

History of THE War Refugee Board with Selected Documents,
Volume II, Pages 817-940

000494

HISTORY OF THE WAR REFUGEE BOARD WITH SELECTED DOCUMENTS

VOLUME II

DOCUMENTS

PAGES 817-940

000495

DOCUMENT

214

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Legation, Bern
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATED: November 1, 1944
NUMBER: 7269

The following message from McClelland for WRB is transmitted.

The Swiss received a message from their Legation in Budapest on the 27th of October which stated that an agreement has been arrived at between the Governments of Germany and Hungary according to which the emigration of about 8,000 Jews from Hungary would soon be authorized and that by the 15th of November this would have to be carried out. Means of transportation to the frontier of Switzerland would be furnished by the Germans and the Hungarians.

The Swiss Political Department on the 31st of October instructed its Legation at Budapest that these refugees would be received in Switzerland, this instruction following approval by Federal Council and in order to offset any possible use by the Germans or the Hungarians of lack of readiness on the part of the Swiss as an excuse not to allow these people to depart. The decision was in line with assurances which in August were given to us (see message dated August 12 from the Legation, Number 5248).

All pertinent information with regard to documentation, composition, and ultimate destination of the group was requested urgently by wire of the Swiss Legation in Budapest on the 28th of October and again on the 1st of November, since it is not clear whether all of the 8,000 are holders of Palestine certificates, or whether only a part of them hold such certificates.

November 1 conversations with Chief of Federal Police and with representative for relief and refugee affairs of the Political Department reveal that the Swiss are concerned seriously regarding the practical difficulties which are involved in receiving and housing a group of this size, even temporarily, at such short notice. Switzerland has received more than 25,000 new refugees during the past six weeks, they pointed out (chiefly women and children from Valdosola in Italy and from the combat zones in France) while, on the other hand, only 8,000 people have departed:- 2000 French civilians and 6,000 military escapees. It would be difficult to solve the problem of fuel, blankets, and housing sufficient to properly take care of 8,000 people in winter; in addition, many of the refugees may be clothed inadequately. Accordingly, the Swiss are anxious that steps be taken as soon as possible for the evacuation of such Hungarian refugees. The practicability of furnishing Swiss trains for the transportation at once to Marseilles or to some

DECLASSIFIED

000496

other French seaport of all those who are eligible for emigration to Palestine is being looked into by the Swiss. Therefore, it would be wise if the board at once could study the problem of obtaining one or more ships for Palestine; in addition, the Swiss would appreciate any efforts which could be made toward evacuation to North Africa or some other territory of Allied choice of all or part of those who are not destined for Palestine.

Radio Budapest, evidently reversing the decision which was reported in Paragraph 1 of October 24 telegram from the Legation, Number 7049, repeated several times during the evening of the 29th of October and the morning of the 30th of October, instructions addressed to all Hungarian authorities, the army, and the police, to the effect that protective documents or foreign passports should be respected and that future Jewish holders of such documents should not be sent to compulsory labor service; and, in addition, that rights of extraterritoriality should be enjoyed by foreign Consulates, Legations, and premises of ICRC.

Now it seems probable that the majority of the 80,000 male Jews reported as being deported as labor (see message from the Legation dated October 25, Number 7088) are being sent to western Hungary for work along the Austro-Hungarian border, on fortifications there.

It is very difficult to believe that the release of 8,000 Jews has suddenly been decided upon in view of the recent intensified anti-Jewish stand taken by the Szalassy regime as well as the consistent refusal of the Germans to allow the departure of even the initial group of 2,000 holders of Palestine certificates.

We will keep you informed with reference to this matter.

HARRISON

000497

DOCUMENT

215

DME-706

Stockholm
Dated December 22, 1944
Rec'd 6:48 a.m., 23rd

Secretary of State
Washington
5235, December 22, 8 p.m.

This is our No. 116 for War Refugee Board.

Report from Wallenburg dated December 8 just received from Swedish Foreign Office gives following information.

Since last report, position of Hungarian Jews has become still worse. About 40,000 Jews, 15,000 men from labor service and 25,000 persons of both sexes who have been taken from their homes, have been forced to march on foot to Germany a distance of about 240 kilometers. The weather has been cold and rainy ever since these death marches started and the people have slept under rain covers and in the open. Many have died. In Moson Magyarover, Wallenburg personally saw seven persons who had died that day and seven the day before. Secretary of Portuguese Legation reported having seen 42 dead persons along the line of march and others reported similar figure. If the marchers could not manage to walk longer, they were shot. At the border, they were taken over by the SS-Special Kommand Reichman and were beaten and those surviving were put at hard labor in the border fortifications.

Twenty thousand military labor men have been taken to the border by railroad. These men are working mainly on Hungarian ground.

The forced labor service mentioned in a previous report has ceased.

The Jews are brought together in a central ghetto which will house about 69,000 Jews but which will probably house many more, and in an alien's ghetto for 17,000 which already houses 35,000. Of this number 7000 are in Swedish houses. 2,000 in Red Cross houses and 23,000 in Swiss houses. Every day a thousand Swiss or Vatican wards are removed for deportation or to the central ghetto. In the ghetto the Jews live four to twelve persons per room but the best conditions prevail in the Swedish houses. An epidemic of "Ruhr" sickness has broken out among the Jews but it is not yet widespread. In the Swedish houses the health conditions are still good. Only five have died so far. The section is now vaccinating the ward Jews against typhus, paratyphus and cholera. Even the staff must be vaccinated. In general the Jews are destitute because in the transposition, they were only allowed to take

000498

with them what they could themselves carry. The supply situation will soon be disastrous.

The Arrow Cross men take lots of Jews in their localities and ill-treat and torment them before taking them to the places from which they are deported.

Rumors are circulating that a death brigade closely affiliated with Minister Kovacs will arrange a program against the Jews but Wallenburg does not think this program will be extensive because the SS organs are said to have received orders not to arrange any systematic Jewish slaughters.

Following the death blow in October, the section has been further expanded.

JOHNSON

LHS

000499

EDW-694

Stockholm
Dated December 22, 1944
Rec'd 4:58 a.m., 23rd

Secretary of State,
Washington.
5235, December 22, 8 p.m. (SECTION TWO)

Employees total 335 in addition to about 40 physicians, house governors, et cetera. These all live in the localities of the section plus the same number of family members. There are about 10 offices and living houses one of which is in the aliens ghetto. Two hospitals have been established with about 150 beds. Also a soup kitchen has been set up. The Jews in the Swedish warehouses leave their ration cards with the section where the supplies are brought in and distributed. A large part of the sections correspondence has been destroyed. The food section has bought about 2,000,000 pengo worth of supplies.

Results obtained. The section has succeeded in procuring an open command from the Honved Minister that all Jews in the labor service with foreign documents should be returned to Budapest. After orders had been given by a military person sent out in one of the section's cars about 15,000 Jews have returned.

Until it was forbidden the march columns to the border obtained certain food and medicine but this was only for a short time.

About 200 sick persons have been rescued from the places of deportations.

Through intervention in one form or another at the loading places of Jews for deportation about 2000 persons have been brought back - about 500 from Heyeshalon alone. This traffic, however, has been interrupted since the Germans in the Eichman commando have threatened forcible measures.

Until now the Jews with protective passports have managed best of all foreign powers wards. Only 8 to 10 have been shot in Budapest and vicinity up to date.

JOHNSON

(END OF MESSAGE)

NPL

000500

DOCUMENT

216

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Embassy, Ankara
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATED: March 20, 1944
NUMBER: 499

The following is Ankara's No. 3 from Hirschmann for WRB.

Since our direct approach to the Rumanian Minister in Ankara (see our telegrams of March 13 and March 16 Nos. 440 and 474) produced satisfactory results, it was decided by the Ambassador and me that equally satisfactory results might be produced by a similar direct approach to the Bulgarian Minister here. Therefore, acting under authority which the Secretary of the Treasury vested in me (see the Department's telegram of February 12, 1944 No. 120) Simond was requested to arrange a meeting at Simond's home between Balbanoff, Simond and myself. I made it clear to Balbanoff at the beginning of our conversation that my sole function in Ankara was as WRB representative to deal with refugee problems; that any discussion which we might have would be confined to this subject exclusively; and that any other construction placed on our talk by him or his Government could be only an error. The reply was made by Balbanoff that he understood that it would be limited to the subject of refugees and that he welcomed a frank discussion. Balbanoff was informed by me that the reports of the brutal treatment accorded to the minorities in Bulgaria, especially the Jews, had outraged the government and the people of the United States and that Bulgaria would be called upon in the near future to answer therefor. I then informed him that our Government was determined to do everything possible to rescue these people who were in danger of losing their lives and to find havens of refuge for them and that any continuation by the Bulgarian Government of the execution of these policies of the Nazi persecution would be borne in mind by our Government in the future and that his Government would be well advised in its own interest to take advantage of such opportunities to permit refugees to depart across its borders as might be available to it in the future.

I suggested at the conclusion of my remarks that he report them to his Government. It was stated by Balabanoff in reply that the maltreatment of the minorities in Bulgaria had resulted from the policies of Gabrowski, the former Minister of Interior, who he asserted had been a tool of the Germans and was no longer a member of the Government. It was then stated by him that of late the Jews had been given much better treatment in Bulgaria and that he had reason to believe the "pressure" against them would continue to relax. It was suggested by me that Balabanoff dispatch to his

DECLASSIFIED

000501

Government an urgent message recommending that the same treatment as that received by other Bulgarian citizens be accorded henceforth to the Jews and all other minorities in Bulgaria and the deplorable conditions under which the Jews and other minorities are living in concentrated camps be ameliorated at once and that the Bulgarian Government take immediate steps to authorize the granting of visas and to provide transportation for all refugees who wish to leave for Palestine or Turkey.

I was assured by Balabanoff at the close of our talk that he sympathizes fully with my suggestions, that he would cable his Government urging it to comply with them, and that he would send to Sofia a full report of our talk with further detailed recommendations and as soon as he received a reply he would request Simond for a further meeting with me.

STEINHARDT

(*) Apparent omission.

000502

DOCUMENT

217

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

No. 3602

Stockholm, June 28, 1944.

Subject: Transmitting Two Informal Statements on Bulgarian Refugee
Problem.


The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington.

Sir:

With reference to the Legation's cable No. 2122 of June 13 (No. 29 for the War Refugee Board), I have the honor to enclose herewith a copy of an informal statement supplied to the Legation indirectly by the Bulgarian Minister in Stockholm. This statement was delivered in response to an informal statement prepared by Mr. Iver C. Olsen, Special Attaché for the War Refugee Board, and delivered to the Bulgarian Minister through intermediary channels, a copy of which is also attached.

Respectfully yours,

(Signed)
HERSCHEL V. JOHNSON

Enclosures:

1. Informal statement by
Bulgarian Minister.
2. Informal statement by
Mr. Iver C. Olsen.

DECLASSIFIED

000503

Enclosure No. 1 to Dispatch No. 3602
dated June 28, 1944.

Informal Statement by Bulgarian Minister

Having for five centuries lived under foreign domination, the Bulgarian people, dismembered from 1878 until the present, have been under the domination of certain foreign states. Thus this nation has had to fight for centuries to obtain at last its independence and its national unity.

Itself reared in the traditions of freedom, the Bulgarian people is refractory to all oppression. For this reason the Bulgarian Government has always respected the human rights of all minorities which have lived on Bulgarian territory.

During the present war, Bulgaria has not sent a single soldier to any front, she has dropped not a single bomb on any of her enemies, but she has ceaselessly striven to mitigate within the limits of possibility the inevitable consequences of war for the Bulgarian populations of Macedonia and Western Thrace which until 1941 were under Serbian and Greek domination.

Measures taken against the Jews by Bulgaria have been applied without harshness by all organizations of the administration. It is no secret — and the Bulgarian Jews themselves know it very well — that the late King Boris, as well as the supreme authority of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church have always taken care to see that the Jews were treated without harshness. As for the Bulgarian town and rural populations, these have declared a sympathy for the Jews which the Jews themselves have recognized. At this moment the Jews are living in much better conditions than those enjoyed by the majority of Bulgarian citizens who have been obliged to abandon their towns destroyed by American air raids and have lost everything they possessed.

The Bulgarian Government has never refused to lend an attractive ear to the counsels of humanity and tolerance. In Bulgaria everyone knows that the strength of a small nation lies in its moral integrity. Even today they would have been willing to listen to suggestions made in defense of Jews and refugees, but on condition that those responsible for making these suggestions should themselves have given a personal example of humanitarian treatment.

The American Air Forces have carried out acts of the greatest and most arbitrary cruelty against the civilian population of the cities of Sofia, Plovdiv, Skopje, Dupnitsa, Vellea, Vratza and others. They have done violence to the chateau of Vrana, residence of the Queen, a widow of barely six months' standing, and of her two orphan children,

000504

aged 12 and 7. The Chateau has been totally destroyed, although it is far from any military objective, far from any other habitation.

If the Bulgarian people were to learn that there are still to be found in the United States of America noble souls who deplore these cruelties; if those who preside over the destinies of the great American nation, instead of addressing threats, were to promise to repair the damage that their cruel military leaders have already done, and never again to permit their Air Force to kill and ruin a harmless and guiltless population, then without a doubt the Bulgarian Government would recognize the moral right of the USA to give humanitarian advice and then the Bulgarian people would fully approve action which conforms to such advice.

000505

Enclosure No. 2 to Dispatch
No. 3602 dated June 28, 1944.

Informal Statement Prepared by Mr. Olsen

The Bulgarian Minister in Ankara, Mr. Balabanoff, had some discussions, through intermediaries, with certain representatives of the American Embassy regarding the status of Jews in Bulgaria. The Bulgarian Minister was advised of the deep concern of the United States Government with regard to these Jews and that it intended to hold all persons and governments involved in the persecution of these minorities fully responsible and accountable. Mention was then made of certain reports concerning brutal treatment and persecution of Jews and other minorities in Bulgaria and Mr. Balabanoff was asked to communicate to the Bulgarian Government the intention of the United States Government to observe very closely any such developments and to take them fully into account in the final settlement. He was advised also to inform his Government that in its own interests the Bulgarian Government would do well to do everything possible to protect these minorities and to take all actions which would assist these refugees in escaping to safety.

Minister Balabanoff gave every assurance that it was not the policy of the Bulgarian Government to persecute and destroy minorities, and thereafter sent a cable to his Foreign Office strongly recommending that persecution of minorities be stopped and that all steps be taken to protect such groups. He advised representatives of the United States Embassy that he would obtain the necessary assurances from the Bulgarian Government and communicate them to the Americans.

These meetings took place early in April and no further word has been received. Failure to receive the promised assurances from the Bulgarian Government has made an unfavorable impression upon the United States Government and it would be greatly appreciated if steps would be renewed in bringing the matter to the attention of the Bulgarian Government and obtaining the assurances which were promised.

000506

DOCUMENT

218

FROM: American Embassy, Ankara
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATED: July 22, 1944
NUMBER: 1344 (Ankara No. 105)

This message is from Hirschmann for Pehle, WRB.

Concerning the refugee movement to Istanbul from Bulgaria by sea and rail developments of a promising nature are under way. This is for your information.

The memorandum's contents which were prepared by me have been transmitted through an intermediary in the confidence of the highest officials of Bulgaria, to Balabanoff, the Minister to Turkey from Bulgaria, who with the Bulgarian officials in Sofia has discussed the subject. I asked in this memorandum that the authorities of Bulgaria give authorization and facilitation without delay to movement of refugees through or from Bulgaria to Turkey by rail of not less than 500 individuals weekly; to give authorization and assistance without hindrance to the movement of refugees by ship from the ports of Bulgaria; and to issue an ordinance stating that all persecution and repressive steps directed against Jews and minorities will cease at once and Jews will be accorded treatment like that of other citizens of Bulgaria. An interview with me has been requested by Balabanoff in regard to my requests since his return to Ankara. Plans are being made through the International Red Cross for this conference at the earliest possible time. Reliable information has been received by me that the Government of Bulgaria is ready to reverse its previous policy and facilitate the movement of the refugees within the limitations imposed by the chaotic transportation and technical facilities of Bulgaria.

With regard to this two Bulgarian ships in Burgas, the PIRIN capable of carrying 400 passengers and the VITA, 350 passengers, have been trying for some time to acquire permission to proceed to Istanbul from the Turk and Bulgarian officials. Attempt is being made by us to effect the departure of these vessels at once and to make plans for other ships to make similar trips. Furthermore, we are attempting to arrange for the transportation of an appreciable number of refugees to Turkey by railroad. Of additional measures and progress you will be informed.

KELLY

DECLASSIFIED

000507

DOCUMENT

219

LC - 92
Distribution of
true reading by
special arrangement.
(~~SECRET~~)

Ankara
DATED: July 26, 1944
REC'D 6:17 a.m. 27th

Secretary of State
Washington
1370, July 26, 4 p.m.

For Pehle WRB from Hirschmann.

The Bulgarian Minister to Turkey in an interview today arranged by Simond of the Intercross informed me (Ankara's 107) that his Government had accepted the proposals which I had made and authorized me to transmit the following decisions of his Government.

One. The Jews are gradually having restored to them the status which they held before the war.

The "restrictions, oppressions, persecutions and abuses" are being eliminated.

Two. Facilities have been officially authorized which will permit them to leave Bulgaria with all possible assistance and a minimum of formalities.

Three. Instructions will be issued to expedite the departure from Bulgaria of vessels containing refugees.

Four. The departure by rail will be authorized by approximately 400 to 500 refugees weekly provided the Turk authorities grant transit visas en route to Palestine.

Balabanoff stated that the above measures were being communicated to the leaders of the Bulgarian Jewish Community. He emphasized that the change of policy was definitive but the steps would be gradual in order not to "fly in the face of the Germans". I urged upon Balabanoff the immediate withdrawal of the two notorious oppressive anti-Jewish Bulgarian laws. Balabanoff replied that these would definitely be cancelled within a brief time.

With respect to the technical difficulties involved in securing the necessary certificates to permit departure from Bulgaria, Balabanoff said that these difficulties would be relieved within technical possibilities. I thereupon urged that children be given first priority since they required few certificates, to which he agreed with the proviso that we define children as under 15 years of age. I told the Bulgarian Minister that the new policy of his Government in regard to refugees would be presented

DECLASSIFIED

000508

as a gesture of good will to Washington, and I suggested that the release without delay of large numbers of refugees would receive favorable publicity in America which the present Bulgarian Government is seeking.

Balabanoff stated that his Government's new regime was essentially liberal in policy and was attempting to find the best and quickest ways to "get out from under the Nazi yoke" being at the same time very sympathetic to the Soviets whom they held in high regard but not without some fear.

Balabanoff said that his Government agreed to the proposal concerning the sailing of the "S.S. Teri" to a Bulgarian port and return to Istanbul without a German safe conduct, provided the Bulgarians granted the necessary authorization, to which a Turk official had agreed with Ambassador Steinhardt and Simond. I will report further on this project which has been revived.

At the conclusion of the interview, I requested Balabanoff to confirm in writing the agreement of his Government to the foregoing. The Embassy's next numbered telegram will contain a translation of Balabanoff's letter.

KELLEY

000509

DOCUMENT

220

EOC-869
Distribution of
true reading only by
special arrangement.
(~~SECRET~~ W)

Ankara
DATED August 1, 1944
REC'D 8:52 a.m. 2nd

Secretary of State
Washington
1400, August 1, noon.

For Pehle, WRB, from Hirschmann, Ankara's 112.

A group of 40 children, 12 girls and 28 boys between the ages of twelve and seventeen years, accompanied by two adult escorts, arrived in Istanbul on July 30 by rail from Bulgaria. All were in possession of Turk transit visas and departed for Palestine on July 31 by rail. The children were part of a group of 100 for whom lists were submitted many months ago but whose documentation because of technicalities was only recently completed. Some of the children all of whom are Bulgarian had been waiting two years for the completion of immigration formalities.

Inquiry among the children indicated that an additional group of approximately 200 have their documentation for emigration to Palestine in varying stages of completion. Efforts are being made here to evacuate them during August in the same manner as the group of 40. In view of the statement made to me by Balaban of R* (ZMB'S 1371, July 26) I am pursuing this among other possible steps by the Bulgarians in order to obtain a concrete indication of the intentions of the Bulgarian Government in the matter of the amelioration of the conditions of its Jewish citizens and facilitating without delay the movement of those desiring to depart.

According to information received in Istanbul the Jewish Community of Rouse in Bulgaria has been designated by the Bulgarian Government as the agency which is to concern itself with the preparation of Jews desiring to emigrate to Palestine. Until now the Bulgarian regulations did not permit the existence of any Jewish organization in consequence of which all steps for emigration had to be undertaken for individuals by attorneys at large fees. The designation of the Rouse Jewish Community for this purpose may indicate a first step in a more orderly emigration of Jews from Bulgaria.

KELLEY

*Balabanoff. Apparent error in transmission.

DECLASSIFIED

000510

DOCUMENT

221

AMT-737
Distribution of true
reading only by special
arrangement: (SECRET-W)

Ankara
DATED August 2, 1944
REC'D 10:45 p.m., 4th

Secretary of State,
Washington,
1414, August 2, 8 p.m.

For Pehle WRB from Hirschmann.

Through an intermediary I have transmitted the following message to Bulgarian officials:

One. We intend to hold the Bulgarian Government responsible for the taking without delay of the steps which Balabanoff informed me would be taken (REEMBS 1370, July 26) with a view to ameliorating the situation of the Jews in Bulgaria and eliminating all varieties of persecution and abuse and facilitating by every possible means the departure of those Jews who desire to emigrate.

Two. We will not be satisfied until the two scandalous anti-Jewish laws are completely revoked and we expect the Bulgarian Government to take steps to this end with the least possible delay.

Three. In the meanwhile the Bulgarian Government is expected to be completely lax in the enforcement of the aforesaid laws.

Four. The necessity for the evacuation of Bulgarian Jewish citizens should be removed without delay and the emigration of such citizens should be the result of voluntary action and not of a necessity imposed by discriminatory treatment and laws.

Five. The Bulgarian Government should in its own interest take steps to rehabilitate its Jewish population for productive work.

Six. Existing relief agencies in Turkey, with the assistance of the United States Government will endeavor within possibilities to provide food, clothing and economic aid for the rehabilitation of Bulgaria's Jewish citizenry, and we expect the Bulgarian Government to give all possible assistance to this work.

Balabanoff and his intermediaries have emphasized their urgent desire to do something which could win for the present Bulgarian Government the good will of the United States at this special juncture, and have reported in a pointed way the effect which the absence of the bombing of Bulgaria since March 20 had had on the Bulgarian Government and people.

DECLASSIFIED

000511

It should be our aim to salvage and to put back on their feet as quickly as possible the entire remaining 45,000 Jewish population of Bulgaria rather than to press for the pitifully small sporadic movement of evacuation to Palestine which the circumstances prescribe at this time. We should emphasize that people rehabilitated in their own country will become more useful citizens and not create any postwar problems.

KELLY

000512

DOCUMENT

222

BJR-39
Distribution of true
reading only by special
arrangement. (S-1-W)

Ankara
DATED August 7, 1944
REC'D 5:25 p.m. 9th

Secretary of State,
Washington.
1446, August 7, 11 p.m.

For Pehle WRB from Hirschmann. Ankara's No. 123.

In a further interview with Balabanoff on August 5 the position of WRB relating to Bulgarian Jewish refugees as set forth in the Embassy's 1414, August 2 was presented to him. Balabanoff said that he would inform his government without delay of my requests and would warmly recommend them.

In the course of the discussion Balabanoff stated that:

One. The political situation in Bulgaria had eased considerably in recent weeks, and this circumstance should tend to assist his government in taking measures which heretofore were subject to strong Nazi influence and opposition.

Two. The relationship between the Bulgarian and Soviet Governments had improved in the last few weeks.

In this connection I informed Balabanoff that all of my discussions with him were reported by me to the Soviets.

Three. He was fully informed of the telegrams relating to refugee movements exchanged between the WRB and the Bulgarian Minister in Stockholm.

Four. He would gladly recommend the revocation of the anti-Jewish laws in return for the continuance of the "happy omission" of bombing of Sophia, to which I replied that I had no authority to speak on military matters to him or his Nazi partners who were the initial perpetrators of the bombing of civilians.

Five. Would be interested in the nature of the goodwill which Bulgaria might build up in the United States by taking the steps which I requested especially with regard to the post-war period. He expressed a special desire to know how long the United States Government would retain an interest in European and Balkan affairs after the war. Again I replied that this was not within my knowledge or jurisdiction but that the United States Government's basic concern with minorities and humanitarian rights was well known.

DECLASSIFIED

000513

Balabanoff is being handed an informal memorandum written by me to Simond covering completely the points presented in the Embassy's 1414. August 2, he promised to inform me as soon as he had a reply from Sofia.

KELLEY

000514

DOCUMENT

223

KEM-110

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

Ankara

DATED September 26, 1944
REC'D 8:06 p.m., 27th

Secretary of State,
Washington.
1823, September 26, 2 p.m.

The Bulgarian Minister of Propaganda, Domokazassov made the following statement to newspaper correspondents on September 22, 1944, which was broadcast via radio Sofia in the Bulgarian, English and Hebrew languages.

One. The Bulgarian Government takes a positive attitude regarding the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine.

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

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

Four. The Jews now enjoy full equality of rights and live under the same conditions and in freedom as do other Bulgarian nationals.

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

Property, firm rights, and other assets still owned by the state will be returned to the Jews. There will remain to be settled the question of assets about which legal obligations have arisen between the state and private interests, that is, where property or firm rights have been transferred to third parties, or where other obligatory relations have been created during the course of the last few years. The solution of this problem is a question of time. The Government will find the means to solve it in such ways as not to disturb the traditional friendship

000515

and mutual understanding between Bulgarians and Jews. The Government is being assisted in this matter by Jewish people who have confidence in it. The Government will solve the problem in accordance with national relations between a democratic state and its citizens.

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

The foregoing ends the statement of policy.

In our opinion, this statement if faithfully implemented will materially assist in the reestablishment of Bulgarian Jewish citizens to their earlier rights and liberties.

STEINHARDT

000516

DOCUMENT

224

BJR
Distribution of true
reading only by special
arrangement. [REDACTED]

September 7, 1944
6 p.m.

Amembassy
Ankara
Circular

The following WRB Cable No. 106 is for Hirschmann.

Several requests have already been received by the War Refugee Board for financial assistance in the relief of refugees in areas liberated by the Allied military forces.

For your information and guidance War Refugee Board activities are to be strictly limited to the rescue and relief of the victims of enemy oppression who are in imminent danger of death, that is, who are still in enemy-occupied territory. Refugee problems in liberated areas are not (repeat not) regarded as being within the Board's functions. Accordingly, if you receive requests limited to the relief and assistance of refugees in areas liberated from the Germans, you should refer such problems to UNRRA, the appropriate military authorities, the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, private refugee organizations, or other national or international groups which are authorized to deal with matters of this nature.

The foregoing shall not be construed to limit the activities of the Board dealing with arrangements for the removal of refugees in liberated areas whose presence serves to discourage and prevent the rescue of additional refugees from enemy-occupied areas.

This message has been repeated to the other WRB Special Representatives abroad.

HULL

[Repeated to Stockholm, Lisbon, Caserta, London, and Bern.]

DECLASSIFIED

000517

DOCUMENT

225

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM SENT

FROM: Secretary of State, Washington
TO: American Embassy, Ankara
DATED: March 13, 1944
NUMBER: 194

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

The following to Hirschmann from War Refugee Board.

Davila suggested that an investigation be made by you of the report that administration of Transnistria has been turned over to the Germans by Rumania, in which event it is indispensable that the Jews be evacuated to Rumania or elsewhere immediately. You are also requested to investigate the report that the Germans halted the earlier evacuation from Transnistria to Rumania. Our insistence that this German demand, if made, be resisted by Rumania is a matter of importance. This Government is making appropriate representations to Rumania, Hungary, and Bulgaria through various channels. You should immediately cable to us any information you can secure regarding the present situation in Transnistria.

STETTINIUS
(Acting)

DECLASSIFIED

000518

DOCUMENT

226

GEM-241
This telegram must be
paraphrased before being
communicated to anyone
other than a Governmental
agency. (SCOO)

ANKARA
DATED: March 13, 1944
REC'D: 3:31 p.m., 14th.

Secretary of State,
Washington.
440, March 13, 5 p.m. (Section One)
Department's 177, March 7.

From Hirschmann for Pehle War Refugee Board.

After consultation with Ambassador Steinhardt it was decided that it was preferable to make a direct approach to Alexandre Cretzianu, recently appointed Rumanian Minister to Ankara rather than to make an indirect approach to the Rumanian Government which would have entailed delay, the possibility of a misunderstanding as to the motive of the approach and would have made less of an impression on the Rumanian Government. Furthermore the unexpectedly rapid advance toward Transistria with the ensuing probability of drastic measures by Rumania and German authorities throughout the threatened area, seemed to call for immediate action to bring to the attention of the Rumanian Government in Bucharest the message contained in the Department's telegram under reference. Accordingly, acting under the authority vested in me by the Secretary of Treasury (see Department's 120, February 12), Gilbert Simond the Swiss representative of International Red Cross in Ankara was requested to arrange a meeting between Cretzianu, Simond and myself at Simond's home.

Cretzianu is reported on good authority to enjoy the confidence of Marshal Antonescu. His sympathies are said to be pro-Ally and his disposition humanitarian. At the outset of our conversation I made it unmistakably clear to Cretzianu that my sole function in Ankara was as the representative of the War Refugee Board to deal with refugee problems; that any discussion between us would be confined exclusively to this subject; and that any other construction placed on our talk by him or his Government, could only be occasioned by a deliberate distortion. Cretzianu said he quite understood the situation and that he welcomed a frank discussion of the Jewish refugee problem in Rumania with a view to its clarification and efforts towards an immediate amelioration. After outlining to him the outraged feeling of our Government as a result of the brutal treatment

000519

which has been and is being accorded the Jewish minorities and refugees of other nationalities in Rumania and our Government's determination to do everything in its power to rescue these unfortunates who are in danger of death and to find havens of refuge for them, and that our Government will keep in mind in the future any continuation on the part of the Rumanian Government of the execution of these policies of Hitlerite persecutions, and that the Rumanian Government would be well advised in its own interest to take advantage of such opportunities as may be available to it in the future to permit refugees to depart across its borders, I invited him to report the foregoing to his Government. After stating his long standing desire to find a satisfactory solution of the Jewish problem in Rumania he made the following statements:

/End of Section One/

000520

ME-253

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

ANKARA

DATED: March 13, 1944
REC'D: 4 p.m., 14th

Secretary of State
Washington
440, March 13, 5 p.m. (Section Two)

(1) Transnistria where the Jewish refugees are mainly concentrated has been changed from a civil to a military zone under the direction of General Potopeau who Cretzianu stated was well known to him and would if he received appropriate instructions from Marshall Antonescu to protect the refugee population, carry out these instructions in an "efficient and sympathetic manner."

(2) The recent advance of the Russian Army toward Rumania was most unexpected by his Government which had anticipated sufficient time within which to "adjust" its military position and might result in a situation which would provoke the German military authorities to take over control in Transnistria.

(3) Cretzianu made the catagoric statement that provided there was time enough to control the situation he could assure me that "no bodily harm will be done to any of the Jewish refugees in Transnistria." In this connection he stated that steps had recently been taken by Marshal Antonescu "to improve the situation among the Jewish refugees even to the extent of providing clothing and medicines."

(4) Cretzianu gave me a definite assurance that on the arrival of a vessel or vessels at Constanza to embark up to 5000 Jewish refugee children the necessary transportation and exit visas would be provided promptly.

(5) Cretzianu agreed to send an urgent telegram to Bucharest recommending in the strongest terms that efforts be made at once to transfer the Jewish refugees from Transnistria to the interior of Rumania proper expressing the reservation, however, that it might not be practical to effect so large a transfer before the Russian advance hindered further movement.

000521

At the close of our talk Cretzianu stated that he would communicate to me immediately any reply received by him from Bucharest by requesting a further meeting with me through Simond.

Throughout the conversation I gained the impression that Cretzianu was deeply sic with the importance attached by our Government to the program of the War Refugee Board and to the seriousness with which our Government would regard any further mistreatment of Jewish refugees in Rumania.

(End of Message)

STEINHARDT

000522

DOCUMENT

227

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Embassy, Ankara
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATED: March 16, 1944
NUMBER: 474

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

The following is for WRB's attention.

I refer herewith to my previous cable dated March 13, 1944, No. 440.

A meeting with Hirschmann was requested today by the Rumanian Minister through Simond, and Hirschmann was informed by the Rumanian Minister that he had received a reply from his Government the substance of which was as follows:

(1) It has been decided by the Government of Rumania to transfer to Rumania proper from Transnistria all Jews who are actually in Transnistria at the present time. This transfer from Transnistria has already started.

(2) The Government of Rumania pledges itself to facilitate in every possible manner the emigration of the Jews.

STEINHARDT

DECLASSIFIED

000523

DOCUMENT

228

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: Amembassy, Ankara
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATED: March 20, 1944
NUMBER: 497

Following is Ankara's No. 2 for the Department and WRB.

I was informed today by Simond of International Red Cross that he had received a cable from a representative of his organization in Bucharest that 48,000 Jewish refugees had been transferred to Rumania proper from Transnistria to date. A request to keep me informed of progress of the movement was made of Simond.

STEINHARDT

DECLASSIFIED

000524

DOCUMENT

229

KD-439
Distribution of true
reading only by special
arrangement. (W)

Ankara
DATED: July 7, 1944
REC'D: 3:54 a.m., 8th

Secretary of State
Washington
1230, July 7, 2 p.m.

For the War Refugee Board from Hirschmann

Ankara No. 89.

By arrangement with Gilbert Simond of the International Red Cross, I conferred yesterday with Alexandre Cretzianu, Rumanian Minister to Turkey, at the home of Simond. Cretzianu took pains to emphasize the determined efforts of the Rumanian Government to assist in the transportation of Jewish refugees from Rumania. He asserted that since my absence from Turkey he had received two telegrams from Miscaea Antonescu to the effect that "I am doing my utmost to assist in the transportation of Jewish refugees." Cretzianu insisted that he had in his possession further corroboration that the camp in Transnistria which had contained 48,000 refugees had been completely disbanded in March 1944, but that he could not guarantee any orderly movement of refugees, since he asserted that the bombing of Ploesti and Bucharest had caused marked confusion and chaos in Rumania for all citizens and had multiplied the difficulties connected with all traffic movements.

Cretzianu promised to verify the authority and function of the Rumanian Interministerial Committee dealing with refugee transportation, referred to in the Embassy's 1218, July 5 for the War Refugee Board. Stating that the Rumanians unanimously desire to withdraw from the war provided Rumania would not become another Italy, he warned that such a step at this time would unquestionably bring about complete German occupation and under such circumstances "I fear that Rumania may become another Hungary insofar as the Jews are concerned." Cretzianu emphasized the friendly role that his government was playing at this time in connection with the Jewish refugees. He promised to assist in expediting the embarkation of refugees on the ships in Constanza and to report to me through Simond the information he will receive from Antonescu after he has communicated our conversation to Bucharest.

Cretzianu seemed deeply impressed by the strong warnings which our government has made to the Hungarian leaders regarding the fate which awaits the latter for their barbarisms and took a copy of a memorandum which I handed to him on this subject and which he requested permission to send to Bucharest.

DECLASSIFIED

100525

I am proceeding today to Istanbul where I shall meet with the Jewish organization representatives there to form the advisory committee and endeavor to expedite the ship movements from Rumania.

KELLY

000526

DOCUMENT

230

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Embassy, Ankara
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATED: June 21, 1944
NUMBER: 1125

The Ambassador transmits the following, Ankara, No. 78, for the War Refugee Board.

Information has reached me that the government of Rumania has decided to create an interdepartmental board for Jewish emigration under the Prime Minister's supervision and to establish an emigration office under the direction of A. L. Zissu, the Jewish Agency Representative in Bucharest, and by making the Rumanian S. S. ALBA JULIA and other Rumanian boats available for the transportation of Jewish refugees, thereby to implement the same.

STEINHARDT

000527

DOCUMENT

231

SFG-288

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

Ankara.

DATED: July 20, 1944

REC'D: 11:10 p.m.

Secretary of State
Washington
1321, July 20, 3 p.m.

For Pehle WRB from Hirschmann.

Ankara's No. 99.

For your information Gilbert Simond of the Intercross forwarded to me today the following communication which he had received from Alexander Cretzianu Rumanian Minister to Turkey. This communication was in response to my request for information concerning the new official Rumanian organization for dealing with the belligerent attitude of Jews from Rumania. The following is translation of this document received from Simond:

"Communication received on July 13, 1944 from Mr. Alexander Cretzianu, Rumanian Minister to Turkey, conveying a statement by Mahai Antonescu, Vice President of the Council of Ministers.

I wish to inform you that an Inter-Ministerial Commission has been constituted since the beginning of the month of May, under my chairmanship, for the purpose of organizing officially and efficiently the belligerent attitude of Jews. During the sessions of this commission Fischer Fildermann and Zimmer, the representatives of the Jews of Rumania, have been consulted, as well as the Commissioner for Jewish Affairs. These persons have jointly established a practical means for organizing Jewish emigration, with the help of either medium size ships flying a foreign flag (which have recently affected transports) or ships of greater tonnage which the Service Maritime Agency may charter for that purpose.

The decision of the government has been officially communicated to the Swiss, Swedish, Turkish and Portuguese Legations; to the delegates of the International Red Cross Committee; as well as to His Eminence, the Apostolic Nuncio at Bucharest.

The Inter-Ministerial Commission is in full activity. I hope that the international organizations which have dealt with the question of Jewish emigration will assist it by giving it their full support."

The above communication on behalf of Mahai Antonescu serves in our opinion to strengthen our view that the Rumanian Government is taking measures at the present time to assist the emigration of Jewish refugees.

KELLEY

000528

DOCUMENT

232

BE-688
Distribution of true
reading only by special arrange-
ment. (██████████)

Ankara
DATED: July 25, 1944
REC'D: 2:15 a.m., 26th

Secretary of State
Washington
1365, July 25, 7 p.m.

For Pehle WRB from Hirschmann.

Ankara No. 106.

Through the intermediary of the International Red Cross representa-
tive in Istanbul, a further meeting was arranged on July 21 at Istan-
bul between the Rumanian Minister to Ankara Alexandria Cretzianu
Monsieur Jaquinet of the International Red Cross and myself.

I made the following urgent requests of Cretzianu:

One. In view of the reported new policy of the Hungarian Govern-
ment that Jewish refugees will be permitted to leave Hungary for
Palestine provided they have Rumanian transit visas, I requested that
the Rumanian Government issue without delay thousands of such visas
to Jews in Hungary who would remain in Rumania only long enough to
embark on the vessels from Constanza. Cretzianu promised to immediately
"warmly and strongly recommend to Bucharest by telegram that the above
request should be granted."

Two. In view of the explained deadlock in Rumania which is
preventing the departure of the Turk ships and the Greek ship "Smyrnie"
from Constanza which I (have?) am informed Cretzianu, I requested him
to obtain information regarding the reasons for this deadlock. I also
asked Cretzianu to urge his Government to facilitate by all possible
means without delay the departure of these vessels. Cretzianu agreed
to do so.

Three. Since it has been reported in Istanbul that some Rumanian
political personalities were seeking to proceed from Rumania to Turkey
by means of the refugee ships I inquired of Cretzianu as to the
veracity of this report since such a situation might possibly inter-
fere with the movement of refugees. Cretzianu asserted that he was
aware of this possibility and informed me that there were two categor-
ies of politicians in Rumania who might be interested in such voyages:
(a) the so-called Liberals with whom he asserted he was in sympathy
and who might be available to perform useful political services at
this time outside of Rumania (b) politicians who are seeking to "desert
the sinking ship" Cretzianu declared that he would work against the

DECLASSIFIED

000529

efforts of the latter to secure Turkish visas and such Rumanians employing the device of refuge ships to escape from Rumania would meet with his opposition.

Cretzianu informed me that the resolution of Mihailu Antonescu, setting forth the auspices and authority of the Rumanian Inter-Ministerial Committee to deal with the transportation of Jewish refugees (reported to you in Embassy's 1321) was a matter of secrecy and had not as yet been disclosed, and that he would prefer that it be not publicly divulged for the present.

My impression from this interview further confirmed my view that Cretzianu is speaking for the Rumanian Government and is searching more intensively for a means of assistance in the rescue and transportation of refugees through and from Rumania.

KELLEY

000530

DOCUMENT

233

DSH-634
This telegram must be
paraphrased before being
communicated to anyone
other than a Government
Agency. ()

Ankara
DATED: September 9, 1944
REC'D: 6:52 p.m.

Secretary of State
Washington
1695, September 9, 4 p.m.

From Ambassador Steinhardt and Hirschmann to War Refugee
Board.

Ankara's 152

It is reported here that a royal decree issued by the Govern-
ment of Rumania restores equal rights to all Rumanians without
regard to race or religion. We are informed further that all royal
decrees based on differentiation of race or religion have been
abolished.

STEINHARDT

000531

DOCUMENT

234

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: Amlegation, Bern
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATED: September 15, 1944
NUMBER: 6083

[REDACTED]

This message is from McClelland for Ackermann, WRB.

Given below is a message which has been transmitted to Rome:
(71, September 15, 8 a.m.)

From reports which have been received during the last few days from trustworthy sources in Bratislava, the situation of the remaining 18,000 to 20,000 Jews in Slovakia is becoming more and more precarious.

In a telegram received here the twelfth of September the statement is made that again on the eleventh of September Slovak officials began to deport Jews. Although we are awaiting additional data from a courier who is arriving the last of this week, as yet this news is unconfirmed. Indications which are reliable and confidential have come to me which show that responsibility for this renewed persecution of the Jews rests on the Slovak "Quisling" Government. The recent public statement of the Minister of the Interior of the Tiso Government to the effect that the Jews and Czechs were responsible for the extensive resistance movement, which a short time ago broke out in Slovakia, bears out the indications above. In both Czech circles here and Jewish circles in Bratislava, it is strongly felt that the influence of the Vatican could help alleviate this situation if energetically and quickly used. Will you please have a discussion with Mr. Taylor as to the possibility and advisability of such Vatican intervention. From reliable sources I am advised that the Slovak Minister and "homme de finance" of Tiso, Carol Sidor, still is at the Vatican from which he hopes to secure protection after the war is over. It might be that this situation could be used to advantage. Information as to whether Mr. Taylor feels that a step in this direction might be effective and feasible would be appreciated.

The message above was repeated to WRB in Washington with the further request that serious consideration be given to the possibility of giving the Slovak Government a formal warning that they will be held responsible for last minute excesses against the Jewish people.

HARRISON

9-15-44
DCR:EMS

DECLASSIFIED

000532

DOCUMENT

235

JMA-221
Distribution of true
reading only by special
arrangement. (S)

Bern
DATED: November 17, 1944
REC'D: 9:50 p.m.

Secretary of State
Washington
7594, November 17, noon
For WRB from McClelland

Legation's 6839, October 13.

Trustworthy report dated October 28 reached Switzerland November 13 through Czech underground channels containing additional information regarding fate of Jews in Slovakia and particularly Bratislava.

Number of Jews sent by Germans to Sered in September and early October from Bratislava appears to have been about 4000, somewhat lower happily than previously announced figure. Only about 300 souls are at present left in Sered, over 3,000 having been deported from that camp to unknown destination.

It is estimated that about 20% of Jews in Bratislava were able to escape deportation by hiding and flight.

This action was a general one conducted against all Jews in Slovakian German-controlled areas and included even so-called Class "B" baptized Jews. Only Jewish wives of "Aryans" were excepted.

Jews arrested in eastern and central Slovakia were mainly sent to a new camp recently set up in a wood near town of Topolcany. This camp is heavily guarded and hermetically cut off from all outside contact, population for radius of 4 kilometers having been evacuated. Nothing further about this new camp is known.

Most of personnel of central Jewish office (Ustrednezidov) in Bratislava appear to have been deported with exception of Mrs. Fleischmann who was able to hide. Nothing is known about whereabouts of Drostar Neumann, her chief colleague.

This report confirms fact that a deportation train left camp at Marianka about mid-October (Legation's 7163 October 28).

It is significant to note that Gestapo delayed granting German transit visa to ICRC delegate Dr. Dunant who was scheduled to leave for Bratislava during September until termination this action against the Jews in mid-October.

HARRISON

DECLASSIFIED

000533

DOCUMENT

236

JEM-376
Distribution of true
reading only by special
arrangement. (SECRET #)

Bern
DATED December 9, 1944
REG'D 7:37 p.m.

Secretary of State
Washington
8050, December 9, midnight
WRB from McClelland

Delegation's 7594 November 17.

I have received following reliable information from a man who
left Bratislava eight days ago concerning situation of Jews in Slovakia
as of December one.

About 900 Jews in Bratislava and some 2500 to 3000 in provinces
(German occupied) have succeeded in hiding and hitherto escaping de-
portation. Only around 150 people are left in camp at Sered, mainly
half Jews "mischlingeun" and Jewish partners of mixed marriages. As
reported in Legation's 7802 November 28, eight Jews entitled to Ameri-
can citizenship were left at Marianka by Germans. Virtually all other
Jews have been deported.

HUDDLE

DECLASSIFIED

100534

DOCUMENT

237

RECT-435

Plain
Cairo
Dated March 30, 1944
Rec'd 6:40 p.m.

Secretary of State,

Washington.

Greek.

95, March 30.

My 94, March 29, 7 p.m.

The Greek Prime Minister has today issued a declaration as follows in translation:

"On the 24th of March 1944 President Roosevelt in a momentous declaration denounced once more to the civilized world the crimes of our bloodstained enemies who, with increased intensity, particularly in the Balkans and Hungary continue, by slaughter and the torments of starvation to exterminate thousands of human beings. The language used by President Roosevelt was the language of the inexorable justice which will before long punish the perpetrators of these unprecedented crimes, together with their satellites and accomplices. This declaration constitutes also, in the highest sense, an expression of human solidarity with all the victims of these barbarous outrages.

The Hellenic Government, fully sharing the views and feelings of the eminent leader of their great Ally the United States of America address to all Hellenes the request that they take particular notice of his recommendation that the Allied Balkan peoples help in the rescue and escape to neutral or friendly countries of the Jews now threatened by new and inhuman persecution or of any other victims of Nazi tyranny."

Copies of this text have been furnished the OWI for broadcasting to the Balkans and the Greek Government will include the statement together with the declaration by the President in its broadcasts to Greece over the Egyptian State broadcasting station.

In addition the Greek Information Office here is releasing the message for use by the local and foreign press and the Foreign Office is telegraphing the Greek text to its Embassies in London and Washington for release to the American and British Greek language press.

MACVEAGH

100535

DOCUMENT

238

ORIGINAL TEXT OF TELEGRAM SENT

FROM: Secretary of State, Washington
TO: American Legation, Bern
DATED: May 13, 1944
NUMBER: 1672

This is WRB cable to Bern No. 17 for McClelland

Consul at Istanbul reports substantially as follows:

"All registered Jews in Greece were confined in Haidari concentration camp late March. On April 2, 4000 were evacuated from camp to unknown destination, believed to be Theresienstadt, Czechoslovakia. Repatriation was ordered for Portuguese, Turkish and Spanish Jews. Assistance has been complicated by these developments since there are officially no Jews in Greece, the Jews who are registered having been removed while the Jews in hiding have lost the last remnant of rights through failure on their part to comply with registration order issued by the Germans."

Missions at Istanbul, Madrid and Lisbon have been instructed to obtain action to help victims in Greece claiming the nationalities of the respective countries. The American representative in the Vatican City has been requested to obtain the cooperation of the Holy See.

You are requested to ask Intercross to bring all possible aid to said victims, including those evacuated from Greece. Would appreciate information as to destination of evacuees.

HULL

DECLASSIFIED

000536

DOCUMENT

239

ORIGINAL TEXT OF TELEGRAM SENT

FROM: Secretary of State, Washington
TO: AMCONSULATE GENERAL, ISTANBUL
DATED: April 26, 1944
NUMBER: 257

War Refugee Board most appreciate [sic] your reports on conditions and refugee problems in Greece. Reference your dispatch 2680, March 18, Board would welcome further development by you your suggestions for evacuation Greek Jews and non-Greek refugees with cooperation EAM and Allied escape services. Board believes it can arrange for funds and such additional assistance as may be necessary to permit escape from Greece victims of enemy oppression who are in imminent danger of death, regardless of their religion, nationality or stateless status. Please telegraph estimate amount required to initiate your proposals.

Your cooperation in this matter will be most appreciated.

Repeated to Ankara and MacVeigh at Cairo as Department's no. 373 and no. 953, respectively.

HULL

DECLASSIFIED

000537

DOCUMENT

240

MMF - 797

Plain
London
DATED February 15, 1944
REC'D 9:55 p.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.
1274 fifteenth

 for Limited Distribution.

Director of IGC respectfully requests expedient arrangements for transport of Spanish republican refugees to Mexico in following letter dated February fourteenth in reference to Embassy's letter based on Department's telegraphic instruction toward end December:

"Will you kindly refer to your letter of the thirty-first December 1943 relating to the removal of Spanish republican refugees from North Africa to Mexico. I have now received the first report from Malin dated the thirtieth January 1944 written from Algiers in which he says that the employment of Spanish refugees who were released from camps last year is likely to decrease and that some two or three thousand who have been in the French Foreign Legion are likely soon to be demobilized. The Spanish problem is thus becoming very urgent and I should be grateful if this fact could be brought to the attention of the State Department with a view to expediting the arrangements with Mexico."

WINANT

DECLASSIFIED

100538

DOCUMENT

TELEGRAM SENT

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

Plain
March 6, 1944
6 p.m.

TO:
American Consul
Durban, (Natal, Union of South Africa)
8

The War Refugee Board has received several reports of the existence of suffering and disease among refugees on the Island of Mauritius. There appear to be two groups of such refugees on the Island. There are about 1500, probably Czech refugees, who attempted to enter Palestine and were deported to Mauritius. There are also approximately 1000 Greek refugees. It is with respect to the first group that we have received the most unfavorable reports as to living and health conditions.

It would be appreciated if you would institute a check of this matter indicating the total number of refugees on the Island of Mauritius, what percentage of them are Jewish, and the general living conditions of these refugees with particular emphasis upon the prevalence of disease and malnutrition. You might also indicate what is needed by way of relief.

STETTINIUS
Acting
(GLW)

000539

DOCUMENT

GAR-14

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

Durban
DATED March 20, 1944
REC'D 1 p.m.

Secretary of State
Washington
9, March 20, noon

With reference to your No. 8, March 6, 6 p.m., according to information obtained from Jewish board of deputies there are 1500 Jewish refugees in detention camp at Bean basin, Mauritius. 600 from Czechoslovakia rest from Austria, Germany, Poland, Russia and Hungary.

Malnutrition is general as Mauritius is unable to meet demands. 50 expectant mothers suffer from lack of vitamins. Children in poor health and considerable eye trouble because of malnutrition. Some malaria and heart disease. Refugees from cold climate affected by tropical conditions.

Refugees not allowed to leave camp. Daily rations might be supplemented by purchases from Chinese shop but prices high and allowance of four shillings and six pence per month (repeat per month) limits purchases.

Requirements dried milk dehydrated vegetables and fruit and medicines for malaria and heart ailments. Clothes badly needed.

SMITH

000540

DOCUMENT

243

MMS
Anembassy
London
5256 fourth

Plain
July 4, 1944

Please promptly inform Mr. Albert Guigui and Mr. Rene Rous, Transport House, Smith Square, S.W.I., London, that Treasury Department has issued license No. W-2215 to French Relief Fund, Inc., New York, permitting them as disbursing trustees for French Relief Fund, Inc., to carry out in enemy territory a relief and evacuation program. The text of such license is identical to license No. W-2153 issued to United Czechoslovak Relief which was the subject of the Department's telegram of March 31, 1944, No. 2518, except that Section (2) of the instant license reads: "The total amount of funds paid out or set up in blocked accounts or otherwise obligated under the terms of this license shall not exceed the amount of dollars (or the foreign currency equivalent thereof) authorized by specific Treasury licenses to be used under this license." In this connection, Treasury has issued to French Relief Fund, Inc., a specific license for the remittance of \$150,000 to Mr. Guigui and/or Mr. Rous for purpose of financing the program contemplated in the instant license. These operations have the approval of the Department, the War Refugee Board and Treasury. For your guidance, pertinent comments and recommendations made by the Department in its telegram No. 2518, March 31, cited above, are fully applicable to license No. W-2215.

HULL

000541

DOCUMENT

244

FBN-592
Distribution of true
reading only by special
arrangement. (██████████)

Stockholm
DATED: July 11, 1944
REC'D: 10:30 p.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.
2569, July 11, 9 p.m.

THIS IS OUR NO. 48 FOR WRB.

We have had several discussions with Polish Minister here, and his staff, regarding the difficulties being experienced in providing suitable assistance to Polish refugees here, who approximate 500. Due to their limited vocational training, most of the employables have found work only on road construction or in the forests, at very low wages. Consequently, their income must be supplemented to provide them with even minimum living standards. The Polish Legation has established a Polish Social Welfare Bureau, but financial support from the Exile Government in London is so limited that even now only half the necessary funds are supplied and the balance is borrowed locally with the hope that London will cover. Swedish charitable organizations are helping but this assistance is somewhat limited.

The situation is further complicated by the fact that several additional Polish refugees, with the help of certain Norwegian organizations are coming in to Sweden from Norway weekly. The Polish Legation states that there are still approximately 6,000 Poles in Norway as compulsory workers or war prisoners, fairly large numbers of whom could be brought to Sweden if funds were available to finance the evacuation and to maintain them after arrival. Apparently the Polish Legation has made only limited efforts in that direction because of lack of funds.

On the basis of the foregoing discussions and a study of the financial requirements involved, the WRB may wish to investigate whether an organization can be found which is in a position to contribute \$15,000 monthly, for the next few months, to a general program of assisting Polish refugees here and to further the rescue of additional Poles from neighboring enemy-occupied territory. It should be added in this connection, that there are also approximately 300 in Finland who are stated to be in immediate danger. Any funds should be transmitted "Polska Social Ahjalpen for Flyktingar" (Polish Society for Refugee Help), which has an account at Skandinaviska Banken.

JOHNSON

DECLASSIFIED

000542

DOCUMENT

BJR - 667
Distribution of true
reading only by special
arrangement. [REDACTED] W)

Stockholm
DATED: July 18, 1944
REC'D: 10:39 p.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.
2668, July 18, 9 p.m.

55 FOR WAR REFUGEE BOARD.

We have explored extensively with Polen-Hjalpen of Malmo the nature of their relief activities in Poland and its facilities for extending its scope of operations. This organization is working very closely with the Polish and Swedish Red Cross and appears to have been effective in carrying out its operations. It is regularly sending food parcels, stamped Swedish Red Cross, to Poland and clear confirmation of delivery of these parcels to ultimate beneficiaries has been obtained. It has also been very active in sending relief supplies to Polish orphanages, nurseries and children's hospitals, in Warsaw and elsewhere, and due to good connections with appropriate persons inside Poland, it is understood to be obtaining remarkable results. These supplies have included paper clothing, condensed milk, vitamins, egg powder, other dried foodstuffs and nursery equipment. On several occasions, even recently, an entire railroad car of supplies has been sent to these children's homes, and it is stated proof of delivery has always been obtained.

While it is difficult to foresee to what extent the changing war outlook will alter current methods of Polish relief operations, it is clear that at the moment, at least, Polen-Hjalpen is operating actively with an established record of effectiveness. At the present moment it has received urgent requests from Poland for substantial amounts of paper clothing for children as well as for basic foodstuffs and vitamins. It does not have the funds to meet requirements in full and could make immediate use of \$25,000 to carry out its program. We have discussed Polen-Hjalpen with the Polish Legation here, which speaks most highly of its effectiveness and expresses the strong hope that American financial assistance can be obtained to enable the organization to carry out its current programs.

JOHNSON

DECLASSIFIED

000543

DOCUMENT
PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM SENT

FROM: American Embassy, Ankara
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATED: May 25, 1944
NUMBER: 950

Following is Ankara No. 63 from the Ambassador for the War Refugee Board.

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

I am informed by the Turk authorities that their information regarding treatment of Jews in Hungary is limited because of the fact that since former Minister Kallay took refuge in the Turk Legation in Budapest, the German Gestapo has guarded the building and contacts and movements of the Turk Minister and his staff have been severely restricted.

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

Two days ago an individual by the name of Joel Brandt, documented as the representative of the Jewish Community of Budapest, arrived in Istanbul and submitted to Barlas of the Jewish Agency a proposal which it is said originated with the Commissioner for Jewish Affairs, Eichman, to the effect that in exchange for two million cakes of soap, two hundred tons of cocoa, eight hundred tons of coffee, two hundred tons of tea, and ten thousand trucks Eichman would agree to stop the deportation and extermination of Jews in all areas which the Germans occupy and including Rumania, and he would further agree to permit the exit of Jewish limited numbers to Palestine and in unlimited numbers to Spain.

STEINHARDT

DECLASSIFIED

000544

DOCUMENT

247

ORIGINAL TEXT OF TELEGRAM SENT

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

FOR AMBASSADOR STEINHARDT'S ATTENTION, ANKARA, TURKEY.

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

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

Telegram No. 683
From: High Commissioner, Jerusalem
To: Foreign Office

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

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

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

As an alternative to complete annihilation of all Jews remaining in Hungary, Rumania, Czechoslovakia and Poland, the Nazis are ready to evacuate one million Jews from these countries to Spain and Portugal (though not, as they specifically stated, to Palestine). In return they require delivery of 10,000 motor lorries and certain quantities of coffee, tea, cocoa and soap. As an act of good faith they are prepared, once the offer has been accepted in principle to release first batch of five to ten

DECLASSIFIED

000545

thousand Jews before receipt of corresponding consideration. They are also prepared to exchange Jews against German prisoners of war. If the offer is rejected they will proceed with their programme of wholesale liquidation. The emissary must return to Budapest with a reply within a fortnight from May 19th.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I enquired whether the agency desired any other specific action than communications referred to in preceding paragraph pending

000546

Shertok's enquiries and report to His Majesty's Ambassador Ankara, and they replied in the negative.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

HULL

000547

DOCUMENT

248

ORIGINAL TEXT OF TELEGRAM SENT

FROM: Secretary of State, Washington
TO: AMEMBASSY, MOSCOW
DATED: July 7, 1944
NUMBER: 1641

SECTION ONE

Reference is made to Dept.'s 1460 of June 9 and 1529 of June 21 and to your cable 2184 of June 19. The following additional facts are now available.

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

(2) Gyorgy, who arrived from Vienna with Brandt on May 19, was taken into custody by Turkish officials on May 25, released in a few hours and departed for Cairo where he is held in custody with Brandt.

(3) Shertok of the Jewish Agency is in London pursuing conversations with officials of the British Government.

(4) Word has been received through the Jewish Agency, that the Gestapo are very angry about the failure of Brandt and Gyorgy to return to German territory. The Gestapo is alleged to have indicated that Brandt's journey was merely a preliminary to future discussions to be carried on in Lisbon by Schroeder, presumably a Gestapo agent. The British Government has proposed that Brandt and Gyorgy be permitted to return to Budapest with message that Allied circles are concerned with the fate of Jews and ready to consider any practicable scheme for relieving their fate and that Brandt understands that the Allies will convey their views through the protecting power and that the German Government might shortly expect to hear something through this source.

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

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

DECLASSIFIED

000548

(7) British Ambassador in Moscow has cabled the British Foreign Office suggesting that the information on the trucks will increase the possibility of a completely negative response from the Soviet Government. Nevertheless it is the feeling here that information with respect to the trucks should be presented directly at this time in order that the Soviet Government be fully informed. He also believes that Brandt and Gyorgy should not be permitted to return to Budapest until the attitude of the Soviet Government on this point has been determined.

(8) Two additional proposals for the release of Jews from enemy territory have been received through Stockholm and Bern, the details of which will be sent to you for transmission to the Soviet Government promptly.

SECTION TWO

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

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

You will understand the reluctance of the British and American Governments to shut the door completely to any offer. Other offers of this nature are expected and eventually one may be received which can be given serious consideration. It is our view that by appearing to explore such matters we not only have the possibility of saving lives while the discussions are going on, but also clearly leave the way open for further offers which we anticipate and which might possibly be made in good faith.

You should inform the Soviet Government that we are fully aware of the undesirability of such direct contacts with representatives of the German Government and we are searching for a method of rescue through the intermediary of the Swiss. Details of any practical proposal will be communicated to the Soviet Government and the Soviet Government will of course be currently informed of developments and no action will be taken without prior agreement with the Soviet and British Governments.

000549

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

Repeated to Ankara as no. 614 for Steinhardt; Cairo as no. 1737 for Tuck; and London as no. 5353 for Winant.

HULL
(GLW)

000550

DOCUMENT

249

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Embassy, Moscow
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATED: June 19, 1944
NUMBER: 2184

Reference is made herewith to Department's cable of June 9, No. 1460, and Embassy's cable of June 15, No. 2142, concerning proposals of the War Refugee Board.

There has been received by the Embassy from Vyshinski a secret note dated June 18 stating that there have been brought to the attention of the Soviet Government the contents of Embassy's note dated June 15, and that Vyshinski has been instructed by the Soviet Government to state that it does not consider it permissible or expedient to carry on any conversations whatsoever with the German Government on the questions which the note from the Embassy touched upon.

HARRIMAN

DECLASSIFIED

000551

AIRGRAM

FROM

Moscow

Dated: January 29, 1945.

Rec'd: February 17, 1945, 5 p.m.

Secretary of State,

Washington, D. C.

A-27, January 29, 1 p.m.

Department's telegram 35, January 6, 4 p.m. with reference to schemes for ransoming Jews in German hands.

Ambassador Harriman was not able before his departure from Moscow to give attention to this matter.

After giving careful consideration to the request made by the War Refugee Board, I am obliged to say that I do not feel that it would be in the interests of our Government to transmit this information to the Soviet Government. In view of the extreme suspicion with which the Soviet Government views all financial transactions with Germany conducted through Swiss channels and in view of the marked lack of enthusiasm with which communications on this subject have been received in the past, I feel that to impart this information to the Soviet Foreign Office would have the effect of undermining confidence here in the integrity of our economic warfare effort and would thus be definitely detrimental to our interests.

The Soviet Government is well aware of the sufferings being inflicted on victims of Nazi persecution of every race and nationality. Their own citizens have been done to death by the Germans in numbers which, they believe, run into the millions. Hundreds of thousands of their citizens are apparently still believed to be held in detention in Germany. Soviet circles feel that the Soviet Union through its war effort is doing the best that can be done to bring to an end this reign of terror and thus to relieve the sufferings of all these unfortunate people, Russians and foreigners alike.

The Soviet Government apparently does not believe, as a matter of principle, in dickering with bandits, and has generally

DECLASSIFIED

000552

taken the position with regard to its own people that the interests of the Soviet State and of the Allied powers in general override the interests of those groups who are unfortunate enough to fall into the hands of the enemy. The idea of ransoming any of these people by the payment of sums which can help the Germans to prolong their war effort will not only fail to appeal to the Russians but will be interpreted by them as a form of betrayal of general United Nations interests on our part. In particular they will fail to understand why these efforts should be directed to the relief of one category of victims of Nazi terror and not others. I am afraid that an explanation to the effect that the transfer of these funds to Switzerland was only a half measure and that we have not yet decided whether or not to release them, will not do anything to improve the impression which this communication would make.

I would therefore strongly recommend that this matter not be communicated to the Soviet Government.

KENNAN

000553

C
O
P
Y

DOCUMENT

251

July 27, 1944

TO: Mr. Stettinius
FROM: J. W. Pehle

Late in the afternoon of July 26, George Warren called to my attention a telegram from the British Mission in Madrid to the British Foreign Office dated July 20, and the reply of the Foreign Office thereto of the same date, both with respect to a proposed meeting between Dr. Schwartz of the JDC and a representative of the German authorities to take place in Spain or Portugal in the near future.

This same matter is also referred to in a cable from Ankara No. 1320 of July 20.

I promptly requested Warren to despatch a cable to Lisbon requesting the Embassy to instruct Schwartz not to have any meeting whatsoever with the German authorities pending instructions from Washington.

After carefully considering this matter it is our firm view that Schwartz should be given definitive instructions not to have any meeting with the German authorities. There is at least a reasonable chance that the Germans are attempting to maneuver us into a situation which would enable them to create suspicions in the mind of the Soviet Government that the British and American Governments are trying to establish an independent contact with the German Government, not limited to refugee matters. Particularly at this stage of the war it seems to me imperative that any possibility of this happening should be avoided. Secondly, even assuming that the Germans are in good faith willing to negotiate on refugee matters, cable No. 1320 of July 20 from Ankara indicates that the Germans are not interested in a purely financial arrangement but are going to insist on some supply of commodities. There is no disposition here or elsewhere in this Government to my knowledge to even negotiate on supplying the Germans with commodities. Thirdly, it is my view that no such meeting should be held without the prior approval of the Russian and British Governments. In view of the attitude which both of these governments have expressed and the time factor involved it seems clear that no such approval could be obtained.

Accordingly, I strongly urge that definitive instructions be sent which will effectively prevent any meeting between Schwartz and the German representative. I would also urge that the American Missions in Lisbon, Madrid and Ankara be advised of this action and the British be informed of our decision.

I am sending a copy of this memorandum to Assistant Secretary McCloy of the War Department for his information.

000554

MAE
Distribution of true
reading only by special
arrangement. (SECRET)

July 28, 1944
5 p.m.

EMBASSY,
LISBON

2112

FOR NORWEB AND DEXTER

With further reference to Department's 2101 of July 27 you are requested to advise Schwartz representative of Joint Distribution Committee that after thorough consideration of all available facts decision has been reached that Schwartz should not (repeat not) have any contact or communication with Schroeder or any other German agent at Lisbon or at any other place.

SEPTINIUS
ACTING
(GLW)

DECLASSIFIED

000555

DOCUMENT

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Legation, Bern
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATED: August 11, 1944
NUMBER: 5197

McGlelland sends the following for the War Refugee Board.

Reference is made herewith to Department's cable of August 2, No. 2656, and Legation's messages of August 3, Nos. 4972 and 4974, and of August 5, No. 5043.

There has just reached Switzerland several reports dated the end of July from reliable Jewish sources in Budapest (Kasztner, Komoly and Perez) which shed additional light on the present situation of Jews in Hungary with regard especially to ransom and emigration aspects of the problem. In spite of the preliminary reassuring news of the agreement between the ICRC and the Hungarian Government to allow Jewish emigration to Palestine and elsewhere and relief to Jews remaining in Hungary it now seems that ranking Gestapo agents of so called "Sondereinsatz Kommand" specially sent to Budapest to direct the deportation of Jews have no intention of permitting them to emigrate freely, especially to Palestine, if they can prevent it. After the attack on Hitler and following the rapid worsening of the German military situation, the Gestapo in Budapest shifted their interest from the biological aspect of Jewish extermination to the purely material benefits in goods, labor and money to be derived therefrom. The essence of their present attitude is contained in declaration of Gestapo Head to Kasztner to the effect that he wished to pump out the necessary labor from Hungary Jewry, and sell the balance of valueless human material against valuable goods.

On the other hand, the Hungarian Government led by Horthy apparently has been frightened not only into stopping deportation (July 9) but also into trying to make up for the unsavory role it has already played in the persecution and deportation of Jews by favoring their emigration and relief to them under the supervision of ICRC. Krausz of the Jewish Agency for Palestine accordingly has been permitted to set up an office in the Swiss Legation where they are actively preparing the emigration to Palestine of 8700 families previously mentioned.

We have already obtained Hungarian exit and Rumanian transit permission for the first convoy of 2000 people and it is reported that boats are available at Constanza. German exit permits from Hungary have not been granted and according to statements which

DECLASSIFIED

000556

the Gestapo chief made to Kasztner they will not be granted unless certain ransom terms are fulfilled.

When Joel Brandt's mission to Istanbul (please see Legation's cable of July 5, No. 4258) failed to produce concrete results and he did not return to Hungary but instead went on to Jerusalem, in the face of obvious German displeasure, desperate efforts were made by Jewish circles in Budapest to keep negotiations with the Gestapo going by raising goods and valuables from local sources to a value of 3 million Swiss francs and by stating that a credit of 2 million francs would be opened in Switzerland to cover purchase goods (tractors) there and in Slovakia (sheepskins). The affair of 40 tractors which Sternbuch brought to our attention (see Legation's message of July 26, No. 4802) was part of this deal which Link and Freudiger of the orthodox group at Budapest negotiated and relayed to Sternbuch. On the basis of these offers, the Gestapo in Budapest refrained from sending to Auschwitz during the initial period of deportations the following groups totaling 17290 souls.

1. 1690 people of whom the 1200 prominent Orthodox Jews and Rabbis mentioned previously seem to have been a part. This group was sent via Bratislava to Strasshof in Austria and later to the camp of Bergen-Belsen in Germany where they are now.
2. Approximately 15,000 persons were sent to unknown destinations in Austria to be kept "on ice" as was stated by the Gestapo; and 600 persons are still confined in Budapest.

These various offers were made as a stop gap in the desperate hope that in the meantime Brandt's negotiations would be successful and thus render superfluous these makeshift deals. As Kasztner writes, we were forced to enter upon such negotiations to win time or do nothing. Apparently he was further encouraged by a message dated June 30 from Barlas of the Jewish Agency in Istanbul saying that funds would be available for the prevention of deportation and for emigration.

The desire was expressed by Gestapo representatives in Budapest to meet Joseph Schwartz of JDC in Lisbon to discuss the terms of payment and release of 17290 Jews who were to be permitted to go to Spain according to the original agreement. After the attempt on Hitler's life, the meeting place was changed to Irun on the Franco Spanish border on orders from Berlin and following the unwillingness of Schwartz to meet them at all, the Germans agreed to meet Saly Mayer instead as a neutral citizen at Austro-Swiss border on or about the 13th of August. As proof of their "good faith" and on the insistence of Kasztner, the Germans also unconditionally agreed to release the convoy of 500 people from Bergen-Belsen which would be permitted to come to Switzerland.

000557

Finally assurances were given by the Germans that until the question had been discussed with JDC representatives no deportations of the 17290 Jews would take place.

A Gestapo agent on July 21 visited Jewish groups in Bratislava who assured him 300 tractors were available in Switzerland. A very favorable impression was created by this news with the Gestapo chief in Budapest, since as is reported by Kasztner, tractors are what are most desired and used here. Before Joel Brandt's departure, the Gestapo in Budapest had declared that they were willing to trade 1000 Jews for every 10 tractors and even went so far as to give assurance that if the delivery of the tractors was begun seriously "they would destroy the 'plants' at Auschwitz."

It is my personal opinion, in light of this information, that Saly Mayer should be permitted to meet Gestapo agents (provided that his own Government, with which the matter has been discussed, approves and grants the necessary border permits for German agents) in an effort to draw out the negotiations and gain as much time as possible without, if possible, making any commitments. I recommended to Saly and he concurred that preliminary message be sent to Budapest postponing the scheduled meeting for a few days pending the arrival of a letter to be dispatched on August 10 to Budapest by courier, the letter to state in turn that no meeting can take place before the arrival in Switzerland of the convoy of 500. In view of the rapidly changing military situation, any time gained is in favor of the endangered Jews. On the other hand, before Saly goes to such a meeting, we must have some very definite expression of your opinion, in case it is impossible to stall, whether any commitments whatsoever on the basis of either tractors, money or both can be entered upon. You should also bear in mind the fact that the Gestapo chief in Budapest has already declared that not one of the 40,000 Jews whose emigration to Palestine is now being planned will be allowed to depart from Hungary unless tractors are secured for them. Concerning the first sentence of Department's cable of August 2, No. 2656, I am not personally able to assume the responsibility for final decision in a serious matter of this sort. However, my own opinion is that apart from the maneuver to gain time, at this juncture it is impossible to embark upon a program of buying Jews out of Nazi hands, especially in exchange for goods which might enable the enemy to prolong the war. Further, there is no assurance that the Swiss Government would be willing to allow the entry of Jewish refugees from Hungary into Switzerland whose release had been secured by ransom payments.

HARRISON

000558

DOCUMENT

254

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM SENT

FROM: Secretary of State, Washington
TO: American Legation, Bern
DATE: August 21, 1944
NUMBER: 2867

From WRB for attention of McClelland.

Reference is made herewith to the Legation's August 11 cable No. 5197 relative to the Hungarian situation.

We have given full and careful consideration to the matters mentioned in cable under reference and for your information and guidance the following views of the Board are given below:

One. It is still the intention of this Government to pursue all means practicable to relieve the desperate plight of Jews in Hungary, however, ransom transactions of the nature indicated by German authorities cannot be entered into or authorized.

Two. If it is felt that a meeting between Saly Mayer and the German authorities would have possible effect of gaining time the Board does not object to such a meeting. In event meeting is held Saly Mayer should participate as a Swiss citizen and leader of Swiss Jewish Community, and not as a representative of any American organization.

The foregoing message has been repeated to Stockholm as No. 1671, London as No. 6661, and Ankara as No. 726 with this opening sentence: Following message is WRB's reply to Bern cable quoted in substance in Department's August 21 cable No. 2867 and is forwarded for your information.

HULL

DECLASSIFIED

000559

DOCUMENT

255

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM SENT

FROM: Secretary of State, Washington
TO: American Legation, Bern
DATED: August 30, 1944
NUMBER: 2990

TO MINISTER HARRISON AT BERN AND MCCLELLAND FROM WAR REFUGEE BOARD.

Reference your 5588 of August 26, 1944. Please express to Saly Mayer the Board's appreciation for the excellent manner in which he is handling a most difficult task.

The Board is in full accord with your view that it is of the utmost importance that every effort must be made to extend the period of negotiation and thereby gain time. The Board is confident that by adroit handling Saly Mayer can take further steps without entering into any irrevocable engagement, and can minimize the danger of negotiations being broken off. It should be made clear to Mayer that there is no possibility of obtaining any material of any military value. Mayer, however, is in a position to indicate that there are funds amounting to at least \$2,000,000 in the United States available to him, and it is suggested that negotiations looking toward the payment of monetary consideration be extended as long as possible in order to gain time. However, no commitment to make any such payment can be entered into without approval here. We are not at all convinced that large monetary payments to the German Government would be successful, and under present circumstances, we could not approve any such commitment.

Saly Mayer should inform the conferees that he can not (repeat not) hope to secure any authorization for Switzerland or any other neutral country to deliver additional goods to Germany without a more precise definition of the nature and quantity of the goods desired. Thus, he may properly ask them to submit, as you suggest, a list of their desiderata, so that he may be placed in a better position to negotiate for the necessary authorizations. This procedure should afford at least one and, if the conferees are not prepared to submit such a list at once possibly two additional adjournments. When such a list is submitted, Saly Mayer can prolong the negotiations by placing the discussions on a technical basis. The foregoing are but suggestions and the Board relies on Saly Mayer guided by you to employ every possible dilatory tactic to prolong the negotiations.

HULL

DECLASSIFIED

000560

DOCUMENT

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Legation, Bern
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATED: September 16, 1944
NUMBER: 6110


McClelland sends the following for the War Refugee Board.

Reference is made in the following to the Legation's July 24 cable No. 4729; and its August 26 cable No. 5588 and the Department's September 12 cable No. 3153.

Discussions with the Gestapo were continued by Saly Mayer (SM) on September 3, 4, and 5 at St. Margarethen. Only one man from the German side (member of SS) was present accompanied by Wilhelm Bielitz and Kasztner. As instructed, SM did not negotiate in name of JDC but only in the name of a private Swiss Jewish organization. For SM these prolonged discussions devoted to gaining time without making any commitments, were exceedingly difficult and trying, as he could tell the Germans only that the matter had been referred to "higher quarters" and that an answer was awaited daily. Meanwhile he invited the Nazis to present a detailed list of goods they desired and which might be found in Switzerland. Figures as high as one hundred million Swiss francs were talked of by the Nazis and they declared they would have to come to Switzerland for a stay of some days in order to compile exact list. Swiss authorities have been very reluctant to grant even temporary entry permits for such a purpose to present date.

My personal opinion and that of SM also, is that all time possible has now been gained and that in all probability the Gestapo has lost patience so that these negotiations can be considered as having lapsed, negotiations which after all were ultimately doomed to failure.

Actually SM negotiations did not primarily concern Jews still in Hungary but rather those still alive and deported outside of Hungary into territory occupied by the Germans.

HARRISON

DECLASSIFIED

000561

DOCUMENT

257

ORIGINAL TEXT OF TELEGRAM SENT

FROM: Secretary of State, Washington
TO: American Embassy, London
DATED: October 21, 1944
NUMBER: 8780

FOR WINANT AND MANN, LONDON, FROM WAR REFUGEE BOARD.

Kindly refer to Department's 5949 of July 28.

The Department considers it desirable to inform the British Government of the following. The Department has been advised that discussions have recently taken place on the Swiss border between representatives of the Jewish groups in Budapest, accompanied by reputed Gestapo agents, and Swiss citizens representing the Swiss Jewish community in an effort by the latter group to forestall, if at all possible, the continued deportation and extermination particularly of Jews from Hungary and Slovakia. The Swiss citizens involved in these discussions have acted in the belief that lives can be saved and precious time gained by prolonging discussion pending the solution of the problem by military action. No commitments or agreements have been made or authorized. The discussions are currently being reported to American Jewish groups and any significant developments will be reported to Moscow.

In Department's 2484 of October 20 the foregoing has also been transmitted to Moscow.

STETTINIUS
(Acting)

DECLASSIFIED

000562

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

November 18, 1944
Midnight

AMLEGATION
Bern

3932

TO HARRISON AND MCCLELLAND FROM WAR REFUGEE BOARD.

Careful consideration has been given to the subject matter
of your cable 7565 of November 16. This is WRB Bern cable 285.

The transaction outlined in your cable cannot (repeat not) be
supported by the Board in any way and further it is the Board's
opinion that no (repeat no) funds from any source should be used
to carry out such proposal.

The Board has carefully considered and recognizes the force
of your argument concerning bringing the negotiations to a close.
In this connection however the Board is confident that you will
take into consideration the fact that because of recent military
developments each day that can be gained is of increasing impor-
tance.

STETTINIUS
(Acting)

DECLASSIFIED

000563

DOCUMENT

259

CC-11
Distribution of
true reading only by
special arrangement.
[REDACTED] W)

BERN
Dated December 13, 1944
Rec'd 9:10 p.m.

Secretary of State
Washington

8118, December 13, 7 p.m.

FOR PEHLE OF WRB FROM MCCLELLAND

Department's 3932, November 18, WRB's 285.

Pursuing negotiations last referred to in Bern's 7565 November 16 Saly Mayer in course of my recent conversations with new representative which took place at St. Margaethen on Swiss German frontier during first week in December in an effort to get away from unfruitful commercial tenor of previous negotiations made following general proposal to Germans: Extermination of all "Schutznaeftlinge" particularly Jewish deportees, in German hands should cease. In return for this concession, which Becher at Budapest reports is already observing pending outcome of negotiations on former "goods" basis, and in response to German claims that maintenance of several hundred United States and Jews constitutes severe strain on their resources Mayer would procure the necessary supplies to keep Jews in German controlled areas alive. The proper distribution of such supplies would either be effected or at least supervised by ICRC.

It is significant to note that SS representative a new man named Crell sent to border by Becher did not reject Mayer's proposal "prima facie" but agreed to submit it to his superior and even supported. Fact that Becher and Shaver attained sufficient interest in these negotiations to dispatch Crell to talk to Mayer in an attempt to learn why negotiations had "bogged down" after relative failure of Kettlitz mission (his Swiss visa expired and he had to leave country at end of November) is also noteworthy.

Although I am personally skeptical that such a watered down proposal (from SS viewpoint) will hold any great interest for Germans certainly nothing has been lost in making it and a few more precious days have been gained.

It is, however, essential to favorable continuation of negotiations that Mayer know as soon as possible whether if Germans should accept this new proposition the credit of twenty million Swiss francs referred to in Department's 3578, October 20, WRB's 27 will be made available to him or if not in cash its equivalent

DECLASSIFIED

000564

in foodstuffs, clothing, shoes and medicines.

Mayer will undertake to persuade Germans to shift over to this new basis, that is allow Jews in their hands to be supported from outside and firmly believes that something may come of it.

On a purely realistic basis main advantages apparent to me such a proposal might offer Nazis would be to relieve them of responsibility of maintaining considerable number of Jews (one which they can hardly be said have adequately discharged in past) and possibly afford certain of them opportunity to claim preferential treatment from Allies after war for "humanitarian acts". Implementation of such a proposal if accepted could give rise to difficult question for instance whether Nazis could continue to use such Jews fed and clothed from outside as forced labor in support of German war effort.

I recommend, however, this new proposal of Mayer's to serious consideration of Board and hope that all possible support can be given to this most laudable effort on his part to bring negotiations around to an acceptable basis.

Your early answer would be appreciated.

HUDDLE

000565

DOCUMENT

260

Distribution of true
reading only by special
arrangement. (████████)

December 19, 1944
9 p.m.

AMLEGATION
BERN

4273

The following for McClelland is WRB 328.

Please refer to your No. 8118 of December 13, 1944. We have read with great interest your comments concerning the new turn which the negotiations have taken. We appreciate Mayer's courage and ingenuity.

As we understand it, the proposal is to furnish, from Switzerland, under appropriate supervision, relief to Jews in German-controlled territory. It is impossible, however, to determine from your cable the exact details of Mayer's proposal. In particular we have no way of knowing whether necessary supplies could be obtained in Switzerland. Nor are we able to determine whether adequate controls could be established through the ICRC or otherwise to assure that the supplies would benefit the Jews and not the Germans. Accordingly, it is obviously not possible at this point to determine whether the proposal can be approved. In any event the agreement of the principal Allies would presumably have to be obtained. If a satisfactory scheme can be worked out we feel sure that adequate funds will be available. You are authorized to advise Mayer accordingly.

We will appreciate being fully advised of the progress of these negotiations.

STETTINIUS

DECLASSIFIED

000566

DOCUMENT

261

RS-1884
Distribution of true
reading only by special
arrangement. (██████ W)

Bern
Dated December 28, 1944
Rec'd 6:24 p.m.

Secretary of State
Washington

8390, December 28, 6 p.m.

FOR FEHLE OF WRB FROM MCCLELLAND.

Department's 4273, December 19 WRB's 328 and Legation's 8118,
December 13.

I have discussed exhaustively with Saly Mayer and Joseph Schwartz present status of negotiations as reported in our 8118, in light of your reply, 4273. We reached conclusions that it is indispensable to satisfactory continuation of negotiations that the twenty million Swiss francs be transferred to us as soon as possible so that he may have something tangible to talk with.

Schwartz informs me that this sum will be forthcoming in the United States of America from Jewish sources if its remittance is approved by the competent authorities.

The twenty million should naturally be sent on condition that they can only be spent under proper control by the ICRC for maintenance relief and emigration of Jews in German hands.

His proposal was made to Germans purely in principle, details as to source of relief goods, their quantity and shipping rhythm mechanism of ICRC control and similar questions being purposely left in abeyance so that their later elaboration might constitute a time-gaining device.

Schwartz is of opinion that there should be no rush about spending this money once here; and so much the better if supplies are difficult to find. On other hand if proposal is accepted by Germans and does reach point where supplies must be shipped twenty million francs worth of appropriate relief goods can certainly not (repeat not) be found in Switzerland. Such essential items as fats, clothing and shoes are well nigh unpurchasable here in necessary quantities. On a showdown supplies would therefore have to come from overseas.

It has been SM's main object to bring these negotiations around to an acceptable basis which could be freely submitted to our Government, our Allies and to neutral Governments such as Switzerland and Sweden and even be of a nature to list support and aid of all. I, therefore, recommend that basic proposal be discussed

DECLASSIFIED

000567

with our principal Allies and their agreement in principle obtained if possible.

If SM can be provided with the twenty million this will permit them to ask Crell or even Becher to come to Switzerland once more for further discussion and avoid breaking off negotiations by default. It will then become apparent whether Germans are willing to accept SM's new proposal in principle.

In light of past few months experience of these frequent conversations with these I distinctly feel they are worthwhile continuing as something further may come of them. The recent delivery to Switzerland of Hungarian group from Bergenbelsenrein forces this feeling.

Kindly inform me soon as possible whether the twenty million can be transferred.

HUDDLE

000568

DOCUMENT

262

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

January 6, 1945
5 p.m.

AMLEGATION
Bern

102

FOR MCCLELLAND FROM DEPARTMENT AND WAR REFUGEE BOARD.

Reference your No. 8390 of December 28, 1944.

This Government is authorizing the remittance of a special fund of twenty million Swiss francs by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee to Saly Mayer upon condition that no (repeat no) part of the fund may be expended or committed for expenditure without the express prior approval of this Government. The War Refugee Board is relying on you to take such steps as are necessary to see that this condition is carried out and you should report by cable the steps taken. Presumably, none of these funds could in any event be paid out without prior approval of our principal allies. The transfer has been approved solely in order that Saly Mayer may have something tangible with which to hold open the negotiations and for the gaining of more precious time.

The British and Russian Governments are being advised that the above-mentioned transfer of twenty million Swiss francs has been authorized under the condition specified.

Please keep Department and Board advised of any significant developments.

STETTINIUS

DECLASSIFIED

000569

DOCUMENT

263

ORIGINAL TEXT OF TELEGRAM SENT

FROM: Secretary of State, Washington
TO: American Legation, Bern
DATED: November 28, 1944
NUMBER: 4014

FOR MCCLELLAND FROM WAR REFUGEE BOARD.

We are advised that Sternbuch is of the view that thousands of Jews in enemy-occupied countries can be saved if large sums of money are made available. The Vaad Hahatzala has asked that a message be sent to Sternbuch indicating that they agree to send all funds necessary. Please discuss his plans with Sternbuch at once and send us your views.

THIS IS WRB BERN CABLE NO. 298.

STETTINIUS
(Acting)

DECLASSIFIED

000570

DOCUMENT

264

ASB-703
Distribution of true
reading only by special
arrangement ()

Bern
Dated December 9, 1944
Rec'd 10:15 a.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington

8045, December 9, 10 a.m.

FOR WRB FROM MCCLELLAND

I have discussed this matter (first referred to in last paragraph Legation's 6951, October 20) with Sternbuch. (Department's 4014, November 28; WRB's 298). It revolves around a trip which a certain former Swiss Federal Councillor, Musy took to Berlin during November on behalf of Mrs. Sternbuch in an attempt to locate and liberate some 200 Jews previously deported from Vittel, a great many of whom were relatives of the Sternbuch family. In spite of having been in personal touch with Himmler (so Sternbuch informed me), Musy was unsuccessful in his efforts to locate these people who are reputed to be in Auschwitz. On his return Musy intimated to the Sternbuchs that if a fund of from ten to twenty million Swiss francs were placed at his disposal he would be able to "arrange" (inference being by buying them out) the exit from Germany of a considerable number of Jews. In view of Musy's extremely questionable reputation here in Switzerland (he is generally spoken of as the potential Swiss Quisling) and the vagueness and unreliability of this whole "scheme" I cannot recommend that it be supported by the Board.

HUDDLE

DECLASSIFIED

000571

DOCUMENT

265

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Legation, Bern
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATED: February 17, 1945 (Received February 18)
NUMBER: 1069

US URGENT

The following message from McClelland for WRB and the Department is transmitted.

Reference is made to message of February 8 from the Legation, Number 881, and to Department's message of February 14, Number 703 - WRB's 403.

On the 16th of February I was told by Sternbuch (S) that he had been successful in securing a paper credit of 5,000,000 Swiss francs issued in his name by a reputable concern in Zurich, the fides Treuhand-Vereinigung. With the help of an international real estate manipulator, a certain Michel Olian, who is on our Proclaimed List and who is doing this in the hope of being removed from that List, it is certain, the foregoing was made possible. He had managed to secure 2,000,000 and Olian had guaranteed the missing three million francs, S stated.

Explanation was made by S that Musy appeared to be satisfied with this paper proof that he (S) was holding the 5,000,000 necessary, and Musy did not insist that this money be deposited in his name, at least for the moment. I am unable to recommend that I, as a member of the staff of the Legation, go on a joint account with Musy which would become known to Swiss authorities without doubt, in view of the highly unsavory and suspicious nature of Musy's own doubtful reputation and his negotiations with the Nazis. A joint account between Sternbuch and me might be an alternative plan. Should our Treasury issue a license allowing Vaad Hahatzala to remit to Switzerland \$937,000, in view of the fact that 20,000,000 francs are already being held by Saly Mayer and me to back up negotiations of this type, I anticipate a considerable amount of difficulty from Swiss authorities in obtaining conversion of this amount of money into Swiss francs. Sternbuch would prefer to die in his tracks rather than ask Mayer for funds, on the other hand.

It is certain that any discussion with the Swiss with regard to conversion of the \$937,000 for Sternbuch would react unfavorably on the entire rescue plan and would make it necessary to disclose the fact that hard cash is being demanded by Musy for actions which have been publicized widely in Switzerland during the past week as being humanitarian.

DECLASSIFIED

000572

However, Musy, who was to have returned on the 16th of February to Germany to pursue negotiations with a view to releasing additional convoys, at the last minute refused to go for the reason that Berlin (with which he was in telephone communication, he claims) reported that in the United States of America there had not been any favorable comment in the press regarding the praiseworthy humanitarianism of Nazis having released these Jews -- in fact no discernable press reaction at all. Sternbuch was reproached by Musy to the effect that the Government of the United States manifestly did not care whether Himmler released the Jews or did not release them. Accordingly, Musy insists that before he will go back, convincing evidence must be received by him to show in Berlin that the press of the United States is commenting favorably along the lines that the Nazis, as evidence of their change of heart, having at last seen the error of their ways, have now not only stopped the extermination of Jews, but are releasing them. However, Musy is not insistent that his role in this be mentioned personally.

Being afraid that the future success of the entire rescue program may be endangered by no press comment in the United States, Sternbuch and his colleagues are very much upset.

The above anxiety of Berlin for a favorable press reinforces my view that there is a great deal more behind this whole matter than release of Jews, and is highly suspicious.

HARRISON

000573

DOCUMENT

266

BG
Distribution of true
reading only by special
arrangement. [REDACTED] W)

January 25, 1945
Midnight

AMLEGATION
BERN

424

The following for Huddle and McClelland from Department and War
Refugee Board is WRB 381.

Information has reached us recently that Sternbuch has developed
a plan for the release of 300,000 Jews from Germany and German-
occupied territory in return for payments totalling \$5,000,000. The
Jews are to be released at the rate of 15,000 a month and payments
are to be made at the rate of \$250,000 a month. It is further
reported that sum of \$250,000 remitted from the United States by
Vaad Hahatzala is now on deposit in a Swiss bank in the name of
Sternbuch and is to be used for payment for the first shipment of
15,000 Jews expected shortly in Switzerland.

For your information, news reports from Bern similar to the
above reports on the Sternbuch plan and as yet unpublished have
been presented to us for confirmation.

Please advise Department and Board of any information you have
or can obtain on the foregoing.

GREW
(Acting)

DECLASSIFIED

000574

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: AMLEGATION, Bern
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATED: January 28, 1945
NUMBER: 605

See Department's 424, January 25, WRB's 381 and Legation's 8045, December 9

From McClelland for WRB

For the purpose of clarifying what I deem a grave and dangerous incorrectness of data reported to the Board concerning Sternbuch's (S) plan, the subject as S recently reported to me is as given in the following paragraphs:

At the instigation of S Musy (M) approximately January 10 undertook a second journey to Germany in behalf of rescuing surviving Jews who were in the possession of the Nazis. I am advised by S that a personal invitation from Himmler (H) extended in writing by German Legation at Bern which S claims to have seen was in the possession of M. January 17 on M'S temporary return to Switzerland to report to S he (M) claimed that on the evening of January 15 in the neighborhood of Western Front he had dinner with H in company with several high SS generals, including Schellenberg. M had secured blanket permission from H as a preliminary concession for the release to Switzerland of all Vittel detainees "whose location could be ascertained." Stated as proof of this that two of Mr. Sternbuch's kinspeople who were located would be delivered at the latest to Switzerland by January 23 which has not occurred as yet.

M strongly maintains, according to S, that he, M, will by political arguments along the line that release of Jews so near the end of the war will be in the interest of Germany and may secure more favorable treatment for the country from the Allies, persuade Germans to release Jews still surviving. The reputation of M is that of being a Naziphile on anti-Communist grounds and interested in obtaining compromise peace for Germany before it is too late and the Bolsheviks overrun the country. The rehabilitation of his personal political reputation in Switzerland is also of interest to M. I am repeatedly assured that M is not interested in offering Nazis money or in getting it for himself. However, S made the admission that he advanced M 50,000 Swiss francs for travel expenses which included purchase of automobile in Germany apparently.

From reliable source I understand that on his first journey M collected 10,000 francs from Mr. Matossian because he was successful in freeing Matossian's grandson from a German concentration camp

DECLASSIFIED

000575

and bringing him back in October to Switzerland. Matossian was informed this ten thousand was also for the purchase of an automobile.

S replied when I informed him this appeared somewhat excessive that it was M's intention to pay him back whatever amount was not spent for the expenses of his journey.

I know nothing of the whole payment and delivery scheme which your 424 reported and denial that any such financial arrangement had been arranged was vigorously made by S. It is my inclination to believe of certain newspapermen in Bern the information which the Board received. It is my opinion that since S knows perfectly well that such a straight, large scale ransom scheme would be entirely unacceptable, he would not dare to become involved in any such financial scheme.

There is enthusiasm and skepticism on the part of S-- enthusiasm because he believes that for the first time direct, personal contact has been established with Himmler concerning the question of the Jews, and skepticism in MS efficacy which he will believe only when arrival of trains in Switzerland actually begin.

On the twenty-first of January ostensibly for additional negotiation with Himmler, M returned to Germany.

My personal judgment is still reserved in regard to the entire affair.

HUDDLE

000576

DOCUMENT

268

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Legation, Bern
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATED: February 8, 1945
NUMBER: 881

US URGENT.

The following message is from McClelland for WRB.

Reference Department's 385, January 23; WRB's 377; Department's circular cable June 14, 1944; Department's 1168, April 6, 1944 and Legation's 605, January 28, 1945.

Legation's 605 previously reported the entire matter of the Musy negotiations which have come into considerably sharper focus since the third of February when Sternbuch told me that Musy had come back on the first of February from Germany and had reported that his endeavors to induce Himmler to release Jews had been successful and that, on or around February 8, a first convoy of some 1200 individuals would arrive at the Swiss frontier. On February 6 this convoy was to depart from the Dresden area. When Sternbuch requested that I bring up the question of Swiss permission for their entrance into Switzerland, I did this personally with the Chief of Federal Police, Dr. Rothmund, on the third of February, reaffirming the interest of our Government in such rescue work and recommending that the Swiss make preliminary preparations for the reception and housing of this group if it should actually reach the Swiss border. The Police Chief stated he would take the necessary measures and brought up the problem of whether our Government's assurances concerning the evacuation from Swiss territory of Jewish refugees from Hungary to Allied regions would hold good for a group from Germany such as this. To this I replied that while I had no specific instructions to this effect, I thought our Government would extend its guarantees to include such groups from Germany. (See assurances given in Department's circular June 14, 1944, and reported on basis of President's statement of March 24, 1944 in Department's 1168, April 6, 1944). Since Musy himself later stated to me that this was to be the first of a series of like convoys, this is a particularly important point on which I should welcome the Board's advice as soon as possible. If the military situation in Germany permits, others would follow at intervals of approximately a week.

In later talks with the Federal Police of February 7, this question of evacuation by us was raised again.

I talked at length with Musy, Sternbuch and Bott on the 6th of February, and they informed me as follows:

DECLASSIFIED

000577

Himmler has been induced by Musy to release all Jews as yet surviving in German controlled regions, particularly those not suited for labor, within practical limits. SS General Schellenberg, who is one of the top SS triumvirate immediately under Himmler, strongly seconded Musy, according to the latter. Musy describes Schellenberg as a really good man and as his own particular friend. With regard to Himmler, he was very much more interested in the entire proposal this time than on Musy's previous trip in November 1944 (*) coming, if this rescue action was to be initiated by first convoy of 1200.

In addition, Musy stated that Himmler and the SS in general were prepared to drop all endeavors to obtain compensation in goods in return for Jews released as they now realized the impracticability of this.

A token compensation payment of five million Swiss francs which was to be deposited to an account in Musy's name with a Swiss bank, after delivery of first convoy, was the only string attached. The only bank which Musy declared would be acceptable to him was the Swiss National Bank. He also assured me that this money would stay in Switzerland and he intimated that in all probability the Nazis would release it to the IGRC as an additional gentlemanly "gesture" some time in the future. The five million is expected to be supplied by Sternbuch.

I did not press Musy for an explanation of the purpose behind this token deposit at the request of Sternbuch, since he was eager not to make an issue of the money question at this critical point because he feared that Musy might be insulted and thus the successful outcome of the entire affair would be endangered.

In private, Sternbuch admitted to me that he was not clear as to the reason for this deposit. Although there are a number of possible explanations, none of them is satisfactory and it is most unclear to me. Musy's accepting money for himself, above and beyond rather stiff travel expenses, is not in harmony with his evident intention of playing the role of an heroic rescuer and thus rehabilitating himself in Switzerland in a political way.

My advice to Sternbuch was to endeavor to stall as tactfully as he could on this money issue until we at least found out whether the first convoy reached the Swiss frontier.

Information that a convoy of 1200 individuals was at Konstanz was given the Federal Police by the German Legation at Bern on February 6, at 6 p.m. They arrived February 7, about noon, in Switzerland. This convoy is made up of 1210 individuals, including some 58 children under twelve, but it is composed mostly of adults about equally divided between men and women.

000578

At present this convoy is in St. Gall under Swiss Army control and seems to be in fairly satisfactory physical condition in contrast to exchanges from Bergen-Belsen, according to preliminary reports.

It is stated in an unconfirmed report that they come from Theresienstadt and as the convoy was to leave from Dresden which is only a short distance from Theresienstadt, this is geographically possible. As yet there are no exact details available regarding composition of the group with respect to nationality, documentation end.

With regard to the broader phase of Musy's negotiations with SS, and in particular Musy's reference to having received support from Schellenberg throughout, I believe it of interest to advise the Board that the Chief of the Swiss Army Intelligence, Masson, informed me on February 6, quite independently of Musy, that Schellenberg had recently indicated to Masson through an intermediary that he, Schellenberg, was interested in doing something regarding release of Jewish refugees.

Sternbuch and I cannot get away from the impression that Musy's negotiations with Himmler have not been confined to the Jewish problem which after all cannot be of major importance to Himmler, in view of Germany's present military situation. It is possible that the release of the Jews may be the forerunner of proposals of much greater importance to the Germans.

You will find it interesting to note that Musy also has been in touch with the French Embassy in Bern and in addition to effecting the release of the Jewish group of 1210, has also effected the release of some 540 French men and women, presumably political prisoners. On the night of February 7 this French group arrived at the Swiss border and they will be rerouted through to France by the Swiss.

Musy was also successful in liberating a group of nine Swiss nationals, which the Germans imprisoned on espionage charges, from German prisons. For over a year the Swiss Government has been attempting in vain to secure release through conventional diplomatic channels of these people. Of this group, four have arrived in Switzerland up to now.

Of course, Embassy will keep you posted with respect to any additional interesting developments in this entire Musy question, and in the meantime, would be grateful for your advice concerning evacuation of this convoy of 1210 individuals, and later groups which may arrive, to Allied territory.

As yet Embassy has heard nothing from SHAEF in Paris relating to evacuation of 1672 Hungarian Jews.

HUDDLE

000579

DOCUMENT

269

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

February 28, 1945.

Dear Sirs:

Your application for a Treasury Department license permitting you to remit \$937,000 to Isaac Sternbuch, St. Gallen, Switzerland, in connection with the Musy negotiations for the release of Jews from enemy territory was considered at a meeting of the members of the War Refugee Board held today.

The Board disapproved the issuance of a license permitting such remittance to Isaac Sternbuch. However, the Board did approve the issuance by the Treasury Department of a license permitting you to remit this sum to a joint account in a Swiss bank in the names of Isaac Sternbuch and Roswell McClelland, Special Representative of the War Refugee Board, provided that the license clearly stated that no part of this sum could be expended or committed for expenditure except as authorized by specific action of the War Refugee Board.

It was the further unanimous decision of the Board that under no circumstances could this money be used for the payment of ransom. However, it is the understanding of the Board that legitimate expenses may be involved in the release of detainees from enemy territory and the Board is prepared to consider requests for its approval of any payments upon presentation of full details concerning the purposes for which such expenditures are to be made.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) William O'Dwyer
William O'Dwyer
Executive Director

Vaad Hahatzala Emergency Committee
of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis,
132 Nassau Street,
New York 7, N. Y.

000580

DOCUMENT

270

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

March 2, 1945
Noon

AMLEGATION
BERN

907

The following for Harrison and McClelland from Department and War Refugee Board is WRB 426.

Reference your nos. 881 of February 8, 1069 of February 17, and 1175 of February 22, 1945, and Department's no. 703 of February 14, 1945.

The members of the War Refugee Board met on February 28th to consider the application of the Vaad Hahatzala Emergency Committee for a license to remit the Swiss franc equivalent of \$937,000 to Isaac Sternbuch. The Board disapproved the issuance of a license permitting such remittance to Sternbuch. However, after careful consideration, the Board unanimously approved the issuance by the Treasury of a license permitting the Vaad Hahatzala to make the desired remittance to a joint account in a Swiss bank in the names of Isaac Sternbuch, representative in Switzerland of the Vaad Hahatzala Emergency Committee of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada, and Roswell D. McClelland, representative of the War Refugee Board, provided that the license clearly stated that no part of the sum could be expended or committed for expenditure except as authorized by specific action of the War Refugee Board.

It was the further unanimous decision of the Board that under no (repeat no) circumstances could any part of this money be used for the payment of ransom.

However, it is the understanding of the Board that legitimate expenses may be involved in the release of detainees from enemy territory and the Board is prepared to consider requests for its approval of any such payments in the present case upon presentation to the Board of full details concerning the purposes for which such expenditures are to be made.

Please advise Sternbuch of the foregoing. Text of Treasury license being issued to Vaad Hahatzala will be sent to you in separate cable.

GREW
(Acting)
(GHW)

DECLASSIFIED

000581

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

March 21, 1945
8 p.m.

AMLEGATION
BERN

1149

The following for McClelland is WRB 467.

At the request of the Vaad Hahatzala the War Refugee Board has approved an amendment of Treasury license No. W-2426, text of which was cabled to you on March 6, 1945 (Department's no. 958). The amendment provides that, solely with respect to the 1,000,000 Swiss francs remitted by Vaad Hahatzala on March 10 to the joint account of Isaac Sternbuch and Roswell McClelland, expenditures may be authorized by you as representative of the Board, without prior reference to the Board in Washington, for such legitimate expenses as transportation, documentary fees, food and other supplies and services.

In approving this amendment, the Board holds you responsible to see to it that no (repeat no) part of the 1,000,000 Swiss francs is used for ransom. As you were advised on March 2, the members of the Board unanimously decided that no payments for ransom will be authorized.

Please keep Board fully informed of any payments which are authorized by you under this amendment. The text of the amendment will be sent in separate cable.

GREW
(Acting)
(GHW) FMA

DECLASSIFIED

000582

DOCUMENT

272

CC-991
Distribution of true
reading only by special
arrangement. (██████████)

Bern
Dated March 31, 1945
Rec'd 6:08 p.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

1905, March 31, 1 p.m.

FOR WRB FROM MCCLELLAND

Department's 1149, WRB'S 467, March 21 and 1204, WRB'S 477,
March 24.

Sternbuch has been informed of this amendment to Vaad Hahatzala's
license W-2426 governing only one million francs.

Pursuant to this amendment and after thorough examination of
purpose, I have authorized Sternbuch to remit 500,000 Swiss francs
to ICRC to cover eventual food purchases and transportation charges.
ICRC has agreed to furnish me with detailed information concerning
all such purchases or charges.

HARRISON

DECLASSIFIED

000583

- 905 -
DOCUMENT

BEP
Distribution of true
reading only by special
arrangement. (S) W)

July 27, 1945
6 p.m.

273

War Refugee Board
AMLEGATION
BERN

2402

The following for McClelland is WRB 541.

Reference your No. 3591, July 17.

Board has been advised that pursuant to agreement between JDC and Vaad Habatzala, Sternbuch is to receive 100,000 Swiss francs of the approximately 3,500,000 Swiss francs still in special joint account in Sternbuch's and your names. JDC authorizes you with Board's approval to receive the aforementioned balance less 100,000 Swiss francs to be transferred to Sternbuch, and to transfer this amount to account of Saly Mayer.

GREW
(ACTING)
(GHW)

SECRET W

DECLASSIFIED

000584

DOCUMENT

274

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Legation, Stockholm
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATED: June 28, 1944
NUMBER: 2362

Information has reached Olsen that several approaches have been made locally by certain influential German officials connected with Baltic affairs on the general proposition of freeing Jews in Latvia against a cash consideration. We allowed the situation to develop and it resulted in the following concrete proposal.

All Jews in Latvia (a guaranteed minimum of 2,000) would be free from ghettos and allowed to come to Sweden against a cash payment of 2 million dollars (revised later to 2 million Swedish kronor). This amount was to be deposited in Riksbank subject to the conditions as follows.

A. Guaranteed release of these funds when and if refugees arrived safely in Sweden.

B. Funds could be used without restriction for purchase of certain supplies other than war materials, such as medicines, Red Cross supplies, et cetera.

C. Balance of funds available for transfer to German clearing. The group would require assurances from Sweden, in turn, that these refugees would not be allowed to spread anti-Nazi propaganda.

These discussions were communicated to the Swedish Foreign Office and it had advanced the following information regarding the three individuals involved. The most important individual is Kleist, said to be Himmler's man in the Baltic and reputedly one of the cleverest intelligence operators in Germany. He is also connected with the German Red Cross. The Foreign Office has had some experience with him in that, contrary to strict orders from Ribbentrop, Kleist facilitated escape to Sweden of certain Swedes in the Baltic. The name of the second individual is Boening, and he is considered somewhat of a mystery to the Foreign Office, although he is known to represent Kleist in Sweden on various matters. The third and last individual is named Klaus. He is stated to have been a former member of the German Military Intelligence but recently he asked the Swedish Foreign Office to consider him a political refugee, based on the fact he is considered a Jew by the Germans. From other sources we are informed that at least on previous occasion Klaus obtained funds from individuals in Sweden on the promise of rescuing certain Jews in Europe; he never fulfilled the promise.

DECLASSIFIED

000585

On subsequent approach, it was intimated by this group that very little, if any, of the 2 million Kronor would go into the German clearing, or even to buy Swedish goods for Germany. Instead, they would use some of the funds to bribe certain minor German officials in the Baltic, and the three would pocket the balance. It was suggested by Olsen, simply to explore the mysterious background of these negotiators, that the German group be informed that it was impossible to raise the money in Sweden and then to ask whether there was any objection to exploring the possibilities of securing American funds. This could be done only by raising the problem with Olsen at the American Legation who probably would want to get all the details directly. It was then stated by the group to this proposal, that money was not necessarily a consideration, that perhaps no money at all would be needed. The important consideration was stated to be that the Swedish Foreign Office must express a strongly sympathetic attitude towards this rescue operation, a willingness to receive these refugees gladly, and to promise that the refugees would not agitate against the German authorities. While baffling and not a little fantastic in scope, the foregoing situation presents the following interesting intelligence aspects. If the government of Germany is behind these feelers, it becomes a simple ransom proposition from which they would hope to trap us into a series of other extortions on a much larger scale. We know that the Germans are extremely pressed for foreign exchange and are experimenting with all possible devices to ease the situation. Too, if German authorities are behind these negotiations, they may be setting a trap for anti-Jewish propaganda in the United States - playing these refugees against prisoners of war, et cetera. On the other hand, the individuals involved may simply be making a last minute effort to purchase good will in the United States and Sweden. (The Swedish Foreign Office believes this latter to be the true basis of the feelers made locally.) At least Kleist is a marked man and the situation in the Baltic may have prompted him to look towards the immediate future.

Treasury should be informed and also War Refugee Board as our No. 41.

JOHNSON

000586

DOCUMENT

275

FROM: AMLEGATION, Stockholm
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATED: July 3, 1944
NUMBER: 2419

Repeat to WRB as our 43.

This message is a supplement to Legation's 2362, June 28, 10 p.m. (WEB No. 41). Through intermediaries Olsen and Boening had a consultation. Olsen asked first as to what was Boening's capacity in Sweden and Boening answered that approximately three years ago, as special trade negotiator, he came here to the German Legation. His explanation was that it was much like the recent Griffis mission. He added that for the last two years he has not been officially connected with the Government of Germany and has business interests of a private personal nature, in connection with which he also represents certain Kleist interests. The question was asked by Olsen as to what was the status of Kleist and Boening answered that up to less than a year ago Kleist had been Ribbentrop's special representative in connection with the civilian administration of Poland and the Baltic countries, but that with von Ribbentrop he had had severe disputes as to policy and had handed in his resignation. It was added that since then Kleist had not been officially connected with the Government of Germany although it was explained that it was quite plain that he had close personal connection with important authorities of the Government of Germany.

Reference was then made by Olsen to the discussions which Boening had been having with certain Swedes regarding the possibility of evacuating all the Jews who are now in the Baltic countries to Sweden and that, as a War Refugee Board representative, it would be absurd for him to disclaim his grave concern with the safety of these individuals. However, in light of the fact that such an operation most certainly would require the authoritative sanction of the Government of Germany, and in view of the well-known policy of Germany towards Jews and the severity with which this policy is being executed by the German Government, Boening was asked how he or Kleist were optimistic that an arrangement involving an exchange of humanitarian acts would be accepted. Inquiry was made by Olsen as to what kind of an exchange he had in view and as a possibility the following idea was advanced by Boening. Eagerness would be expressed by the Swedish Red Cross to evacuate the Jews from the Baltic countries and regarding this matter would make the correct approaches. To the Germans the Swedish Red Cross, as a counterbalancing act of humanity, would offer certain relief operations such as non-strategic medical supplies, beds, chairs etc. for its bombed-out civilians. It was stated by Boening that the whole matter could be so controlled that no military considerations of any kind would be involved. It was also stated by

DECLASSIFIED

000587

Boening that both Kleist and he were of the opinion that this would be of interest to the Germans. The impression received by Olsen was that with at least certain of the German officials the propositions may have in fact been cleared in principle. There could be developed nothing more as to what may be behind the discussions so far as concerns the Germans or as to the motives of these persons in submitting the proposal.

JOHNSON

000588

DOCUMENT

276

FBM
Distribution of true
reading only by special
arrangement. (S) (W)

July 10, 1944
9 p.m.

AMLEGATION,
STOCKHOLM

1365

The following WRB cable 45 is for Olsen.

The substance of your 2362 of June 28 is being communicated to the British and the Russians in accord with policy to do so with all such proposals no matter how dubious their nature or origin. The following points are not clear and would appreciate any information you may be able to supply: (a) whether financial consideration is still deemed essential, and if so, whether the same would be for the benefit of individuals or Germany; (b) why the offer deals only with approximately 2000 Jews when available statistics indicate that over 95,000 resided in Latvia prior to the war (this might elicit some information as to the fate of the others; it might also tend to emphasize the enormity of the crimes involved, and thus perhaps to increase the group's desire to be helpful); (c) the manner in which and the persons by whom the evacuees would be selected; (d) the means by which the evacuees would be transported to Sweden; and (e) what guarantees or evidence of good faith and effectiveness are available. Would also appreciate any further information you may have as to identity of three individuals named. Is there any possibility that Krause is Krause of Anderson report?

Your 2362 is subject to construction that all that may be required for release of 2000 is the expression by the Swedish Foreign Office of a strongly sympathetic attitude towards this rescue operation, a willingness to receive these refugees gladly and to promise that the refugees would not agitate against the German authorities. If this interpretation is correct, you should urge the Swedish Foreign Office to take the required steps without any reference to this Government or its interest in the operation. Any refugees of the kind described arriving in Sweden as a result of this operation would come within the guarantees and assurances made in Department's 749 of April 25, WRB's 4.

With reference to form proposal takes in your 2419 of July 3, your 43 to WRB, Swedish Red Cross should be fully informed and requested to endeavor to secure definitive terms and conditions from Boeing and other interested parties. In so doing the Red Cross should make no (repeat no) reference to this Government or its interest in any discussions, negotiations or agreement that might ensue.

DECLASSIFIED

000589

Please keep the Department and Board fully advised of developments. Please express to Boheman the sincere appreciation of the Department and the Board for the information contained in your 2412 of July 1.

HULL
(GLW)

000590

DOCUMENT

277

EM-799
Distribution of true
reading only by special
arrangement. [REDACTED] W)

Stockholm
Dated July 15, 1944
Rec'd. 11:30 a.m.

Secretary of State
Washington

2621, July 15, 10 a.m. (SECTION ONE)

Following supplements Legation's 2419 of July 3, noon and
Legation's 2362 of June 28, 10 p.m. and is our no. 52 for War
Refugee Board in response to inquiries raised in WRB 45
(Department's 1365 of July 11, 8 p.m.)

a. Olsen's discussion with Boening developed no question of
financial consideration, simply humanitarian exchange such as
certain relief supplies to Germany's bombed-out civilians. It may
be that eventually the question will be raised of remuneration to
Boening, Kleist and Klaus for arranging the matter but even that
is disclaimed by them at this stage since they are playing heavily
their humanitarian sympathies.

b. Our best information obtained from Latvian refugees is
that there are only 3200 Jews in Latvian concentration camps at
the present time. Most of these are stated to be Latvians although
there are a few German and Central European Jews.

JOHNSON

DECLASSIFIED

000591

KEL-806
Distribution of true
reading only by special
arrangement. (W)

Stockholm
Dated July 15, 1944
Rec'd 11:57 a.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

2621, July 15, 10 a.m. (SECTION TWO)

and according to reports by Andersen, approximately 50 American
and British Jews.

(C) The question of selecting evacuees disappeared in the
last discussion since basis of discussion was evacuation of all
Jews in Latvian concentration camps.

(D) It was understood that evacuation could probably be
carried out by Swedish Red Cross in Swedish vessels.

(E) Throughout the various discussions during which the Ger-
mans shifted from one consideration to another, it was constantly
emphasized by Boening that no delivery of the considerations agreed
upon would be necessary until the Jews had arrived in Sweden.

The guarantees of the Swedish Foreign Office, mentioned in
Legation's No. 2362 were not mentioned in final discussion and
presumably were abandoned in favor of proposals with respect to
Swedish Red Cross mentioned in Legation's 2419. It is repeated
that the basis of these discussions has shifted from one considera-
tion to another.

JOHNSON

DECLASSIFIED

000592

EM-845
Distribution of true
reading only by special
arrangement. (b)(7)(D)

Stockholm
Dated July 15, 1944
Rec'd. 2:30 p.m.

Secretary of State
Washington

2621, July 15, 10 a.m. (SECTION THREE)

and probably will be subject to other revisions if further discussions are held. At present time, however, consideration advanced for release of Latvian Jews is that involving Swedish Red Cross. Will raise the matter with Swedish Red Cross along lines suggested in WRB 45 but believe that it is the type of proposal that can be discussed only with Count Folke Bernadotte, chairman, who is temporarily away on vacation. No time will be lost by deferring discussions until his return since both Kleist and Boening are in Berlin and won't be back for a week.

Will endeavor to obtain additional details regarding Kleist, Boening and Klausé. The first two are said to be well known to Count Bernadotte because of Red Cross activities. Klausé should not be confused with Krause who is prominently identified with murder of Latvian Jews. Klausé has resided in Sweden more or less permanently for past two or three years.

(END OF MESSAGE).

JOHNSON

DECLASSIFIED

000593

DOCUMENT

278

FHH-116
Distribution of true
reading only by special
arrangement (W)

Stockholm
Dated September 11, 1944
Rec'd 3:10 a.m., 12th

Secretary of State,
Washington.

3565, September 11, 10 p.m.

German group mentioned in our number 41, 43 and 52 for WRB (Legation's 2362 of June 28, 10 p.m.; 2419 July 3, noon and 2621 of July 15, 10 a.m.) have recently renewed their approaches with respect to freeing Baltic Jews against 2,000,000 Swedish kronor of civilian relief supplies for German bombed-out population and a concrete proposal allegedly will be advanced this week with Berlin approval. In the meantime it is stated the German authorities have issued strict orders to stop further Jewish persecutions in the Baltic countries.

We are also advised that Boeing returned to Germany for military service but was immediately released and sent to Bern. It is possible that he is involved in some of the German negotiations in Switzerland with respect to Jews, particularly Hungarian. Believe it highly desirable that there be a close interchange of information as to any such negotiations. This is our number 80 for WRB.

JOHNSON

DECLASSIFIED

000594

DOCUMENT

HM-485
Distribution of true
reading only by special
arrangement. (██████ W)

Stockholm
Dated October 14, 1944
Rec'd. 9:36 p.m.

Secretary of State
Washington

4187, October 14, 10 a.m. (SECTION ONE OF TWO)

Storch has informed us that Kleist (see last paragraph our 85 WRB) during his recent visit to Stockholm made the following statements: (1) It is impossible to buy release of Jews in Germany with money (2) His real mission here was to negotiate release of the 100,000 Estonians on Osel and to arrange for their entry into Sweden. (3) He was to take up on his return to Berlin general subject of release of Jews. He claims Swedes had put pressure on him to do something for the Jews and he expected to have some measure of success in Berlin as he wished to do the Swedes a favor.

(4) He claimed that in a recent Berlin meeting on the general subject of treatment of Jews following points were discussed: A. All Jews should be treated kindly now and endeavor made to prove to the world that they had never been abused, the idea being that surviving Jews who would be treated kindly would speak up for the Germans after the war. B. Remaining Jews should all be killed. This point was turned down. C. As the Germans cannot expect the Allies to treat them any better than they themselves have treated the Jews or the inhabitants of occupied countries the Germans must work out some plan other than A or B above, hence they are now considering the use of Jews as hostages. He claimed in this connection the Germans have not killed remaining Lithuanian Jews. 6.

JOHNSON

DECLASSIFIED

000595

EM-469
Distribution of true
reading only by special
arrangement. (S [REDACTED] W)

Stockholm
Dated October 14, 1944
Rec'd. 7:55 p.m.

Secretary of State
Washington

4187, October 14, 10 p.m. (SECTION TWO)

THIS IS WAR REFUGEE BOARD CABLE NO. 90

as was once intended but have taken them to work on East Prussian fortifications and are reserving them for possible use as hostages.

Five. Kleist is expected back here any day and hopes to have concrete plans to present before a conference consisting of Count Bernardotte, Professor Ehren Preis, Storch and Austrian representative.

Storch feels Kleist wants to convey impression at least he tried to do the Jews a favor so he may gain favor in Allied eyes. Storch wishes Iver Olsen in London to get in touch with Mr. Easterman or some other official of the World Jewish Congress there as he feels that organization is not clearly informed of the negotiations taking place here regarding the Jews.

(END OF MESSAGE)

JOHNSON

DECLASSIFIED

000596

DOCUMENT

280

NCP-968
Distribution of true
reading only by special
arrangement. (b)(7)

Stockholm
Dated March 7, 1945
Rec'd 2:22 p.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

TOP SECRET

876, March 7, Noon (SECTION ONE OF TWO)

On the basis of statements made by certain important Germans with whom Olsen has indirect contact, a real possibility appears to exist that within the next two weeks or so the Germans may make a fantastic offer with respect to Jews in German concentration camps. This offer is nothing less than the liberation of all such Jews except those engaged in vital war effort. From three separate German sources here Olsen has been informed that the Germans are laying groundwork to prove that the wholesale massacre of Jews had not been carried out by the Germans but by criminal elements in the occupied countries themselves. In order to emphasize this point it appears that according to statements made to Olsen, the German authorities are preparing to take the position that they are not interested in keeping the Jews in German concentration camps any longer, that in fact it has been a nuisance required for security reasons, and that they are prepared to release them and permit them to leave Germany if some neutral organization such as the Swedish Red Cross will provide the necessary transportation. The following are Olsen's sources of information:

One. Dr. Kerstner, German masseur living in Stockholm and first heard of when he joined Himmler during his stay in Helsinki. He has attended Himmler for several years and is not considered pro-Nazi in local circles. Kerstner states that ever since last October there has been considerable dispute within the German High Command as to the policy to be followed with respect to Jews. The severe attitude of General Daluge, Himmler's right-hand man, seemed to prevail, but Kerstner states that Daluge has now become entirely incapacitated as a syphilitic and paralytic and has been confined to a sanatorium. Before leaving for Berlin this week, he stated flatly that the Germans are now willing to release the Jews. He made reference to severe friction between Himmler and Ribbentrop, and Himmler's efforts to remove the latter from all influential posts. He also reported great controversy between Hitler and Himmler but that the latter remains completely and devoutly subservient to Hitler, even though Hitler, according to Kerstner, is at present a serious mental case.

DECLASSIFIED

000597

Two. Fritz Hesse, said to be an influential member of the German Foreign Office who recently arrived here from Berlin and has permission to stay until Thursday. Shortly after his arrival he made connection with Olsen's intermediary in previous discussions with the Germans on Jewish problems, and asked him to come over and talk with him at the Grand Hotel.

JOHNSON

000598

RP-1000
Distribution of true
reading only by special
arrangement. (W)

Stockholm
Dated March 7, 1945
Rec'd 3:00 p.m.

Secretary of State
Washington

876, March 7, noon. (SECTION TWO)

THIS IS OUR NO. 129 FOR WAR REFUGEE BOARD

Hesse stated that his sincerity and reliability could be confirmed by an internationally known Jew named Frederick Kuh, who, he said, was in London. He then made the categorical statement that the German authorities are prepared to release the Jews provided a basis can be found of working out all related problems. He evaded questions as to what the Germans would be likely to ask in return, but the definite impression was gained that Hesse was also interested in exploring war politics. Hesse also inquired whether a meeting could be arranged with Olsen, but added that he would communicate further on that point later.

Three. Dr. Klaus, Stockholm representative of Dr. Kleist, who has been contacted frequently in the past on these matters. Klaus states that Kleist, known to be an intimate of Himmler's will return to Stockholm from Berlin in a few days. He states that Kleist has completed his discussions with the German authorities and that the prospects are strong that the Germans will agree to the release of all (repeat all) Jews in German concentration camps. Klaus emphasizes that the basis of release will not be similar to that whereby certain Jews recently arrived in Switzerland from Bergen Belsen, which Klaus describes as nothing more than a ransom proposition. Klaus states that Kleist's negotiations with the German authorities have been exclusively on a humanitarian basis, but he is unable or unwilling to elaborate further.

Olsen considers that there is a peculiar pattern of similarity in the foregoing discussions and that something rather substantial may be brewing. He is exploring the situation carefully and would appreciate comments or suggestions from the War Refugee Board.

These discussions and the names of individuals involved have been brought to the attention of Engzell of the Swedish Foreign Office who is rather optimistic of the prospect of these negotiations resulting in at least a few thousand Jews being brought to safety in Sweden.

(END OF MESSAGE)

JOHNSON

DECLASSIFIED

000599

DOCUMENT

281

PEM-126
No paraphrase
necessary.

Stockholm
Dated March 28, 1945
Rec'd 9:12 a.m., 29th

Secretary of State,
Washington.

US URGENT

1186, March 28, 8 p.m.

As reported in our 876 of March 7, noon to Department (No. 129 for War Refugee Board) Felix Kersten went to Berlin in early March to render certain medical attention to Himmler. Prior to his departure certain individuals here provided him with the memorandum of questions to be raised concerning the status of Jews in Germany. These questions included the following points:

- (A) Assurances that food packages to Jews in German concentration camps were actually reaching destination;
- (B) Permission to have future distribution of food packages from Sweden to be supervised by Swedish Red Cross;
- (C) Number of Jews recently in Germany, broken down by number and location of each camp and data as to the nationality of such Jews;
- (D) Question of eight various categories of Jews, such as those with South American passports (presently under negotiation by Swedish Government);
- (E) General question of freeing larger groups of Jews against appropriate guarantees of transportation and support.

Kersten has now returned to Stockholm and has presented a rather incredible account of his discussions with Himmler which are presented below without comment.

He stated that at present there are about 350,000 Jews in Germany. He added that 8,000 of them have Palestine visas and probably would be released if Swedish Government took appropriate steps in the matter. He states that Himmler expressed a most sympathetic interest in Jewish problems, mentioning specifically the following:

- (A) Himmler was especially interested to know that the 2,700 Jews arrived in Switzerland and whether this group had commented favorably upon the delivery of food packages;

DECLASSIFIED

000600

(B) Himmler was receptive to the idea of placing Jews in specially arranged Red Cross camps with the administration completely under the jurisdiction of the Red Cross;

(C) Himmler called a meeting of all Jewish camp administrators for March 24 in order to give strict orders for the improved treatment of Jews hereafter. This will include the instruction that each camp leader hereafter will be held strictly accountable for the death of any Jew in his camp and will be required to file a full report of circumstances underlying any such death. Kersten added that, in his presence, Himmler dictated certain orders concerning the necessity of improved sanitary conditions in Jewish concentration camps;

(D) Himmler expressed a willingness to receive at once a special emissary from Sweden to discuss with him personally the Jewish problem. This was advanced with particular reference to a stateless Jew of Latvian origin (Storch, local representative of World Jewish Congress) who has been Legation's intermediary in several contacts of similar nature; and

(E) Emphasis was placed on the unfortunate results in case these discussions were used by the Allies as propaganda to portray German weakness. It was added that because of the delicate nature of the discussions as well as rather well-known mixed feelings in Germany with respect to Jews, the entire matter most urgently must be handled with the greatest discretion.

Kersten has made available two extraordinary documents. The first, an official SS stationery and purportedly signed by Himmler, reads as follows in translation:

"Dear Mr. Kersten, First of all please accept with these lines my thanks for your visit. This time, as always, I have been glad when you came and with old friendship placed your great medical skill at my disposal.

During the long years of our acquaintanceship we have indeed discussed many problems and your attitude was always that of the physician who, remote from all politics, desires the good of the individual human being and of humanity as a whole.

You will be interested to know that during the course of the past three months I have brought about the realization of an idea which we once discussed. Roughly 2,700 Jewish men, women and children were taken to Switzerland in two trains. This is in effect the continuation of the policy which my collaborators and I have consistently pursued for many years until the war and the resulting folly in the world made it impossible to carry it out. You know, of course, that I in the years 1936, '37, '38, '39, and '40, in collaboration with Jewish American associations, created an

000601

emigration organization which functioned very fruitfully. The two trains which traveled into Switzerland are the intentional resumption, despite all difficulties, of this fruitful procedure.

From a prisoners camp at Bergen Belsen there recently came the rumor, that a typhus epidemic of larger proportions had broken out. I immediately sent the hygienist of the SR, Dr. Mrugowski, there with his staff. It was a question of cases in the camp of spotted typhus which unfortunately occurs very frequently among people from the East, but the cases are to be regarded as under control, thanks to the best medical and modern methods.

I have the conviction that, by eliminating demagogism and superficialities, despite all differences and in spite of most bloody wounds on all sides, wisdom and logic must prevail and at the same time the human heart and the spirit of helpfulness.

It goes without saying that, just as I have done throughout all the past years in good times and bad, I shall gladly examine requests which you transmit or communicate to me in the humanitarian sphere and, whenever it is at all possible, shall decide them generously.

With my hearty greetings to your respected dear wife, to your children and especially to you, with old attachment, your (signed) H. Himmler."

The second, also on SS Headquarters stationery and signed by Himmler's adjutant, R. Brandt, reads in part (in translation) as follows:

"Worthy and Dear Mr. Kersten, I can give you the very welcome news that the Reichfuhrer-SS intends to fulfill the requests which you expressed a few days ago."

I am forwarding photostatic copies of the documents in question under secret despatch. The question of continuing indirect contacts of this nature is one regarding which I, as heretofore, would appreciate urgent instructions from the Department and War Refugee Board since Olsen and I are in agreement that such discussions are not without danger. In the past the principal merit of these discussions has been the time-gaining factor but the tempo of the war as well as the level to which this approach has reached suggest strongly that a basic policy and appropriate instructions are now most urgent. There is also the question of whether Storch should be permitted to go to Berlin. We are of the opinion based on our personal knowledge of Storch's capabilities that it would be most unwise for him to go unless accompanied by a topflight neutral thoroughly conversant with these problems who could dominate the discussions. This is apart from the over-all question of whether any such discussions should be held at all.

JOHNSON

000602

DOCUMENT

282

RP
Distribution of true
reading only by special
arrangement. (S) (W)

April 7, 1945
5 p.m.

ALLEGATION
STOCKHOLM

646

The following for Johnson and Olsen from Department and War
Refugee Board is WRB 344, and refers to your numbers 1186 of March
28 and 1235 of April 3.

Report forwarded in your 1186 greatly appreciated.

Department and Board approve the continuation of discussions
designed solely (repeat solely) to save the lives of Jews and other
victims of enemy oppression by means of relief supplies or evacuation
to safety. However, such discussions should be severed immediately
if, in the opinion of Minister Johnson, they become political in
nature.

Board and Department leave entirely to discretion of Minister
Johnson the question of continuing the indirect (repeat indirect)
contacts already made and the question of Storch's going to Berlin.

SEETINIUS
(GEW)

DECLASSIFIED

000603

DOCUMENT

LFG-1441
Distribution of true
reading only by special
arrangement. (██████ W)

Stockholm
Dated April 25, 1945
Rec'd 7:34 a.m., 28th

Secretary of State,
Washington.

1547, April 25, 8 p.m. (SECTION ONE OF TWO)

██████████ FOR DEPARTMENT AND WAR REFUGEE BOARD

Supplementing my 1235, of April 8, 8 p.m., and my 1186 of
March 28, 8 p.m.

Norbert Masur of local Mosaicszka for Forsamlingen and official
of the Swedish section of the World Jewish Congress proceeded to
Berlin on Thursday afternoon with Kersten for a discussion with
Himmler on the Jewish problem. The trip was without incident and
they were met in Berlin by Himmler's assistant Schellenberg. The
party proceeded to Kersten's estate approximately 80 km outside of
Berlin and were joined there by Himmler at approximately 2:30 a.m.
The discussion lasted until approximately 5 a.m., on Friday at which
time Himmler left. According to Masur, Himmler appeared in top form
in resplendent uniform and discussed the Jewish problem in a formally
pleasant and matter of fact manner. Masur stated his position as
previously made clear to Kersten and Schellenberg; that he had no
official status, had no authority to promise anything and was simply
a private Jew expressing the fears of all his people for the ultimate
fate of the Jews remaining in Germany.

Himmler reviewed the historical development of anti-Semitism in
Europe and particularly the efforts of his party to remove the
Jewish problem from the Reich. He reminded Masur that he himself
(Himmler) had pressed the policy of removing Jews from Germany
without violence and that he in 1935 had formed an organization to
foster the migration of Jews out of Germany. He spoke with consider-
able length and bitterness of the extent to which the Allies had
propagandized German atrocities. He mentioned specifically Poland
and Russia. With respect to Poland Himmler stated that atrocity
stories concerning crematoria were vicious propaganda since the
crematoria were the only means the German authorities could cope
with rapidly spreading typhus epidemic. He was particularly bitter
concerning Allied propaganda during the past few days on the concen-
tration camps at Bergen Belsen and Buchenwald. He pointed out that
these two camps and their inmates had been left intact to the Allies
at his own command and that all he was getting in return was Allied
horror stories.

DECLASSIFIED

000604

Masur raised with Himmler the following major points:

One. That Jews should remain in their present camp and that they should not be subjected to the further physical deterioration of being moved from place to place.

Two. That permission would be granted to evacuate Jews to neutral countries whenever possible.

Three. That the most humane care possible be given the Jews until the camps fell into Allied hands.

JOHNSON

000605

DSI-1388
Distribution of true
reading only by special
arrangement. (T-W)

Stockholm
Dated April 25, 1945
Rec'd 11:10 p.m.

Secretary of State
Washington

1547, April 25, 8 p.m., (SECTION TWO)

Himmler and Schellenberg stated that there had been about 50,000 Jews in Bergen-Belsen and 6,000 in Buchenwald. They said there were an additional 20,000 in Mauthausen Beilinz, 20,000 Jewesses in Ravensbrueck and about 25,000 Jews in the Resienstadt. In addition there were several smaller concentration camps in southern Germany and around Innsbruck.

Himmler made the following specific promises:

One. The Jews interned in Norway (about 50) would be released immediately and escorted to the Swedish border.

Two. 1,000 Jewish women in Ravensbrueck would be released immediately and permitted to come to Sweden. According to latest information these women are in fact being transported through Denmark by lorries of the Swedish Red Cross and are expected to arrive tomorrow.

Three. Certain lists of Dutch Jews in the Resienstadt would be released but there appears to be no hope of evacuating them.

Four. Himmler gave only a half promise that there would be no further evacuation of Jews from camp to camp.

Five. Red Cross organizations were promised free access to camps for delivery of food and medical supplies.

Six. No Jews would be shot.

Himmler emphasized in the strongest possible terms that no publicity should be given to the conference and that absolute secrecy must surround his liberation of any Jews. He referred to them all as "Poles" apparently mindful of his promise to Hitler that he would not release any more Jews.

Meaur gave an interesting description of Berlin -- which he called a frightfully ruined and dead city. He was particularly impressed by the almost complete absence of soldiers. All roads were congested with refugees -- many who had been walking for three

DECLASSIFIED

000606

weeks from Eastern Germany. He also saw a long procession of prisoners being moved from Oranienburg. Throughout his entire visit Allied planes were roaring overhead without a shot being fired at them.

END MESSAGE.

JOHNSON

000607

TELEGRAM SENT

Plain
April 20, 1944

American Consulate
Casablanca
61, twentieth

For Beckelman.

1. British and American governments have agreed in principle to transfer to UNRRA of responsibility for maintenance and operation of refugee center at Casablanca.
2. Plans are to develop as soon as possible detailed agreement as to conditions and date of transfer. UNRRA proposes that British and American Governments should retain responsibility for transport of refugees to North Africa, UNRRA's primary responsibility being for care and maintenance of refugees after arrival at North African seaport. Responsibility for finding new places for their eventual settlement will remain unchanged by transfer although UNRRA is prepared to assist in repatriation of such persons as can and are willing to return to countries of origin or of former residence. Expectation is that terms of transfer will also include some understanding as to supply arrangements as for example possible extension of present agreement with military for furnishing of supplies. Proposed date of transfer is some time after U. S. Congress appropriates money for UNRRA probably in four to six weeks.
3. Take up with French authorities in Algiers the proposed transfer in order to obtain their consent pursuant to Article I, paragraph 2(a) of the UNRRA agreement, clearing with them also as to any discussions which you deem necessary with authorities in Morocco. British and American representatives in Algiers are being instructed to join with you in discussions with French whenever necessary although since French Committee is member of UNRRA initial approach should be made by you as UNRRA representative. We are informally notifying French representatives here of the above plans.
4. Would appreciate your cabled recommendations as to terms to be included in understanding referred to in paragraph 2. Also cable results of your talks with French in line with paragraph 3.

HULL
(GHK)

000608

DOCUMENT

285

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM SENT

FROM: Secretary of State, Washington
TO: American Embassy, London
DATED: February 22, 1944
NUMBER: 1330

It is requested that you advise the Director that the Department is in agreement with the views which he expressed, transmitted in your cable of December 30, 1943, No. 9066, and to state further that when the Fedhala Camp was first agreed upon it was the understanding of the United States and British Governments that the camp was to be a temporary one and that the responsibility of finding a more permanent place for the refugees accepted at Fedhala would fall to the Inter-governmental Committee.

At that time it was envisaged that either the permanent migration of the refugees might be organized or that they might be moved for the duration of the war to a more permanent place and thereafter to return to their countries of origin in Europe.

These plans remain in effect, and it is anticipated that, in order that the foregoing objectives can be achieved as soon as possible, close working relations may be established between the Fedhala administration and the London and/or Algiers office of the Inter-governmental Committee. Since the consent of the French Committee of National Liberation was based on the temporary stay of the refugees at Fedhala Camp, this is especially desirable.

The foregoing message was repeated to Madrid for Beckelman's attention.

STETTINIUS
(Acting)

DECLASSIFIED

000609

DOCUMENT

286

ORIGINAL TEXT OF TELEGRAM SENT

FROM: Secretary of State, Washington
TO: Amrep, Algiers
DATED: April 25, 1944
NUMBER: 1253

From War Refugee Board to Ambassador Wilson and Ackermann

We have just received report from Schwartz in Lisbon that French are refusing to accept in Lyautey Sephardic Jews arriving in Spain after March 1, 1944. Report states further that 50 Sephardics now in Perpignan, France, awaiting admission into Spain and others still en route will be excluded under this ruling.

Such a ruling would cause breakdown in plans to rescue Sephardic Jews still in Nazi territory, as Spanish Government will do nothing to rescue Sephardics unless assured that they will be removed from Spain soon after arrival. If after investigation you feel report is accurate, please take up at once with Comite representatives indicating unfortunate effects of such a step.

Schwartz has advised Beckelman concerning matter.

This is WRB Algiers Cable No. 5.

HULL

DECLASSIFIED

000610

DOCUMENT

287

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Mission, Algiers
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATED: May 3, 1944
NUMBER: 1453

██████████
Following is No. 16 from Ackerman for WRB.

The question of admission of additional Sephardic Jews had already been informally discussed by me with a member of Comite prior to the arrival of your Algiers no. 5, dated April 25, 1944. Beckelman talked with Massigli after your cable arrived and Massigli replied that there would be no change in the original agreement providing for admission of 2000. This has been confirmed by us by note and we asked for reply to make the understanding certain and definite.

Taking request to the French regarding admission of about 750 Jews now in Italy to Fedhala is being considered by AFHQ. I am requesting Robert Murphy and others concerned to consider relative priorities of further Sephardic Jews as the group in Italy plus refugees arriving soon from Spain will practically fill the quota. Please inform us how many more Sephardics might be rescued from occupied territory, if it is possible to do so. In order that Schwartz can inform us as to his information on the question, we have repeated the foregoing message to Lisbon as our cable no. 97.

CHAPIN

DECLASSIFIED

000611

DOCUMENT

288

ORIGINAL TEXT OF TELEGRAM SENT

FROM: Secretary of State, Washington
TO: Amrep, Algiers
DATED: May 11, 1944
NUMBER: 1428

TO AMBASSADOR WILSON, ALGIERS, FOR ACKERMANN FROM WAR REFUGEE BOARD

Please refer your No. 16 (Department's No. 1453) of May 3rd.

Your prompt action in taking up admission of Sephardic Jews to Camp Lyautey is appreciated. Please confirm our understanding that so long as total number of refugees in Camp Lyautey does not at any one time exceed 2,000, French will not object to entry of refugees, merely because they arrived in Spain subsequent to March first.

We are not able to give you information as to number of Sephardics who might be rescued from occupied territory. This information must come from Schwartz, and if you do not hear from him please advise us.

We are inclined to believe that camp quota should not be filled by bringing Jews there from Italy. If we are able to bring more from Spain in the future this may put us in a position to encourage entry of refugees into Spain from occupied territory. For your information it is understood that many Jewish refugees in Southern Italy already have certificates entitling them to enter Palestine and the possibility of their being taken to Palestine should not be overlooked. As you probably know the British Government is presently admitting into Palestine Jewish refugees who reach Turkey. It is understood that more than twenty thousand refugees may still be admitted to Palestine under the terms of the White Paper. When you have investigated the matter please give us your views.

This is WRB Cable to Algiers No. 8.

HULL

DECLASSIFIED

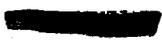
000612

DOCUMENT

289

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Embassy, Madrid
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATED: June 22, 1944
NUMBER: 2172


The following has been repeated to Algiers.

You are informed that on June 21, there sailed from Cadiz en route to Fedhala a group of 573 stateless refugees.

HAYES

DECLASSIFIED

000613

DOCUMENT

290

MMS-196

Plain
London
DATED: July 17, 1944
REC'D: 3 p.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.
5637, seventeenth

FOR WAR REFUGEE BOARD

Sir Herbert Emerson has furnished the Embassy with a copy of a cable received by him from Gouverneur Valentin Smith Intergovernmental Committee representative in Algiers transmitting a suggestion that the refugee camp at Fedhala be closed. Smith says the camp now holds 600 persons, that because of improving international situation no more large contingents are to be expected and that costly maintenance of organization to care for 2000 persons is not justified. Local management of camp recommends closing it and transferring the 600 inmates to existing camps in Egypt and Palestine and to countries willing to receive them.

Emerson has replied that question of the future of the camp is one primarily for American and British Governments in consultation with French authorities; that Intergovernmental Committee has no instructions to give but feels that decision to close the camp now would be premature.

WINANT

000614

DOCUMENT

291

ORIGINAL TEXT OF TELEGRAM SENT

FROM: Secretary of State, Washington
TO: American Embassy, London
DATED: August 31, 1944
NUMBER: 7017

Please refer to your 6289 of August 5 concerning Beckelman's proposal to close Camp Lyautey.

Inasmuch as Camp Lyautey is still under the joint jurisdiction of the British and American Governments, (Department's 6456 August 15 to Reed from FEA) Beckelman's proposal must of necessity be passed upon by the two Governments.

It is the United States Government's view that now would be a highly inopportune time to close Camp Lyautey. Beckelman's statement that few newcomers are expected at Lyautey indicates that he is unaware of the Horthy offer (your 5956 of July 27 and our 6096 of August 2). The closing of Camp Lyautey at a time when the British and American Governments have accepted the Hungarian proposal to permit certain categories of Jews to emigrate from Hungary might well prove tragic in its consequences, for in the eyes of the Hungarian Government it might easily throw open to question the sincerity of the British and American Governments in accepting the Hungarian Government's offer. Obviously all possible havens must be held available for any eventuality that may occur from accepting the Hungarian Government's offer.

It would be appreciated if you would make known to the British Government and the IGC the United States Government's view concerning Beckelman's proposal to close Camp Lyautey at this time. This cable has been cleared with the Department, FEA and WRB.

HULL

DECLASSIFIED

000615

DOCUMENT

292

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM SENT

FROM: Secretary of State, Washington
TO: American Embassy, Paris
DATED: November 15, 1944
NUMBER: 438

Of more urgency at the present time than it was in August is the matter which is taken up in instruction from the Department to Algiers dated August 24, No. 213. Should it become possible to rescue any of the persons from Germany to whom reference is made in Resolution XXIV, the facilities of the Fedhala camp are urgently needed for use. There is no other destination available for these people at the present time. It is expected that these individuals will be released into Switzerland and from there will travel, either directly from France or by way of Spain and France, to the Fedhala camp, as transportation can be arranged, under the auspices of the War Refugee Board, if an exchange involving these people can be arranged. We would appreciate it, therefore, if you would urgently take up this matter with the Provisional Government of France and secure its consent in principle to the admittance into French territory from Switzerland of any persons included in such a movement, to their travel to a point of exit on the frontier of Spain, or to Marseille, or to any other port which may be designated, and to their entrance into Morocco for accommodation at Fedhala camp, subsequently.

If Reber would take up the question with SHAEF and secure agreement in principle to this kind of movement, along with a statement of requirements of SHAEF, it would likewise be appreciated. Screening of these people, it should be pointed out, cannot take place until they reach French territory; also that authorities in Germany who have the custody of the camps where they are held will apparently select the individuals for exchange. Jewish intellectuals from Poland comprise the majority of the individuals concerned, who can, it is presumed, be identified promptly as they are relatively well known in such circles.

The Government of the United States and the British Government have stated that they are opposed to the closing of the Fedhala camp, which still has definite purposes to serve; this for the information of Reber and the Embassy.

STETTINIUS
(Acting)

DECLASSIFIED

000616

DOCUMENT

293

BE-947
Distribution of true
reading only by special
arrangement. (W)

Algiers
DATED July 12, 1944
REC'D 11:30 p.m.

Secretary of State
Washington
2371, July 12, 6 p.m.

FOR WRB FROM MURPHY.

Reference my 1937, June 10, 9 p.m.

In connection with proposed establishment of refugee camp near Philippeville reply has now been received from French authorities accepting in principle Allied proposal for establishment of such camp and suggesting the setting up of a commission composed of representatives of the Inter-Allied General Staff, of representatives of the FCNLP and eventually a representative of Yugoslav Government, which would establish without delay rules and regulations for administration of the refugees for duration of their stay in North Africa and establish conditions under which Allied authorities will coordinate with French authorities all arrangements necessary in connection with lodging, feeding and maintenance of such refugees.

CHAPIN

DECLASSIFIED

000617

DOCUMENT

294

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM SENT

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

Department's telegram of January 14, 1944 No. 371 is referred to herewith.

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

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

Ever since the Bermuda Conference, at which it was specifically recommended that admission of refugees to Cyrenaica be considered by the British, Cyrenaica and Tripolitania have been under consideration as havens. Thereafter, when agreement was reached to consider a refuge camp in North Africa, the President in a message to Prime Minister Churchill commented on his interest in the possibility of using Cyrenaica and Tripolitania as havens of refuge. The suggestion was again made to the British informally in the manner described in the aforementioned cable as recently as January of this year. No decision has apparently yet been taken in this important matter although many months have passed. It is requested that you reopen the matter at once and raise with the British Government the question of using Cyrenaica and Tripolitania as havens of refuge, subject of course, to the later approval of the Combined Chiefs of Staff. The consent of the British should be secured before any approach is made to the Combined Chiefs of Staff. You should inform the British Government that this Government is prepared to share the responsibility for financing the establishment and maintenance of camps in Cyrenaica and Tripolitania, including the cost of transporting the refugees to these camps. We are confident that part of this cost may be borne by private refugee agencies if it later seems desirable. The transportation problem can be worked out cooperatively between the British Government and ourselves.

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

It is extremely important that havens of refuge be established in Cyrenaica and Tripolitania. The War Refugee Board is convinced

DECLASSIFIED

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

000618

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

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

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

HULL

000619