foreign Affairs has agreed to provide transportation for a considerable additional number of refugees arriving on so-called illegal boats and in less than two months, in addition to the regular movement, has thus far accommodated approximately 900 refugees. The fact that there are only two trains weekly from Istanbul to the Syrian frontier, which require approximately forty-eight hours to cover the 1,000 miles on the single track lines, must be taken into consideration in connection with the possibilities of transportation in Turkey and must not be measured by American

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transportation standards. The number of cars that can be attached to each train is limited by the poor condition of locomotives and the haul over the Naurus mountains. The Turkish transportation system is acutely short of rolling stock in addition to the above handicap. The opinion of Austrian that the situation is simply whether or not the Turkish Government is disposed to make available additional transportation facilities, is not, therefore, agreed to by me. The question is much less the disposition of the Turkish Government, which continues to be most cooperative, than the number of cars and locomotives available and particularly the condition of the locomotives. The single track line already is carrying four times its pre-war load, therefore, the number of refugees that can be transported over this line must be examined in the light of the maximum total passenger and freight movement and not in the light of the number of refugees who have to be transported.

Even though I may have to secure permission to house some of the refugees temporarily at the port of arrival in order to permit of a gradual and orderly movement, should the TARI disembark 1,800 refugees at a Turkish port and should it be found impossible to transport all of them to Palestine by coastal schooners, I have little doubt that I will be able to make the necessary arrangements with the British authorities to transport the excess number by rail.

STEINHARDT

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DOCUMENT

26

HMK-9  
Distribution of  
true reading only by  
special arrangement  
(██████ W)

Ankara  
DATED July 26, 1944  
REC'D 10:11 p.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.  
1371, July 26, 5 p.m. (Section One of Two)

For Pehle WRB from Hirschmann Ankara 108.

The following is a translation of a letter addressed to Simond of the Intercross, by Balabanoff, Bulgarian Minister to Turkey, referred to in my 1370, July 26.

"In regard to the question you raised, relative to a Turkish vessel which could go to any Bulgarian port to embark Jewish children from Rumania and possibly also Jewish children from Bulgaria, I am able to communicate to you the following: in principle, the Bulgarian (\*) would have no objection to this. But for a settlement of this question I would suggest that you address the Bulgarian Red Cross which on its part, will submit the question to the Government in order to obtain the latter's decision.

I take advantage of this opportunity to share with you the impressions which I bring back from my last short visit in Bulgaria.

There is no doubt that the new Bulgarian Government regrets exceedingly all the measures which have been taken regarding

/End of Section One/

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GAR-107  
Distribution of true  
reading only by special  
arrangements (██████ W)

Ankara  
DATED July 26, 1944  
REC'D 6:54 a.m., 27th

Secretary of State  
Washington  
1371, July 26, 5 p.m. (Section Two)

Jews in our country and that it does not in the least approve these measures. This Government intends to mitigate the situation of the Jews. But for reasons which will be readily understood, it could not proceed to annul immediately the law concerning the Jews. However, it is firmly decided to avoid all arbitrary action in the application of this law as well as all restrictive measures not provided for by the law. In the second place, the Bulgarian Government has decided to facilitate the emigration of Jews desiring to leave the country by reducing, for this purpose the administrative formalities to a strict minimum by removing all obstacles.

The President of the Bulgarian Council of Ministers has invited the Jewish Consistory in Bulgaria to come to see him and he has had a long conversation with its members concerning the situation of the Jews in the country. He has spoken to them of the steps which he intended to take to mitigate their situation and to facilitate the departure of those who might desire to leave the country. At Sofia, I was able to ascertain that the members of the Consistory came away from the conversation very well satisfied and pleased with their visit to the Bulgarian Prime Minister to whom I understand they expressed their thanks and gratitude for his plans for the Jews.

In general I consider that the policy of the new Bulgarian Government toward the Jews will be based on principles of equity and humanitarianism. Likewise I do not exclude the possibility of reaching gradually and quickly a completely normal state in the situation of the Jews in our country."

KELLEY

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DOCUMENT

27

MES-1708

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

Ankara via Army  
UNDATED  
REC'D March 15, 1945  
4:35 p.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.  
353

For Department and WRB.

As anticipated in Katzki's cable to the DRB (Ankara's 14, re Embassy's 2375, December 16) Jabotinsky's approach to any negotiations with the Turkish authorities to charter the S.S. TARI without consulting the Embassy or the WRB representative, has afforded the Turkish Minister of Communications an opportunity to reopen the matter of the TARI and to present a claim to the Embassy through the Foreign Office for what in effect amounts to demurrage from April 9 to May 28 inclusive. The amount claimed is 117,500 Turkish pounds being 47 days at 2,500 Turkish pounds a day.

It is not yet clear whether the Foreign Office intends to support the claim wholeheartedly. Under the circumstances I have taken advantage of the fact that there is no longer a WRB representative in Turkey to suggest to the Foreign Office that the Turkish Embassy in Washington discuss the matter with the WRB in Washington. It might thus be possible to arrange to have the claim disposed of under reverse Lend-Lease.

STEINHARDT

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DOCUMENT  
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

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WAR REFUGEE BOARD

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

February 24, 1944

OFFICE OF THE  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MEMORANDUM FOR THE MINISTER OF SWEDEN TO THE UNITED STATES.

As you know, the War Refugee Board, consisting of the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Treasury and the Secretary of War, has recently been established by the President of the United States to take immediate action to rescue the Jewish people of Europe and other victims of enemy oppression who are in imminent danger of death.

The Board is fully aware of the splendid humanitarian efforts which the Swedish Government has been making to help save the lives of these persecuted peoples. The Board takes this opportunity to ask you to convey to your Government the Board's appreciation for Sweden's treatment of the war refugee problem.

The Board is convinced that one of the greatest opportunities for saving many lives exists in the areas adjacent to Turkey and the Black Sea. It is known that in Transnistria, Rumania and Bulgaria there are substantial numbers of refugees in imminent danger of death. It also appears that arrangements can be made with the Turkish Government to receive refugees from these areas. There are strong indications that the Rumanian Government at least will permit a substantial number of these refugees to leave Rumania. It is indispensable that means of transportation be found at once. Arrangements are being made for a small Turkish vessel to proceed to the Rumanian port of Constanza and evacuate approximately one thousand children to Turkey. Other boats are urgently needed to effect the evacuation of refugees from this area to Turkey.

Knowing the sympathetic attitude of your Government toward this whole matter, the Board desires to request the urgent assistance of your Government in helping to solve this immediate transportation problem. The Board understands that a number of Swedish ships under the auspices of the Swedish Red Cross are being used to carry food from Canada and Argentina to Greece. It has been suggested by the Board's representative in Turkey, after consultation with the Turkish Government, that these empty Swedish ships might proceed from Greece to Constanza and other Black Sea ports for the purpose of transporting refugees to Turkey.

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The Board is prepared to arrange for the financing of the use of any Swedish vessels which can be made available for this purpose and would appreciate a prompt consideration of this matter by your Government.

(Signed)  
J. W. PEELE

J. W. Pehle  
Acting Executive Director

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ORIGINAL TEXT OF TELEGRAM SENT

FROM: Secretary of State, Washington  
TO: Amembassy, London  
DATED: April 15, 1944  
NUMBER: 3005

[REDACTED]

From War Refugee Board to Ambassador Winant, London.

Please refer to our no. 2516 of March 31.

Ambassador Steinhardt has just advised that there are a number of refugees who can be evacuated from Rumania in addition to those who can be carried in the one Turkish vessel for which charter negotiations are still continuing. Within the last few weeks approximately 500 refugees have been brought to Turkey on small Bulgarian boats. It is therefore extremely urgent that additional shipping be obtained without delay.

During the course of negotiations for a Turkish boat Ambassador Steinhardt suggested that we undertake to obtain from the Swedish Government permission to divert one or more of the ships carrying relief supplies to Greece for use in evacuation operations from Constanza to Turkey. Ambassador Steinhardt felt that this procedure was desirable in view of the delay in obtaining a Turkish ship and in view of the fact that the Greek relief ships of which there are twelve or thirteen in service were the closest to Turkey and could most easily be sent to Constanza. A request along these lines was addressed to the Swedish Government through the Ambassador here. In reply the Swedish Government indicated that certain obstacles such as obtaining the consent of the German, British and Canadian Governments would have to be overcome before a Greek relief ship could be used for evacuation of refugees. The Swedish Government indicated however that if these conditions and certain others could be met one ship, the "S.S. BARDALAND," arriving in Salonika about March 15, might be used.

The British Government apparently did not desire to have any Greek relief ships diverted for refugee evacuation. It is understood that the British Legation in Stockholm felt that any extraneous delay in the shipping schedule for Greek relief would have serious and deplorable effects. Moreover, the Board has been advised by the Washington representative of the Ministry of Economic Warfare that even a small loss of tonnage in the Greek relief schedule might leave a serious gap in deliveries. The Ministry of Economic Warfare suggested that

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it may be possible to reopen the question when four ships which are to be added to the Greek relief fleet have actually left the Baltic. The Ministry added however that even so it would be difficult to use a relief ship for this purpose and expressed the hope that ships can be obtained for this purpose in other quarters.

We have now received from Ambassador Steinhardt the following cable with respect to the necessity of obtaining one of the Greek relief ships for evacuation purposes.

"Baron de Platon, Second Secretary of the Swedish Legation in Ankara, still offers hopes for the availability a Swedish vessel to transport refugees from Constanza to Haifa. This would be in addition to the "TARI" or any others, the "S.S. BARDALAND" now in Istanbul is not fitted with equipment or life saving devices for refugee conveyance. Platon will explore the possibilities of reequipping the vessel for this purpose. The "BARDALAND" is scheduled to sail today to arrive in Piraeus (Athens) on April 25 and scheduled thereafter to sail for Constanza. Platon believes that Stockholm could be induced to have this vessel return to Istanbul and thence to Constanza to embark refugees to Haifa. I have not been informed except indirectly through the State Department radio bulletin regarding the reply of the Swedish Government to our request through the Swedish Minister here and your request through Washington for a Swedish boat. In spite of any refusal by the Swedish Government I recommend that the Board urge Stockholm to give instructions to make the "BARDALAND" available the latter part of April. This of course is not in lieu of the proposed trip of the "S.S. TARI" but in addition thereto."

In view of the urgency of the situation the Board would appreciate it if you would immediately discuss this matter with appropriate officials of the British Government with a view to obtaining that Government's consent to the use of the "S.S. BARDALAND" for the purpose indicated in Ambassador Steinhardt's cable. As soon as such approval is obtained you should also discuss the matter with the Swedish Ambassador in London asking to communicate to his Government this Government's request for the use of the "BARDALAND" and asking them to approach the German Government to obtain the necessary safe-conduct. In your discussions with the British you may wish to make clear that time is of the essence and that the rescue of additional refugees in imminent danger of death depends upon this boat being made available to the War Refugee Board.

The "BARDALAND" may be leaving the Greek service, we are advised.

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PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: Amembassy, London  
TO: Secretary of State, Washington  
DATED: May 4, 1944  
NUMBER: 3653

The Department's cable of April 28, 1944, no. 3434 from the War Refugee Board and the previous are referred to herewith.

With respect to the diverting of a Swedish vessel for the purpose of evacuating refugees, a favorable reply has now been received from the Foreign Office. The ban on code cables for foreign diplomats other than American or Russian has been put into effect since the receipt of War Refugee Board's cables under reference, in which the Embassy was requested to take the matter up with the Swedish Minister in London as soon as favorable reply was received from the British and we presume that the Swedish Minister would not be able to communicate with his Government in cipher regarding this matter. Consequently I hesitate to approach him and it is suggested that the War Refugee Board may under these circumstances desire to communicate with the Swedish Government directly either through our Legation in Stockholm or through the Swedish Legation in Washington.

It was stated by the Foreign Office in its reply that it has no objection to the BARDALAND being used for this purpose and is willing to grant a safe-conduct provided the Government of Sweden agrees and that safe-conducts are obtained from the Russian Government and from the German Government on behalf of itself and its Allies. The letter from the Foreign Office states that it is understood that the BARDALAND is at Piraeus at the present time and is due to return to Sweden, leaving the Greek Relief service. The Foreign Office letter adds that the Swedes have put forward proposals that on her way home this ship should collect the cargo of various imports for Sweden.

We have not communicated with Ambassador Harriman concerning the procuring of a safe-conduct from the Soviet Government.

WINANT

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ORIGINAL TEXT OF TELEGRAM SENT

FROM: Secretary of State, Washington  
TO: American Legation, Stockholm  
DATED: May 12, 1944  
NUMBER: 895

From War Refugee Board to Minister Johnson, Stockholm, Sweden.

Reference your 784 March 7 concerning possible use of Swedish ship for refugee evacuation in Balkan Black Sea area.

Ambassador Steinhardt advised us some time ago that a number of refugees can be evacuated from Rumania in addition to the 1,500 who can be carried on TARI which is awaiting German safe-conduct (reference our 571 April 3, your 1181 April 7, our 633 April 10, your 1255 April 13). In April alone more than 900 refugees were brought to Turkey in small Bulgarian ships.

Late in February at Ambassador Steinhardt's suggestion, made after discussion with the Swedish Legation in Ankara a request was addressed to the Swedish Government through Minister Bostrom in Washington for authorization to divert a Greek relief ship for refugees operations in Balkan Black Sea area. The Swedish Government replied that consent of the governments concerned in Greek relief operations would be necessary. It was indicated that M/S BARDALAND might be available for such purpose if certain conditions could be met.

Originally the British did not desire to have any Greek relief ship diverted for refugee evacuation. The Washington representative of the Ministry of Economic Warfare advised the Board that even a small loss of tonnage in Greek relief schedule might leave a serious gap in deliveries. The Ministry representative suggested however that four additional ships for Greek relief fleet were expected soon to leave the Baltic and at that time the question of diverting a ship for refugee evacuation could be reopened.

In view of Ambassador Steinhardt's repeated and insistent requests that further efforts be made to obtain a Swedish ship Ambassador Winant at our suggestion took up the matter with the British Government. Word has just been received from Ambassador Winant that the British Government has no objection to use of BARDALAND for refugee evacuation if Swedish Government consents. Furthermore, British would grant safe-conduct for such a voyage. It is understood in addition that BARDALAND is being withdrawn from Greek relief service.

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Please ask Swedish Government whether in view of above British action and the urgency of evacuating refugees from Balkan areas it would be willing to make BARDALAND available to War Refugee Board for refugee evacuation from Rumania to Turkey or Palestine, and whether as a preliminary step it would immediately sound out the German Government's willingness to grant safe-conduct for such an evacuation operation. If the Swedish Government desires, the War Refugee Board would aid by asking other neutral governments and the Vatican to make independent approaches to the German Government in support of the Swedish approach. Although the Board would prefer that Haifa be the destination of such an evacuation voyage, the Board would agree to make a Turkish port the destination if such action were more likely to produce a favorable response from the German Government.

If the Swedish Government consents to the use of the BARDALAND and the German Government is willing to grant safe-conduct, a charter would be executed in the name of the Board, which would arrange for British and Russian safe-conducts. These and other details such as insurance, etc., could be worked out as soon as the preliminary negotiations show signs of producing results.

In your discussions with the Swedish Government you may wish to make clear that time is of the essence in this matter.

This is War Refugee Board cable No. 9.

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DOCUMENT

32

ORIGINAL TEXT OF TELEGRAM SENT

FROM: Secretary of State, Washington  
TO: American Legation, Stockholm  
DATED: May 20, 1944  
NUMBER: 967

From War Refugee Board to Minister Johnson and Olsen.

Reference your No. 1744 of May 16 concerning Swedish Foreign Office attitude with respect to diverting the BARDALAND for refugee evacuation in the Black Sea area.

It would be the War Refugee Board's intention if the Swedish Government agreed to charter the BARDALAND for refugee evacuation to have the ship proceed to Istanbul to be fitted with the necessary passenger accommodations. From Istanbul, the BARDALAND would proceed to Constanza where there are a large but unknown number of refugees available for evacuation. We feel satisfied that if the BARDALAND puts in at Constanza refugees will be available for as many trips as the ship can make. Meanwhile it would be helpful to know the number of passengers the BARDALAND can carry after being fitted with passenger accommodations. After embarkation of refugees at Constanza the War Refugee Board would desire to have the BARDALAND proceed to Istanbul where the War Refugee Board would accept responsibility for arranging for the passengers' care until such time as they could proceed by rail to Palestine.

If, in your opinion, the German Government is more likely to consider favorably a safe conduct request by the Swedish Red Cross or by Intercross for a ship chartered to either of these organizations rather than to the War Refugee Board, the Board would agree to reimburse the Swedish Red Cross or Intercross for all expenses incurred as a result of assuming the charter obligation. It would seem to the Board that valuable time could be saved if the BARDALAND were chartered to the Swedish Red Cross rather than Intercross as there would be no need to await authorizations from Geneva. In order that there be no delay until the Swedish Red Cross or Intercross agrees to accept the charter of the BARDALAND for refugee evacuation, please request the Swedish Government to make an immediate request to the German Government for permission to divert the BARDALAND and also for the necessary safe conduct.

It is assumed that you will conduct the necessary negotiations with the Swedish Red Cross or Intercross. Please advise us how we can aid on this end. It is assumed further that the BARDALAND charter negotiations will be conducted in Sweden. If so, the Board would expect you to act as its representative in the charter negotiations between the Swedish Government and the Swedish Red Cross or

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Intercross. It is presumed that no charter contract would be entered into between the Swedish Government and the Swedish Red Cross or Intercross without your prior agreement to all details.

The War Refugee Board would agree to assume responsibility for the reasonable charter costs of the BARDALAND from the time that the BARDALAND puts into Istanbul for refitting with passenger accommodations. However, before such an obligation is assumed, the Board would desire some indication that the German Government would be willing to grant a safe conduct.

Please thank the Swedish Government for its sympathetic and cooperative attitude in this humanitarian undertaking.

This is War Refugee Board's cable to Stockholm No. 13.

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33

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Legation, Stockholm  
TO: Secretary of State, Washington  
DATED: June 5, 1944  
NUMBER: 2009

Reference is made herewith to Department's cable of June 1, No. 1082, and previous related correspondence. It is advised by the Swedish Foreign Office that the German Government has flatly refused to authorize use of the BARDALAND for evacuation of refugees and it has even expressed resentment at the Swede's making the request. The German Government's official explanation was that it had already as a favor to the Swedish Government authorized replacement of the BARDALAND by the BORELAND (please see the Legation's message May 12, No. 1689). It is believed by the Swedish Foreign Office that the real explanation is that the German Government does not wish to facilitate the evacuation of refugees. As the Government of Sweden and the Swedish Red Cross very much desired to take part in this humanitarian undertaking, the Swedish Foreign Office expressed regrets over this outcome.

JOHNSON

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

June 16, 1944  
10:00 p.m.

Amlegation  
Stockholm  
1213

The following WRB cable No. 27 refers to your 2009 of June 5 regarding the BARDALAND and is from the Board to Johnson.

The following had been received by the Board from Winant before Board's receipt of your cable:

QUOTE Foreign Office has just informed Embassy that word has now been received that the Germans have refused to grant a safe conduct for the BARDALAND to enable her to evacuate refugees (Embassy's 3857, May 12, 1 p.m., and previous for War Refugee Board). Foreign Office states that it is settled German policy to refuse in every way to facilitate the evacuation of Jews to Palestine and that, therefore, there does not seem to be anything further which can be done in this particular case. Unless War Refugee Board expresses urgently their disapproval, British intend to accept notice of sailing of BARDALAND from Piraeus June 10 UNQUOTE

The reply to London which was repeated to you as No. 1164 of June 9 was immediately dispatched by the Board. The Board notes, after receipt and consideration your 2009, that German refusal of safe conduct for BARDALAND not (repeat not) attributed to German policy of refusing to facilitate the evacuation to Palestine of the Jews. The basis of the Board's reply to the cable from Winant was of course the apparent view of the British Foreign Office regarding this matter.

The Board, because of opinion of British Foreign Office, desires you to discuss with Swedish Government possibility of reopening with Germans the matter of safe conduct for the BARDALAND on basis of assurances which may be given Germans that refugees evacuated thereon, will not (repeat not) be taken to Palestine but to havens of refuge elsewhere. The Board's conviction that any possibility of obtaining a safe conduct should not be lost merely because of intended destination of the voyage should be explained to the Swedish Government as the reason for this additional request. Other refugee havens can and will be found if the German refusal is based simply upon their opposition to taking refugees to Palestine.

The efforts which the Government of Sweden and the Swedish Red Cross have been making in this matter are greatly appreciated. The results of your conversations on this subject should be reported promptly.

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BE-147  
Distribution of true  
reading only be special  
arrangement (██████ W)

Stockholm  
DATED July 10, 1944  
REC'D 5:45 p.m.

Secretary of State  
Washington  
2548, July 10, 8 p.m.

Foreign Office now states there is definitely no possibility  
of reopening with Germans the matter of safe-conduct for "Bardaland"  
(as proposed in Department's 1213 June 16, 10 p.m., being War Refugee  
Board cable 27) on basis of assurances that refugees would not be  
taken to Palestine.

JOHNSON

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DOCUMENT

36

BE-822  
Distribution of true  
reading only by special  
arrangement [redacted] W)

Stockholm  
DATED: June 13, 1944  
REC'D: 11:57 a.m.

Secretary of State  
Washington  
2120, June 13, 2 p.m.

Owners of BARDALAND have presented a preliminary claim of 80,000 kronor to Swedish Foreign Office as an estimate of indemnity due them for charter hire, seamans' war bonus and war risk insurance during period vessel was tied up at Piraeus on War Refugee Board negotiations. This our No. 30 for WRB. Foreign Office appears to feel that settlement by WRB would be reasonable and the problem is referred by this Legation without recommendation or prejudice. Foreign Office was advised that this office was advised that original instructions of WRB contemplated that charter and other costs of vessel would be assumed when and if vessel arrived at Istanbul for refugee operations.

JOHNSON

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PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Legation, Stockholm  
TO: Secretary of State, Washington  
DATE: September 19, 1944  
NUMBER: 3732

 (Section One)

Reference is made herein to the Legation's cable of July 20, No. 2688.

The full claim for charges by the Swedish Orient Line for the "Bardaland" in the sum of 99,158 kronor 68 ore has been received from the Foreign Office. Included in this claim are the following charges: On the basis of \$19,383.13 per 30 days, hire from 2 p.m. May 16, 1944 to 2 p.m. June 8 equals \$14,860.40 equivalent at exchange 4.20 to 62,413 kronor 68 ore; war bonus for the same period 23,005 kronor; bunker oil consumed as indicated by ships journal 5,800 kilograms at 300 kronor equals 1,740 kronor; sundries and trunk calls 50 kronor; at one quarter percent, war insurance on ship 10,750 kronor; war risk insurance on crew and officers 1,200 kronor.

August 22 is the date of this account. The Foreign Office states, in a covering letter dated September 16, that the ship owners would be grateful for payment at earliest convenience;

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PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Legation, Stockholm  
TO: Secretary of State, Washington  
DATE: September 19, 1944  
NUMBER: 3732

[REDACTED] (Section Two)

that "Bardaland" was due to leave Piraeus May 18 for Sweden; that owners had contracted to carry cargo from Spain to Sweden; that on May 13 it was learned that WRB desired to charter "Bardaland" for refugees from Rumania and to hold ship in Greece pending negotiations for such transport; that ship sailed finally from Piraeus June 10 instead of May 18. Covering letter contains a not entirely clear statement which appears to be for purpose of explaining why charge is not for full period from May 16 to June 10 but is for two days less; apparent explanation is that previous charter party expired May 16 and ship owners under previous schedule expected it to lie idle until scheduled departure May 18. Please repeat to WRB as our sl.

Please instruct.

JOHNSON

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OUTGOING  
TELEGRAM

EJM  
Distribution of true  
reading only by special  
arrangement. ( [REDACTED] )

September 30, 1944  
9 p.m.

Amlegation  
Stockholm  
1968

The following for Olsen is WRB 93.

Reference your 3926 of September 27. You are authorized to  
pay immediately total claim of 99158 kronor 68 ore for BARDALAND  
to the Swedish Orient Line. Regret misunderstanding.

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(GLW)

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39

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM SENT

FROM: Secretary of State, Washington  
TO: Embassy, Ankara  
DATED: March 22, 1944  
NUMBER: 230

Following for Hirschmann from War Refugee Board.

War Refugee Board cable no. 7.

It is stated in a letter dated February 25, from Inter-cross that the "Bellacitta", a Bulgarian vessel, is available to transfer refugees at the rate of 150 per week to Istanbul presumably from Mangalia. Red Cross also informed us that two Bulgarian vessels, "Milka" and "Maritza", are also available to Jewish organizations for this purpose but since Turkey is not allowing more than 150 a week to go to Palestine by rail, it is presumed that the last two mentioned boats will not be usable since the "Bellacitta" can fill the limit imposed. Red Cross as intermediary will give notification of sailings you are requested to do everything possible without lessening efforts concerning Swedish and Turkish boats. Red Cross has requested and the United States has granted safe conducts for the "Bellacitta" and cable is being sent to the American Embassy at Moscow requesting that the Soviet Government take prompt action on the British Government's safe conduct requests.

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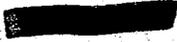
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PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Embassy, Ankara  
TO: Secretary of State, Washington  
DATED: March 25, 1944  
NUMBER: 527

  
The following message from Hirschmann for the WRB. No. 9.

Reference is made to Department's cable No. 230.

For over a month, we have been aware of the desire of certain individuals to make use of Bulgarian boats MILKA and MARITZA to transport Jewish refugees from Constanza to Istanbul but due to objection of International Red Cross representative in Bucharest to use of these two vessels as unseaworthy, have taken no action in the matter. On the other hand, since the BELLACITTA is regarded as seaworthy, we are attempting to expedite her from Constanza which is being delayed from day to day for a reason which we have been unable to discover. Either the failure to receive Soviet safe conduct thus far or some connection with illegal traffic in refugees may be the reason for delay.

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PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: The American Ambassador, Ankara  
TO: The Secretary of State, Washington  
DATE: March 30, 1944  
NUMBER: 579

The following message is Ankara's number 17 and is from the Ambassador for the Department and the War Refugee Board.

Reference my number 573.

This afternoon the Minister for Foreign Affairs telephoned me and said that in the case of the approximately two hundred and fifty Jewish refugees without Turkish visas or Palestine entry certificates who were on board the S.S. MILLIA, he had decided to make an exception. The Minister said also that he had issued instructions that the refugees are to be allowed to land in Istanbul and that in order to accommodate the refugees he had asked the Minister of Communications to detach four non-passenger cars from the semi-weekly Istanbul-Aleppo train and attach four passenger cars.

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PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: The American Ambassador, Ankara  
TO: The Secretary of State, Washington  
DATE: April 8, 1944  
NUMBER: 625

[REDACTED]

The following message as Ankara's number 25 is from the Ambassador for the War Refugee Board.

Yesterday in Istanbul there arrived the Bulgarian S.S. MARITZA with two hundred and forty four Jewish refugees from Constanza. The authorities of Turkey have agreed today to allow all of the 244 refugees to land in Istanbul and to supply them with railroad transportation to Palestine leaving Istanbul on April 10 although only fifteen of the refugees have Turkish visas and Palestine entry certificates.

STEINHARDT

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NCB-336  
This telegram must be  
paraphrased before being  
communicated to anyone  
other than a Governmental  
agency. (BR)

Ankara  
DATED: April 25, 1944  
REC'D: 2:19 p.m., 26th

Secretary of State,  
Washington.  
746, April 25, 11 p.m.

For WRB from the Ambassador Ankara, No. 46.

The Bulgarian S.S. BELLACITTA arrived in Istanbul yesterday  
afternoon with 152 Jewish refugees on board. As stated in my tele-  
gram 713, April 19, I do not anticipate any difficulty in arranging  
for the prompt transit of these refugees to Palestine.

STEINHARDT

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PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: Embassy, Ankara  
TO: Secretary of State, Washington  
DATED: May 2, 1944  
NUMBER: 788

Following is Ankara's 49 from the Ambassador for War Refugee Board.

Yesterday the vessel S.S. MILKA from Constanza carrying 272 Jewish refugees appeared off the Port of Istanbul and asked for permission to enter the port.

The Foreign Minister has directed the refugees to land and has requested the Communications Minister to provide transportation to the Syrian frontier for them in spite of the fact that the vessel again arrived without proper papers and the refugees on board are without Turk entry or transit visas and without Palestine entry certificates. The British in Istanbul are today issuing the requisite Palestine entry certificates.

It is necessary for me to advise the Board to refrain from expressing publicly at this time our appreciation for the Foreign Minister's action in allowing the continued transit to Palestine of Jew refugees arriving in Turkey illegally. It is feared that such public expression at this time might embarrass Turk relations with Arab countries and might be used against the Foreign Minister by his political opponents who are now very active. Therefore it is recommended that any public expressions of appreciation be deferred until later especially since I am advised that the Bulgarian vessel S.S. MARITZA, which will present a situation similar to the MILKA, is due to arrive in Istanbul shortly.

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PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Embassy, Ankara  
TO: Secretary of State, Washington  
DATED: May 19, 1944  
NUMBER: 907

Following is Ankara's No. 60, from the Ambassador for the War Refugee Board.

Reference is made herewith to my message dated May 2, No. 788.

On May 17 the Bulgarian ship SS MARITZA from Constanza with 316 Jewish refugees on board appeared off the port of Istanbul and permission to enter was requested. Despite the fact that the MARITZA again arrived without proper papers and that the refugees on board were without Turkish entry or transit visas and without Palestine entry certificates, it has been directed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs that the refugees be permitted to land, and the Minister of Communications has been requested to provide immediate transportation to Palestine for them. The British authorities in Istanbul last night issued the requisite Palestine entry certificates.

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ORIGINAL TEXT OF TELEGRAM SENT

FROM: Secretary of State, Washington  
TO: American Embassy, Ankara  
DATED: June 2, 1944  
NUMBER: 503

From War Refugee Board to Ambassador Steinhardt, Ankara, Turkey.

Please refer to your 941 of May 23.

We appreciate your excellent handling of this difficult situation and accept your judgment as to the route of the voyage and the charter arrangements. The Board is anxious to retain the right to use the TARI as long as there is any reasonable hope that it may ultimately be permitted to sail. While we hope that it will not be necessary to do so, you are authorized, if you deem it desirable, to use the \$160,000 already transmitted to you to hold the TARI. In any event please advise us before finally relinquishing the right to use the TARI.

For your confidential information, the Bulgarian Minister to Stockholm is said to be sympathetic with our refugee evacuation program. If at any point you deem it desirable, you may cable Minister Johnson in Stockholm asking him to enlist the support of the Bulgarian Minister there in connection with any project requiring the cooperation of the Bulgarian Government.

With respect to the general question of obtaining shipping for refugee operations across the Black Sea the following is for your information:

We have been advised by the State Department that the British are requesting the American Government's view concerning appropriate conditions to be proposed to the Turkish Government in consideration for the renewal of the charters of five British cargo ships now in Turkish service and known as the Adana ships. It is our understanding that these vessels were originally chartered to Turkey for the on-shipment of military supplies from Egyptian ports to Turkey and that the stoppage of military shipments to Turkey has nullified the purpose for which the ships were originally chartered to Turkey by the British Government. We understand from the State Department that the British authorities in London and Ambassador Hugessen are anxious to receive in return for the re-charter of the Adana ships a substantial quid pro quo from the Turkish Government. In addition to various political conditions proposed tentatively by the British Government as a condition to the re-charter of the Adana ships the

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British are apparently suggesting that a further condition might be added to the effect that a suitable Turkish vessel up to the tonnage of one Adana ship should be placed at the disposal of the British and American Governments for refugee evacuation operations. We understand that at the present time the charters of the Adana ships are being temporarily renewed for two month periods pending a final decision on this matter by the British and American Governments.

In order to strengthen your hand in future dealings with the Turkish Government concerning refugee matters and particularly in order to facilitate the obtaining of Turkish shipping for refugee purposes in the future, we have recommended to the State Department that it suggest the following among others as conditions to the re-charter of the Adana ships:

1. So long as any of the Adana ships are under charter to the Turkish Government, the Turkish Government should make available the TARI or a similar vessel for repeated refugee evacuation voyages across the Black Sea to a Turkish Black Sea port with a German safe conduct if it can be obtained or without such a safe conduct, whenever in the opinion of the British and American Ambassadors to Turkey such voyages become feasible. It shall be clearly understood that the re-charter of the five Adana ships will constitute fulfillment of any Turkish demand that a substitute passenger vessel be made available to the Turks while the TARI is engaged in refugee evacuation operations.

2. The Turkish Government should cooperate with the British and American Ambassadors in effecting arrangements whereby evacuation operations across the Black Sea without a German safe conduct by small boats carrying relatively small numbers of passengers such as the MARITZA, MILKA, and BELLACITTA will be continued and if possible intensified. Such cooperation would include not only permitting all refugees arriving in this manner to land in Turkish Black Sea ports and remain in Turkey until Turkish rail facilities permit them to be transported across Turkey to Palestine but also actively assisting the British and American Ambassadors in their efforts to find and put into service in Turkey small boats which can operate in the same manner as the three above-named ships.

The War Refugee Board would of course agree to arrange for the payment of a reasonable charter hire for the use of any Turkish vessel made available and to assume responsibility for the maintenance and support of refugees in transport or awaiting transportation in Turkey.

In view of the necessity of using for military purposes all passenger ships now available to us, the War Refugee Board is also recommending that if the Turkish Government insists upon a guarantee of replacement in kind in the case of loss of any Turkish vessel made

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available in the future for refugee evacuation operations, consideration should be given to using the re-chartering of the Adana ships as a basis for requesting the Turkish Government to waive such guarantee in the future unless the Turks are willing to make a similar guarantee to replace any of the Adana ships that are lost. However, if the giving of a guarantee in kind appears absolutely necessary in order to obtain the use of Turkish vessels the War Refugee Board will, despite all difficulties, seriously consider giving such a guarantee in connection with future voyages of the TARI or any other Turkish vessel because of the urgent humanitarian considerations involved and the strong interest of this Government in the refugee evacuation program. It should be clearly understood that the original guarantee to replace the TARI in the event of loss on its first voyage still stands and that the above refers to subsequent voyages of the TARI and any other Turkish vessels made available for refugee evacuation purposes.

The State Department is transmitting the Board's recommendations to the British.

This is War Refugee Board Cable to Ankara No. 45.

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PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Embassy, Ankara  
TO: Secretary of State, Washington  
DATED: June 19, 1944  
NUMBER: 1104

The Ambassador sends the following, Ankara No. 77, for the War Refugee Board.

Department's cable dated June 15, No. 534, is referred to herewith.

Since representatives of the various Jewish organizations in Istanbul or others during recent months have reported to the Embassy only one instance of refusal of entry into Turkey to Jewish refugees without visas by Turkish border guards, the details of the reports which have come to the Board's attention that such occurrences have been "not infrequent" would be appreciated by me so that I may bring these specific cases to the attention of the Turk authorities. While it is most unlikely that the Turk authorities would enter into an "arrangement" for the violation of their own laws by agreeing that refugees without Turk visas could enter Turkey, as stated in my cable dated June 5, No. 1010, on several occasions I have been assured by the Turk Foreign Office that entry would not be refused to Jewish refugees provided that British and Jewish agency representatives in Istanbul issue them Palestine entry certificates. Such certificates are being issued now without delay as a matter of course, and consequently a considerable number of Jewish refugees without Turk transit visas who have arrived overland at Turk border points from Bulgaria have passed through Turkey en route to Palestine. For some time past, Turk border guards have been under instructions not to turn back Jewish refugees but to detain them on the Turk side of the frontier pending instructions. It is essential, in view of the foregoing, that I be furnished immediately with the details of all cases in which Turk border guards have failed to carry out their instructions. As matters now stand refugees arriving overland are no less favorably placed than those who arrived by sea. I do not anticipate any unfavorable change in this situation since the arrivals by sea without Turk visas have far exceeded the arrivals by rail. Thus it would seem from the Department's cable under reference that the Turk authorities have been taking substantially the same position as those of the other neutral countries adjacent to enemy controlled areas who have refrained from barring the entry of refugees. The Turk authorities might be frightened by an attempt to convert the present benevolent attitude of the Turk authorities in admitting refugees arriving

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by sea or land without Turk visas into an arrangement of a more formal character, and they might suspect the organization of a movement beyond their physical capacity to deal with and it would result in our losing some of the ground already gained rather than making a further advance. Since our objective is to evacuate the maximum possible number of refugees from the Balkans to Turkey or Palestine, I feel that at least for the present we should seek to hold the Turks to a strict compliance with the informal assurances that they have given me rather than press for a formal agreement which would involve the risk of withdrawal of the informal assurances.

If notwithstanding what I have pointed out above, it is preferred by the Board and the Department that I press the Foreign Office for a formal agreement, of course I shall try to do as you wish.

STEINHARDT

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BJR-47

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

Ankara

DATED: July 5, 1944

REC'D: 4:59 p.m., 6th

Secretary of State  
Washington  
1217, July 5, 2 p.m.

For War Refugee Board from Hirschmann, Ankara No. 86.

For your information a luncheon conference was arranged at the invitation of Ambassador Steinhardt on July 2 to consider and coordinate plans for the expansion of the work of rescuing refugees from the Balkans. Among those present were Ambassador Laurence A. Steinhardt, Counselor Robert F. Kelley, Ira A. Hirschmann, special representative of the War Refugee Board, and his assistant Herbert Katzki; and the following representatives of organizations engaged in refugee rescue work: Joseph Schwartz and Reuben Resnik, American Joint Distribution Committee; Dr. Judah Magnes and Harry Viteles, Middle East Advisory Committee of the American Joint Distribution Committee; Chaim Barlas, Jewish Agency; Jacob Griffell, Agudath Israel, Vaad Hahatzala, and other orthodox groups; Zevschind, Hlstadruth; and David Schweitzer, Hicem.

It was agreed among the organizations that overlapping and duplication of effort now exists and that greater results will be obtained by coordinated efforts. Ambassador Steinhardt pointed out the unfavorable reaction he had received from Turkish high officials to counteract confusion resulting from numerous individual organizations approaching these officials frequently with similar or conflicting projects; also the difficulties placed in the path of the representative of the United States Government in dealing effectively with the Turkish Government as a result of these conflicts.

An agreement was reached to form an over-all coordinating committee including all effective agencies now represented in Turkey. The committee is to be directed by Ira Hirschmann, War Refugee Board representative and his assistant Herbert Katzki.

It was understood that all efforts of individual organizations, especially those related to chartering of ships, would be pooled into a single coordinated effort in which all effective agencies would be afforded an opportunity to participate.

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We are sure that you will take advantage of Ambassador Steinhardt's imminent return to Washington to learn from him at first hand and in detail the current situation existing in Turkey with regard to the refugee movement.

When the above-mentioned committee is formed in Istanbul, and operating, we will keep you informed of its program and developments.

KELLEY

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GAR-041

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

Ankara

DATED: July 11, 1944

REC'D: 11:17 p.m., 12th

Secretary of State  
Washington  
1250, July 11, 5 p.m.

For War Refugee Board from Hirschmann.

Ankara No. 94.

Confirming Embassy's 1246, July 9, 1 p.m. the Turkish SS Kazbek arrived in Istanbul Sunday, July 9, carrying 759 refugees from Rumania. Among the refugees were 265 children, 214 of whom came originally from Transnistria, 187 young agricultural students of whom 20 were of the Agudah-Israel organization, and 65 refugees of other nationalities, mostly Hungarians and Poles. The remainder were Zionists and non-Zionists; the exact figures of each group are not known.

Upon being informed by me of the impending arrival of the Kazbek, Mr. Kelley immediately requested the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to make at once the necessary arrangements with the Ministry of Communications for the transportation of the refugees to Palestine. Mr. Kelley was assured that all possible measures would be taken to facilitate the departure of the refugees at the earliest possible moment.

In consequence, a special train was made available by the Turkish State Railways for the entire contingent of 759 refugees and they departed from Istanbul on the evening of July 10 for Palestine via Syria. The British passport control in Istanbul was most energetic and cooperative in completing the issuance of the necessary visas for Palestine without delay.

The successful completion of the voyage of the S.S. Kazbek and the immediate departure of the passengers for Palestine are encouraging indications that the deadlock in respect to both transportation and governmental red tape, which had caused the virtual cessation of the rescue of refugees from the Balkans during May and June has been broken.

KELLEY

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MJB-917

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

Ankara

DATED: August 10, 1944  
REC'D: 5:01 a.m., 12th

Secretary of State  
Washington  
1471, August 10, midnight

For Pehle WRB from Hirschmann. Ankara's No. 129.

The 308 refugees who arrived Istanbul aboard vessel MORINA MARINA proceeded on August 9 by railroad from Istanbul to Syria. Included in this group were 177 children up to the age of 18, of whom 171 were orphans from Transnistria; the remainder were with their parents. Included also among the refugees were 31 young trainees for Palestine (Chalutzim) mostly Rumanian and 36 revisionists, the balance of the 308 comprised refugees who had arrived in Rumania (18 Polish and about 25 Hungarian) and Rumanians.

For your information we have learned that approximately 1,300 orphans from Transnistria are still in Rumania and I am attempting to secure priority for them in whatever additional emigration from Rumania it may be possible to effectuate.

KELLY

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MRQ-304

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

Ankara

DATED: October 30, 1944  
REC'D: 4:51 p.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.  
2079, October 30, 2 p.m.

From Katzki for Pehle War Refugee Board.

Ankara No. 175.

The Turkish motor vessel Salahattin arrived in Istanbul on October 29 carrying 547 passengers proceeding to Palestine from Rumania. Preliminary information indicates that the group comprises 409 men, 133 women and 5 children. Refugees from Hungary who succeeded in entering Rumania make up the majority of the passengers, including 24 Hungarians who were liberated from the forced labor mine at Bor, Yugoslavia. It is planned that the emigrants proceed by railroad from Istanbul to Palestine within the next few days under the general agreement between the Ambassador and the Turkish Foreign Office. Hirschmann's reports provide information regarding the assurances given the Ambassador by the Foreign Office which we refer to here as the general agreement. The foregoing is for your information. Additional material will be sent by pouch.

STEINHARDT

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LFG-203

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

Ankara  
DATED December 7, 1944  
REC'D 8:07 p.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.  
2320, December 7, 3 p.m.

From Katzki to Pehle War Refugee Board.

Ankara's No. 200.

For your information the Turkish vessel "Toros" which departed from Constanza December 3, arrived in Istanbul on December 5 carrying 905 emigrants from Rumania proceeding to Palestine. The "Toros" proceeded from Istanbul to Constanza during the month of November and returned to Istanbul under Rumanian Red Cross safe conduct. The emigrants arrived in Istanbul without transit visas or Palestine entry certificates, possessing only their travel documents. The Palestine entry certificates and the Turkish and Syrian transit visas were issued in Istanbul pursuant to the Embassy's general agreement with the British and Turkish authorities which previously has been reported to you relating to such cases.

Passengers include 350 children repatriated from Transnistria to Rumania, Rumanian nationals, forced laborers from the Bor mines in Yugoslavia and a large proportion of refugees from Hungary, some of whom it is reported escaped from Hungary as recently as November 15.

In accordance with Ambassador Steinhardt's general agreement with the Turkish Foreign Office concerning railroad facilities, the Turkish authorities provided a special train and the entire group departed from Istanbul for Palestine on December 8.

As soon as it has been possible to examine the lists and documentation of the "Toros" emigrants more closely revised details will be sent to you.

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PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Legation, Bern  
TO: Secretary of State, Washington  
DATED: February 15, 1944  
NUMBER: 941

Department's telegram dated February 11, 1944, No. 459, is referred to herewith.

Given below is a preliminary answer to questions in the Department's telegram of January 25, 1944, No. 251.

1. A reply is being awaited by this Legation to the communication to the Swiss Foreign Office regarding War Refugee Board to which reference is made in my telegram of January 31, 1944, No. 624. Also, I am waiting for a reaction to my note of February 5, 1944 (supported by British Legation's concurring note) concerning burden on resources of Switzerland of care of refugees (see Department's telegram of January 20, 1944, No. 190); and also we are waiting for a reply to joint representations made on 9th of February concerning Swiss reception of selected children from France, Belgium and other territories occupied by the Germans (see my cable of February 10, 1944, No. 824). Answers are also pending to messages forwarded by War Refugee Board to International Red Cross Committee (Department's telegrams of January 27 and February 9, 1944, Nos. 279 and 437) regarding funds for relief operations for Jews and other persecuted groups especially in Rumania, Hungary, Thereisenstadt, Croatia and Slovakia.

2. More than 70,000 refugees have already been admitted by Switzerland (70,493 as of January 1 according to published figures). Please see my telegram dated October 27, 1942, No. 6729, for comparison of estimate of 63,000 in categories listed in Swiss Government's October 25, note.

3. Swiss Government's general policy in dealing with refugee problem was set forth in my telegram of November 19, 1943, No. 7262. The Swiss Government still makes it a practice to admit refugees in the following categories (see my telegram of March 30, 1943, No. 2004): political refugees (defined as fugitives subject individually to arrest or imprisonment for political beliefs); military deserters; escaped prisoners of war; physically helpless persons (sick persons, pregnant women, aged persons, children and parents accompanying children). A great majority enter clandestinely. In order to lessen risk of detection, fugitives not officially admitted are allowed to

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leave in the same manner in which they cross the frontier, i.e., clandestinely.

It is reported by the press that new entrants are coming in at the rate of about 90 to 100 a night, the bulk of them from Italy. Among Italians the percentage of Jews is very high.

5. The following factors seem to motivate the Swiss Government's restriction of entry of non-Swiss refugees, in addition to problem of lodging and feeding refugees; fear of giving encouragement to anti-Semitism; high percentage of foreigners in Switzerland, about 400,000 or 10 percent of the total population; the belief that the admission of an increasing number of refugees who are enemies of the Nazi regime might compromise the neutrality of the Swiss (indicated in the Swiss Government's November 16 note last quoted in my telegram of November 19 mentioned above).

Evidently the furnishing of funds from abroad is less important than furnishing food and clothing for the refugees as indicated by the Swiss Government's and National Banks disinclination to make Swiss francs generally available for local purchases against blocked dollars on behalf of refugees.

6. While it was intimated by the Foreign Office in its November 16 note that financial "facilities" may become necessary, it was stated that there was actual need for clothing and blankets and foodstuffs for refugees and that it was hoped that requests for license to purchase and transport replacement stocks of clothing and food would be given sympathetic consideration by the American Government.

7. Latest available information concerning condition of refugees in Axis and Axis occupied territory as received from informed sources has been provided continuously to the Department by the Legation. The Legation is giving its advice and assistance to such private organizations as the Unitarian Service Committee, the Joint Distribution Committee, World Jewish Congress, and others in their attempt to organize and finance relief in European areas from Switzerland as the center. Progress has been made in general and I am pleased to report that federal authorities of Switzerland have shown no disposition to be other than helpful in these respects.

HARRISON

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BFC-242

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

Bern  
DATED March 4, 1944  
REG'D 1:36 p.m.

Secretary of State  
Washington  
1304, March 4, 9 a.m.

"My dear Minister, by letter of February 2, you kindly informed me of the decision of the President of the United States to create an inter-departmental board for refugee questions. At the same time you advised me of your Government's purpose in this matter and you (\*) me to what extent the Swiss Government would be ready to collaborate in the relief work contemplated by the Government of the United States. Finally, you ask for any suggestions we might wish to make.

Concerning the contribution of Switzerland to the solution of the problem, you are aware, I believe, of our past and present efforts. We have kept you regularly informed in this respect. I may therefore be brief on this point more so as the political (\*) in its note verbale of November 16 last stated very exactly, for the information of your Government, the manner in which the problem of refugees and internees, Jews and non-Jews, presents itself for Switzerland.

I shall, therefore, restrict myself to specifying that, according to the latest statistics out of 70,500 refugees and internees of all categories in Switzerland at the beginning of 1944, about 53,000 of which 22,000 are Jews, fall approximately within the classification of persons referred to in your inquiry.

This being said, I must remind you that notwithstanding the great desire of our population that our country be receptive and hospitable, our authorities have had to take into account the risk to our security of having a massive unchecked influx of foreigners, possibly containing undesirable elements and also requirements of national defence particularly in certain regions. Security of Switzerland in the long run is also security of those who have taken refuge there.

Apart from persons with military status, Switzerland, as is known now, admits into its territory as far as circumstances permit in particular: political refugees, sick people and pregnant women, aged persons over 65 and their wives or husbands, infants or very young people; persons with close relatives in Switzerland; finally, the women who have lost their Swiss nationality through marriage with their husbands if any.

\*Apparent omission.

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After an obligatory period of quarantine refugees are, in principle, distributed among labor camps or in hospitals or homes for adults or children or also in private homes. Cost of upkeep of refugees is borne by authorities and by charitable institutions; only very exceptionally may they carry on a private lucrative occupation. On the other hand payment in the form of salary is made to those who perform regular work in establishments where they are sheltered. Refugees who have private resources may, under certain conditions, live in hotels or in apartments or be taken in by relatives or friends. Refugees naturally keep their belongings. In their own interest, securities and money, which they carry when they arrive, are deposited in a bank and competent authorities decide under what conditions interested parties may dispose of deposits.

After having overcome difficult problems of organization, principal concern of our authorities is now to occupy refugees by means taking into account present situation and economic future of our population.

Having this briefly summarized situation, it remains for me to touch on the last paragraph of your aide memoire. You will not be surprised — through observation and knowledge of our practices over several years — and it will certainly be understood in Washington that while contributing as substantial aid as possible in specific cases as it has constantly done since the beginning of war Switzerland by the very nature of its strict neutrality cannot associate itself formally with initiatives of belligerent governments. Maintenance of this attitude, far from hindering its effective activity and while properly speaking not constituting a ruling factor, does, on the contrary tend at least to reinforce the position whereby Switzerland is still able, in the heart of Europe, to continue its contribution to practical accomplishments in the field of relief to war victims.

We could not find a better medium than you to explain to the American Government that while we are anxious to persevere along the lines we have traced for ourselves and to continue to give the greatest effect within our means, limited, of course, by existing circumstances and our present state, to the feelings of human solidarity which animate the Swiss people, our activities must remain independent and autonomous. That is the reason why we are always anxious to avoid having relief which we give here or there from becoming a subject of controversy between belligerents.

It is hardly necessary to assure you that in the future as in the past we shall be ready to examine in a spirit imbued with practical realism as well as sympathetic understanding, the specific cases in which our cooperation may be judged compatible with the principles mentioned above. Thus as you are aware in compliance with a request from the inter-governmental Committee at London inspired by the American and British Governments, we have undertaken to approach the

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French authorities at Vichy regarding the possibility of obtaining emigration permits for children of refugees threatened with deportation or whose parents have been deported or threatened with deportation.

I wish to add that it would be useful to us to be kept informed of the measures which will be taken as a result of the recent decisions of the President of the United States."

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PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM SENT

FROM: Secretary of State, Washington  
TO: Amlegation, Bern  
DATED: March 24, 1944  
NUMBER: 983

[REDACTED]

The message given below refers to your telegrams of March 4, 1944, nos. 1304 and 1321.

With respect to paragraph number four of the Sternbuch-Rubinfield-Rosenbamm reports contained in your cable no. 1321, you are informed that the confidential statements made in that report are not necessarily inconsistent with the Swiss Government's official statement contained in your cable no. 1304. The interpretation which the Swiss authorities, including the Swiss Department of Foreign Police, placed on the phrase "political refugees" and the persons considered in such category by those authorities would seem to be the pertinent consideration. We suggest that the appropriate Swiss Government officials be approached to determine as definitely as possible the extent to which the Swiss authorities, including the border guards and cantonal police, the Swiss Foreign Police Department and any other authorities concerned consider the following as political refugees: one, stateless Jews, including those of military age; two, nationals of the United Nations countries now occupied by the Germans who are of Jewish descent; three, nationals of German satellite countries who are of Jewish descent; and four, nationals in general of the United Nations countries now occupied by Germany.

The many problems with which Switzerland has had to contend, as mentioned in your 1304, are appreciated by this Government but it believes that persons falling within all four of the categories mentioned above should, prima facie, be considered political refugees and as such should be afforded, after required security checks, temporary refuge without considering whether they have close relatives living in Switzerland and without regard to age or sex. You may determine to what extent the foregoing should be communicated to the Swiss after considering the replies to the specific inquiries, set forth above, you receive from the Government of Switzerland.

We suggest that you may desire to bring to the Swiss Government's attention the fact that the Jewish people of Europe are refugees because of Germany's political action and the political

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action of her satellites and that therefore they are political refugees in every sense of the term.

It is requested that you inform the Department of such views as the Swiss Government might express regarding the matter under reference and of any developments resulting from your negotiations with the Swiss Government.

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EXCERPTS FROM

RECORD OF EXPENDITURES FROM WAR REFUGEE BOARD DISCRETIONARY FUNDS

MAY 1 THROUGH OCTOBER 31, 1944

\*\*\*\*\*

. . . A series of six reports concerning the Jewish persecutions in Hungary which I issued "unofficially" during June, July, and August . . . appeared in English, French, and German, and were distributed to various persons and organizations in Switzerland in a position to act on public opinion. We also brought out two more reports during this period on the political situation in Hungary with specific emphasis on the anti-Jewish and Fascist tendencies of the various governments since March 19, 1944. . .

\*\*\*\*\*

Special expenses included fees for courier service performed by the Franc-Tireur Partisans in the Haute Savoie border region and points south and west; the Hechaluz to Germany (Berlin), Hungary, Slovakia, and Rumania; the Italian Liberation Committee in Northern Italy (between Swiss border and Milan); the Belgian Resistance in Belgium (Brussels) and Holland.

\*\*\*\*\*

Dutch Jewish Coordinating Committee. Dr. Pollak-Daniels, who came to Switzerland clandestinely via Belgium and France during the latter part of 1943, is co-director of a small but well organized relief committee specializing in assistance to Dutch Jewish refugees and Jews of other nationalities coming from Holland. Since the needs of their organization in Holland itself were fairly well covered by grants from Mr. Saly Mayer of the Joint Distribution Committee, I filled-in with a small monthly contribution which served mainly to finance "passeurs" along the French-Swiss border for such incoming refugees. 200 francs a month went to enlist the cooperation of a Swiss customs officer who served in the "refoulement" and "sorting" camp of Crompton in Geneva. Here refugees crossing the border illegally are cross-questioned and "sifted," with a view to determining who shall be pushed back across the border into France. Thus with a few hundred francs a month in the right place about 30 people, who might otherwise have been "refoules," were admitted to Switzerland.

Since the liberation of France, which has brought the flow of refugees into Switzerland from that country to a stop, Dr. Daniels' committee (he works with a Mr. Gans of the Dutch Jewish Coordinating Committee) is expanding its parcel work and "postcard location"

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of Jewish deportees in German-occupied territory. Further contributions to this organization may not be necessary in the future as they have some promise of receiving additional funds from Dutch sources in Great Britain.

Freies Deutschland. Karl "Burkhardt" (a "nom de guerre") is in charge of the relief and rescue section of the "Freies Deutschland" committee in Switzerland. I have known K. B. for a number of years as he was previously in contact with the Quaker Center in Berlin. This group, which has little in common with the Moscow group except the name, is made up of German political refugees of all parties at present in Switzerland. It operates, of course, illegally in Switzerland and maintains close relations with Germany and with resistance groups inside Germany. Our WRB contribution has helped them to pass particularly endangered political refugees across the border into Switzerland (mainly between Basel and Singen) for a number of months. Since the events of July 20th the number of individuals to be brought in has increased and probably will. Getting them across the Rhine is also becoming more expensive. I am at present working with the FD on plans to send in more relief to endangered persons hiding in Germany along the border.

Hungarian Student Organization in Zürich. Stefan Eisenberg is the President of the Hungarian students' organization in Zürich. When it became known late in July that persons holding Palestine Certificates in Hungary might be allowed to emigrate, this committee was very active in sending collective telegrams to Palestine in an attempt to secure certificates for the relatives in Hungary of various of their members. This WRB contribution was made to assist them with covering the cost of these wires.

Franc-Tireur Partisans. Jean-Jacques Jaeger was representative in Geneva of the "Franc-Tireur Partisan" Resistance group (Communists) for the Department of the Haute Savoie. As such he was extremely helpful in hiding refugees along the French side of the border and in getting them across the frontier into Switzerland. This WRB contribution [for special medico-food relief for persons in prison, hiding, or fleeing] went mainly for their own people in order to enlist their cooperation in "passing" foreign refugees over. As was generally the case with French Resistance organizations, one could not ask them to aid foreigners without at least offering to assist them with their own well-nigh insurmountable relief problems, as hundreds of their own people, particularly if they belonged to the FTP, were tortured, shot, and imprisoned by the Gestapo and the Milice.

Pharmacie Nouvelle, Geneva. [Two small grants were made for special medico-food relief for persons in prison, hiding, or fleeing. Another] grant was made for a purpose very similar to the above. The partisan groups fighting along the northern Yugoslavian

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border, up against the Hungarian frontier, were quite willing to assist in any way possible with rescuing endangered Jewish refugees. Their own material situation, however, was such that they could scarcely do it without receiving help themselves. This shipment of medical and restorative products, therefore, was split up between their own people and incoming Hungarian Jewish refugees. Although it seems difficult to believe, the lines of communication between Switzerland and northern Yugoslavia were better than between Italy and this region, with the result that a considerable amount of medical goods (the shipments had to be compact) was sent from Switzerland via Chiasso and Trieste, with the collaboration of Italian partisan groups.

Spanish Comite d'Union National (CUN). The first of these [two] contributions was made to enlist the invaluable assistance of the Spanish partisan groups operating along the whole chain of the Pyrenees from Gerbere to Hendaye in France with the passing of Jewish refugees into Spain. The second contribution was, according to my agreement with Manuolo Ascerati, the representative of the Spanish "Comite d'Union National" in Switzerland, to be split two ways, half going to finance "passing" and the other half for relief to imperilled Spaniards in the prisons and camps in southern France (and there were unfortunately many of them!). These contributions had really more concrete results than some of the others since, with assistance from other Jewish organizations such as the World Jewish Congress and the Joint Distribution Committee, close to 700 persons were passed successfully over the mountains into Spain.

Correspondent for Switzerland of "Tass" and "Pravda." [A] small contribution was made to secure the cooperation of the Communist press in Switzerland and use of their channels into occupied countries.

Staff Member of Legation. [This grant was] for aid to French in Lyon region sought by Milice and Gestapo. Mr. Royall Tyler is on our Legation staff, as you probably know, representing the Foreign Economic Administration and later the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. He has very close contacts with France, and I was very happy to be able to place a sum at his disposal for assistance to French Gestapo victims and their families.

Conseil National de la Resistance and Comite des Oeuvres Sociales des Organisations de Resistance. This large contribution to the relief and rescue activities of the French Resistance was paid to and handled by Charles Guillon (whom I have known personally for some years, particularly from the period I worked in France) as representative in Geneva of the relief section of the "Conseil National de la Resistance," and Madame Andre Philip as delegate, at that time, of the COSOR ("Comite des Oeuvres Sociales des Organisations de Resistance"). The 200,000 Swiss francs realized approximately 12,000,000 French francs. . . [The first installment of 7,000,000 French francs was allocated in July 1944] as follows:

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The Social Services of the M. U. R. ("Mouvements Unis de la Resistance").

The relief activities of the "Front National" and Cooperative Groups.

The "France d'Abord" group.

The relief section of the "Etat Major des Postes, Telegraphes et Telephones" at Lyon. This was a resistance organization made up from the personnel of the postal, telegraph, and telephone services. They accomplished excellent and dangerous information and sabotage work and were consequently particularly tracked by the Gestapo and Milice. A great many of their members were tortured and killed by the Germans.

The resistance group from the SNCF (Societe National des Chemins de Fer Francais)--the French railroads. They did work similar to the post and telegraph organization which was of great value.

The "Mouvements Prisonniers," a group specializing in assistance to men and women imprisoned by the Germans by sending them packages of food, cigarettes, etc.

The "Oeuvre des Prisons de Lyon," a smaller organization doing work similar to that of the group previously mentioned, but limited to the city of Lyon.

The "Amities Chretiennes" in Lyon, an interconfessional group formed to assist French Jews. I know their work at first hand.

Individual relief cases in the Northern "Zone."

Individual relief cases in the Southern "Zone."

The need for such individual relief was really tragically urgent and under-financed in France during the resistance period. Let me take two cases at random from among those reported to me as having been assisted with our WRB funds, to give you an idea of how this money was spent.

1) The case of Family C. in Paris: Father arrested in October 1942 by the Gestapo, and, after 8 months in prison at Paris, deported to the concentration camp of Sachsenhausen-Oranienburg near Berlin. Mother of the family, who was

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also arrested shortly after her husband on suspicion of having aided in his work, died of undernourishment in the prison of "La Tourelles" in Paris. This couple left behind two children aged 4 and 7 who are being cared for by a sister in modest circumstances with three children of her own.

2) The case of Maurice Th., a member of the Paris section of "Ceux de la Liberation." Denounced and arrested at the end of August 1943. Finally liberated from the hospital at Paris by comrades of the CDL. The Gestapo, in the course of questioning him, had hung him by his feet, and in beating him had broken several ribs, injured his spinal column, and fractured his pelvis. During earlier interrogatories the fingers of both hands had been crushed. At present he is living at Montmirail with a physician friend, but must be in a plaster cast for over a year. His wife and one child meanwhile have to be supported.

The second installment which went into France consisted of roughly 5,000,000 French francs and was distributed mainly in the region of Lyon during the month of August. The principal disbursing agent was Melle Germaine Ribiers, head social worker in that area for the CCSOR. She divided these funds up among the following organizations: "Amities Chretiennes," "Coeuvres des Prisons de Lyon," CIMADE ("Comite Inter-Mouvement Aupres des Evacues"), an excellent Protestant organization which has always done fine work in France, particularly for foreign refugees, including a great many Jews, by hiding those in danger of deportation, securing false papers and ration cards for them and passing them over the border into Switzerland, and the "Service Social d'Aide aux Emigres," the French branch of the International Migration Service, which does work somewhat similar to that of the CIMADE in France. A sum of 500,000 French francs went to Pere Godard, of Lyon, as representative of Cardinal Gerlier and director of Catholic relief work in that city and environs. This sum was largely instrumental in organizing the release of some 200 wounded prisoners whom the Germans were keeping at the Hospital of Antiquaille in Lyon awaiting their sufficient recovery so that they could be executed!

Communist Party of Milan Liberation Committee. 75,000 Swiss francs were sent into Northern Italy at the beginning of July through the Communist representative of the Milan Liberation Committee in Switzerland and carried by the representative of a resistance group known as the "Gruppi di Difesa della Donna," Gisella della Porta. As far as I know they realized in the neighborhood

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of 6,000,000 Italian Lire since the current "rate" at that time against Swiss bank notes in Italy was around 80 Lire per Swiss franc.

I asked Madame della Porta that these funds be used (among other similar projects) for the protection of Jewish women and children in danger of deportation. I also stated that we were very interested in the escape of as many Jewish refugees as possible into Switzerland. To date, however, due to increasingly disturbed conditions along the Italo-Swiss border, only 7 cases, numbering some 18 persons, have turned up in Switzerland sent by the Women's Defense Groups.

It was also of course understood that part of these funds could be used (and were to be used) for assistance to endangered Italian political refugees and prisoners, to aid with their release, hiding, maintenance, parcels to them while in prison, and the like.

Although it has only been possible to receive somewhat fragmentary reports from Northern Italy concerning the exact expenditure of these funds I was able to learn that a sum of 500,000 Lire was devoted to smuggling relief parcels to Jewish internees in the ill-famed prison of San Vittore in Milano, in the camps of San Martino di Rosignano Monferrato (near Alessandria) and Fossoli di Carpi--which I had specially requested--near Modena.

Another portion of this amount was allotted to the job of "springing" political prisoners from various prisons--generally in the smaller towns--in Northern Italy. According to reports received, the following liberations were effected in whole or in part with WRB funds:

- 1) July 24, at Abbiategrasso near Milan, a group of the GAP (Gruppi d'Azione Patriotici) released 4 political prisoners.
- 2) August 8, at the prison of Breno (Provincia of Brescia), 14 politicals liberated.
- 3) August 18, at the local prison of Fossano (Provincia of Piemonte), 9 political prisoners released.
- 4) September 15, at the local prison of Saluzzo (Provincia of Piemonte), 8 prisoners, all condemned to death for having operated a clandestine printing press.

As in the case of France, about 30% of our WRB contribution went toward the urgent support of the wives and children of Italians who had been deported or executed by the Neo-Fascists or Gestapo. A part was also used to relieve the inhabitants of small

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villages "sacked" as reprisal by the S. S. or Fascists. . . Typical of this type of aid, . . . the Commander of the 49th Garibaldian Brigade, Giambone Detachment, delivered 30 kilos of butter and 12 kilos of tobacco to the "population of the village of Feletto struck by the Nazi-Fascist incendiaries."

I hope eventually to receive more complete reports as to the use of this contribution, but it is becoming more and more difficult (and particularly dangerously compromising) to get written reports of this nature through.

Unitarian Service Committee. Noel Field, Director in Switzerland of the Unitarian Service Committee, has for some months been supporting a group of German political refugees in France who have been doing very creditable rescue work among endangered foreign refugees in Southern France. [Our WRB contribution] served principally to maintain persons in hiding and to finance the escape of 9 political refugees to Switzerland and 2 to Spain.

Hechaluz. . . Three major contributions to the "Hechaluz" [Jewish Zionist Labor group] were made through their representative here in Switzerland, Nathan Schwalb. The primary purpose of these contributions, as reported in Legation's 5343, August 17, 7 p.m., 1944, was to finance the flight of Jewish refugees from Hungary into Rumania. To a much lesser extent they also helped send a number of Jews to Slovakia where the situation in the early summer was much more favorable for the Jews than it later turned out to be, and to finance the bringing of a small number of Jews across the Silesian border into Slovakia. The funds were sent to Budapest and Bratislava in both Swiss franc and dollar currency, which were about the only two notes with which effective rescue work could be accomplished. All the money safely reached its destination (for which I am most thankful, as generally in work of this type one has to allow for some loss occasionally when a courier is stopped or searched) as it was almost all sent by neutral diplomatic couriers (Turkish, Swedish and Swiss and occasionally the Nunciature's pouch to Bratislava). Roughly, I should say that these contributions enabled about 2,000 persons to escape to Rumania, 250 to Slovakia, and some 500 into Northern Yugoslavia, although complete figures are lacking.

Czech Resistance Movement. As set forth in Legation's 4666 of July 21, 3 p.m., 1944, this contribution . . . was paid to Dr. Jean Kopecky, officially delegate of Czechoslovakia to the League of Nations and less officially representative of the Czech resistance organizations in Switzerland. Dr. Riegner of the World Jewish Congress also contributed a similar sum. These funds were employed to enable the Czech partisans to rescue Jews (capture of the camps of Sereď and Novaky) and to provide a certain amount of liquid cash for the Central Jewish Office (Ustredna Zidov) in Bratislava. I should estimate that it saved the lives of close to 1,500 people,

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although it is hard to know how many of them later fell into German hands when the situation in Slovakia grew more serious for the Jews. With reference to the use of these funds see also Legation's 6619 of October 5, 8 a.m., 1944.

Dutch Jewish Coordinating Committee. A grant to the Dutch Jewish Coordinating Committee in Geneva was in the nature of a deposit to permit this organization to put up the necessary guarantee for the transportation of 50 Dutch Jews from the camp of Bergen Belsen to Switzerland. It begins to look more and more, however, as though these funds would not produce the desired result. The plan was organized by a Swiss . . . who has connections with S. S. circles in Germany and claimed very convincingly that he could arrange the transportation of Jews from Bergen Belsen at an expense of 1,000 Swiss francs per person, the money to remain in Switzerland. We were even given assurance that any payment after the war could be blocked since we would be supplied with the necessary information as to the persons in whose names the money would be deposited (if and when the 50 people arrived in Switzerland) with Swiss banks. I am afraid that recent military developments, however, have rendered the carrying out of this plan most doubtful since even an S. S. man in the upper brackets would have great difficulty in organizing the transportation of 50 persons to the Swiss frontier. In case this project falls through (and the deadline has been set at December 15th) this money will come back. [The deposit was refunded to the Board in December 1944 when it proved impossible to accomplish the proposed rescue.]

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As reported in Legation's 7754, November 25, 11 a.m., I had, as of October 31st, outstanding unpaid commitments of approximately 40,000 francs for medical parcels to be sent to camps of unassimilated persons in Germany and the cost of the 54,756 kgs. of salvaged CRISTINA goods which . . . has not yet [been] collected for. . .

I have just [made another allotment] to Nathan Schwalb of the Hechaluz, in the main for Budapest but in part for Berlin, where there are still upwards of 300 Jews in hiding who are in contact with the Hechaluz. Their situation is, of course, exceedingly precarious. It is hoped that a small group of young people may be brought to Switzerland (the Swiss have already declared themselves willing to let them in) within the course of the next few weeks.

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Bern, November 27, 1944.

Roswell D. McClelland  
Special Assistant to  
the American Minister.

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LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES

Bern, May 30th, 1945.

Dear General O'Dwyer:

With reference to my letter of April 20 I am pleased to be now able to forward for the Board's confidential information and records two copies of my accounts. They cover disbursements from discretionary War Refugee Board funds made during the period of November 1st, 1944 to April 30th, 1945 inclusive, that is, the second six months of Board activity conducted from Switzerland.

The possibilities of usefully "placing" WRB contributions unfortunately grew constantly smaller as the military situation in Europe developed. During the summer and fall of 1944 the major portion of our Board financial assistance went into the Balkans: principally Hungary, for the relief and, insofar as possible, rescue of the sorely persecuted Jewish minority in that country. But in the early winter of this year Budapest finally fell and the Russian advance toward Bratislava, a city which had previously also been the destination of several WRB contributions, was well on its way. Our last grant for Budapest and Bratislava was made on December 2nd, 1944 through the "Hechaluz." Thereafter aid for Hungarian Jews was channeled to the many thousands still located in Austria, particularly in the Vienna area, where they had been deported by the Germans and their Hungarian satellites during the summer of 1944. To be sure a further contribution for Balkan rescue operations was made in February 1945 but it was to cover work which had been carried out during the fall of 1944 in passing fleeing Hungarian Jews over the border into Rumania.

Early in 1945, therefore, our War Refugee Board efforts from Switzerland had to be refocused on those areas where many victims of Axis persecution were still located: Austria, Northern Italy, Czechoslovakia--at least that section called the "Protectorate" by the Nazis--and of course Germany itself, the vast prison of hundreds of thousands of men and women deported there from almost every European country.

As regards relief and rescue operations in Germany financed from the Board office in Switzerland, special medical parcels were purchased for the terrible women's concentration camp at Ravensbrück, north of Berlin--during our second six months of activity--funds were sent in clandestinely, and what was more valuable than funds, small highly prized, negotiable objects such as cheap Swiss watches, pocket knives, razor blades and holders, and the like, to help endangered persons to continue to hide and perhaps to work their way down toward the Swiss border. An intelligence service concerning conditions in the concentration camps, the movement of

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detainees and the possibilities of distributing parcels where they had the greatest chance of reaching their intended beneficiaries, was developed in collaboration with a German resistance organization. Through the same group currency and objects were sent in which permitted a small number of political and racial refugees to get across the border into Switzerland.

Throughout this second period, however, as the Nazis were driven back week by week and intensified the ruthlessness of their control and surveillance, it became increasingly hard to literally rescue persons by extricating them from German occupied territory and bring them to the neutral safety of Switzerland. The situation in northern Italy in this respect was further aggravated by the presence and activities of an indigenous "Fifth Column" in the form of the Neo-Fascists and their various police bands. As in the case of the Darnand "Milice" in France they were often more vicious than the SS and the Gestapo.

Concerning WRB operations in this northern Italian zone a financial contribution was made in January to the "Women's Defense Groups" of the Milan Liberation Committee to enable them to intensify their aid to Jewish women and children in hiding and to help them meet the ever increasing and tragic load of their own imprisoned and fugitives. A few weeks before the sudden surrender of the Germans in northern Italy a new relief and rescue channel was opened up through the Valdensian Church, that staunch, Protestant community settled in the mountain valleys up against the Swiss and French borders. As did the Huguenots in the Haute Loire region of France during the deportations of the summer of 1942, so did the Valdensians in Italy shelter and protect many a tracked and desperate refugee regardless of his race or religion. Unfortunately hostilities ceased--or rather one should say happily--in northern Italy before this WRB sponsored program could really get under way.

During the first six months of the War Refugee Board's life in Switzerland some 733,935.50 Swiss francs--roughly \$180,000--were disbursed for relief and refugee operations. To this should be added the cost of slightly over 50 tons of foodstuffs purchased from the American Red Cross and used to make up our first emergency parcels for the concentration camps in Germany, which amounted to 141,747 Swiss francs, or approximately \$34,000. These packages were delivered by the International Committee of the Red Cross during the early fall of 1944, and all reached the camps satisfactorily, although they were not actually paid for until May 1945. During the second six months of activity directed from our Swiss base a total of 394,679.35 Swiss francs, or about \$97,000, were spent. At the same time the distribution of the better part of the 300,000 Board parcels shipped to Sweden and Switzerland--representing considerable monetary value--for deportees and civil detainees in German controlled areas was supervised in collaboration with the

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Division of Special Assistance of the International Committee of  
the Red Cross from Switzerland.

Very sincerely yours,

(Signed)

ROSWELL D. McCLELLAND

Roswell D. McClelland  
Special Assistant to  
the American Minister.

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

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EXCERPTS FROM

RECORD OF EXPENDITURES FROM WAR REFUGEE BOARD DISCRETIONARY FUNDS

NOVEMBER 1, 1944, THROUGH MAY 31, 1945

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Special disbursements were made to finance two fairly extensive trips of agents inside Switzerland undertaken particularly with a view to obtaining information from incoming refugees about the situation on the German side of the border, both in Germany proper and in northern Italy.

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Tomaso Della Porta, Socialist delegate of the Milan Liberation Committee and brother of Gisella Della Porta, the woman who did our liaison work with the "Women's Defense Groups" in Northern Italy during the summer of 1944, undertook a special investigation trip to obtain, insofar as possible, additional precise information concerning the camps and prisons which were used by the Germans and Neo-Fascists in northern Italy as assembly centers for deportation. I was particularly interested in having details on the camp at Gries near Bolzano which, after the closing of the ill-famed camp at Fossoli di Carpi near Modena, had become the deportation center for Jews and political prisoners. From here arrestees were regularly sent to Mauthausen and other German concentration camps.

As fate would have it Della Porta never got through but, as far as I could learn, was arrested in Turin (he had taken the "French" route into Italy) by a "Mutti Brigade," one of the many Neo-Fascist "police" organizations. I am still attempting to secure information regarding his welfare. He is the only "Board" agent we have ever lost so I feel particularly badly about it.

Papal Nuncio in Bern. The payment to Monsignor Bernardini, the Papal Nuncio in Bern, concerns an attempt initiated in the fall of 1944 when Sir Clifford Heathcote-Smith, of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees of Rome, was in Switzerland to intimidate the Neo-Fascist police and obtain concessions for if not the liberation of a certain number of racial and political detainees in northern Italy. Monsignor Bernardini drew our attention to a young Italian named Bruno Kiniger (from the Trento region, hence the Austrian sounding name), who had served in Zürich as an unofficial representative for commercial matters of the Neo-Fascist "Government." Some months earlier, Kiniger had dissociated himself from the Neo-Fascists and was anxious to rehabilitate himself. As it happened, he was a relative of Tullio Tamburini, former head of the Fascist police. Tamburini in turn was close to both Mussolini and General

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Montagna, chief of the Neo-Fascist police, and in a position to get at Buffarini, the "Minister of the Interior of the Government of the Italian Socialist Republic." According to reliable information, Buffarini was beginning to have qualms of conscience concerning his personal future and accordingly might be open to intimidation or threat of eventual treatment as a war criminal. We hoped that through Kiniger an effort could be made to frighten Buffarini and thereby obtain more favorable treatment for at least those prisoners in Neo-Fascist hands. We also instructed Kiniger to bring back to us all the information he could collect concerning camps, prisons, the numbers, types and nationalities of detainees in them, and the like.

Kiniger was also furnished with letters of introduction by the Papal Nuncio to Cardinal Schuster of Milan and one or two other important Churchmen in northern Italy, underlining the interest of the Vatican in an effort of this sort.

After some delay occasioned by one false start during which the Swiss police picked him up trying to cross the border illegally, Kiniger got through. He saw both Tamburini and Buffarini, and the latter promised to take the matter up with General Montagna. Kiniger learned, however, that virtually all of the Jews arrested for deportation were concentrated in the camp at Gries which was directly under the control of the S. S. and inaccessible to even the Neo-Fascists. It was nevertheless possible for Kiniger to obtain one immediate, if small, concession: the permission to send into the prison of San Vittore in Milan, one of the worst in the whole of northern Italy, for detainees, special medical and food parcels. Buffarini agreed to facilitate the transportation of such parcels from the Swiss border to Milan. We therefore immediately made up a shipment (soap, vitamins, insect powder, condensed milk, chocolate, sulfanilamide, vaseline, etc.) which was satisfactorily dispatched on January 18th. This purchasing was done with the assistance and through my good friend, Dr. Joseph Weill, of the Union OSE.

This practical aid remained about the only tangible result of Kiniger's trip, which might have had better results if we could have been in touch with him a few months earlier and sent him to northern Italy when a larger number of arrestees were still in Neo-Fascist hands.

Freies Deutschland. The financial assistance given to Karl "Burkhardt" of the "Freies Deutschland" was for three types of work: 1) maintenance in hiding of endangered racial and political refugees, particularly near the Swiss border, 2) the "passing" of such fugitives over into Switzerland (a total of 14 persons actually were brought into Switzerland between December 1944 and April 1945: 1 German, 6 Poles, 2 Russians, 2 Czechs and 3 Hungarians),

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including the cost of false papers and minor bribes, and 3) the operation of an intelligence service concerning the concentration camps, mainly Dachau, Oranienburg, Buchenwald, and Mauthausen. Point 1) also involved the sending of compact medico-food parcels of the type shipped to San Vittore in Milan.

All three of these operations were financed not so much in currency as in kind. From the beginning of 1945 money as such had less and less value in Germany. On the other hand, small, much sought after, easily negotiable objects such as pocket knives, razor blades and holders, cigarette lighters, cheap Swiss watches, wallets, aspirin tablets, small tubes of cold cream--in short, hundreds of minor objects such as one can buy in the normal "Five & Dime" store at home--had a value far above that of money. I have one case on record of a young man who was fed and lodged in hiding by a family in L rrach for two months for the price of a cheap Swiss watch costing about 25 francs! Second-hand suitcases full of such peddler's trinkets smuggled over the border (with the complicity of a sterling Swiss customs' guard) by the Freies Deutschland oddly enough served to save the lives of a good many people.

The intelligence service involved the collection of information which would be of value to us here and to the International Red Cross's Division of Special Assistance in the distribution of WRB and other parcels in the concentration camps. In this respect it was very valuable to know, for instance, what the attitude of the present camp commander was toward such relief action, who the reliable "hommes de confiance" for the national groups in the camps were, whether they enjoyed not only the confidence of their comrades but had been able to work out a certain "modus vivendi" with the camp S. S. officials, who among the guards and internee block leaders could be counted on or could be bribed with cigarettes or soap, which S. S. men were trying to "change their colors," whether items were removed from the parcels prior to delivery, were detainees forced to sign for packages they never received, and a great many other small facts which played so important a role in the satisfactory bringing of relief to these men and women.

Our last contribution to the "Freies Deutschland" on April 15, 1945, was in the nature of an emergency grant so that advantage might be taken of situation in Germany as things began to crack up. It served principally to pay out small bribes to camp guards and to smooth the way for the "disappearance" of detainees before the last-minute desperate excesses of the S. S. were carried out. It is difficult to know how many persons were benefited by this since in the days between April 18th and May 5th all sorts of escapees from all kinds of camps, prisons and work groups streamed over the Swiss border from southwestern Germany.

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Dutch Jewish Coordinating Committee. The smaller Board contributions to the "Dutch Jewish Coordinating Committee" in Geneva were less to finance rescue operations than to render possible an intelligence service of a different sort. During the course of many months this organization had slowly built up a very complete card file covering in a manner duplicated nowhere else practically all the Jewish deportees from the Netherlands, both of Dutch and of other nationalities. Their excellent efforts in this direction, for personality reasons, were very little or not at all financed by the Dutch Legation in Switzerland, but almost entirely with the private resources of a young Dutch Jewish journalist, M. H. Gans, who pioneered this work. He was ably seconded by Dr. Polak-Daniels, who is now head medical officer of the Dutch Government's repatriation team which hopes to be able to go into Poland to search for and return Jewish deportees from Holland. Gans's work of locating or trying to locate deportees in the camps and work companies of Germany and German-occupied areas was done with registered "searcher" postcards sent out weekly in very large numbers, with prepaid answers. Out of an average of twenty cards mailed about one answer was received, which often consisted of only the official "stamp" of the Jewish Community in Upper Silesia or southern Poland. The Dutch Jewish Coordinating Committee also engaged in the smuggling of lists from Holland and Germany. Our WRB contribution was of the greatest value to them to keep this excellent work going.

Pharmacie Nouvelle, Geneva. Board funds financed the purchase of 250 special double pharmaceutical and restorative parcels for the women's concentration camp at Ravensbrück, Germany.

Hechaluz. Two grants [were] made to the Hechaluz, the young workers' Zionist organization, which has consistently done such courageous and effective rescue work among persecuted Jewry in Poland and the Balkans. You will recall that during the first six months of Board activity from Switzerland three contributions were made to the Hechaluz. This further financial assistance constituted a continuation of Board support for Hechaluz work in those areas where this organization was still able to render effective service. The first grant was split up as follows: [One-half] to Budapest, [one-sixth] to Prague, [one-sixth] to Bratislava, and [one-sixth] to Berlin. It was primarily used by Nathan Schwalb's correspondents in these cities to maintain and protect young Jews in hiding. The contribution for Berlin also served to finance the flight of six young people, 3 girls, 2 boys, and 1 child to Switzerland where they arrived on March 18th. Permission for their entry had already been obtained from the Swiss police.

The [last] WRB grant helped Nathan Schwalb pay up "back" rescue bills. As was the case with most of the payments made into enemy territory, they were done by clearing with private parties. Often, however, several weeks if not months elapsed before word came back

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that the local funds had been made available and the "donor" at the Swiss end of the line requested reimbursement. This was a situation of this sort, where Rumanian Lei had been advanced for rescue operations in the Arad-Timisoara area where the Hechaluz had relay points. At them Jewish refugees from Hungary being passed over into Rumania were fed, sheltered, hidden, given false papers and money, and sent further, thanks to a certain degree of cooperation which had been "worked out" with the local authorities.

American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee. This contribution was made to Saly Mayer of the "Joint," partly to lighten the very heavy financial burden which the Joint Distribution Committee was carrying and has always carried, and partly to enable him to take advantage of a special opportunity to buy food and clothing in Vienna and Bratislava for distribution to Hungarian Jewish deportees in Austria. Our grant was actually paid to the "Commission Mixte" of the International Red Cross. This more acceptable mode of payment, however, permitted Saly Mayer to use other funds in Vienna and Bratislava. During January and February of this year, the Jews in the Vienna area (there were some 7,000 of them, mainly Hungarians deported from Hungary during June and July of 1944, plus a few hundred Poles) were under the control of a certain Ebner, the head of the Gestapo in Vienna. Ebner was of Austrian origin and displayed a definite willingness to cooperate in this question of assistance for Jewish deportees. The situation there was further improved by the presence of an active and capable ICRC delegate, Dr. Tudicum, who had established "cordial" relations with Ebner and whom the latter was quite ready to allow to supervise the distribution of such relief supplies. Ebner himself dug up the goods which consisted of such priceless items as shoes, suits and canned meat. We did not inquire too closely into their origin. Their price was not exorbitant, and even Dr. Löwenherz, the director of the relief service of the Vienna Jewish Community who was still on the job, amazingly enough, was allowed to have his advisory say in the distribution. All in all, the chance was too good to be missed even if somewhat unorthodox.

Milan Liberation Committee. This was a further contribution to the excellent relief work being done in northern Italy by the "Women's Defense Groups," to which the WRB had also made grants during our first accounting period. This money was spent in much the same manner: to pay for the shelter and hiding of Jewish women and children and to give sorely needed relief to the families of Italians imprisoned, executed or deported by the Nazis and the Neo-Fascists. It was also used to make up parcels locally which were sent into the prisons in Milan, Turin, Genoa, Alessandria, Voghera and Brescia. It was not used this time to finance the liberation of patriots from the prisons since throughout the spring of this year more arms were made available to the partisans by the Allies and money could be more economically used to buy food for

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families and pay them small monthly allowances than in being spent to purchase carbines, cartridges or gasoline at very high prices. I know, of course, that a certain percentage of such funds were always used to "smooth" the way for parcels into prisons by bribing petty officials and guards. The devaluation of the Italian Lira, however, increased by such leaps and bounds that the price for buying a person out of prison became almost unapproachable, often going into several million Lire. We could, therefore, not finance work of that sort.

Valdensian Church in Northern Italy. As described on page 2 of my covering letter, this last Board contribution went to Pastor Guido Rivoir, a minister of the "Valdensian" Protestant Church, located in Lugano. Pastor Rivoir's church has a number of hardy little communities for the most part in the high mountain valleys up against the French and Swiss borders. They are imbued with that same spirit which characterizes the Huguenot communities in France today and have always given asylum to fugitives. In Italy during Fascism and under the German occupation they did not relinquish this tradition, but rather intensified their work in behalf of the persecuted. Their particular stronghold is in the region between Turin and the Franco-Italian border where they have given shelter to a great many refugees trying to get over into France. Our WRB grant [of 6,000 Swiss francs] purchased a million Lire (at that time selling at 55 Swiss centimes a hundred!) which were intended to finance the hiding of refugees. As things turned out, the war came happily to a more sudden end in northern Italy than we had expected so that very little of it could be used for the original purpose. I received a note from Pastor Rivoir a few days ago, however, in which he explained what he had done with the money. It reads as follows:

"I was in Italy for a few days (he writes this under date of May 24th) and took the opportunity of looking into the use which had been made of the funds which the War Refugee Board generously placed at our disposal to aid victims of Nazi-Fascism. This money served in part to liberate persons from the prisons of Milan. The greater part of it, however, could not be used since, thank God, the regime in northern Italy collapsed. I therefore left this money to a committee formed by Colonel Gustave Ribet, commander of the partisan troops for the Lombard region, and including Mr. Georges Peyronel, charged with the "epuration" of the Milan police "Questura," and Pastor Tron (of the Valdensian Church) of the city of Milan to be distributed to persons who had aided fugitives, such persons generally being poor peasants who had lost all, because of this aid given, having had their homes burned by the Germans."

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When the question of the Jewish refugees from Bergen-Belsen and Theresienstadt actually leaving Switzerland came up there was an immediate request from them for a great many small items including suitcases, toilet articles, clothing, shoes, etc. Saly Mayer agreed generously to cover part of the cost of such "departure" expenditures. . . I told him that I would be glad to contribute from Board funds what more was necessary. . . I also agreed to defray cash expenditures incurred by the Swiss authorities for the train, sanitary and welfare personnel, food supplies, and the like.

(Signed)

ROSWELL D. McCLELLAND

Roswell D. McClelland  
Special Representative of the  
War Refugee Board and  
Special Assistant to the Minister.

Bern, June 2, 1945.

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DOCUMENT

58

COPY

EMBASSY OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

No. 14393

London, March 11, 1944

Subject: Palestine Immigration Numbers.

The Honorable,  
The Secretary of State,  
Washington.

Sir:

Upon receipt of the Department's airgram A-83, 7:20 p.m., January 19, 1944 the Embassy immediately discussed with the appropriate British officials the matter of immigration into Palestine and expressed the hope of the United States Government that the British authorities might reconsider their position and authorize numbers to be allocated permitting children to enter Palestine within the total allowable under the White Paper.

The view expressed by the Foreign Office was that, although there is no intention on the part of the British Government to close immigration into Palestine after March 31, 1944, (the time limit originally expressed in the 1939 White Paper for the immigration quota established therein) it is nevertheless undesirable to freeze any substantial number of certificates for cases that may never arise. By way of confirming the views expressed in that discussion the Foreign Office addressed to us a letter dated February 18, 1944. A copy is enclosed.

1/ It will be observed that the Foreign Office assumes that the aspect of the matter which gives concern to the Department is the effect upon Switzerland of British refusal to issue to refugee children to whom Switzerland may be considering giving temporary asylum quota numbers assured to be valid for immigration into Palestine after the war. To that presumed basis of the Department's inquiry the Foreign Office addresses its answer, pointing out that, so far as it is aware, the Swiss Government has made no representations either to the Intergovernmental Committee nor to the British Government regarding conditions on which Switzerland would be willing to receive refugee children. It should particularly be noted that the Foreign Office holds open appropriate consideration of the matter if and when the Swiss Government approaches the Intergovernmental Committee for concrete assurances. The position stated is that the British Government does not wish, on a hypothetical basis, to complicate its administering of the immigration quota into Palestine.

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The Embassy has taken the occasion, by way of obtaining expressions of view of possible use to the Department in weighing the tenability of the British reply as above, to consult representatives here of several concerned organizations with regard to present practice in issuing quota numbers for immigration into Palestine. There is general agreement among them that, for reasons of political equilibrium in Palestine and the Arab area while the war continues, the British Government is seeking to keep the total of immigration into Palestine well within the number previously announced, in spite of lengthening the period of time to which it is to apply. On the other hand there is also general agreement that difficulties of travel and exit from enemy-occupied territory are the actual determining limitations under present conditions rather than lack of availability of numbers.

The 1939 White Paper (Cmd. 6019, May 1939, entitled PALESTINE, Statement of Policy; enclosed with despatch 2679, May 18, 1939) laid down certain conditions (page 10 and 11), including Palestine's economic absorptive capacity, to govern the admission of some 75,000 Jewish immigrants into Palestine in the five year period from April 1, 1939 to March 31, 1944. In the House of Commons on November 10, 1943 (Parliamentary Debates, vol. 393, No. 120, column 1152; enclosed with despatch 12278, November 17, 1943) the Secretary of State for the Colonies reported that up to the end of September 1943 the number of Jews who entered Palestine against the total of 75,000 to be admitted under the existing quota system was 43,922, leaving a balance of 31,078 concerning which he made the following carefully-worded statement:

" . . . There are thus 31,078 who, it may be fairly assumed, would have reached it before 31st March, 1944, but for the exigencies of the war. His Majesty's Government have been considering this position, and have reached the conclusion that it would be inequitable to close the doors of Palestine to these persons on account of the time factor. No effort will be lacking on the part of His Majesty's Government to facilitate their arrival, subject to the criterion of economic absorptive capacity."

The unused balance of 31,078 as of the end of September 1943 has been reduced at the present to approximately 26,000 according to statements informally made to us at the Foreign Office.

Respectfully yours,  
For the Ambassador:

(Signed)  
W. J. GALLMAN

W. J. Gallman  
Counselor of Embassy

Enclosure:

1. Copy of letter (W/1586/134/48) of January 18, 1944 from A.W.G. Randall of the British Foreign Office.

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[Enclosure No. 1 to letter  
to State from U.S. Embassy  
in London.]

No. W 1586/134/48.

FOREIGN OFFICE,  
(Refugee Department),  
3, Cleveland Row,  
St. James',  
S.W.1.

18th February, 1944

Dear Bucknell,

Your letter of 29th January about the Swiss application to Germany at the request of the Intergovernmental Committee to allow Jewish children to leave France.

Before replying I thought it best to explain our position at greater length to Coville, and I should now like to confirm this as follows:

Our understanding is that the Swiss Government has been requested to try to obtain exit permits for Jewish children from France. If these are given the children will receive hospitality in the United States (5,000), in Canada and elsewhere, and there will be negotiations with the Spanish and Portuguese Governments to get the children in question through those countries in order that they may proceed overseas. The Swiss Government will be asked to grant temporary asylum to some of the children, but it seems more practicable, in view of the number of visas offered elsewhere, that the children should be directed through Spain and Portugal.

So far the Swiss Government has not obtained any promise of exit permits. They have also made, so far as I am aware, no representations to the Intergovernmental Committee or to us regarding conditions on which they would receive children in their own territory. The question of the children going eventually to Palestine is therefore entirely hypothetical, and the feeling of our authorities is that in these circumstances it would be undesirable to freeze any substantial number of certificates for cases which may never arise, as this would reduce the stock available for the regular allocations which are made in agreement with the Jewish Agency. Of course, if the German Government agreed to give exit permits and if asylum offered in countries other than Switzerland proved insufficient or it proved impracticable to transport the children to those countries, and if the Swiss

Mr. Howard Bucknell, Jr.,  
United States Embassy,  
1, Grosvenor Square  
W. 1.

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Government then agreed to take a certain number of children themselves only on the condition that the children in question were received elsewhere at the end of the war, it would be open to the Swiss Government then to go to the Intergovernmental Committee, which would have the duty of seeing how far the Swiss Government's condition could be met. In this concrete case, the British Government could be approached in respect of Palestine or other territories for which it is responsible in exactly the same way as other members of the Committee could be approached. The mere existence of the Intergovernmental Committee and the fact that Switzerland is a member of it would appear to be a sufficient assurance to the Swiss Government that they will not have to shoulder the present or future burden of refugees in Swiss territory with no prospect of international assistance, but the assurances your Government and mine have given the Swiss Government of sympathetic consideration over any obstacles to a continuance of the Swiss Government's humanitarian action surely makes all apprehensions rather unreal.

In the light of the above, I hope you will agree that our reluctance to freeze Palestine permits in a purely hypothetical case where no concrete action or objection has been raised by the Swiss Government should, if properly understood, prove no hindrance to the efforts which are now being made by the Intergovernmental Committee and the Swiss Government to persuade the German Authorities to allow children to depart, and I should be grateful if this explanation could be conveyed to the State Department. We are very anxious that the balance of immigration permissible into Palestine should be used as far as possible for refugees from Nazi terror; our concern is to secure that it is used to the best advantage and that permits should not be frozen for people who may not be able to use them.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed)

A.W.G. RANDALL

P.S. Since writing the above I have heard that the Swiss Government have undertaken to receive 1,500 children from France if they can reach the frontier, and no conditions so far as I know have been attached to this offer.

000232

TELEGRAM SENT

Anlegation,  
Dublin,  
39, fourteenth  
From War Refugee Board.

Plain  
March 14, 1944

Refer your A-7 of February 10, 1944 regarding the rescue and relief of war refugees.

Please inform the appropriate Irish officials that this Government accepts with deep appreciation the generous and humanitarian offer which we understand the Irish Government is prepared to make to receive and provide haven for 500 Jewish refugee children.

It is anticipated that these 500 children may be able to leave France and to enter Eire by transit through Spain and Portugal.

We are presently examining the matter of securing the shipping space necessary for the transportation of these children and will advise you further with respect thereto. We are also canvassing the possibility of assisting the Irish Government in its humanitarian endeavor, with respect to supplies of food and clothing.

The Swiss Government has been requested to take up the matter of evacuating children from France with Vichy, and we are considering the desirability of requesting similar action on the part of the Irish Government, as we understand that it was prepared last year or earlier this year to take such action. However, we would appreciate your informally raising this matter with the appropriate Irish authorities to ascertain whether they are still prepared to make such an approach to Vichy.

You are also requested to ask the appropriate Irish authorities whether their Government would be willing presently to guarantee the admission into Eire after the war of an additional 500 Jewish refugee children in the event that they are evacuated from France to Switzerland during the war. Such a guarantee would probably enable us to induce the Swiss Government, which may be in a position to obtain the release of children from Vichy, to accept larger numbers of them for the duration of hostilities.

We will appreciate being kept promptly and fully advised of all developments.

HULL  
(GLW)

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DOCUMENT

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AIRGRAM

Dublin  
DATED: April 13, 1944  
REC'D: April 27, 10 a.m.

Secretary of State  
Washington  
A-16, April 13, 3 p.m.

Reference to Department's telegram No. 39, March 14, from War Refugee Board.

The War Refugee Board's telegram was made available to the Irish Department of External Affairs, and there is quoted below the reply of Mr. Joseph P. Walshe, Permanent Secretary of the Department.

"Dear Mr. Gray,

"I received your letter dated the 22nd March enclosing copy of a telegram from the War Refugee Board.

"The Government will be very glad to receive and provide haven for the 500 Jewish refugee children. The Executive Committee of the Red Cross have given their full agreement, and they are ready to make arrangements at once for the housing and reception of the children.

"I should let you know, however, that so far we have had no success in securing permission for Jews to leave the occupied countries, and it might be better if your Government would ask the Swiss Government to obtain the necessary permits. However, we are instructing our Charge d'Affaires in Berlin to make a further request.

"I shall write you later about the guarantee concerning the further 500 refugees mentioned at the end of the telegram."

In the event that the Irish Government has any success in obtaining permission for the Jewish children to leave the occupied countries, the Department will be immediately advised.

GRAY

000234

DOCUMENT

61

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM SENT

FROM: Secretary of State, Washington  
TO: American Legation, Bern  
DATED: March 18, 1944  
NUMBER: 891

[REDACTED]

Pursuant to Part 58.55 (a) (16) of the Regulations of November 19, 1941 as amended concerning aliens entering the United States, the following special instructions relating to the issuance of visas to refugee children are issued in an attempt to cause the Government of Switzerland to give refuge to additional refugee children from France:

Authorization is given to consular officers in Switzerland to issue during the present quota year in the aggregate up to 4000 immigration visas to refugee children who shall have arrived in Switzerland from France on or after January 1 of this year and before July 1 of this year. Specific instructions from the Department may extend this latter date. The visas are to be issued without regard to religious nationality or stateless status and without regard to the question of availability of means of transportation to the United States. The children which this instruction covers shall be under 16 years of age at the time the visas are issued and of course are subject to the statutory immigration requirements of Section 3 of the Act of February 5, 1917 except that they may be considered to meet the public charge requirements since the Attorney General has found that satisfactory arrangements for their support have been made.

With respect to the determination of questions under Section 58.47 of the Regulations of November 19, 1941 as amended, concerning aliens entering the United States, no consideration shall be given to the existence of the relationships described in Section 58.48 thereof. During the same quota year replace visas may be issued to those children who are still qualified therefor under this instruction and who are still under 16 years of age at the date when such replace visas are issued. It is the intention of the Department, subject to the quota laws, to assign numbers from the quota for next year to cover visas issued pursuant to this instruction under the quota for this year and to repeat this process each year until at least 6 months after the present hostilities between Germany and the United States have ceased. Thus it is intended that children to whom visas are issued in accordance with this instruction, except children who in the interim reach 16 years of age, will continue to hold visas until transportation is available to the United States. Furthermore, the foregoing assumes no pertinent adverse change in the present quota laws. You should report to the Department for further instructions

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the cases of children who have passed their sixteenth birthday in the interim desiring to obtain new visas or replace old ones. There is no need to register and fingerprint children under 14 years of age.

The Zurich Consulate General will be the supervisory and control office for the assignment of quota numbers to offices in Switzerland equipped for issuing immigration visas or to which Zurich can furnish equipment. The following inclusive non-preference quota numbers are allotted to Zurich for this purpose: 65 to 234 Belgian; 265 to 514 Czechoslovak; 145 to 444 French; 1031 to 3430 German; 157 to 466 Netherland; and 1084 to 1683 Polish quotas.

These visas may be issued at the rate of 25% of each allotment monthly. At the end of each month Zurich should submit by cable consolidated quota reports, returning any unused numbers and giving name of child, quota number, and date and place of issuance. A request should be made by cable if additional quota numbers of the countries mentioned or of any other country are desired. An estimate of quota numbers needed for the fiscal year 1944-1945 should be submitted by cable before June 1. Consular officers in Switzerland should be informed. You should advise the appropriate Swiss authorities concerning this instruction and state that this Government earnestly hopes that the Government of Switzerland will promptly take such action, direct or indirect, as will facilitate and expedite the movement of children to Switzerland from France. Furthermore, you may advise the Government of Switzerland that the War Refugee Board will undertake to arrange for any financing that may be needed to provide maintenance for refugees from enemy oppression arriving in that country.

It is requested that you report the reaction of the Swiss and that developments in this matter which may be of interest be sent to the Department.

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PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM SENT

TO: American Legation, Bern  
FROM: Secretary of State, Washington  
DATE: July 3, 1944  
NUMBER: 2236

  
Reference is made herewith to Department's March 18 telegram No. 891.

This is to inform you that provisions concerning issuance of immigration visas to refugee children which was mentioned in reference cable has been extended to 1945, July 1 of that year. For issuance July through October the nonpreference quota immigration numbers given below were allotted to Zurich:

German 609 to 3008; Belgian 31 to 200; French 83 to 382; Polish 162 to 761; Netherland 81 to 360; and Czechoslovak 63 to 312.

This is 25% monthly. Additional allotment will be made then. It is requested that you inform consuls and current information as to developments would be appreciated by the Department.

HULL

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DU-330

Secretary of State  
Washington  
7589, Seventeenth

Plain  
Bern  
DATED: November 17, 1944  
REC'D: 8:37 am. 18th

For WRB from McClelland.

Department's 891, March 18.

I have recently been approached by organizations responsible in Switzerland for care of refugee children which are anxious to know whether 4,000 United States immigration visas authorized in Department's wire under reference will still be available after this war.

Any information you could secure concerning this question would be appreciated.

HARRISON

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DOCUMENT

64

JP  
Distribution of true  
reading only by special  
arrangement. (b)(7)(N)

November 29, 1944  
1 p.m.

Amlegation  
Bern  
4027

The following for McClelland is WRB 299.

Reference your 7589 of November 17.

The authorization to which you refer was given for the purpose of encouraging Swiss willingness to receive refugee children by concrete U. S. action assuring their evacuation. Accordingly, the authorization will remain in effect as long as necessary to influence Swiss action with respect to refugee children seeking admission to Switzerland to escape enemy persecution. Whether in order to accomplish this purpose it will be desirable to continue the authorization for a period beyond the time when flight from enemy persecution is necessary, is a matter on which the Board would appreciate your views.

Of course, visas issued pursuant to this authorization are subject to the assurances with respect to replacement contained in Department's 891 of March 18.

STETTINIUS  
(Acting)  
(GLW)

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RECT

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

April 12, 1944  
4 p.m.

Amlegation  
Canberra  
40

For the Minister from the War Refugee Board.

Reference your airgram A-6 February 24, 1944.

A principle means of assisting in the rescue of victims of enemy oppression and persecution is to offer the neutral nations contiguous to enemy-controlled territory effective and concrete guarantees that such refugees will not in large numbers remain after the war. By this means such neutrals may be induced to receive at this crucial time increased numbers of refugees. Thus, the Governments of the United States, United Kingdom, Soviet Union, Luxembourg, Yugoslavia, Norway, Greece, Belgium, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and The Netherlands and the French Committee have already agreed in principle that each of them will receive after the war its nationals who have fled to asylums in other countries and to assure such conditions in enemy countries as will permit the return thereto of all persons who have fled therefrom to refuge elsewhere. Obviously, however, it is probable that a number of refugees will not as a practical matter be able or willing for a variety of reasons to return to their former homes. Just how large this number will be is uncertain, but the neutral countries above referred to are aware of this probability and for this reason hesitate freely to admit refugees seeking asylum.

In an effort partially at least to solve this problem the department has authorized American consular officers in Switzerland to issue up to 4,000 visas to refugee children of any nationality and regardless of stateless status arriving in Switzerland from France during the first six months of 1944. The Department has further stated its intention, within the limits of the quota law, to replace such visas as they expire until at least six months after the war. Similar provision is about to be made for the issuance of an additional 1,000 visas to refugee children escaping from France to Spain.

You are requested to advise appropriate officials of the Australian government of the foregoing and to inquire whether the Australian government will take action parallel to our own. In this connection, you may

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wish to advise such officials that the War Refugee Board is gratified by the recent increase to an aggregate of 300, the number of refugee children that it has been announced Australia will receive.

In this connection, however, it is of interest that it was authoritatively reported here in December 1938 that the Australian government announced that it would receive 15,000 European refugees over a three year period. It is our understanding that approximately only 6,500 refugees were received pursuant to that program. Accordingly, you are requested to inquire as to the present status of such program, and if the same is still operative, to approach appropriate officials of the Australian government with the suggestion that that fact be made known to Switzerland, Spain and Turkey as an inducement to them to receive additional refugees. If you are informed that the program is no longer in operation, please approach appropriate officials of the Australian government in an effort to secure its revival.

The War Refugee Board has been approached in connection with a program to colonize European Jews in Northwestern Australia known as the Kimberley Project. We are advised that on March 31, 1943, E. J. Holloway, Australian Minister for Social Services and Health wrote with respect to this project: QUOTE The West Australian government had agreed and the Federal Government were giving favorable consideration to the project when the war put all projects, other than war, on one side. UNQUOTE The project appears also, from letters made available to the War Refugee Board, to have had the support as recently as a year ago of the Anglican Archbishop of Perth, the Presbyterian Moderator General, the Methodist President General, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne, and the Australasian Council of Trade Unions. Please make appropriate inquiries to determine whether anything is being done at the present time to further or to ascertain the feasibility of this project. On October 28, 1943, the War Refugee Board is informed, Prime Minister Curtin wrote concerning it: QUOTE The whole question of immigration into Australia, particularly having regard to the conditions that will exist at the conclusion of hostilities is one that requires to be fully explored from all aspects. Plans are at present in progress to set up a Committee to study the various phases of the general problem and, until recommendations are made by that body, the Government is not in a position to formulate a definite policy. UNQUOTE. Please ascertain and advise the Department whether such a Committee has been constituted and, if so, whether it has made any study of the Kimberley project and its practicability.

The War Refugee Board is of the view that the mere knowledge that a concrete proposal such as the Kimberley project is receiving serious study by an Australian governmental committee on immigration matters might be some aid in further opening neutral borders to refugees from enemy-controlled territories and thus in saving the lives of many. It is with this thought in mind therefore that we suggest you make the inquiry above indicated. You may make this view of the War Refugee Board known in appropriate quarters if the occasion should arise and you deem it advisable to do so. Consideration is being given to the

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advisability of discussing the Kimberley project and other refugee problems with Prime Minister Curtin during his forthcoming visit to the United States. Please keep the Department advised.

You have requested clarification of work contemplated by the War Refugee Board and clarification of its connection with IGC and UNRRA.

UNRRA and IGC are both international in character, while the War Refugee Board is an organization of the United States set up to carry out the policies of the United States Government. The War Refugee Board has been created for speedy action and is dedicated to measures to secure withdrawal of victims of oppression from enemy or enemy-occupied territory and where that is not possible, to measures to alleviate their condition. The War Refugee Board is prepared to render every assistance to both UNRRA and IGC in any projects they have undertaken or will undertake with the view to bring about the speedy rescue of victims of enemy oppression.

At the moment Sir Herbert Emmerson and Patrick M. Malin are in the United States to discuss relationships.

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(GLW)

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AIRGRAM SENT

MJB

April 15, 1944  
7 p.m.

CIRCULAR

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ CIRCULAR AIRGRAM

For the Personal and ~~Confidential~~ Information of the Ambassadors at Panama, Habana, Ciudad Trujillo, Bogota, Lima, Santiago, Montevideo and Mexico, D.F.

With further reference to the Department's circular airgram of January 26, 7 p.m., and to subsequent communications on refugee matters, you are informed that the Department has now authorized the American consular officer in Switzerland to issue up to four thousand quota immigration visas to refugee children up to sixteen years of age without regard to religion, nationality or stateless status, to close relatives residing in enemy, enemy-controlled or occupied territory, or to the availability of means of transportation to the United States. The purpose of this authorization is to facilitate the escape to Switzerland of orphaned or abandoned children by giving assurances to the Swiss Government that these children will not remain in Switzerland after the termination of hostilities in Europe. The authorization contains provisions for the continued renewal of the visas until such time as adequate transportation facilities to the United States become available. Private sources have posted bond with the Attorney General of the United States to assure this Government that the immigrating children will not become public charges.

If there are private agencies in the country to which you are accredited willing and able to undertake a program for the care of refugee children, the War Refugee Board is confident that it can make arrangements to provide those agencies with adequate funds for the maintenance, education and welfare of as many children as the Government of that country would be willing to admit. Should it prove necessary, funds would undoubtedly be available to meet transportation expenses from Switzerland to that country.

Kindly approach appropriate officials of the Government to which you are accredited, inform them of the foregoing and request them to give assurance to the Swiss Government through their diplomatic mission in Bern that they will accept up to a fixed number of refugee children in a manner similar to that of this Government. For the information of the Government to which you are accredited, it is conservatively estimated that there are in France alone eight to ten thousand abandoned or orphaned refugee children. Should that Government be willing to make this humanitarian offer, please request the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to authorize its chief of mission in Bern to issue the appropriate

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number of immigration visas and to maintain their validity until suitable transportation facilities from Switzerland to its country become available. The Government may be informed that the special representative of the War Refugee Board attached to the American Legation in Bern will be glad to cooperate with the diplomatic and consular officers of the other American Republics in this as well as in all other refugee matters.

Please report by telegraph whether this suggestion has been favorably received by the Government to which you are accredited and, if so, the number of children it is prepared to admit.

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