

RAOUL WALLENBERG MATERIALS FROM WAR REFUGEE BOARD  
RECORDS, HENRY MORGENTHAU, JR. DIARIES, AND ELEANOR  
ROOSEVELT PAPERS (Folder 1 of 3)

304 total pp.

000126

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The Committee will be glad to receive inquiries from anyone  
interested in Raoul Wallenberg.

RHP  
8-27-90

000127

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



OFFICE OF THE  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

August 31, 1944

TO: Secretary Morgenthau  
FROM: J. W. Pehle

I am sure you will be interested in the attached excerpts from two ~~business~~ letters I have recently received from Iver C. Olsen, our representative in Stockholm.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "J. W. Pehle".

EXCERPTS FROM LETTER OF AUGUST 10, 1944, FROM IVER C. OLSEN,  
WAR REFUGEE BOARD REPRESENTATIVE IN STOCKHOLM.

"With the longer nights now arriving, my Baltic operations are beginning to show results, although they are very difficult. As I cabled you, I lost my man Vokietaitis, which upset me very much, and had a most serious effect on our Lithuanian operations, to say nothing of losing our best source of Baltic intelligence. He had shipped into Lithuania to complete all the rescue arrangements personally, and the first hint of bad news came when he or anyone else failed to show up at the appointed place when the boat went after him the following week. The same thing happened when the boat went the next week, and it was on the third trip that the evacuees reported he had been captured and shot by the Germans. He was a hell of a fine, fearless fellow and the most skillful operator I had. There are several things I could do to try and rescue him, but I am afraid to do it in case (a) he is simply caught behind the lines for the time being, in which case anything I did to stir things up would only focus attention on the fact that he is over there, or (b) he is in a German prison, in which case anything I did might blow the story he has told the Germans, and get him shot straightaway. Consequently, all I can do just now is to keep the boat going, with the hope he will show up. There is a tremendous number of political, religious and racial refugees hiding in the Lithuanian woods in the greatest possible peril, and these next two weeks are about all we have to work on.

"The Estonians are doing very well, and I'm damned pleased with them. They are excellently organized with very good technicians and equipment, including radio, and know their business. Through secret arrangements with the General Staff, which avoided a few score years of imprisonment for espionage, I spent several hours at their operations base in restricted territory on the Baltic coast, and must say I was impressed. They have already gotten about 100 people out of Estonia, and through their excellent organization have made it possible for 2 or 3 hundred others to get out on boats - not ours. I have been getting a list of the persons gotten out and without question they are people who are much wanted by the Germans. Those who are not politically compromised with the Germans are intellectuals who are certainly worth saving. As a rule, however, most of them have had very active connections with the recently organized Estonian National Committee which not long ago declared war on both Russia and Germany. This has somewhat complicated the picture, but I have continued operations on the basis that these persons are most seriously compromised with the Germans - over 700 of them have already been arrested and/or shot by the S.S. and Gestapo. The Estonian operation looks like it will last the longest, which hardly can be more than a month.

000129

- 2 -

"The Latvian operation is not going very well, although it is just now starting to show a few results. This is due in large part to the fact that there are very few Latvians in Sweden, as a result of which it has been impossible to recruit thoroughly competent crews to carry out the operations. Also, I continue to be very uncertain of Salnais, both as to his point of view and ability, which situation I have made quite clear to him with the hope that he would make every effort to show me that I was 100 percent wrong. We can expect some results, but they will not be remarkable. The Latvian show will also, in all probability, be washed up in a couple of weeks or so.

"With the Finnish situation looking quite optimistic, I am not pushing our program in that area any more, except that I got a promise from the Swedish Foreign Office that whenever they undertake to evacuate the Swedes from Finland (they have made very complete plans), they would include in their transportation plans the evacuation of the Finnish Jews. Heretofore, however, I have had some hot going on the Finnish program, and temporarily had almost the entire Jewish community in Sweden mad at me. The truth of the matter was that they were dragging their heels in the most unconscionable way, on one pretext or another. The following is for your information only, but it is only too true that the Swedish Jews don't want any more Jews in Sweden. They are very comfortably situated here, have no anti-semitic problems, and are very much afraid that an influx of Jews will not only be a burden to them, but will create a Jewish problem in Sweden. Consequently, you will find them very interested in Jewish rescue and relief operations, so long as they do not involve bringing them into Sweden. For example, the fact that thousands of Jews got out of Denmark was due to a boldly conceived and executed plan of the Swedish Socialstyrelsen - the Swedish Jews were most apathetic. In the case of the Norwegian Jews, they were even frigid, since all these were of the poorer classes. They consider themselves a sort of Jewish aristocracy and they do not want it watered down. No more striking example could be found than the fact that a year or so ago about thirty Jewish children, orphans, arrived from Central Europe - finally were taken into Christian homes. The Swedish Jews did not want to be bothered. This was again illustrated in connection with my recent cables regarding the possibility of getting some Jewish children out of Finland - less than fifty. The local community did not want to take any steps until full guarantees of American financial support were supplied. There should have been five hundred comfortable Jewish homes here available without a moment's hesitation for these children on a temporary basis. Their disinterest may be further suggested by the fact that not to this date has a representative of the Jewish community ever been down to the pier to receive any of the evacuees from Finland as they dribbled in. All of this has been done by Filseth of my office, including getting them through immigration, customs, the Socialstyrelsen, and then to camp. Only Filseth has been to the

000130

- 3 -

camp to see how they are getting along.

"Another headache has been the Wolbe group, genuinely well meaning but the most hopelessly helpless group that I have worked with. All they can talk about is Shanghai and Ecuadorian passports, despite my assurances that the War Refugee Board is exploring all possible bets in that connection, and that their big task is to devise something that will help in Lithuania. Wolbe's comprehension of the urgency of this problem perhaps best may be suggested by the fact that the day after he received \$10,000 for Lithuanian rescue operations he went off on a month's vacation and I haven't seen him since. This vacation item, by the way, is something that the Swedes take very seriously, and is no laughing matter if you are trying to get something done during that period.

"The Hungarian situation looks much better, although I do not believe that rescue or evacuation operations will be of any consequence, at least those requiring German transit visas. It looks like the old game of the Germans permitting their satellites to make a fine variety of gestures for the record, but clamping down themselves at whatever point they become involved. However, the situation is much better inside Hungary wherever the Hungarian authorities have contact, but the trouble is that in too many places the Germans have control and the Jews are simply disappearing. I talked with a chap from Hungary yesterday who had tried to find some Jewish families. He said that the Jews are moved from camp to camp until trace of them is lost. He said an awful lot of young Jewish children, particularly girls 14 and 15, are being stolen on the streets and completely disappear. As you know, anybody has authority over them. The Jews are so terrified that they now are simply hiding in their homes. He believed that if the Jews weren't so terrified, the best thing they could do would be to take off their yellow stars en masse, which would cause so much confusion, particularly because of the air-raids around Budapest, that many of them could escape out into the country where they could be hidden. He said that about 80 percent of the Hungarian metropolitan population are quite unmoved by the Jewish persecutions, and simply shrug their shoulders. The others are too frightened to help. In the country, however, things are much better.

"I get the impression indirectly that the Swedish Foreign Office is somewhat uneasy about Wallenberg's activities in Budapest, and perhaps feel that he has jumped in with too big a splash. They would prefer, of course, to approach the Jewish problem in the finest traditions of European diplomacy, which wouldn't help too much. On the other hand, there is much to be said for moving around quietly on this type of work. In any case, I feel that Wallenberg is working like hell and doing some good, which is the measure. In a week or so the Swedish Red Cross is sending three men delegates to Budapest to construct camps for

000131

- 4 -

the Jews, which I think is the most tangible thing that can be done for the moment. I have a stake in this program. I have also arranged with Count Bernadotte that the Swedish Red Cross handle all negotiations with Kleist and Boening with regard to the evacuation to Sweden of approximately 4,500 Jews in Germany with South American visas. It is understood that Berlin has agreed in principle to the idea, but the nature of the proposition involved will not be available for a few days. I certainly hope that it is something that can be considered, since it would be a substantial accomplishment, but am rather dubious.

"It seems to me that I must have run down a thousand or so straw possibilities in trying to obtain concrete results, and wish that more of them could have panned out. You might be interested in one of them, which I did not report for certain reasons. As you know, Goering's first wife (her second marriage) was the Swedish Countess von Rosen, through which marriage Goering acquired a step-son, now a strapping, nice chap of about 25, who is the apple of his eye. This step-son, who lives in Sweden (Swedish citizen, of course) visits Goering periodically and, in fact, has his own flat in Goering's home. It is also a well-known fact, even told to me by Jews who knew Goering personally, that Goering has been greatly opposed to the Jewish persecutions but has not been strong enough to stop them. Consequently, just before this step-son went to visit Goering in the latter part of June, I had him over to my flat and had a very strong talk with him. I pointed out that Goering would soon be on trial for his life and, after Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Warsaw, etc., he would not exactly have many people on the other side of the fence who will testify as to his beautiful soul. I suggested that both from the point of view of his own Swedish humanitarian instincts, as well as his affection for his step-father, he should urge him in the strongest possible manner to do what he could to ease Jewish persecutions in the Balkans, Poland, Theresedstadt, and elsewhere, and to urge him to take steps that would permit young children and old people to get out of Europe. This chap seemed very impressed and said that he would press the matter with Goering to the best of his ability. I haven't seen him since, but without anything to base it on, I believe that some good has been done."

"I am keeping very careful records of the funds you have sent me to be used in my discretion, and am now thankful that I have them. I will be able to account for all of them, and I have receipts for virtually the full amount. This is also true with respect to my Baltic operations, where I have been able to get excellent accounting and receipts against a large proportion of the expenditures. Out of the funds which you have placed at my disposal the following are the more important outlays, actual and proposed:

000132

- 5 -

(A) Wallenberg left in a hell of a hurry with no instructions and no funds for preliminary expenditures, such as purchase of easily carried barter articles for Hungarian relief. I placed 10,000 kronor at his disposal. In order to channel it through an organization so I could get a good receipt, I gave it to his Aunt, Countess Bonde, who is head of the "Committee for Aid to Belgian Children," earmarked for "Special Hungarian Relief Activities."

(B) On the basis of several urgent requests that Chief Rabbi Ehrenpreis received from Bucharest for relief funds, I gave the Executive Committee for Relief of European Jews 25,000 kronor. They were able to get about 12,000,000 lei for this, which will do a lot of good. The need of Rumanian Jews for food and clothing is really desperate and it would be impossible to do enough. Excellent channels are available from Sweden.

(C) I am trying to get 25,000 to Wallenberg through intermediaries who are in a position to obtain favorable pengo rates on a satisfactory basis.

(D) I turned over 2,000 kronor to Mrs. Andersen for "special translating work and other services" with which she hired a Latvian fishing boat to go over and pick up 20 anti-Nazis in hiding. This seemed a very cheap gamble and I will know the outcome in a few days.

(E) I informed Count Bernadotte that the War Refugee Board was very interested in the proposal of constructing camps for Hungarian Jews, and that we would donate 50,000 kronor to further the program when all details were worked out. They were most appreciative and it will help push early action.

(F) I have told Mr. Cedergrén's Committee, "Hjälp Krigeis Offer," that I would place at their disposal a special fund of 5,000 kronor which can be used to send food packages to families in concentration camps of refugees here in Sweden who are penniless and have no means of sending packages. This will be a strong morale boost both to these people and their families."

000133

EXCERPTS FROM LETTER OF AUGUST 14, 1944, FROM IVER C. OLSEN,  
WAR REFUGEE BOARD REPRESENTATIVE IN STOCKHOLM.

"Since writing the foregoing letter, I had lunch with the First Secretary of the Swedish Legation in Budapest, who is here for a short while. He is a fine chap and had many interesting comments to make. He said Wallenberg is working very hard and doing everything possible, which items he has also emphasized to the Foreign Office. He considers the situation in Hungary far from settled but he is confident that the Hungarian Government will continue to ease the Jewish situation so long as control is in their hands and not in German hands. This is, however, the big question. He is very skeptical as to the possibility of bringing to Sweden the 2,000 odd Jews who, up to now, have been issued Swedish papers. He stated that both the Hungarians and the Germans had agreed to provide transit visas (actually the German Legation in Budapest gave him personally the official assurances), but later the Germans said these must be a quid pro quo, which was that the rest of the Hungarian Jews of working age must be delivered to German labor camps. This chap is positive that the only real constructive move to be made just now is to get as many Jews as possible into Swedish camps, and then extend the Swedish protection to as many others as possible. I thoroughly agree and that is why I am so anxious to press the Swedish Red Cross in this matter. He also indicated, and please keep this as personal, that we should not take without a grain of salt the hopeful enthusiasm of the I.R.C. man there, who apparently drinks a lot and has delusions of grandeur, but very little in the way of practical judgment in approaching the problem.

"He said that even he did not believe some of the atrocities until he himself was an eye-witness. He went over to a brick factory where they had over 10,000 Jews herded in an area so small that they were forced to stand up closely packed together for five days, old people and young children alike, without any sanitary facilities. He saw them himself standing there, and also being loaded into box cars, eighty (he said eighty were counted out very carefully) into each car, after which the doors were nailed shut. He said many died just standing in the brick factory. He also said that young girls of 14 and 15 were being stolen on the streets, taken into other areas where they had "war whore" tattooed on their arms. Some of them, young Hungarian Jewesses of good family, had been observed as far away as Hamburg. He lamented very much the total lack of

000134

courage among the Hungarian Jews, since they could do so much to help themselves even when they knew it was only a matter of a short time before they would be killed. He said it was very difficult to escape into Rumania or Yugoslavia because the country was too open and the Jews are too terrified. He mentioned that all Hungarian Jews escaping into Rumania are greeted with open arms by the Rumanian authorities, sign long statements as to how badly the Hungarians treated them, and how well the Rumanians greeted them. The Rumanians will produce these after the war."

000135

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000136

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Description (To, From & Date)	Collection	Container No.	Folder Title	No. of Pages
Book 767, pp. 183-190	Morgenthau Diary	767	Book 767	8
Cover, Table of contents, List of documents, pp. 90-91, 142-175	War Refugee Board	110	History of the War Refugee Bd., Vol. I	54
Documents-114, 166-169, pp. 642, 733-741	" " "	110	History of the War Refugee Bd., Vol. II	10
Summary Report of the Activities of the War Refugee Board with Respect to the Jews in Hungary	" " "	34	Hungary, No. 1	33
Summary of Steps Taken by War Refugee Board with Respect to Jews of Hungary	" " "	34	Hungary, No. 1	8
Pehle to Johnson, 12-6-44, & attached	" " "	34	Hungary, No. 1	5
Johnson to State (2098), 6-12-44	" " "	34	Hungary, No. 2-C	2
Hull to Olsen & Johnson, (1010, WRB 17), 5-25-44, & attached	" " "	34	Hungary, No. 2-C	2
Johnson to State, (2231, 31 to WRB), 6-21-44	" " "	34	Hungary, No. 2-C	2
Johnson to State (2360, 40 to WRB), 6-29-44	" " "	34	Hungary, No. 2-C	2
Johnson to State, 2412, 7-1-44	" " "	34	Hungary, No. 2-C	4
Hull to Stockholm (1349, WRB 42), 7-6-44, & attached	" " "	34	Hungary, No. 2-C	5
Hull to Stockholm (1353, WRB 41), 7-7-44	" " "	34	Hungary, No. 2-C	4
Hull to Olsen (1364, WRB 48), 7-10-44, & attached	" " "	34	Hungary, No. 2-C	2
Hull to Stockholm (1426, WRB 55), 7-17-44, & attached	" " "	34	Hungary, No. 2-C	2
Johnson to State, (2779, 594 to WRB) 7-25-44	" " "	34	Hungary, No. 2-C	3
Stettinius to Stockholm (1503, WRB 61), 7-28-44, & attached	" " "	34	Hungary, No. 2-C	3

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149

000137

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Description (To, From & Date)	Collection	Container No.	Folder Title	No. of Pages
Stettinius to Stockholm (1551, WRB 66), 8-3-44, & attached	War Refugee Board	34	Hungary, No. 2-C	2
Johnson to State (2993, 64 to WRB), 8-7-44	" " "	34	Hungary, No. 2-C	3
Stettinius to Stockholm, (1606, WRB 72), 8-12-44, & attached	" " "	34	Hungary, No. 2-C	3
Johnson to State (3811), 9-22-44	" " "	34	Hungary, No. 2-C	4
Hull to Stockholm (1976, WRB-94), 10-2-44, & attached	" " "	34	Hungary, No. 2-C	2
Johnson to State (4186, 92 to WRB), 10-14-44	" " "	34	Hungary, No. 2-C	1
Johnson to State (4416, 99 to WRB), 10-30-44	" " "	34	Hungary, No. 2-C	3
Stettinius to Olsen (2232, WRB 239), 11-7-44, & attached	" " "	34	Hungary, No. 2-C	2
Johnson to State (5235, 116 to WRB), 12-22-44	" " "	34	Hungary, No. 2-C	5
Johnson to State (246, 121 to WRB), 1-20-45	" " "	34	Hungary, No. 2-C	1
Johnson to State (891, 130 to WRB), 3-7-45	" " "	34	Hungary, No. 2-C	2
American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, Inc. (Tab 16-b)	" " "	36	Hungary, No. 6	6
Raoul Wallenberg (Tab 24)	" " "	36	Hungary, No. 8	30
Johnson to State (1841), 5-18-45	" " "	45	Evacuation to & thru Sweden, Tab 5-A	1
Hodel to Leavitt, 7-21-45, and attached	" " "	45	Evacuation to & thru Sweden, Tab 5-A	2
Stettinius to Stockholm (1550, WRB 65), 8-3-44, & attached	" " "	70	Eugene Bogdanffy	3
Johnson to State (3182, 74 to WRB), 8-19-44	" " "	70	Eugene Bogdanffy	1

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71

000138

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PAGE 3

PAGE 3

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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Description (To, From & Date)	Collection	Container		No. of Pages
		No.	Folder Title	
Olsen to Pehle, 8-10-44	War Refugee Board	72	Sweden	6
Olsen to Pehle, 8-14-44	" " "	72	Sweden	2
Olsen Stockholms Enskilda Bank A.B., 9-26-44	" " "	72	Sweden	1
Olsen to Pehle, 11-22-44, & attached	" " "	72	-Iver Olsen's Reports, Tab 2	28
Olsen to O'Dwyer, 6-15-45	" " "	72	Iver Olsen's Reports, Tab 12	6
Pehle to Johnson, 12-6-44	" " "	34	Hungary, No. 1	5
Gromyko to ER & attached, 3-19-47	Eleanor Roosevelt		General Corres- pondence, G	16
von Dardel to ER, 5-8-47	Eleanor Roosevelt		General Corres- pondence, V	4
ER to Thompson, 5-26-47	" "		General Corresp., Wallenberg, Raoul	4
"To Mrs. Roosevelt from Raoul's mother Maj. von Dardel"	Book Collection		Raoul Wallenberg by Rudolph Philipp	4

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000139

HISTORY OF THE WAR REFUGEE BOARD WITH SELECTED DOCUMENTS

000140

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
I. <u>INTRODUCTION</u> .....	1
II. <u>RESCUE PROGRAMS</u>	
A. RESCUE TO AND THROUGH TURKEY.....	14
B. RESCUE TO AND THROUGH SWITZERLAND.....	43
C. RESCUE TO AND THROUGH SWEDEN.....	77
D. RESCUE TO AND THROUGH ITALY.....	96
E. RESCUE TO AND THROUGH SPAIN.....	111
F. RESCUE TO AND THROUGH PORTUGAL.....	126
G. RESCUE FROM HUNGARY.....	142
H. RESCUE FROM BULGARIA.....	176
I. RESCUE FROM RUMANIA.....	189
J. RESCUE FROM CZECHOSLOVAKIA.....	200
K. RESCUE FROM GREECE.....	206
L. OTHER PROJECTS.....	211
M. SPECIAL NEGOTIATIONS.....	215
N. EMERGENCY REFUGEE CAMPS AND SETTLEMENT	
1. North Africa.....	221
2. United States.....	231
3. Other Countries.....	239
4. Palestine.....	242
O. RESCUE THROUGH PROTECTIVE MEASURES	
1. Recognition of Latin American Passports.....	247
2. Recognition of Sephardics Claiming Spanish Nationality.....	273
3. Recognition of Sephardics Claiming Portuguese Nationality.....	277
4. Reinstatement of Turkish Citizenship to Certain Jewish Refugees.....	279
5. Exchange.....	281
6. United States Visas.....	289
III. <u>PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE PROGRAMS</u>	
A. APPROACHES TO GERMANY AND THE SATELLITES TO HALT PERSECUTIONS	
1. Appeals through Neutral Countries.....	295
2. Appeals through the Vatican.....	303
B. STATEMENTS AND INFORMATIONAL CAMPAIGNS INSPIRED BY THE BOARD.....	310
IV. <u>RELIEF PROGRAMS</u>	
A. EFFORTS TO OBTAIN ASSIMILATED STATUS FOR INTERNED CIVILIANS.....	329
B. BOARD'S FOOD PARCELS PROGRAM.....	333
C. RELIEF THROUGH THE BLOCKADE TO COOPERATING NEUTRALS.....	351
D. PROJECTS OF PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS.....	354
V. <u>COOPERATION WITH OTHER GOVERNMENTS AND THE VATICAN</u>	
A. GREAT BRITAIN.....	381
B. THE SOVIET UNION.....	388

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Cont.)

	<u>Page</u>
C. THE EUROPEAN NEUTRALS.....	390
D. THE VATICAN.....	392
E. OTHERS.....	394
VI. <u>COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL AND GOVERNMENTAL</u> <u>AGENCIES</u>	
A. INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE ON REFUGEES.....	410
B. INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS.....	415
C. UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND REHABILITATION ADMINISTRATION.....	420
D. UNITED NATIONS WAR CRIMES COMMISSION.....	422
E. OTHER UNITED STATES AGENCIES.....	426
VII. <u>COOPERATION WITH PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS</u> .....	443
VIII. <u>PUBLIC RELATIONS</u> .....	446
IX. <u>DOCUMENTS</u> .....	449

# # #

000142

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Airgram No. A-21 from Cairo dated June 6, 1944.....	962
Airgram No. A-323 from Caracas dated April 15, 1944.....	1033
Airgram No. A-16 from Dublin dated April 13, 1944.....	561
Airgram No. A-229 from Guatemala dated May 8, 1944.....	1014
Airgram No. A-1294 from Havana dated June 16, 1944.....	1006
Airgram No. A-288 from La Paz dated June 26, 1944.....	1001
Airgram No. A-1211 from London dated October 6, 1944.....	1269
Airgram No. A-59 from Madrid dated February 15, 1944.....	662
Airgram No. A-188 from Madrid dated May 10, 1944.....	680
Airgram No. A-387 from Madrid dated August 16, 1944.....	679
Airgram No. A-177 from Managua dated April 24, 1944.....	1021
Airgram No. A-200 from Managua dated May 9, 1944.....	1022
Airgram No. A-27 from Moscow dated January 29, 1945.....	873
Airgram No. A-286 from Port-au-Prince dated May 24, 1944.....	1016
Airgram No. A-369 from Port-au-Prince dated July 12, 1944.....	1019
Airgram No. A-1568 from Rio de Janeiro dated August 22, 1944.....	572
Airgram No. A-390 from San Jose dated June 16, 1944.....	573
Airgram No. A-186 from San Salvador dated May 3, 1944.....	1011
Airgram No. A-288 from San Salvador dated July 7, 1944.....	1012
Airgram No. A-165 from Tegucigalpa dated April 27, 1944.....	587
Airgram No. A-540 to Bern dated November 9, 1944.....	1082
Airgram No. A-12 to London dated January 3, 1944.....	646
Airgram No. A-151 to Managua dated May 1, 1944.....	994
Airgram No. A-216 to Port-au-Prince dated July 5, 1944.....	1017
British Embassy Aide Memoire dated March 27, 1944.....	1261
Cable No. 1450 from Algiers dated May 3, 1944.....	649
Cable No. 1453 from Algiers dated May 3, 1944.....	932
Cable No. 2371 from Algiers dated July 12, 1944.....	938
Cable No. 1253 to Algiers dated April 25, 1944.....	931
Cable No. 1428 to Algiers dated May 11, 1944.....	933
Cable No. 1823 to Algiers dated June 8, 1944.....	942
Cable No. 282 from Ankara dated February 18, 1944.....	471
Cable No. 380 from Ankara dated March 3, 1944.....	478
Cable No. 388 from Ankara dated March 4, 1944.....	469
Cable No. 440 from Ankara dated March 13, 1944.....	840
Cable No. 455 from Ankara dated March 15, 1944.....	480
Cable No. 458 from Ankara dated March 15, 1944.....	485
Cable No. 474 from Ankara dated March 16, 1944.....	844
Cable No. 497 from Ankara dated March 20, 1944.....	845
Cable No. 499 from Ankara dated March 20, 1944.....	822
Cable No. 527 from Ankara dated March 25, 1944.....	514
Cable No. 547 from Ankara dated March 27, 1944.....	486
Cable No. 579 from Ankara dated March 30, 1944.....	515
Cable No. 596 from Ankara dated April 4, 1944.....	728
Cable No. 625 from Ankara dated April 8, 1944.....	516

Cable No. 746 from Ankara dated April 25, 1944.....	517
Cable No. 788 from Ankara dated May 2, 1944.....	518
Cable No. 794 from Ankara dated May 2, 1944.....	729
Cable No. 815 from Ankara dated May 5, 1944.....	492
Cable No. 907 from Ankara dated May 19, 1944.....	519
Cable No. 950 from Ankara dated May 25, 1944.....	865
Cable No. 1010 from Ankara dated June 5, 1944.....	730
Cable No. 1104 from Ankara dated June 19, 1944.....	523
Cable No. 1125 from Ankara dated June 21, 1944.....	848
Cable No. 1217 from Ankara dated July 5, 1944.....	525
Cable No. 1230 from Ankara dated July 7, 1944.....	846
Cable No. 1250 from Ankara dated July 11, 1944.....	527
Cable No. 1321 from Ankara dated July 20, 1944.....	849
Cable No. 1344 from Ankara dated July 22, 1944.....	828
Cable No. 1365 from Ankara dated July 25, 1944.....	850
Cable No. 1371 from Ankara dated July 26, 1944.....	494
Cable No. 1370 from Ankara dated July 26, 1944.....	829
Cable No. 1400 from Ankara dated August 1, 1944.....	830
Cable No. 1414 from Ankara dated August 2, 1944.....	832
Cable No. 1430 from Ankara dated August 5, 1944.....	1100
Cable No. 1446 from Ankara dated August 7, 1944.....	834
Cable No. 1471 from Ankara dated August 10, 1944.....	528
Cable No. 1478 from Ankara dated August 12, 1944.....	1281
Cable No. 1546 from Ankara dated August 23, 1944.....	806
Cable No. 1553 from Ankara dated August 24, 1944.....	1279
Cable No. 1695 from Ankara dated September 9, 1944.....	852
Cable No. 1823 from Ankara dated September 26, 1944.....	836
Cable No. 2079 from Ankara dated October 30, 1944.....	529
Cable No. 2320 from Ankara dated December 7, 1944.....	530
Cable No. 353 from Ankara, undated, received March 15, 1945...	496
Cable No. 473 from Ankara dated April 7, 1945.....	1092
Cable No. 519 from Ankara dated April 15, 1945.....	1095
Cable No. 120 to Ankara dated February 12, 1944.....	456
Cable No. 144 to Ankara dated February 25, 1944.....	477
Cable No. 146 to Ankara dated February 25, 1944.....	467
Cable No. 147 to Ankara dated February 26, 1944.....	465
Cable No. 194 to Ankara dated March 13, 1944.....	839
Cable No. 230 to Ankara dated March 22, 1944.....	513
Cable No. 243 to Ankara dated March 23, 1944.....	483
Cable No. 250 to Ankara dated March 24, 1944.....	422
Cable No. 324 to Ankara dated April 13, 1944.....	488
Cable No. 342 to Ankara dated April 17, 1944.....	490
Cable No. 377 to Ankara dated April 27, 1944.....	491
Cable No. 503 to Ankara dated June 2, 1944.....	520
Cable No. 514 to Ankara dated June 9, 1944.....	866
Cable No. 583 to Ankara dated June 29, 1944.....	1164
Cable No. 665 to Ankara dated July 28, 1944.....	1096
Cable No. 503 from Asuncion dated September 5, 1944.....	788

Cable No. 941 from Bern dated February 15, 1944..... 531  
 Cable No. 1028 from Bern dated February 18, 1944.....1298  
 Cable No. 1304 from Bern dated March 4, 1944..... 533  
 Cable No. 1334 from Bern dated March 4, 1944.....1245  
 Cable No. 1366 from Bern dated March 6, 1944.....1247  
 Cable No. 1994 from Bern dated March 31, 1944..... 975  
 Cable No. 2031 from Bern dated April 1, 1944.....1192  
 Cable No. 2236 from Bern dated April 11, 1944..... 597  
 Cable No. 2282 from Bern dated April 13, 1944..... 996  
 Cable No. 3144 from Bern dated May 17, 1944.....1175  
 Cable No. 3147 from Bern dated May 17, 1944.....1175  
 Cable No. 3346 from Bern dated May 25, 1944..... 744  
 Cable No. 3843 from Bern dated June 16, 1944..... 762  
 Cable No. 3871 from Bern dated June 17, 1944..... 972  
 Cable No. 3877 from Bern dated June 17, 1944.....1198  
 Cable No. 4041 from Bern dated June 24, 1944..... 750  
 Cable No. 4223 from Bern dated July 3, 1944..... 977  
 Cable No. 4506 from Bern dated July 14, 1944..... 760  
 Cable No. 4578 from Bern dated July 18, 1944.....1200  
 Cable No. 4896 from Bern dated July 29, 1944..... 743  
 Cable No. 5040 from Bern dated August 5, 1944..... 763  
 Cable No. 5197 from Bern dated August 11, 1944..... 877  
 Cable No. 5579 from Bern dated August 26, 1944..... 810  
 Cable No. 5689 from Bern dated August 31, 1944.....1039  
 Cable No. 5796 from Bern dated September 3, 1944..... 797  
 Cable No. 6083 from Bern dated September 15, 1944..... 853  
 Cable No. 6093 from Bern dated September 15, 1944..... 813  
 Cable No. 6110 from Bern dated September 16, 1944..... 882  
 Cable No. 6276 from Bern dated September 22, 1944..... 808  
 Cable No. 6524 from Bern dated September 30, 1944..... 794  
 Cable No. 6619 from Bern dated October 5, 1944..... 803  
 Cable No. 6913 from Bern dated October 18, 1944..... 798  
 Cable No. 6938 from Bern dated October 19, 1944.....1053  
 Cable No. 7048 from Bern dated October 24, 1944..... 802  
 Cable No. 7269 from Bern dated November 1, 1944..... 817  
 Cable No. 7365 from Bern dated November 6, 1944.....1208  
 Cable No. 7542 from Bern dated November 15, 1944.....1055  
 Cable No. 7589 from Bern dated November 17, 1944..... 565  
 Cable No. 7594 from Bern dated November 17, 1944..... 854  
 Cable No. 7613 from Bern dated November 18, 1944.....1044  
 Cable No. 7973 from Bern dated December 7, 1944..... 816  
 Cable No. 7997 from Bern dated December 7, 1944..... 599  
 Cable No. 7998 from Bern dated December 7, 1944.....1183  
 Cable No. 8044 from Bern dated December 9, 1944.....1216  
 Cable No. 8045 from Bern dated December 9, 1944..... 892  
 Cable No. 8050 from Bern dated December 9, 1944..... 855  
 Cable No. 8118 from Bern dated December 13, 1944..... 885  
 Cable No. 8177 from Bern dated December 16, 1944.....1104  
 Cable No. 8293 from Bern dated December 23, 1944.....1084  
 Cable No. 8390 from Bern dated December 28, 1944..... 888  
 Cable No. 455 from Bern dated January 22, 1945.....1218  
 Cable No. 520 from Bern dated January 25, 1945.....1120

Cable No. 551 from Bern dated January 27, 1945.....	1123
Cable No. 605 from Bern dated January 28, 1945.....	896
Cable No. 881 from Bern dated February 8, 1945.....	898
Cable No. 913 from Bern dated February 9, 1945.....	604
Cable No. 1069 from Bern dated February 17, 1945.....	893
Cable No. 1340 from Bern dated March 2, 1945.....	1230
Cable No. 1481 from Bern dated March 8, 1945.....	612
Cable No. 1727 from Bern dated March 22, 1945.....	1231
Cable No. 1905 from Bern dated March 31, 1945.....	904
Cable No. 2175 from Bern dated April 13, 1945.....	614
Cable No. 2189 from Bern dated April 14, 1945.....	1234
Cable No. 2290 from Bern dated April 19, 1945.....	615
Cable No. 2823 from Bern dated May 19, 1945.....	1235
Cable No. 3632 from Bern dated July 20, 1945.....	966
Cable No. 3939 from Bern dated August 20, 1945.....	606
Cable No. 279 to Bern dated January 27, 1944.....	1185
Cable No. 437 to Bern dated February 9, 1944.....	1244
Cable No. 770 to Bern dated March 7, 1944.....	1110
Cable No. 891 to Bern dated March 18, 1944.....	562
Cable No. 916 to Bern dated March 20, 1944.....	1250
Cable No. 983 to Bern dated March 24, 1944.....	536
Cable No. 991 to Bern dated March 24, 1944.....	1160
Cable No. 1023 to Bern dated March 27, 1944.....	727
Cable No. 1181 to Bern dated April 7, 1944.....	970
Cable No. 1221 to Bern dated April 10, 1944.....	985
Cable No. 1269 to Bern dated April 13, 1944.....	999
Cable No. 1498 to Bern dated April 29, 1944.....	1173
Cable No. 1672 to Bern dated May 13, 1944.....	857
Cable No. 1786 to Bern dated May 23, 1944.....	731
Cable No. 1805 to Bern dated May 25, 1944.....	732
Cable No. 1806 to Bern dated May 25, 1944.....	742
Cable No. 1819 to Bern dated May 26, 1944.....	1142
Cable No. 1846 to Bern dated May 27, 1944.....	1074
Cable No. 2023 to Bern dated June 13, 1944.....	598
Cable No. 2149 to Bern dated June 24, 1944.....	1037
Cable No. 2198 to Bern dated June 28, 1944.....	1196
Cable No. 2215 to Bern dated June 29, 1944.....	1162
Cable No. 2236 to Bern dated July 3, 1944.....	564
Cable No. 2259 to Bern dated July 3, 1944.....	1242
Cable No. 2407 to Bern dated July 13, 1944.....	1047
Cable No. 2490 to Bern dated July 21, 1944.....	1034
Cable No. 2657 to Bern dated August 2, 1944.....	773
Cable No. 2715 to Bern dated August 7, 1944.....	776
Cable No. 2853 to Bern dated August 19, 1944.....	795
Cable No. 2867 to Bern dated August 21, 1944.....	880
Cable No. 2877 to Bern dated August 21, 1944.....	781
Cable No. 2900 to Bern dated August 23, 1944.....	791
Cable No. 2918 to Bern dated August 24, 1944.....	1102
Cable No. 2933 to Bern dated August 25, 1944.....	800
Cable No. 2990 to Bern dated August 30, 1944.....	881
Cable No. 3074 to Bern dated September 6, 1944.....	1299

	<u>Page</u>
Cable No. 3092 to Bern from State Department dated September 6, 1944.....	1080
Cable No. 3120 to Bern dated September 9, 1944.....	811
Cable No. 3180 to Bern dated September 14, 1944.....	1040
Cable No. 3245 to Bern dated September 20, 1944.....	1054
Cable No. 3404 to Bern dated October 3, 1944.....	801
Cable No. 3427 to Bern dated October 5, 1944.....	1052
Cable No. 3435 to Bern dated October 6, 1944.....	814
Cable No. 3461 to Bern dated October 7, 1944.....	1114
Cable No. 3618 to Bern dated October 24, 1944.....	1167
Cable No. 3852 to Bern dated November 11, 1944.....	1060
Cable No. 3932 to Bern dated November 18, 1944.....	884
Cable No. 4014 to Bern dated November 28, 1944.....	891
Cable No. 4027 to Bern dated November 29, 1944.....	566
Cable No. 4154 to Bern dated December 8, 1944.....	1057
Cable No. 4273 to Bern dated December 19, 1944.....	887
Cable No. 4289 to Bern dated December 20, 1944.....	1083
Cable No. 4314 to Bern dated December 22, 1944.....	1214
Cable No. 4398 to Bern dated December 30, 1944.....	1106
Cable No. 102 to Bern dated January 6, 1945.....	890
Cable No. 127 to Bern dated January 9, 1945.....	1121
Cable No. 424 to Bern dated January 25, 1945.....	895
Cable No. 677 to Bern dated February 12, 1945.....	1124
Cable No. 804 to Bern dated February 23, 1945.....	1229
Cable No. 819 to Bern dated February 23, 1945.....	610
Cable No. 886 to Bern dated February 28, 1945.....	607
Cable No. 907 to Bern dated March 2, 1945.....	902
Cable No. 998 to Bern dated March 9, 1945.....	1224
Cable No. 1149 to Bern dated March 21, 1945.....	903
Cable No. 1763 to Bern dated May 10, 1945.....	1240
Cable No. 2402 to Bern dated July 27, 1945.....	905
Cable No. 95 from Cairo dated March 30, 1944.....	856
Cable No. 40 to Canberra dated April 12, 1944.....	567
Cable No. 61 to Casablanca from State Department dated April 20, 1944.....	929
Cable No. 106 from Caserta dated August 11, 1944.....	659
Cable No. 653 from Caserta dated October 6, 1944.....	660
Cable No. 219 from Ciudad Trujillo dated May 4, 1944.....	576
Cable No. 240 from Ciudad Trujillo dated May 19, 1944.....	577
Cable No. 131 from Dublin dated August 15, 1944.....	783
Cable No. 9 from Dublin dated January 17, 1945.....	1117
Cable No. 23 from Dublin dated February 6, 1945.....	1119
Cable No. 39 to Dublin dated March 14, 1944.....	560
Cable No. 20 to Dublin dated January 22, 1945.....	1118

Cable No. 9 from Durban dated March 20, 1944.....	661
Cable No. 8 to Durban dated March 6, 1944.....	660
Cable No. 161 to Geneva dated April 13, 1945.....	1228
Cable No. 257 to Istanbul dated April 26, 1944.....	858
Cable No. 77 from Jerusalem dated June 5, 1944.....	965
Cable No. 1274 from London dated February 15, 1944.....	859
Cable No. 3653 from London dated May 4, 1944.....	501
Cable No. 4681 from London dated June 10, 1944.....	1206
Cable No. 4745 from London dated June 14, 1944.....	964
Cable No. 4389 from London dated June 20, 1944.....	1090
Cable No. 5104 from London dated June 28, 1944.....	650
Cable No. 5396 from London dated July 8, 1944.....	1091
Cable No. 5637 from London dated July 17, 1944.....	935
Cable No. 5729 from London dated July 20, 1944.....	1243
Cable No. 5734 from London dated July 20, 1944.....	1295
Cable No. 6279 from London dated August 5, 1944.....	1205
Cable No. 6609 from London dated August 16, 1944.....	780
Cable No. 7393 from London dated September 8, 1944.....	790
Cable No. 10022 from London dated November 16, 1944.....	1221
Cable No. 634 to London dated January 25, 1944.....	460
Cable No. 1390 to London dated February 22, 1944.....	930
Cable No. 2292 to London dated March 25, 1944.....	939
Cable No. 3005 to London dated April 15, 1944.....	499
Cable No. 3934 to London dated May 17, 1944.....	1161
Cable No. 3953 to London dated May 18, 1944.....	1241
Cable No. 4411 to London dated June 3, 1944.....	1089
Cable No. 4413 to London dated June 3, 1944.....	652
Cable No. 4641 to London dated June 12, 1944.....	655
Cable No. 4753 to London dated June 15, 1944.....	941
Cable No. 4829 to London dated June 19, 1944.....	1207
Cable No. 5256 to London dated July 4, 1944.....	862
Cable No. 5504 to London dated July 13, 1944.....	1294
Cable No. 5943 to London dated July 28, 1944.....	771
Cable No. 6035 to London dated July 31, 1944.....	1203
Cable No. 7017 to London dated August 31, 1944.....	936
Cable No. 8341 to London dated October 10, 1944.....	1268
Cable No. 8780 to London dated October 21, 1944.....	883
Cable No. 9419 to London dated November 10, 1944.....	1220
Cable No. 2757 to London dated April 9, 1945.....	1094
Cable No. 779 from Lisbon dated March 11, 1944.....	1112
Cable No. 1168 from Lisbon dated April 19, 1944.....	710
Cable No. 1176 from Lisbon dated April 20, 1944.....	1068
Cable No. 1367 from Lisbon dated May 6, 1944.....	708
Cable No. 2009 from Lisbon dated June 28, 1944.....	720
Cable No. 2110 from Lisbon dated July 8, 1944.....	688

	<u>Page</u>
Cable No. 2864 from Lisbon dated September 14, 1944.....	716
Cable No. 3149 from Lisbon dated October 14, 1944.....	1116
Cable No. 1013 to Lisbon dated April 12, 1944.....	1113
Cable No. 1229 to Lisbon dated May 1, 1944.....	712
Cable No. 1289 to Lisbon dated May 8, 1944.....	709
Cable (unnumbered) to Lisbon dated June 14, 1944.....	657
Cable No. 1819 to Lisbon dated June 24, 1944.....	718
Cable No. 2007 to Lisbon dated July 17, 1944.....	721
Cable No. 2112 to Lisbon dated July 28, 1944.....	876
Cable No. 2331 to Lisbon dated August 24, 1944.....	701
Cable No. 2656 to Lisbon dated October 3, 1944.....	717
Cable No. 683 from Madrid dated February 28, 1944.....	666
Cable No. 378 from Madrid dated March 3, 1944.....	672
Cable No. 997 from Madrid dated March 22, 1944.....	684
Cable No. 1195 from Madrid dated April 6, 1944.....	677
Cable No. 2172 from Madrid dated June 22, 1944.....	934
Cable No. 2479 from Madrid dated July 15, 1944.....	690
Cable No. 2500 from Madrid dated July 17, 1944.....	1079
Cable No. 3640 from Madrid dated November 3, 1944.....	1063
Cable No. 463 to Madrid dated February 18, 1944.....	663
Cable No. 530 to Madrid dated February 25, 1944.....	670
Cable No. 752 to Madrid dated March 18, 1944.....	681
Cable No. 799 to Madrid dated March 23, 1944.....	673
Cable No. 992 to Madrid dated April 10, 1944.....	987
Cable No. 1008 to Madrid dated April 12, 1944.....	686
Cable No. 1108 to Madrid dated April 21, 1944.....	1061
Cable No. 1384 to Madrid from State Department dated May 16, 1944.....	1077
Cable No. 1485 to Madrid from State Department dated May 25, 1944.....	1076
Cable No. 2324 to Madrid dated August 21, 1944.....	695
Cable No. 2519 to Madrid dated September 11, 1944.....	1062
Cable No. 271 from Managua dated May 5, 1944.....	588
Cable No. 538 from Managua dated August 28, 1944.....	787
Cable No. 509 from Montevideo dated June 3, 1944.....	1071
Cable No. 570 from Montevideo dated June 16, 1944.....	1032
Cable No. 775 from Moscow dated March 9, 1944.....	1274
Cable No. 2184 from Moscow dated June 19, 1944.....	872
Cable No. 554 to Moscow dated March 11, 1944.....	1275
Cable No. 555 to Moscow dated March 11, 1944.....	1277
Cable No. 1641 to Moscow dated July 7, 1944.....	869
Cable No. 438 to Paris dated November 15, 1944.....	937
Cable No. 33 to Paris dated January 3, 1945.....	1086

000149

Cable No. 908 from Quito dated September 15, 1944..... 789

Cable No. 317 from Rome dated September 8, 1944..... 661

Cable No. 932 from Santiago dated May 30, 1944.....1002

Cable No. 908 from Stockholm dated March 16, 1944..... 618

Cable No. 1342 from Stockholm dated April 18, 1944..... 617

Cable No. 1379 from Stockholm dated April 21, 1944..... 621

Cable No. 1772 from Stockholm dated May 19, 1944..... 639

Cable No. 2009 from Stockholm dated June 5, 1944..... 506

Cable No. 2120 from Stockholm dated June 13, 1944..... 509

Cable No. 2187 from Stockholm dated June 17, 1944..... 753

Cable No. 2231 from Stockholm dated June 21, 1944..... 733

Cable No. 2362 from Stockholm dated June 28, 1944..... 906

Cable No. 2419 from Stockholm dated July 3, 1944..... 908

Cable No. 2548 from Stockholm dated July 10, 1944..... 508

Cable No. 2569 from Stockholm dated July 11, 1944..... 863

Cable No. 2621 from Stockholm dated July 15, 1944..... 912

Cable No. 2652 from Stockholm dated July 17, 1944..... 625

Cable No. 2668 from Stockholm dated July 18, 1944..... 864

Cable No. 3074 from Stockholm dated August 12, 1944.....1099

Cable No. 3199 from Stockholm dated August 19, 1944..... 626

Cable No. 3242 from Stockholm dated August 22, 1944..... 799

Cable No. 3565 from Stockholm dated September 11, 1944..... 915

Cable No. 3732 from Stockholm dated September 19, 1944..... 510

Cable No. 3864 from Stockholm dated September 25, 1944..... 627

Cable No. 3955 from Stockholm dated September 29, 1944..... 623

Cable No. 4187 from Stockholm dated October 14, 1944..... 916

Cable No. 4206 from Stockholm dated October 16, 1944.....1115

Cable No. 4348 from Stockholm dated October 25, 1944..... 628

Cable No. 4548 from Stockholm dated November 7, 1944..... 640

Cable No. 4620 from Stockholm dated November 11, 1944..... 629

Cable No. 5043 from Stockholm dated December 9, 1944.....1107

Cable No. 5167 from Stockholm dated December 18, 1944..... 630

Cable No. 5235 from Stockholm dated December 22, 1944..... 819

Cable No. 463 from Stockholm dated February 7, 1945..... 632

Cable No. 483 from Stockholm dated February 7, 1945.....1127

Cable No. 781 from Stockholm dated February 28, 1945..... 633

Cable No. 891 from Stockholm dated March 7, 1945..... 642

Cable No. 876 from Stockholm dated March 7, 1945..... 918

Cable No. 1186 from Stockholm dated March 28, 1945..... 921

Cable No. 1298 from Stockholm dated April 7, 1945..... 634

Cable No. 1447 from Stockholm dated April 19, 1945..... 643

Cable No. 1490 from Stockholm dated April 21, 1945..... 635

Cable No. 1547 from Stockholm dated April 25, 1945..... 925

Cable No. 1635 from Stockholm dated May 2, 1945..... 644

Cable No. 1669 from Stockholm dated May 3, 1945..... 645

Cable No. 1953 from Stockholm dated May 29, 1945..... 638

Cable No. 2071 from Stockholm dated June 8, 1945.....1236

000150

	<u>Page</u>
Cable No. 654 to Stockholm dated April 12, 1944.....	616
Cable No. 749 to Stockholm dated April 25, 1944.....	619
Cable No. 895 to Stockholm dated May 12, 1944.....	502
Cable No. 967 to Stockholm dated May 20, 1944.....	504
Cable No. 1213 to Stockholm dated June 16, 1944.....	507
Cable No. 1301 to Stockholm dated June 30, 1944.....	622
Cable No. 1353 to Stockholm dated July 7, 1944.....	734
Cable No. 1365 to Stockholm dated July 10, 1944.....	910
Cable No. 1501 to Stockholm dated July 28, 1944.....	777
Cable No. 1968 to Stockholm dated September 30, 1944.....	512
Cable No. 2537 to Stockholm dated December 16, 1944.....	1109
Cable No. 106 to Stockholm dated January 19, 1945.....	1125
Cable No. 646 to Stockholm dated April 7, 1945.....	924
Cable No. 127 from Tegucigalpa dated April 26, 1944.....	1020
Cable No. 257 from Tegucigalpa dated August 15, 1944.....	786
Cable No. 393 from Vatican City dated December 1, 1944.....	1139
Circular Airgram to Bolivia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay, El Salvador, and Venezuela, dated August 1, 1944.....	1050
Circular Airgram to Canberra, Ottawa, Dublin, and various Latin American republics dated August 12, 1944.....	782
Circular Airgram to Chile, Colombia, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Panama, Peru and Uruguay, dated April 15, 1944.....	570
Circular Airgram to Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela dated May 11, 1944.....	1000
Circular Airgram to Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Uruguay and Venezuela, dated September 19, 1944.....	1045
Circular Airgram to Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Peru and Venezuela dated March 31, 1944.....	967
Circular Airgram to Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Peru, Nicaragua, and Venezuela, dated April 11, 1944.....	991
Circular Airgram to United States Missions dated February 29, 1944.....	462
Circular Airgram to the various American republics dated June 17, 1944.....	1073
Circular Cable to Ankara, Stockholm, Lisbon, Caserta, London and Bern dated September 7, 1944.....	838
Circular Cable to London, Ankara, Madrid, Lisbon, Stockholm, and Bern dated June 28, 1944.....	1165
Circular Cable to Stockholm, Lisbon, Madrid, Cairo, and Naples dated July 15, 1944.....	1166

	<u>Page</u>
Dispatch No. 2148 from Asuncion dated June 3, 1944.....	569
Dispatch No. 2163 from Asuncion dated June 8, 1944.....	1023
Dispatch No. 294 from Ciudad Trujillo dated September 5, 1944..	784
Dispatch No. 1104 from Guatemala dated May 15, 1944.....	584
Dispatch No. 7845 from Havana dated September 7, 1944.....	574
Dispatch No. 711 from Lima dated June 28, 1944.....	592
Dispatch No. 790 from Lima dated July 7, 1944.....	1026
Dispatch No. 653 from Lisbon dated June 28, 1944.....	1064
Dispatch No. 1071 from Lisbon dated October 16, 1944.....	722
Dispatch No. 14393 from London to State Department dated March 11, 1944, enclosing letter from the British Foreign Office to the United States Embassy in London dated February 18, 1944.....	556
Dispatch No. 2790 from Madrid dated July 25, 1944.....	691
Dispatch No. 2905 from Madrid dated August 14, 1944.....	696
Dispatch No. 3139 from Madrid dated September 26, 1944.....	699
Dispatch No. 3819 from Madrid dated January 8, 1945.....	702
Dispatch No. 4743 from Montevideo dated August 29, 1944.....	594
Dispatch No. 1388 from Quito dated April 18, 1944.....	1008
Dispatch No. 2140 from Quito dated September 15, 1944.....	578
Dispatch No. 1400 from San Jose dated May 16, 1944.....	1003
Dispatch No. 1531 from San Salvador dated May 4, 1944.....	580
Dispatch No. 3593 from Stockholm dated June 26, 1944.....	755
Dispatch No. 3602 from Stockholm dated June 28, 1944.....	824
Dispatch No. 2042 from Tangier dated April 10, 1944.....	1253
Executive Order No. 9417 of January 22, 1944.....	453
Foreign Funds Control License No. W-2106, as amended, dated February 4, 1944.....	1305
Foreign Funds Control License No. W-2177 dated April 12, 1944.	1307
Letter addressed to 94 private welfare organizations dated February 8, 1944.....	1316
Letter from Administrator of Surplus Property Board dated May 30, 1945.....	1239

000152

Letter from the American Red Cross dated July 28, 1944.....1211

Letter from Apostolic Delegate dated February 26, 1944.....1129

Letter from Apostolic Delegate dated March 31, 1944.....1141

Letter to Apostolic Delegate dated April 3, 1944.....1130

Letter from Apostolic Delegate dated April 25, 1944.....1132

Letter from Apostolic Delegate dated May 6, 1944..... 998

Letter from Apostolic Delegate dated May 24, 1944.....1133

Letter from Apostolic Delegate dated July 7, 1944.....1144

Letter from Apostolic Delegate dated July 24, 1944.....1146

Letter from Apostolic Delegate to State Department  
dated July 27, 1944.....1181

Letter from Apostolic Delegate to State Department  
dated July 31, 1944.....1182

Letter from Apostolic Delegate dated September 23, 1944.....1135

Letter from Apostolic Delegate dated September 25, 1944..... 805

Letter from Apostolic Delegate dated October 2, 1944.....1136

Letter from Apostolic Delegate dated October 14, 1944.....1137

Letter from Apostolic Delegate dated November 4, 1944.....1148

Letter from Apostolic Delegate dated November 14, 1944.....1138

Letter from Apostolic Delegate dated January 5, 1945.....1280

Letter from Assistant Secretary of War McCloy dated  
July 4, 1944..... 707

Letter from the Attorney General dated March 1, 1945..... 960

Letter from Board Representative Olsen dated November 14,  
1944..... 737

Letter from Executive Director O'Dwyer to General Counsel of  
United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration  
dated March 15, 1945.....1223

Letter from Executive Director O'Dwyer to Surplus Property  
Board dated May 30, 1945.....1238

Letter from Executive Director O'Dwyer to War Department  
dated March 30, 1945.....1225

Letter from the Foreign Economic Administration dated  
February 24, 1944..... 475

Letter from the International Red Cross in Geneva dated  
May 30, 1945.....1300

Letter from the International Red Cross to Minister Harrison  
at Bern dated February 29, 1944.....1186

Letter from the Office of Censorship dated June 3, 1944.....1309

Letter from the Office of War Information dated  
January 12, 1945.....1170

000153

Letter from President Roosevelt to the Secretary of the Treasury dated January 29, 1944.....	463
Letter from President Roosevelt to the Secretary of the Treasury dated May 15, 1944.....	1286
Letter from the President's War Relief Control Board dated February 12, 1944.....	1251
Letter from the Secretary of the Interior dated February 27, 1945.....	957
Letter from the State Department dated February 7, 1944.....	1282
Letter from the State Department dated November 11, 1944.....	1287
Letter from the State Department dated December 14, 1944.....	1304
Letter from the State Department dated February 5, 1944.....	1150
Letter from the State Department dated March 4, 1944.....	1255
Letter from the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration dated January 30, 1945.....	602
Letter from the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration dated January 30, 1945.....	1088
Letter from the War Department dated March 3, 1944.....	1315
Letter from the War Department dated April 4, 1945.....	1227
Letter from the War Relief Control Board dated February 9, 1944.....	1312
Letter from the War Shipping Administration dated February 23, 1944.....	474
Letter from the Washington Delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross dated July 25, 1944.....	768
Letter to Ambassador Norweb dated November 10, 1944.....	726
Letter to the American Red Cross dated July 25, 1944.....	1209
Letter to the Apostolic Delegate from State Department dated February 21, 1944.....	1128
Letter to the Apostolic Delegate dated March 24, 1944.....	1140
Letter to the Apostolic Delegate from State Department dated June 24, 1944.....	1179
Letter to the Apostolic Delegate dated September 21, 1944.....	1134
Letter to the Apostolic Delegate dated October 20, 1944.....	1147
Letter to the Attorney General from Senator Robert Reynolds dated June 14, 1944.....	948
Letter to the International Red Cross dated August 11, 1945.....	1301

	<u>Page</u>
Letter to Minister Johnson in Stockholm dated December 6, 1944.....	740
Letter to the Office of War Information dated January 6, 1945.....	1168
Letter to the Secretary of State dated April 6, 1945.....	1171
Letter to the Secretary of the Treasury (and accompanying memorandum) dated June 6, 1945.....	952
Letter to Senator Robert Reynolds from the Attorney General dated June 23, 1944.....	949
Letter to the State Department dated February 11, 1944.....	1153
Letter to the State Department dated February 26, 1944.....	1283
Letter to the State Department dated March 16, 1944.....	1259
Letter to the State Department dated November 15, 1944.....	1288
Letter to Turkish Ambassador Ertegun in Washington dated May 3, 1944.....	1069
Letter to the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration dated January 12, 1945.....	1087
Letter to the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration dated January 16, 1945.....	600
Letter to Vead Hahatzala Emergency Committee from Executive Director O'Dwyer dated February 28, 1945.....	901
Letter to the War Relief Control Board dated March 5, 1944.....	1313
Letter to the War Relocation Authority dated September 12, 1944,.....	951
List of Washington Staff of the War Refugee Board .....	458
Memorandum from the Director of the Intergovernmental Committee dated April 14, 1944.....	1289
Memorandum from Executive Director Pehle to Secretary Stettinius dated July 27, 1944.....	875
Memorandum from the President dated June 8, 1944.....	944
Memoranda from the President dated September 12, 1944.....	1213
Memorandum from the President dated January 31, 1944.....	1222
Memorandum from President Truman to the Secretary of the Interior and the Executive Director of the War Refugee Board dated June 6, 1945.....	961

	<u>Page</u>
Memorandum of Understanding between the War Refugee Board and War Relief Control Board dated March 4, 1944.....	1314
Memorandum of Understanding between United States and British Officials on Experimental Feeding Program dated June 12, 1944.....	1193
Memorandum Resolving Differences in Spanish and Portuguese Rescue Operations dated July 13, 1944.....	713
Memorandum to Assistant Secretary of War McCloy dated June 29, 1944.....	766
Memorandum to the Director of the Intergovernmental Committee dated April 17, 1944.....	1293
Memorandum to the President from the Board members.....	1284
Memorandum to Under Secretary of State Stettinius dated August 28, 1944.....	1302
Memorandum to Secretary Stimson from Secretary Morgenthau dated February 1, 1944.....	647
Memorandum to the Swedish Minister to the United States dated February 24, 1944.....	497
Memorandum to the War Shipping Administration dated February 23, 1944.....	473
Message of the President to Congress dated June 12, 1944.....	945
Moscow Conference Declaration of German Atrocities dated November 1, 1943.....	1158
Office of War Information Central Directive dated February 1944.....	1310
Record of Expenditures from War Refugee Board Discretionary Funds dated November 27, 1944.....	538
Record of Expenditures dated June 2, 1945 (and accompanying letter from Representative McClelland in Bern dated May 30, 1945).....	546
Report from Lars Evensen to Representative Olsen dated May 25, 1945.....	636
Report from Lars Evensen to Representative Olsen dated June 8, 1945.....	637

	<u>Page</u>
Schedule of Private Agency Remittances Authorized by United States Treasury for War Refugee Board Purposes.....	1313
State Department Aide Memoire to the British Embassy, undated.....	1264
United Nations Declaration dated December 17, 1942.....	1152
War Refugee Board Press Releases No. 1 through 18.....	1321
War Refugee Board Press Release (unnumbered) dated November 26, 1944.....	1370
White House Press Release dated January 22, 1944.....	455

000157

Germans upon anyone assisting persons in these groups. Other funds made available to certain officials of the Norwegian Legation in Stockholm were used to supply urgently needed medicines, clothing, equipment, and food to Norwegian Home Front groups for a project related to the safeguarding of the Norwegian youths and students hiding in the forests and for the maintenance of facilities for their rescue should their lives become endangered. Pastors of the Norwegian Lutheran Church in Sweden were supplied with funds for a dual program, the first part involving arrangements for more or less penniless Norwegian refugees in Sweden to send food parcels back to relatives in Norway, the second part consisting of operations for transmitting Norwegian kroner into Norway through the underground for the relief of persons in the more isolated Norwegian parishes. 1/

In November 1944 the Board received reports from Stockholm concerning the appalling situation of the Norwegian civil population, particularly that north of Narvik. The Germans as they moved southward had followed a scorched-earth policy, destroying everything in the northern regions, and thousands of Norwegians faced starvation. The situation was so desperate that the Swedish Government had approached the Germans for permission to evacuate sick and aged women and children to Sweden. 2/ American Relief for Norway funds were placed at the disposal of competent groups to help in relieving the desperate situation in the northern districts.

In April 1945 the Board facilitated arrangements for the remittance of \$1,000 to Sweden by the Methodist Committee for Overseas Relief, to be used for the relief of Norwegian Methodists in Northern Norway. 3/

Operations in Hungary and the Balkans. As a result of the willingness of the Swedish Foreign Office to assign an attaché to its Legation in Budapest for the exclusive purpose of undertaking action in behalf of Hungarian Jews, a very constructive program of operations in Hungary was initiated from Sweden. 4/ Raoul Wallenberg, a Swedish businessman possessed of great energy and resourcefulness and sincerely concerned with the urgency of the problem, was chosen for the post. When the desperate nature of the situation of Jews in Hungary became apparent, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee was licensed to send \$100,000 to Sweden, and this money was made available by Representative Olsen to Mr. Wallenberg for rescue and relief operations in Hungary.

- 1/ Cable No. 4548 from Stockholm dated November 7, 1944, comprising document 113.
- 2/ Cables No. 14746 and 4800 from Stockholm dated November 20 and 22, 1944.
- 3/ Cable No. 627 to Stockholm dated April 5, 1945.
- 4/ See Rescue from Hungary.

Representative Olsen paid high tribute to the work done by Mr. Wallenberg and his associates. In his final report to the Board he stated: "Sufficient facts now appear at hand to support the conclusion that Hungarian rescue and relief actions initiated by the War Refugee Board from Sweden were the keystones of the most productive steps taken in that area, and paved the way for saving the lives of perhaps 100,000 Jews. The work of Raoul Wallenberg, actively supported by Minister Daniellson and his staff of the Swedish Legation in Budapest, was nothing short of brilliant--to say nothing of being highly courageous. This group pioneered the program of constant and relentlessly increasing pressure on the Hungarian Government in behalf of the Jews, at the cost of seriously jeopardizing their own personal safety. Minister Daniellson informed Minister Johnson . . . that during their last weeks as officials in Budapest, Raoul Wallenberg had to hide in a different house every night, he was so hotly hunted by the Hungarian Fascists and the Germans. The program of issuing Swedish protective passports, of sheltering Jews in Swedish protected dwellings, and similar other activities in itself brought approximately 20,000 Jews under the safety of Swedish protection . . . This program set a pattern which soon was followed by the Swiss, Portuguese and the International Red Cross, and in the end produced a combined program which probably afforded the greatest relief and protection to Jews in any European country." 1/

In January 1945 Mr. Wallenberg disappeared. Some time later he was reported to have been murdered.

Efforts were made by Board Representative Olsen to further rescue and relief measures in the Balkan countries. Indirect and unofficial pressure was brought to bear on the Rumanian Legation in Stockholm concerning the policy of the Rumanian Government towards the Jews. Negotiations were also begun with respect to transport facilities for the evacuation of Jews from Rumania to Turkey, but these were suspended in view of similar negotiations under way in Turkey. 2/ Informal pressure was also exerted on the Bulgarian Minister in Stockholm for a relaxation of Jewish persecutions. 3/ Board funds were made available by Representative Olsen for urgently needed relief operations for Jews in both Rumania and Bulgaria.

Licenses Obtained for Private Organizations. In May 1944 Board Representative Olsen advised the Board of discussions held with the Chief Rabbi of Sweden, who was described as directing the

- 1/ Letter from Board Representative Olsen to Executive Director O'Dwyer dated June 15, 1945; see also Cable No. 891 from Stockholm dated March 7, 1945, comprising document 114.
- 2/ See Rescue from Rumania and Rescue to and through Turkey.
- 3/ See Rescue from Bulgaria.

II G. RESCUE PROGRAMS: RESCUE FROM HUNGARY

Prior to Germany's military occupation of Hungary in March 1944, Hungary was the only refuge for Jews in Axis Europe. Although anti-Jewish laws had been on the Hungarian statute books since as early as 1938, their enforcement and the condition of the Jews in Hungary were such as to invite the clandestine immigration of tens of thousands of Jews from Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Rumania. The Jewish population of Hungary was thus swelled to more than 800,000. The refugees were cared for by the native Jewish population, who tried to see to it that no large numbers of newcomers congregated in any one place. The movement was so large, however, that it was undoubtedly known of and condoned by Hungarian authorities.

During the first month of the Board's existence, the clandestine movement of Jews from Poland and Czechoslovakia was still under way and the Board facilitated the efforts of private agencies to increase the traffic to Hungary as a place of relative safety.<sup>1/</sup> In connection with these efforts to enable persons to flee to Hungary and, later, to escape from Hungary and the Balkans to safety elsewhere, substantial amounts of money were remitted by private American organizations, particularly to Switzerland and to Sweden, under appropriate Treasury licenses, to finance the operations involved.<sup>2/</sup>

In the early days of the Board's existence Hungary also served as an important source of food for the International Red Cross and other relief organizations to distribute to persecuted groups in concentration camps in German-controlled areas. On the Board's recommendation, Treasury licenses were issued to permit the purchase of Hungarian foodstuffs for such purposes.<sup>3/</sup>

There were, however, lapses in the Hungarian Government's passive attitude. It was reported that during 1941, for example, a substantial number of Jews from Poland and Hungarian-born Jews of

- <sup>1/</sup> See also Approaches to Germany and the Satellites To Halt Persecution for an account of early efforts of the Board to stem persecution and deportations in Hungary.
- <sup>2/</sup> See especially Rescue to and through Switzerland, Rescue to and through Sweden, Rescue from Rumania, and Rescue from Czechoslovakia.
- <sup>3/</sup> See Relief Programs: Projects of Private Organizations (American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee).

Polish origin but of uncertain nationality were rounded up, some being deported to Poland and others detained in concentration camps. It was also reported that in December 1943 the Germans began to press Hungary to adopt a stricter anti-Jewish policy. Late in February 1944 word reached the Board that Hungary was yielding to German pressure to deport foreign Jews and to close its borders to refugees from Poland and elsewhere.

Early Measures and Attempts To Get Facts. The Board's intense interest in getting the facts of the Hungarian situation was communicated at an early date to the neutral European governments and to various public and private agencies. Early in March 1944 the Board also asked key United States Missions abroad to communicate to Hungarian and other satellite authorities, through channels known to be available, a message expressing this Government's disapproval of continued collaboration in such persecution and warning them of the consequences that would follow.<sup>1/</sup>

On March 19, 1944, however, the German military occupied Hungary and the following days witnessed the creation of a Nazi puppet government, one of whose avowed purposes was to make Hungary Judenrein. Five days later President Roosevelt publicly condemned the Nazi policy of exterminating Jews and other civilian populations, referring particularly to Hungary and warning that all those who took any part in such persecutions would be punished for their crimes. With the cooperation of the Office of War Information, this statement and others condemning the Nazi atrocities, along with various appeals to Hungarians "of good will" to oppose the Nazi persecutions, were repeatedly broadcast to Axis Europe. The British and Soviet Governments were urged by the Board to cooperate in this psychological warfare program, as a result of which the British, in particular, helped materially to expand the radio coverage of messages directed to the continent.<sup>2/</sup>

Cooperation of International Red Cross Solicited. On the theory that the presence of foreigners in official or unofficial capacities would have a deterrent effect, the Board, late in March 1944, addressed a request to the International Red Cross to send effective representation to Hungary in order to protect the well-being of groups there facing persecution.<sup>3/</sup> In response to this request, the Red Cross declined to send any such special delegation on the ground that such a mission might be considered as inconsistent with its traditional functions.<sup>4/</sup>

- 1/ See Approaches to Germany and the Satellites To Halt Persecutions: Appeals through Neutral Countries.
- 2/ See Psychological Warfare Programs: Statements and Informational Campaigns Inspired by the Board.
- 3/ Cable No. 1023 to Bern dated March 27, 1944, comprising document 160.
- 4/ Cable No. 2312 from Bern dated April 13, 1944.

At the Board's instigation, however, the Ankara representative of the International Red Cross spoke with German Ambassador von Papen in Ankara, who was said to have agreed to recommend to the German Government that restraint be exercised in its treatment of the Jews in Hungary. 1/

In response to another request addressed to the International Red Cross for whatever information could be obtained concerning the Jewish situation in Hungary, arrangements were made for relaying to the Board the substance of reports received from the Budapest representative of the Red Cross concerning Hungarian developments. 2/

Cooperation of Vatican Also Sought. On March 24, 1944, the Board sent a copy of the statement issued by President Roosevelt to the Apostolic Delegate in Washington and asked him to urge that the Holy See take action toward influencing the people and Governments of Hungary and Rumania to protect the Jewish population of those countries. In accordance with this request, the Holy See instructed its representatives in Hungary and Rumania to do everything possible for the relief of victims of Axis persecution in those countries. In June 1944 these instructions were followed by a personal appeal from the Pope to Hungarian Regent Horthy, calling for tolerance in the treatment of minority groups in Hungary, to which the Regent was said to have responded favorably. 3/ A stirring statement by Archbishop Spellman of New York likewise proved helpful in connection with the Board's campaign to halt the persecution of Jews and other minorities in Hungary. 4/

Second Warning Addressed to Hungarian Authorities. Meanwhile reports continued to arrive indicating that German pressure on Hungary was being intensified. In April 1944 a second informal warning was therefore sent to Hungarian authorities through the United States Legation at Lisbon, reiterating that any action to inflict new and further persecutions or to continue existing persecutions directed against foreign or native Jews, or any further deportations, would be considered by this Government with the greatest disfavor and would be taken into account at the end of the war. 5/

- 1/ Cable No. 596 from Ankara dated April 4, 1944, comprising document 161.
- 2/ Cable No. 895 from Ankara dated May 18, 1944.
- 3/ See Approaches to Germany and the Satellites To Halt Persecution: Appeals through the Vatican.
- 4/ See Psychological Warfare Programs: Statements and Informational Campaigns Inspired by the Board.
- 5/ See Approaches to Germany and the Satellites To Halt Persecution: Appeals through Neutral Countries.

Attempts to Increase Flow of Refugees through Yugoslavia. In view of the rising tide of persecution, all avenues for escape were explored. The most promising clandestine route at the time appeared to be through that portion of Yugoslav territory occupied by the Partisan forces of Marshal Tito. Consequently, one of the Board's representatives discussed at length the feasibility of such an escape route with representatives of Marshal Tito as well as with British and United States military authorities in Italy. As a result of this discussion and of approaches made to Marshal Tito by the British, a promise of Partisan support in rescuing Hungarian Jews was obtained. In addition, the Board made arrangements for the sending of private funds to Italy to facilitate rescue operations through Yugoslav territory and across the Adriatic to southern Italy. 1/

Emigration through Turkey to Palestine. The possibility of escape through emigration was also explored and proved more productive. Since there was reason to believe that persons with Turkish transit visas and Palestine immigration certificates would be able to obtain Rumanian and Bulgarian transit visas, the Turkish Government was prevailed upon to facilitate the departure of Jews from Hungary by issuing Turkish transit visas in considerable numbers. Rumanian authorities later set up a new bureau to facilitate the emigration of Jews, and through the efforts of the Board private funds were made available to finance the evacuation from Rumanian ports of large numbers of endangered persons bound for Palestine by way of Turkey. Largely as the result of personal intervention on the part of Ambassador Steinhardt in Ankara, the Turkish Government provided transportation facilities to the Syrian border for those reaching Turkey in this manner. 2/

The Board meanwhile extended its facilities fully for the transmission of applications for Palestine certificates to persons in Hungary. Efforts in this direction, however, received a severe set-back early in 1944. Ambassador Steinhardt, noting that no Jewish refugees had arrived from Hungary during the latter part of April 1944, invited the attention of the Turkish Foreign Office to this fact and inquired as to whether the Turkish Consul in Budapest was for any reason withholding the granting of Turkish visas. As a result of this inquiry, Ambassador Steinhardt learned that the Turk Consul at Budapest had sent the Foreign Office word that every Jew who entered the Turkish Consulate in Budapest for the purpose of applying for a Turkish visa had been arrested as soon as he left and transported to an unknown destination. 3/

The Board later suggested that the Turks be asked to allow refugees to enter Turkey without transit visas, but Ambassador

1/ See Rescue to and through Italy.

2/ See Rescue from Rumania and Rescue to and through Turkey.

3/ Cable No. 794 from Ankara dated May 2, 1944, comprising document 162.

Steinhardt felt that obtaining Turkish concurrence on this proposition would be virtually impossible.<sup>1/</sup>

Special Efforts To Obtain Releases. While pursuing its efforts to influence Hungarian authorities by official and unofficial pressure and to aid in the escape of Jews from Hungary, the Board did not neglect the possibility of enlisting the self-interest of individual German and Hungarian officials in a position to alleviate the fate of Jews. For example, in April of 1944, in cooperation with a private agency, steps were taken to establish contact with an individual in Bratislava who was reported to have been successful in arresting the deportation of Jews from Slovakia. An intermediary in Switzerland was asked to explore with him the possibility of arranging for evacuations from Hungary to neutral countries or for holding up deportations or permitting the sending of relief to those detained. A second effort along such lines was made three months later with the assistance of a prominent Hungarian in this country.<sup>2/</sup>

Still another less conventional possibility of rescue was explored. On various occasions, upon learning the names of certain individuals in Hungary who might be able to assist in the temporary hiding of Jews in that country, the Board cabled these names to Stockholm and Bern for transmission to members of the underground in Hungary, for whatever use could be made of them.

German-Inspired Proposals To Save the Jews of Hungary. On the other hand, various proposals were received through neutral countries suggesting certain concessions by the Allied Governments in return for a cessation on the part of the Germans of the Hungarian deportations and slaughter. Most, if not all, of these propositions were felt to be of dubious reliability. Nevertheless, it was the Board's policy to avoid outright rejection of any of the proposals, however fantastic, as a means of stalling for time and in the hope that some valid and acceptable proposal might be received. It eventually became clear, however, that the Germans were willing to let the Jews go only on totally unacceptable terms, that is, in exchange for such articles as trucks, tractors, machine tools, and similar material to support the German war effort.

Protection Provided by Means of Latin American Documents. One of the most successful steps taken to insure the safety of Jews in Hungary was the extension to Hungary of this Government's

1/ Cable No. 1010 from Ankara dated June 5, 1944, comprising document 163.

2/ See Special Negotiations.

emphatic demand that persons in German-controlled territory holding documents issued in the name of any American republic, or otherwise claiming the nationality of an American republic, be accorded all the rights and privileges of such nationals unless and until the government whose nationality was claimed denied the validity of such documents or claims. 1/

Hungarian Deportations Begun. Despite these early efforts of the Board, a communication received early in May 1944 from the United States Embassy in London, based on information obtained from London representatives of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, confirmed previous reports that the deportation of Jews from Hungary and territories under its control had begun. By that time some 24,000 persons had been deported from Sub-Carpatho Russia, in addition to the general deportation of Polish refugees seized by the Hungarian police. 2/ This report was rapidly followed by word from other sources that the deportation of Jews from Hungary was being pursued relentlessly and with attendant brutalities.

Efforts Made To Obtain Further Information. In cables to the various neutral European capitals the Board on May 23, 1944, indicated this Government's grave concern over these developments. United States Missions were asked to request the authorities of the various governments to which they were accredited to obtain as soon as possible detailed information from their missions in Budapest concerning the treatment of Jews in Hungary. 3/

Expansion of Diplomatic and Consular Staffs Urged. Since it was felt that the lives of some 800,000 persons in Hungary might well depend on the restraint resulting from the mere presence in that country of the largest possible number of foreign observers, these same United States Missions were asked to make representations designed to induce the various governments to which they were accredited to take immediate steps to expand their respective diplomatic and consular staffs in Hungary and to distribute such personnel as widely as possible throughout the country. It was hoped that such diplomatic and consular representatives would be able to persuade individuals and officials to desist from further barbarisms. 4/

- 1/ See Rescue through Protective Measures: Recognition of Latin American Passports.
- 2/ Cable No. 3641 from London dated May 4, 1944.
- 3/ Cable No. 1786 to Bern dated May 23, 1944, comprising document 164; repeated on the same date to Lisbon, Madrid, Ankara, Stockholm, and Vatican City.
- 4/ Cable No. 1805 to Bern dated May 25, 1944, comprising document 165; repeated on the same date to Lisbon, Ankara, and Stockholm; repeated on the following day to Madrid.

Sweden Complied with Board's Request. The Swedish Foreign Office, complying with the Board's request, appointed as its Special Attaché to the Swedish Legation at Budapest Raoul Wallenberg, a prominent Swedish businessman, who was instructed to follow and report on the situation in Hungary, particularly the persecution of Jews and other minority groups.<sup>1/</sup>

The Board was invited to make suggestions as to the activities of the new attaché and his staff, in response to which a proposed program was promptly outlined and forwarded to Stockholm.<sup>2/</sup> Arrangements were made to communicate through the Swedish Foreign Office with Mr. Wallenberg when he reached Budapest. It was thus possible for the Board to keep reliably and currently informed, via diplomatic channels, on developments in Hungary. Since it was felt that money and favorable post-war considerations might motivate action impeding, relaxing, or slowing down the tempo of persecution and might help permit escapes, the new attaché was urged by the Board to ascertain in just what quarters such inducements might be effective.

Board Representative Olsen in Stockholm meanwhile was instructed to lend every possible assistance to the Swedish attaché. The Board also arranged to place at the disposal of Representative Olsen substantial funds provided by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, which were later used by Mr. Wallenberg to accomplish seemingly impossible feats of rescue and relief in Hungary against overwhelming odds.<sup>3/</sup>

Shortly after the arrival in Budapest of the new Swedish attaché and his staff, several thousand persons were placed under effective Swedish protection.<sup>4/</sup> Food and other relief supplies

- <sup>1/</sup> Cable No. 2231 from Stockholm dated June 21, 1944, comprising document 166. See Rescue to and through Sweden; see also Cable No. 1010 to Stockholm dated May 25, 1944, and Cable No. 2069 from Stockholm dated June 9, 1944.
- <sup>2/</sup> Cable No. 1353 to Stockholm dated July 7, 1944; comprising document 167; see also Cable No. 1349 to Stockholm dated July 6, 1944.
- <sup>3/</sup> See Rescue to and through Sweden. Mutually congratulatory letters were later exchanged by Mr. Wallenberg and the Board; see letter from Board Representative Olsen dated November 14, 1944, comprising document 168, and letter to Minister Johnson in Stockholm dated December 6, 1944, comprising document 169.
- <sup>4/</sup> Cable No. 2779 from Stockholm dated July 25, 1944; see also Cable No. 3811 from Stockholm dated September 22, 1944, and Cable No. 891 from Stockholm dated March 7, 1945.

000166

were later acquired in Hungary for needy Jewish groups, both within and outside newly established Swedish houses of protection. 1/

Proposal To Enlarge Neutral Personnel Unsuccessful in Other Quarters. Switzerland was never persuaded to increase its diplomatic personnel in Hungary. 2/

Ambassador Hayes meanwhile informed the Board that although the Spanish Foreign Office had, at his request, agreed to instruct Spanish diplomatic personnel in Budapest to be as active there as possible, in the hope that their presence might have a deterring effect on the Germans, he felt it useless to suggest that additional personnel be sent to Hungary, especially since such action would be against Spain's policy of minimizing its connections with the Hungarian regime. 3/

Minister Norweb pointed out that as a result of having made fairly strong representations, following the invasion of Hungary, seeking to persuade the Portuguese Government not to recognize the puppet government in Budapest, he felt that it would be inappropriate for him to approach the Portuguese Government at that time with respect to enlarging the Portuguese mission in Hungary. Even aside from this consideration, Minister Norweb voiced grave doubts that the Germans would allow any such increase at that time. 4/

Hungarian-Turkish relations were virtually non-existent at that time, according to a cable from Ambassador Steinhardt. This strain was said to have resulted from the Turkish Government's having materially reduced the shipment of strategic materials to Hungary, at the request of the Allies. The Turkish Government therefore felt that it was in no position to ask the Hungarian Government for permission to expand the Turkish diplomatic force in Hungary. Moreover, Turkish authorities were convinced that such request would be refused. 5/

Renewed Appeal to Red Cross Successful. As of May 1944 the International Red Cross had only one representative in Hungary, and this representative had gone to Budapest not as a Red Cross delegate but in his capacity as Director of the Swiss Chamber of Commerce in Hungary since it had been feared that his going in the former capacity would have delayed his receipt of a German visa. Under date of May 25, 1944, the Board therefore asked that Board Representative McClelland again appeal to the Red Cross, along somewhat the same lines as those on which neutral governments were being approached, in the hope that the Red Cross would reconsider its previous decision not to send a special delegation to Hungary. Emphasis was placed upon the Board's conviction that the persistent

- 1/ Cable No. 3884 from Stockholm dated September 26, 1944.
- 2/ Cable No. 4045 from Bern dated June 24, 1944.
- 3/ Cable No. 1943 from Madrid dated June 1, 1944.
- 4/ Cable No. 1671 from Lisbon dated June 1, 1944.
- 5/ Cable No. 977 from Ankara dated May 29, 1944.

000167

reports concerning systematic mass extermination of Jews in Hungary made immediate enlargement of the Red Cross delegation in Budapest and throughout Hungary, especially in the localities in which Jews were being concentrated, an elementary humanitarian obligation.1/

As a result of the Board's repeated requests, the Red Cross eventually enlarged its representation in Hungary.2/

Approach Proposed to Hungarian Minister in Ankara. In line with its determination to pursue every possible means of halting the Hungarian persecutions, the Board early in June 1944 advanced to Ambassador Steinhardt still another proposal. This time it was suggested that the Hungarian Minister in Ankara be approached in an effort to restrain the Hungarian Government in its persecution of Jews.3/ Ambassador Steinhardt, however, felt that such action would be of no use whatever, in view of what he described as the well-known pro-Nazi attitude of the Hungarian Minister and his staff.4/

Increased Persecutions Noted. Meanwhile, according to reliable information which reached the Board from Bern toward the end of May 1944, steps being taken in Hungary were unmistakable preliminaries to further mass deportation and extermination of the Jewish population, especially in the Carpatho-Russian and Maramaros regions.5/ The number of persons immediately involved was said to be about 200,000, with all signs pointing to the extension of such actions to the Jewish population in Hungary proper.

The lot of the Jews in improvised Hungarian camps to which they had been confined was said to be wretched. The cattle markets, tile factories, and wood yards used as camps were reported to be almost completely devoid of sanitary facilities. In many instances, thousands of men, women, and children, along with the sick and the aged, were forced to live in the open under frightfully overcrowded and degrading conditions. Since the persons confined had been permitted to take nothing with them in the way of blankets or covers, it became tragically obvious that a great many of them would die from exposure as well as from disease and slow starvation, even before they were jammed into cattle cars for deportation.

- 1/ Cable No. 1806 to Bern dated May 25, 1944, comprising document 170; see also Cable No. 3731 from Bern dated June 11, 1944, and Cable No. 2103 to Bern dated June 19, 1944.
- 2/ Cable No. 4896 from Bern dated July 29, 1944, comprising document 171.
- 3/ Cable No. 499 to Ankara dated June 2, 1944.
- 4/ Cable No. 1010 from Ankara dated June 5, 1944.
- 5/ See, for example, Cable No. 3346 from Bern dated May 25, 1944, comprising document 172.

000168

In June 1944 Board Representative McClelland reported that there no longer remained any doubt that the majority of the Jewish population east of the Danube, especially in eastern, northern, and northeastern Hungary, had been deported to Poland. Figures received from various reliable independent sources indicated that at least 335,000 Jews had already been deported from Sub-Carpathian and Ruthenian areas, from Transylvania, and from the Tisz region; some 350,000 Jews remained in Budapest and environs.

Prior to the deportations there were said to have been two weeks to a month of brutal concentration, during which thousands of Jews were crowded together in primitive quarters without sufficient food, clothing, or water and without respect to health, sex, or age. Hungarian gendarmes were said to have carried out this action. The names of individuals in the Hungarian Government who were said to bear the major responsibility for these persecutions were also forwarded.<sup>1/</sup>

Swedish Reports on Conditions in Hungary. Official reports on the situation in Hungary were not lacking. The Swedish Foreign Office, in particular, materially aided the development of the Board's program by constantly making available to Minister Johnson and Board Representative Olsen, in strict confidence, the substance of various official reports received from Swedish diplomatic personnel in Hungary. On June 17, 1944, for example, Minister Johnson relayed to the Board from Stockholm the principal features of a summary of conditions in Hungary prepared by the Swedish Foreign Office on the basis of information received from the Swedish Minister in Hungary. The substance of this official report substantiated word previously received concerning cruelty, torture, murders, and suicides.<sup>2/</sup>

The Board later received from Stockholm a translation of a detailed memorandum furnished by the Swedish Foreign Office with respect to the discriminatory regulations that had been applied in Hungary to all Jews, whether Jewish or Christian by religion. (In this connection it was estimated that 35 percent of the Jews in Budapest were Christian.)

The Swedish memorandum stated unequivocally that the lives of the bulk of Hungarian Jews were in danger. Hungary was reported to have obtained permission from German authorities to

<sup>1/</sup> Cable No. 4041 from Bern dated June 24, 1944, comprising document 173; see also Cable No. 4170 from Bern dated June 30, 1944.  
<sup>2/</sup> Cable No. 2187 from Stockholm dated June 17, 1944, comprising document 174.

retain 150,000 male Jews between the ages of 21 and 50 for compulsory military labor in the country's defense; the remaining 900,000 Jews were being transferred to German territory. This transfer was said to have gone on daily in sealed freight cars holding 70 persons each, without sanitary arrangements and with only whatever food each person carried. Estimates of the number of persons already sent to Germany in this manner varied between 20,000 and 100,000. The purpose of this transportation, it was stated, appeared to be partly to furnish labor for Germany and partly, in the case of children and the aged, to furnish hostages of a sort or protection against bombing if they were quartered near war industries.<sup>1/</sup>

Shortly after transmitting the substance of this memorandum, Minister Johnson was advised by a spokesman of the Foreign Office that information later received from Budapest indicated the treatment of Jews was so terrible as to defy description. Of the total number of Jews in Hungary originally, it was estimated that not more than 400,000 remained and these were mostly in Budapest. The others - of whom there were conservatively well over 600,000 - were said to have been either deported to Germany or killed. Evidence reaching the Swedish Foreign Office supported previous reports that large numbers of Jews were being killed en masse by means of a gas chamber across the Hungarian frontier in Poland.<sup>2/</sup>

The Swedish Legation in Budapest, acting through Attache Wallenberg and his limited staff, had attempted, in particular, to aid persons in Hungary having Swedish connections. Communication between the Swedish Legation and persons in Hungary holding protective papers issued by the Legation, however, became virtually impossible. Letters to such persons were returned as undeliverable. Only in rare instances could personal visits by the Legation's staff be undertaken, and these accomplished little. Letters and notes addressed to military officials or to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry by the Swedes were politely received, but replies were practically never forthcoming.

One example cited was the case of Jews holding Swedish passports. Hungarian authorities, instead of agreeing to leave such persons at liberty until they could proceed to Sweden, as was done in the case of other Swedish subjects, declared that after July 1, 1944, all alien Jews were to be interned. Oral inquiries addressed to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry elicited only vague replies. Vague replies were also received in connection with inquiries concerning the possibility of interning such persons in special camps to be maintained and administered by Sweden.<sup>3/</sup>

1/ Dispatch No. 3593 from Stockholm dated June 26, 1944, comprising document 175.

2/ Cable No. 2412 from Stockholm dated July 1, 1944.

3/ Cables No. 2510 and 2511 from Stockholm, both dated July 7, 1944.

Information Obtained from Swiss Government. The Swiss government was likewise cooperative in relaying to the Board information it received concerning the situation in Hungary. A Swiss spokesman stated that, while no exact figures were obtainable reports to the Swiss Foreign Office indicated that as of July 1944 some 250,000 deportations from Hungary had already occurred. It was further indicated, in strictest confidence, that the Swiss Government was facilitating communication between interested groups in Switzerland and Jewish organizations in Hungary. Moreover, the Swiss Minister in Budapest was under instructions to leave the Hungarian Government in no doubt as to the attitude of the Swiss Government and the Swiss people with regard to these persecutions. A similar message had been conveyed to the Hungarian Charge d'Affaires in Bern.<sup>1/</sup>

United States Note Delivered to Hungarian Authorities. On June 16, 1944, in an effort to confront Hungarian authorities with their responsibility for the infamous treatment visited upon the Jews, Minister Harrison at the Board's request delivered to the Swiss Foreign Office for transmission to the Hungarian Government a note inquiring into the intentions of Hungary with respect to the future treatment of Jews and reiterating the grave view which this Government took regarding the persecution of Jews and other minorities.<sup>2/</sup> The Swiss communicated this note verbatim to Hungarian officials on June 27, 1944.<sup>3/</sup> It was not until August 1944 that a reply was received.<sup>4/</sup>

Military Measures Held Impracticable. Although the Board at the outset, in response to a British query, had declared that military measures were not contemplated as an essential part of the Board's rescue and relief program, the tragic turn of events in Hungary gave rise to renewed suggestions that some sort of military operations be undertaken. Because of the immensity of the catastrophe being visited upon the Jews of Hungary, the Board gave serious consideration to all rescue proposals advanced. Thus on June 29, 1944, the Board addressed a memorandum to Assistant Secretary of War McCloy, directing his attention to the recommendations relayed by Board Representative McClelland from Bern concerning the proposal of various agencies that vital sections of the railway lines being used for the deportation of

- <sup>1/</sup> Cable No. 4506 from Bern dated July 14, 1944, comprising document 176.
- <sup>2/</sup> Cable No. 3843 from Bern dated June 16, 1944, comprising document 177.
- <sup>3/</sup> Cable No. 4260 from Bern dated July 5, 1944.
- <sup>4/</sup> Cable No. 5040 from Bern dated August 5, 1944, comprising document 178. See page 159.

Jews from Hungary to Poland be bombed for the purpose of forestalling or hindering German extermination operations.<sup>1/</sup>

The War Department in turn advised the Board that it was of the opinion that the suggested bombing was impracticable, since it could only be executed "by the diversion of considerable air support essential to the success of our forces now engaged in decisive operations" and would in any case be of doubtful efficacy.<sup>2/</sup>

Various other proposals along these lines were received by the Board. It was suggested that concentration and extermination centers be bombed in order that the resultant confusion might enable some of the persons held to escape and hide. It was also proposed that weapons be dropped by parachute during such bombings and that parachute troops be used to bring about disorganization and escape. These particular proposals were not referred to the War Department because the Board did not feel justified in asking at that stage of the war that any measures be undertaken involving the diversion or sacrifice of American troops.

One private organization urged that the Board ask the War Department to make transport planes available to a neutral power to be used to facilitate the evacuation of Hungarian Jews. This request was not referred to the War Department, however, because it seemed clear that the Germans would not consider granting safe-conduct to such planes inasmuch as they had refused to grant safe-conduct to ships carrying Jewish refugees from Rumania to Turkey. Moreover, the Board felt in this case also that it would not be proper at that time to ask the War Department to divert military equipment to non-military purposes.

There was also the recurrent proposal that Hungarian rescue operations be undertaken by means of small vessels sailing down the Danube.<sup>3/</sup> After careful investigation of this proposal, it was learned that such operations were not feasible because of the heavy mining of the waters of the Danube by Allied air forces.<sup>4/</sup> A Swiss request that safe-conduct be granted for such voyages was therefore denied by both the United States and Great Britain.<sup>5/</sup>

- <sup>1/</sup> Memorandum to Assistant Secretary of War McCloy dated June 29, 1944, comprising document 179.
- <sup>2/</sup> Letter from Assistant Secretary of War McCloy dated July 4, 1944, comprising document 180.
- <sup>3/</sup> See, for example, Cable No. 5820 from Bern dated September 5, 1944.
- <sup>4/</sup> Cable No. 7394 from London dated September 8, 1944.
- <sup>5/</sup> Cable No. 3498 to Bern dated October 13, 1944.

Appeal Addressed to Hungary by King of Sweden. Early in July 1944 the Board learned that, as a result of the petitioning of Jewish groups in Sweden, the King of Sweden had addressed a strong personal appeal to the Hungarian Government appealing to it "in Humanity's name" to do what it could to stop the massacre of defenseless persons.<sup>1/</sup>

International Red Cross Appeal to Hungarian Regent. A little later in July the Swiss Foreign Office revealed that it had transmitted a direct appeal from President Huber of the International Red Cross to Hungarian Regent Horthy. This appeal was in line with the promise obtained by the Board with respect to enlargement of the Red Cross delegation in Hungary.<sup>2/</sup> It enumerated known facts concerning the anti-Jewish persecutions and sought permission to send a special mission to Hungary to be present at deportations in order to assist people with medicines and food and to exercise some control over the ultimate fate of the deportees.<sup>3/</sup>

According to an International Red Cross communique published on July 18, 1944, Hungarian authorities, in response to this appeal, gave official assurances that the deportation of Jews had ceased. The Red Cross, according to this statement, had been authorized to furnish relief to Jewish internees in Hungary and to aid in the evacuation of all Jewish children under 10 years of age who were in possession of visas to receptive countries; moreover, all Jews in Hungary holding Palestine certificates were to be permitted to leave for Palestine.<sup>4/</sup>

Substantial relief was later provided by the Red Cross in Hungary, in line with this authorization. Several thousand children were housed and fed, along with many mothers who feared separation from their children. A considerable amount of the private funds which the Board had arranged to have sent abroad for relief purposes was spent by the Red Cross in connection with these activities in Hungary.

The Horthy Proposal. Later in July 1944 a letter was received from the Washington Delegate of the International Red Cross confirming the fact that the Hungarian Government had indicated

- <sup>1/</sup> Cable No. 2412 from Stockholm dated July 1, 1944.
- <sup>2/</sup> Cable No. 3731 from Bern dated June 11, 1944.
- <sup>3/</sup> Cables No. 4324 and 4506 from Bern dated July 7 and 14, 1944, the latter comprising document 176.
- <sup>4/</sup> Cable No. 4896 from Bern dated July 29, 1944, comprising document 17L.

its willingness to make possible the emigration of certain categories of Jews. The proposal failed, however, to elaborate on what categories of Jews would be permitted to leave Hungary. 1/

Despite the vague nature of the Hungarian "offer", it seemed imperative to reply to it as soon as possible and to stress that this Government's acceptance was not limited to any special category of Jews but embraced all who might be permitted to leave. Since the inquiry received through the Red Cross had been addressed to the United Kingdom as well as to the United States, an exchange of views with Great Britain was undertaken through Ambassador Winant in London. 2/

After a series of proposals and counterproposals, the British advised the Board that they were prepared to join in a public statement announcing the Horthy proposal, the terms of its acceptance by the United States, and Britain's readiness to "cooperate" to the extent of British resources in the fulfillment of the commitment made by this Government. This proposal was not acceptable to the Board; accordingly, this Government's reply, which had been held up for several days pending receipt of the British response, was delivered to the Red Cross through Minister Harrison in Bern on August 11, 1944, without British support. Public statement concerning this Government's action, however, was withheld pending further discussion with the British.

The reply transmitted by Minister Harrison reiterated the assurances given by this Government that it would arrange for the care of all Jews permitted to leave Hungary for neutral or United Nations' territory and would find temporary havens for such people. 3/ These assurances were likewise communicated to the governments of the neutral European countries, which were requested to permit the entry of Jews reaching their borders from Hungary. 4/

Joint Declaration Issued by the United States and Great Britain. On August 16, 1944, the Board was advised that the British had finally agreed to join the United States in accepting the Horthy offer. 5/ On August 17 the following joint statement was issued by the two Government: 6/

- 1/ Letter from the Washington Delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross dated July 25, 1944, comprising document 181.
- 2/ Cable No. 5948 to London dated July 28, 1944, comprising document 182.
- 3/ Cables No. 2657 and 2715 to Bern dated August 2 and 7, 1944, comprising documents 183 and 184.
- 4/ Cable No. 1501 to Stockholm dated July 28, 1944, comprising document 185; repeated on the same date to Lisbon, Madrid, and Ankara; repeated to Bern on August 1, 1944.
- 5/ Cable No. 6609 from London dated August 16, 1944, comprising document 186.
- 6/ Department of State Press Release No. 366 dated August 17, 1944.

"The International Committee of the Red Cross has communicated to the Governments of the United Kingdom and the United States an offer of the Hungarian Government regarding the emigration and treatment of Jews. Because of the desperate plight of the Jews in Hungary and the overwhelmingly humanitarian considerations involved the two governments are informing the Government of Hungary through Intercross that, despite the heavy difficulties and responsibilities involved, they have accepted the offer of the Hungarian Government for the release of Jews and will make arrangements for the care of such Jews leaving Hungary who reach neutral or United Nations territory, and also that they will find temporary havens or refuge where such people may live in safety. Notification of these assurances is being given to the governments of neutral countries who are being requested to permit the entry of Jews who reach their frontiers from Hungary. The Governments of the United Kingdom and the United States emphasize that, in accepting the offer which has been made, they do not in any way condone the action of the Hungarian Government in forcing the emigration of Jews as an alternative to persecution and death."

Visa Programs Developed to Effectuate Declaration. Broad measures were developed to effectuate this joint declaration. Even before the Hungarian negotiations, the Board had undertaken to work out with the State Department a visa program in favor of victims of enemy persecution so related to United States citizens and to alien residents of the United States as to be entitled to nonquota or preference visas, as well as persons to whom United States visas had previously been issued or authorized. In August 1944 the Board's efforts in this direction attained final State Department approval. 1/

Havens Promised for Child Refugees. As another step to meet the demands of the Hungarian situation, United States consular officers in Switzerland, Spain, and Portugal, on August 21, 1944, were authorized to issue visas to refugee children arriving in those countries from Hungary. Previous instructions concerning the 5,000 United States visas made available in March 1944 for refugee children from France were appropriately amended. 2/

- 1/ See Rescue through Protective Measures: United States Visas.  
2/ Cable No. 2877 to Bern dated August 21, 1944, comprising document 187; see also Cable No. 2324 to Madrid of the same date.

000175

Earlier arrangements made by the Board for havens in Ireland and in Latin American countries for refugee children from France were, with the approval of such countries, extended to cover Jewish children from Hungary.<sup>1/</sup> The governments agreeing to the extension of this principle were Eire,<sup>2/</sup> the Dominican Republic,<sup>3/</sup> Honduras,<sup>4/</sup> Nicaragua,<sup>5/</sup> and Paraguay.<sup>6/</sup> Ecuador agreed to accept 300 European children,<sup>7/</sup> and Brazil indicated its willingness to receive 500 Jewish refugee children from Hungary.<sup>8/</sup>

In addition to these commitments, both Sweden and Switzerland made offers of asylum for Jewish children from Hungary. The Swiss offer included sanctuary for 5,000 expectant mothers and children.<sup>9/</sup> While it was not anticipated that the number of children actually evacuated in this manner would be large, appropriate officials were advised that this Government, either singly or in cooperation with the British, would guarantee the costs of maintaining those evacuated and would also seek to accomplish their ultimate removal from Sweden and Switzerland at an early date.<sup>10/</sup>

Spanish Efforts Reported. Meanwhile, arrangements were made for the granting of Spanish visas for Tangier in Morocco to 500

- 1/ Circular airgram to Canberra, Ottawa, Dublin, and various Latin American republics dated August 12, 1944, comprising document 188; see also Cable No. 680 to Quito dated August 10, 1944.
- 2/ Cable No. 131 from Dublin dated August 15, 1944, comprising document 189.
- 3/ Dispatch No. 294 from Ciudad Trujillo dated September 5, 1944, comprising document 190.
- 4/ Cable No. 257 from Tegucigalpa dated August 15, 1944, comprising document 191.
- 5/ Cable No. 538 from Managua dated August 28, 1944, comprising document 192.
- 6/ Cable No. 503 from Asuncion dated September 5, 1944, comprising document 193.
- 7/ Cable No. 903 from Quito dated September 15, 1944, comprising document 194.
- 8/ Cable No. 7393 from London dated September 8, 1944, comprising document 195.
- 9/ Cable No. 4506 from Bern dated July 14, 1944, comprising document 176.
- 10/ See Rescue to and through Switzerland.

000176

Jewish children in Hungary and 70 accompanying adults.<sup>1/</sup> Although it proved impossible to arrange transportation to Tangier, these visas enabled their bearers to remain assembled in Budapest in special buildings under Spanish protection and International Red Cross supervision.

In response to representations made by Ambassador Hayes, Spanish diplomatic and consular personnel in areas under German occupation or control, including Hungary, also were instructed to render any other assistance possible to Jews and other persons in imminent danger of persecution or death, regardless of nationality. These efforts were responsible for the saving of many lives.

Portuguese Visas Issued to Axis Victims. Portuguese authorities likewise cooperated by agreeing in principle to permit the entry of Jewish refugees reaching their borders from Hungary and by so informing the Hungarian Government. A number of Portuguese visas were, in fact, issued to endangered persons still in Hungary, on the basis of which Hungarian exit visas were obtained, but the Germans refused to permit the holders of these documents to leave. Some of the persons so affected were accorded asylum in the Portuguese Legation in Hungary.<sup>2/</sup>

In September 1944 the Venezuelan Government authorized its Legation in Lisbon to visa the passports of Jewish refugees, especially children, traveling to the American continent, even though such persons might not be proceeding to Venezuelan territory.<sup>3/</sup> Although the Board had hoped that this action might influence the Portuguese Government to grant large numbers of transit visas to Jews in Hungary and other German-controlled territory, <sup>4/</sup> it developed that the Venezuelan authorization had stipulated that each case had to be confirmed by the Foreign Office in Caracas. In view of the delay inherent in this requirement, Portuguese action along the desired lines appeared unlikely and no such request for transit visas was advanced.<sup>5/</sup>

Hungarian Reply to United States Inquiry. The attitude of the Hungarian authorities during the period after their July offer showed various internal contradictions. The Hungarian Government had, as indicated, granted exit visas to the holders of visas for

- <sup>1/</sup> Dispatch No. 2791 from Madrid dated July 25, 1944, and Cable No. 3044 from Madrid dated September 5, 1944.
- <sup>2/</sup> Cables No. 2560 and 2594 from Lisbon dated August 19 and August 22, 1944.
- <sup>3/</sup> Airgram No. A-708 from Caracas dated August 22, 1944.
- <sup>4/</sup> Cable No. 2408 to Lisbon dated September 3, 1944.
- <sup>5/</sup> Cable No. 3062 from Lisbon dated October 4, 1944.

certain neutral destinations. There were other reports from neutral, Vatican, and International Red Cross sources that the deportations had been temporarily halted and that the Red Cross was being afforded an opportunity to supervise the treatment accorded remaining Jews.

On the other hand, the Hungarian Government attempted to justify its persecution of the Jews, as illustrated by the Hungarian reply to the inquiry of this Government, concerning Hungarian intentions with respect to the future treatment of Jews, which the Swiss had transmitted to Hungary in June 1944. The reply, received in August 1944, stated that military events on the eastern front and the approach of the Soviet armies made it necessary to mobilize fully all military, material, and moral forces of the country for defense purposes. This meant eliminating "everything that would undermine or diminish the country's resisting power. As defeatist propaganda and agitation of Jews — as in 1918 — became more and more perceptible in this decisive phase of the war and in order to prevent repetition of tragic events of 1918-1919 the Hungarian government was obliged to eliminate on increased scale influence of Jews. They were consequently separated from rest of population and put to more useful work — either in country itself or abroad." The message added that if individual cases of injustice occurred, they were due to subordinate rather than top authorities.

The reply then listed certain concessions which had been granted to Jews in preceding weeks at the instance of "foreign organizations (International Red Cross and War Refugee Board.)" These concessions included temporary suspension of the deportation of Jews including those of non-Hungarian citizenship 2/ for work abroad; authorization for the emigration of Jews to Sweden, Switzerland, Palestine, and other countries; and authority for the International Red Cross to arrange for the emigration of Jewish children under 10 years of age to Palestine.

The Hungarian reply concluded by stating that the "departures" of Jews for work abroad would take place under humanitarian conditions, with the Hungarian Red Cross being permitted to exercise control. Permission would also be given for the sending of food parcels to persons in concentration camps through the Red Cross. 1/

1/ Cable No. 5040 from Bern dated August 5, 1944 comprising document 178.

2/ Cable No. 5068 from Bern dated August 7, 1944.

Exception Taken to Hungarian Response. The limited assurances contained in the Hungarian note served only to prompt the Board to ask that Minister Harrison inform Hungarian authorities, through the Swiss, that although this Government had taken note of the Hungarian communication, it did not accept the reasoning involved and reserved the right to return at a later date "to the purported facts" related therein. 1/ Thus, in a message conveyed to the Hungarian Government by the Swiss Minister at Budapest on September 6, 1944, this Government's warning with respect to Jewish persecutions was reiterated. Permission to emigrate freely and for International Red Cross supervision of treatment and living conditions was urged as a minimum concession for all categories of Jews. 2/

Note Addressed to International Red Cross. Taking advantage of the opening afforded by the Hungarian Government's statement to the effect that future deportees for labor service in Germany would be accorded the right of supervision by Hungarian Red Cross representatives, Minister Harrison and Board Representative McClelland in August 1944, at the Board's request 3/, urged the International Red Cross to get in touch with Hungarian authorities and the Hungarian Red Cross at once in the hope that supervision might be established over all camps to which Jews from Hungary had been deported in the past. The Board felt that the establishment of such supervision was urgent because of the possibility that the 400,000 Jews already said to have been deported might suffer extermination unless such supervision were undertaken at the earliest possible moment. 2/ |

The Board subsequently learned that the International Red Cross was not anxious to extend supervision to the Hungarian deportations, this attitude being dictated by the fear that such action would be interpreted as participation in or approval of deportations. A proposal had been submitted to Hungarian authorities, however, seeking extension of Red Cross protection to Jews confined in camps and houses in Hungary. 4/ |

- 1/ Cable No. 2900 to Bern dated August 23, 1944, comprising document 196.
- 2/ Cable No. 6524 from Bern dated September 30, 1944, comprising document 197.
- 3/ Cable No. 2853 to Bern dated August 19, 1944, comprising document 198.
- 4/ Cable No. 5795 from Bern dated September 3, 1944, comprising document 199.

Board Representative McClelland in turn was asked to convey to the Red Cross the Board's conviction that fear of misinterpretation should not be allowed to stand in the way if supervision of deportations could alleviate the sufferings of deportees; moreover, it was felt that the very presence of that organization's observers might have a salutary effect beyond the mere humanization of treatment of deportees. 1/

The International Red Cross delegation in Hungary was later sufficiently expanded to permit some measure of supervision over many of the concentration and labor camps established in Hungary.

Statement Requested of Hungarians. Referring to the statement in the Hungarian note to the effect that Jews deported from Hungary had been "placed at the disposal of the German Government as workers," this Government early in September 1944 requested through Swiss channels that, in view of the well-known policy of the Germans with respect to Jews, Hungarian authorities furnish a statement of measures being taken by them to insure humane treatment of Jews placed at Germany's disposal. 2/

In a note addressed to the Swiss Legation in response to this request, the Hungarian Foreign Office stated that a Workers' Supervisory Office had been established by the Hungarian Legation at Berlin. The jurisdiction of this office, it was declared, extended "to every male and female worker of Hungarian nationality, regardless of religion or race." The Hungarian note went on to declare that definite cessation of the "transfer of Jews of Jewish faith for labor service abroad" had been ordered in August 1944 and that no Jews had been put at the disposal of the German Government after that time. The readiness of the Hungarian Government to authorize the emigration of all categories of Jews and to permit International Red Cross visits to Hungarian Jews working in Germany was reiterated. 3/

United States Meanwhile Protested Hungarian Complicity. According to reports received by the Board, including stories appearing in the Hungarian press, the Hungarian general population had not sympathized with the brutal anti-Jewish measures employed by the Nazis. Many Hungarians had sided openly with the persecuted Jews and had tried to aid them by furnishing food and clothing.

- 1/ Cable No. 3255 to Bern dated September 21, 1944.
- 2/ Cable No. 6524 from Bern dated September 30, 1944, comprising document 197.
- 3/ Cable No. 6913 from Bern dated October 18, 1944, comprising document 200.

According to one newspaper account, the mass attempt on the part of the general public to get food and clothing to Jews in concentration areas had been an "incomprehensible phenomenon," as a result of which Hungarian authorities had been "forced to take the necessary police measures to cut off such Jews from all contact with the population." 1/

Other reports reaching the Board made increasingly and unmistakably clear the major part which the Hungarian police played in the Hungarian arrests and deportations. 2/ In view of persistent Hungarian denials of the complicity of Hungarian officials in the commission of atrocities, the Board on August 25, 1944, had asked Minister Harrison and Board Representative McClelland to request the Swiss Government to bring certain reports of Hungarian participation in atrocities to the attention of the appropriate Hungarian authorities. 3/

Minister Harrison discussed this matter with a ranking Swiss official, who took the position that the Swiss could not request their Legation in Budapest to present the matter to the Hungarian authorities without information concerning the time and place of the reported events and the nationality of the Jews involved. 4/

In response to this position the Board promptly cabled all available details appropriate for use by the Swiss in transmitting the proposed message. 5/

Delivery of the protest was finally accomplished on October 11, 1944. 6/

- 1/ Cable No. 3346 from Bern dated May 25, 1944, comprising document 172 ; see also Cable No. 5397 from Bern dated August 19, 1944.
- 2/ Cable No. 3242 from Stockholm dated August 22, 1944, comprising document 201.
- 3/ Cable No. 2933 to Bern dated August 25, 1944, comprising document 202.
- 4/ Cables No. 5888 and 6445 from Bern dated September 7 and September 28, 1944.
- 5/ Cable No. 3404 to Bern dated October 3, 1944, comprising document 203.
- 6/ Cable No. 7048 from Bern dated October 24, 1944, comprising document 204.

Escapes Made into Rumania. During the summer of 1944, particularly in the period following the suspension of deportations, there was a small but steady stream of clandestine Jewish emigration from Hungary into Rumania. While these underground operations were expensive, requiring a substantial amount of the funds, which the Board had arranged to have sent to Switzerland, in order to obtain the collaboration of minor Rumanian and Hungarian officials and to pay transportation and maintenance costs, administrative personnel, and false paper "passeurs," they yielded positive results. 1/ By means of this organized underground movement an estimated 3,500 to 4,000 persons succeeded in reaching Rumanian soil. 2/ Several hundred of these refugees were later enabled to proceed to Palestine via Turkish boats sailing from Constanza. 3/

After the arrival of the first of these refugees in Rumania, the German Minister to Rumania was said to have brought pressure to bear on the Rumanian Government to enact a decree to the effect that anyone escaping across the Rumanian border would immediately be executed by the Rumanians. Despite the later enactment of an official Rumanian edict along these lines, the Rumanian Government made little effort toward enforcement but instead was reported to have requested Jewish organizations in Rumania to arrange for the evacuation of the refugees arriving from Hungary at the earliest possible moment. 4/

According to other reports, the Rumanian Government made Rumanian passports available to Jews in Hungary and took special measures to help them get into Rumania. Board Representative Olsen in Stockholm was further advised by the Rumanian Minister to Sweden that the decree ordering Hungarian Jews to be shot at the Rumanian border had been issued for the purpose of preventing mass flights, which it was felt would greatly endanger their lives. Rumanian border guards, it was asserted, had been privately instructed to shoot no one and not a single person had been shot fleeing across the border. 5/

Slovak Maquis Aided in Hungarian Rescues. Through Board Representative McClelland arrangements were made whereby the Czechoslovak resistance movement aided in rescuing Jews from Hungarian-dominated territories by helping them reach Slovakia, to be en-

1/ Cable No. 5343 from Bern dated August 17, 1944.

2/ Dispatch No. 808 from Ankara dated October 4, 1944, comprising a summary report from Board Representative Hirschmann to the Board.

3/ See Rescue from Rumania and Rescue to and through Turkey.

4/ Cable No. 1343 from Ankara dated July 22, 1944.

5/ Cable No. 3153 from Stockholm dated August 18, 1944; see also Cable No. 4257 from Bern dated July 5, 1944, and Cable No. 1546 from Ankara dated August 23, 1944.

rolled in the Slovak Maquis or to be hidden. Following discussions with the Czechoslovak Minister at Geneva, Minister Harrison endorsed certain operations for which funds had been requested, and Board Representative McClelland made a contribution of \$10,000 from special Board funds to the account in Switzerland of the Czech resistance movement. 1/

Escapes Made to Yugoslav Territory. Private funds which the Board had arranged to have sent to Bari, Italy, and Partisan support earlier obtained by Board Representative Ackermann eventually enabled several thousand persons to reach safety during the summer of 1944 by fleeing across the Yugoslav-Hungarian border to Partisan territory. During July and August alone some 7,000 Jews were evacuated from southern Hungary over this route. Men in the group capable of bearing arms were enrolled in the Partisan forces, while women, children, and men physically unfit for military service were removed to the interior. Because the latter were living in extremely primitive conditions, Board Representative McClelland aided in shipping medical and sanitary supplies from Switzerland for the relief of these refugees. 2/

Hungarian Promises Proved Meaningless. Despite the Hungarian "offer" and the broad steps taken by the Board to give meaning to the response of this Government and the British, practically no Jews were evacuated from Hungary except as the result of such relatively small-scale clandestine operations as those aided by the Rumanian, Slovak, and Yugoslav underground movements. There were indications that, for a while, the Jews who had not been deported found themselves in a somewhat better position, a development that was undoubtedly due to the combined pressure of this Government and its Allies, of neutral governments, and of the Vatican, as well as to the necessity of utilizing all available manpower for the defense of Hungary against Allied advances. One such indication came from the Apostolic Nuncio in Budapest through the Vatican, the improved situation being attributed to the removal from power of officials responsible for previous atrocities. 3/

There followed, however, an evident tendency on the part of the Hungarian Government to stand solely on its statement of good intentions while passively submitting to German pressure for further deportations of Jews, including Hungarian nationals. Information furnished by the International Red Cross confirmed the fact

- 1/ Cable No. 4666 from Bern dated July 21, 1944; see also Rescue to and through Switzerland.
- 2/ Cable No. 6619 from Bern dated October 5, 1944, comprising document 205; see also Rescue to and through Switzerland.
- 3/ Letter from the Apostolic Delegate to the Board dated September 25, 1944, comprising document 206.

that Hungarian officials were not always able to "resist" arbitrary action on the part of the Germans. Red Cross delegations were by that time at work in Hungary and were thus able to exercise some moral influence wherever the opportunity occurred. 1/

As for emigration, German authorities, under various pretexts, refused to grant the Jews in Hungary permission to leave the country or to travel through German territory to adjoining neutral countries. 2/ On September 12, 1944, the International Red Cross reported that, as the result of this attitude, emigration from Hungary toward Rumania and Bulgaria was absolutely impossible. From Ankara Board Representative Hirschmann confirmed this report, adding that all rail communications and civilian movements between Hungary and the Balkan countries had ended. The possibility of evacuations had been further narrowed as a result of the advance of Soviet armies into Transylvania and the Rumanian and Bulgarian declarations of war on Germany. 3/

Emigration toward the neutral countries that were accessible likewise met with serious obstacles, despite the Hungarian assurances. Of the 7,000 to 8,000 persons in Hungary for whom Palestine certificates had been issued, a group of 2,000 such holders (all who could immediately be found) were assembled for emigration shortly after the Horthy "offer". To enable their early departure, a collective passport was issued by the Swiss Legation at Budapest. Despite these preparations, the Germans denied the group exit permits and transit visas. Substantial groups of Hungarian Jews holding Latin American passports who had been granted Swedish and Spanish entry visas were likewise denied permission to leave. 4/ At first, the Germans were said to have declared that their friendship with the Arabs made it impossible for them to permit Jews to emigrate unless assurances were obtained that they would not go to Palestine. Later, assurances were reportedly demanded that all Jews permitted to emigrate would go to Britain or America. 5/

- 1/ Cable No. 6713 from Bern dated October 9, 1944.
- 2/ See, for example, Cable No. 1546 from Ankara dated August 23, 1944, comprising document 207.
- 3/ Cable No. 1767 from Ankara dated September 19, 1944.
- 4/ See Rescue through Protective Measures: Recognition of Latin American Passports.
- 5/ Cable No. 6276 from Bern dated September 22, 1944, comprising document 208.

In line with these reports, the International Red Cross recommended that this Government, in concert with the British, indicate to the Hungarians its willingness to transport a certain number of Hungarian Jews to some haven other than Palestine. 1/

In response to this recommendation, Board Representative McClelland was requested to point out to the Red Cross that nothing in the Board's acceptance of the Horthy proposal implied limitation of the Board's interests to Jews possessing Palestine certificates or planning to go to Palestine. It was further suggested that he reiterate this Government's refusal ever to limit its undertakings with respect to the emigration of Jews from Hungary to any specific number or particular category of Jews or to Jews going to any particular country, and that he protest against the attempt of German and Hungarian authorities to introduce such arbitrary limitations. 2/

Further Compulsory Relocation Planned. The seriousness of the Hungarian situation was accentuated in a report from Board Representative McClelland under date of September 15, 1944, to the effect that every able-bodied man and woman among the estimated 200,000 Jews remaining in Hungary was to be placed in compulsory agricultural and industrial work in various parts of the country "in the interest of national defense." Budapest Jews physically unsuited for work apparently were to be placed in two large camps; those too aged or infirm for these camps were to be sent to "Jewish hospitals" in unspecified locations. Board Representative McClelland's informant declared that these camps were to be under military control whereas press reports from Budapest referred to "Red Cross" supervision, without specifying whether such supervision would be by the International or the Hungarian Red Cross. In an attempt to clarify the matter, Board Representative McClelland learned that the International Red Cross had received no details concerning such an arrangement; moreover, continued failure of the Germans to issue transit visas for International Red Cross personnel from Switzerland left the International Red Cross in no position to exercise any effective degree of control over the camps. 3/

Apparent confirmation of these proposed Hungarian actions was contained in word received by the Swiss from their Legation

- 1/ Cable No. 5579 from Bern dated August 26, 1944, comprising document 209.
- 2/ Cable No. 3120 to Bern dated September 9, 1944, comprising document 210.
- 3/ Cable No. 6093 from Bern dated September 15, 1944, comprising document 211.

in Budapest. It was hinted that Hungarian approval of these measures was for the purpose of protecting the Jews, against whom the Germans might otherwise have taken sudden mass extermination measures without consulting Hungarian authorities. 1/

Formal Protest Made. In view of these reports, Board Representative McClelland was asked to convey to the German authorities through Swiss channels this Government's emphatic protest against the impending deportations. The Board also proposed that the strongest possible unofficial representations be made to appropriate individual German authorities through Swiss and Swedish channels. 2/

Board Representative McClelland, however, recommended that a formal protest along these lines be addressed by this Government to the Hungarians. 3/ Shortly thereafter the Board forwarded a prepared statement to the effect that, in view of the fate of Jews previously removed from other cities to camps similar to those proposed and in view of the approach of winter, this Government had good reason to regard the impending deportations as a further measure of mass extermination. Mass extermination, the message pointed out, could be accomplished either by the methods employed at camps of final destination in Poland or by subjecting large numbers of people to undernourishment, hard physical labor, and unhygienic living conditions in improvised camps. For these reasons, the statement continued, this Government considered it appropriate to remind Hungarian authorities of its determination, as expressed by President Roosevelt in his statement in March 1944 and publicly reaffirmed shortly thereafter by committees of both Houses of Congress, that none participating in these acts of savagery should go unpunished and that all who shared the guilt should share the punishment. The message concluded by stating that allowance was made for the possibility that the plan was inspired by genuinely humanitarian motives, and to the extent that this proved to be the case, the United States would recognize such claims.

Representative McClelland was requested also to employ such unofficial channels as might be available to him for transmission of this message; Board Representative Dexter in Lisbon and Ackermann in Caserta were similarly instructed. 4/

- 1/ Cable No. 6092 from Bern dated September 15, 1944.
- 2/ Cable No. 3245 to Bern dated September 20, 1944, and Cable No. 1883 to Stockholm of the same date.
- 3/ Cable No. 6447 from Bern dated September 28, 1944.
- 4/ Cable No. 3435 to Bern dated October 6, 1944, comprising document 212; repeated on the same date to Lisbon and Caserta.

Minister Harrison reported that this message reached the Hungarian Foreign Office through Swiss channels on October 28, 1944. 1/ The substance of the message was also transmitted to Budapest through the Hungarian Legation in Lisbon. Meanwhile, in Italy, Board Representative Ackermann sought Vatican intercession in bringing the matter to the attention of Hungarian authorities. 2/ Through the Apostolic Delegate in Washington, the Board asked that the Holy See also broadcast a public appeal against the impending deportations. 3/

Hungarian Response to This Government's Protest. In a statement delivered by the Hungarians to the Swiss Legation in Budapest on November 8, 1944, in response to this message, the Hungarians took the position that Jewish workers were needed in Hungary's total war mobilization and that the concentration of Jews fit for work was not discriminatory, since it was based on a law of 1939 according to which all physically fit persons, without distinction as to race, nationality, or religion, were subject to military labor service under military discipline. Jewish concentration and work camps, it was alleged, were not punishment camps. The Hungarian statement went on to reiterate that the Hungarian and German Governments had consented to the visit of an International Red Cross delegate to camps where Hungarian Jews were performing labor in Germany, and that the protection of these Jews was appropriately provided for "according to the nature of the work performed." It was claimed that Hungarian actions with respect to Jews were undertaken in the light of the interests of Hungary and that "foreign threats of whatever kind" could not change this principle.

The reply went on to declare that the Hungarian Government intended to treat Jews in a just and humane manner but warned that such treatment would be dependent upon the attitude of the Jews themselves and upon the absence of "further enemy terroristic attacks on the Hungarian civilian population." With respect to passports and other documentation issued by foreign missions in Budapest to Hungarian Jews for their emigration to neutral countries or to Palestine, the reply reiterated that the Hungarian Government was prepared to recognize these papers and to allow the emigration of the Jews concerned "within the framework of the number of visas agreed upon by the German Government for transit through German territory in case normal diplomatic relations with the interested country so permit." 4/

- 1/ Cable No. 7304 from Bern dated November 3, 1944; see also Cable No. 6793 from Bern dated October 12, 1944.
- 2/ Cable No. 723 from Caserta dated October 12, 1944.
- 3/ See Approaches to Germany and the Satellites To Halt Persecution: Appeals through the Vatican.
- 4/ Cable No. 7973 from Bern dated December 7, 1944, comprising document 213.

Despite this exchange of notes and despite continued psychological pressure exerted through Office of War Information broadcasts to Hungary, 1/ there was no indication that there had been any change of plans in connection with the impending deportations of Jews for compulsory labor.

Protective Documents Respected. Repeated efforts on the part of the Board, along with the support of Switzerland as the protecting power of the United States, eventually resulted in the exemption from deportation for labor service and from other restrictive measures of large numbers of bearers of certificates issued by Switzerland, including holders of Palestine certificates and Latin American passports. 2/ A new Hungarian regime had assumed office and had promised still other measures to alleviate the position of Jews.

The firm position of the Swedish Government with respect to the treatment of Jews in Hungary holding Swedish protective passports, along with intervention by the King of Sweden, likewise brought assurances that Swedish passports would be respected. 3/

In line with these assurances, official radio broadcasts from Budapest on October 29 and 30, 1944, reversing decisions reflected in earlier October broadcasts, instructed all Hungarian authorities, the army, and the police that protective documents or foreign passports were to be respected. In the future Jewish holders of such documents were not to be sent to compulsory labor service; moreover, foreign consulates and legations and the premises of the International Red Cross were to enjoy the rights of extraterritoriality. 4/

The Papal Nuncio in Hungary was reportedly given similar assurances by the new Hungarian regime, 5/ though German exit and transit visas for persons holding protective foreign passports were still lacking.

Following representations made by the Board through Ambassador Hayes in Madrid, the Spanish Legation in Budapest eventually issued approximately 2,300 letters of protection to endangered Jews, 6/ along with some 700 visas for Morocco, 7/ thereby giving

- 1/ See Psychological Warfare Programs: Statements and Informational Campaigns Inspired by the Board.
- 2/ See Rescue through Protective Measures: Recognition of Latin American Passports.
- 3/ Cable No. 4457 from Stockholm dated November 1, 1944.
- 4/ Cable No. 7269 from Bern dated November 1, 1944, comprising document 214.
- 5/ Cable No. 4426 from Stockholm dated October 31, 1944.
- 6/ Cables No. 3896 and 4028 from Madrid dated November 29 and December 14, 1944.
- 7/ Dispatch No. 3504 from Madrid dated December 4, 1944.

them the same form of protection which was operating successfully for the group of 500 children previously assembled at Budapest and making it possible for them to escape internment or deportation.

Throughout the German control of Hungary, however, the actual departure of any group of holders of foreign documents proved impossible. Many false starts were made and the Board's efforts to facilitate obtaining the necessary transit visas were unremitting. In one instance, the Swiss Minister to Hungary reported that German transit visas and all other necessary papers for a group of approximately 7,000 persons had finally been obtained, but lack of rolling stock prevented their evacuation. 1/

Through the intervention of the Swedish Legation, there had been accomplished the gradual release from compulsory labor service of approximately 15,000 Jews. In the case of about 4,500 Jews with special Swedish passports, 2/ it proved possible to accomplish their assignment to special quarters under Swedish protection, where relief and medical attention were provided.

Availability of United States Visas Recalled. Despite the obvious unwillingness of German authorities to permit emigration from Hungary, the Board persevered in its efforts in this direction. On September 30, 1944, upon learning that the Germans had given vague indication that they might reconsider their refusal to permit the emigration of the group of 2,000 Jews holding Palestine certificates, Minister Harrison and Board Representative McClelland were asked to recall to the attention of German and Hungarian authorities, through the Swiss Government and the International Red Cross, the United States visa program developed some time before in favor of children, close relatives of United States citizens and of alien residents in the United States, and of persons to whom visas had previously been issued or authorized. 3/ Nothing was accomplished by this action, however.

Renewed Excesses Indicated. In October 1944, according to radio broadcasts from Budapest intercepted in Istanbul and relayed by the Board's representative in Ankara, Jews were forbidden to leave their homes under any circumstances until further notice, and visits to Jewish homes by non-Jews were prohibited. From these and other statements broadcast by Hungarian officials, 4/ as well as from reports received from Bern, 5/ it was apparent that renewed excesses were imminent.

- 1/ Cable No. 7716 from Bern dated November 24, 1944.
- 2/ Cable No. 4720 from Stockholm dated November 18, 1944.
- 3/ Cable No. 3378 to Bern dated September 30, 1944.
- 4/ Cable No. 1998 from Ankara dated October 19, 1944.
- 5/ Cables No. 7045 and 7093 from Bern dated October 24 and 25, 1944.

The gravity of the situation was further apparent in word received from the International Red Cross delegate in Budapest later in October. According to this report, a total of 50,000 men were being deported to Germany, ostensibly as labor; all aged and all sick persons, including children, were being concentrated in a ghetto in Budapest; and all remaining able-bodied men and women were being employed in the construction of fortifications in the vicinity of Budapest. An energetic protest against these actions was lodged by the International Red Cross delegate with the Hungarian authorities. 1/

A report from Swedish Attache Wallenberg in Budapest likewise described extremely unfavorable developments, such as the issuance of an order for all Jews to be used as labor on defense works and the cancellation of all special privileges for any groups previously exempted from anti-Jewish regulations. Several thousand new murders were reported. The Swedish attache's Jewish staff employed in relief activities disappeared completely on October 17, 1944; he finally succeeded in locating all but 10 of them. Under a plan subsequently worked out with the Hungarian Foreign Minister, the staff members recovered were moved to specially protected homes. 2/ The Swedish Government continued to make strong representations to Hungarian authorities with respect to the treatment of Jews, and at one point serious consideration was given to withdrawal of the entire Swedish Mission.

Forced Marches to Germany Begun. Through the Swedish Foreign Office the Board next learned that early in November 1944, following the alleged finding of arms and munitions in certain Jewish homes, the Hungarian Arrow Cross party took over the Government, and Hungarian Jews became the object of increased terrorism. Several hundred murders occurred and wholesale arrests were made. Even Jews under Swedish protection were arrested. 3/ Other reports including word received from delegates of the International Red Cross in Hungary, confirmed the fact that deportations for labor in Germany were proceeding actively, the deportees being forced to travel on foot because of lack of rolling stock. 4/

According to one report from private sources, 25,000 persons, roughly 70 percent women and 30 percent men, were brutally assembled in a tile factory on the outskirts of the city by Arrow Cross party members between November 8 and 19, 1944, and were forced to set out on foot from Budapest. Children as young as 10 were included, and adults ranging up to 80 years of age. They

- 1/ Cable No. 7088 from Bern dated October 25, 1944.
- 2/ Cable No. 4416 from Stockholm dated October 30, 1944.
- 3/ Cable No. 4598 from Stockholm dated November 10, 1944.
- 4/ See, for example, Cable No. 4057 from Lisbon dated November 24, 1944, and Cables No. 2271 and 2337 from Ankara dated November 29 and December 9, 1944.

were sent out in groups of from 2,000 to 2,500 per day along the main highway from Budapest and were expected to cover 20 to 30 kilometers daily. The food they were given and the supplies they were allowed to carry with them were totally inadequate, so that 15 to 20 percent of the deportees died or fell out from complete exhaustion along the way. Of those who reached a destination 109 kilometers from Budapest, 80 percent could scarcely be considered capable of physical labor.

In addition to deportations conducted by the Arrow Cross another 13,000 Jews, the majority men, were said to have been sent to Austria on foot by an S.S. group in Budapest. 1/

Information received from the Swedish Legation in Budapest indicated that about 40,000 persons were involved in the forced marches to Germany. Cold and rainy weather prevailed during these marches, and since the deportees had to sleep under rain covers and in the open, many of them died. Mr. Wallenberg himself saw seven persons who had died one day and seven who had died the day before. The Secretary of the Portuguese Legation reported having seen 42 dead persons along the line of march; others related similar experiences. When any of the marchers could no longer manage to walk, they were shot. At the border, the deportees were taken over by an S.S. officer and those who survived the march and the beatings were put at hard labor on border fortifications.

For a short time, until it was forbidden, deportees in the columns marching to the border were given certain foods and medicines. Intervention in one form or another resulted in the return of several thousand persons from places where Jews were loaded for deportation, but forcible measures threatened by the Germans interrupted this practice.

In contrast to the treatment accorded Jewish deportees, comparatively good conditions prevailed in the houses in which Jews were held as wards of Sweden. Those held were vaccinated against typhus, paratyphus, and cholera, as were the staff members of the Legation engaged in helping Axis victims. Following the events of October 1944, Swedish activities in Hungary were further expanded; by December, employees totaled 335, in addition to about 40 physicians, house governors, and the like. 2/

1/ Cable No. 7971 from Bern dated December 6, 1944.

2/ Cable No. 5235 from Stockholm dated December 22, 1944, comprising document 215.

Red Cross Letters Provided Protection. As another consequence of the ominous events of October, the International Red Cross was persuaded to give out hundreds of special letters of protection to persons in Hungary whose safety was threatened. 1/

Protection Afforded Palestine Certificate Holders. Through the efforts of the British as well as of the Board's representatives abroad, lists of persons in Hungary for whom Palestine immigration certificates had been authorized (about 20,000 families were involved) were transmitted to the Swiss Legation in Budapest, which, as the protecting power, sought to protect these persons and accomplish the necessary measures to enable their emigration to Palestine. After the Swiss Legation had undertaken numerous representations in favor of these persons, the Hungarian and German Governments in November 1944 finally declared themselves ready to authorize the emigration of about 7,800 Jews holding Palestine certificates, but arbitrarily denied the right of Switzerland to accord protection to the other Jews authorized to enter Palestine.

These 7,800 persons, freed from labor service, were immediately assembled by the Swiss in about 25 buildings, which were placed under the protection of the Swiss Legation.

As had been the case in connection with persons whom the Swedish Legation was housing and otherwise seeking to protect, there were forced entrances to these houses by members of the Arrow Cross party; on various occasions identity documents issued by the Legation and even the individuals themselves were taken away. 2/

The actual emigration of these Palestine certificate holders under Swiss protection was apparently never accomplished while hostilities continued, despite unremitting efforts on the part of the War Refugee Board and interested governments and organizations. Two large groups of persons for whom Palestine certificates were said to have been promised, composed largely of Hungarians who had been held in camps in Germany proper, however, were evacuated to Switzerland toward the end of 1944 and in early 1945, 3/ and plans were later made for the onward movement to Palestine, via Italy, of some 700 of these persons. 4/

- 1/ Letter from Board Representative McClelland to Executive Director Pehle dated November 11, 1944, and enclosures.
- 2/ Dispatch No. 10437 from Bern dated January 3, 1945.
- 3/ See Rescue to and through Switzerland.
- 4/ See Emergency Refugee Camps and Settlement: Palestine.

Fall of Hungary to Soviet Armies. Soviet armies reaching Hungary in November and December 1944 promptly took over the administration of this German satellite, thereby effectively ending one of the most brutal of all periods of organized persecution of minority groups on racial and religious grounds.

DOCUMENT

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DCG-1142  
Distribution of true  
reading only by special  
arrangement. ( ) W)

Stockholm  
DATED: March 7, 1945  
REC'D: 8:26 p.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.  
891, March 7, 7 p.m.

THIS IS OUR 130 FOR WAR REFUGEE BOARD

One of Sweden's leading newspapers, DAGENS NYHETER, of March 6, contains a front page interview with a Hungarian Jew who recently escaped to Sweden. He pays tremendous tribute to Swedish relief and rescue activities for Hungarian Jews, particularly that of Raoul Wallenberg, and states "Budapest Jews were saved by the Swedes."

The article describes one instance in which an hour's urgent conference by Wallenberg with Szalasy personally caused the latter to reinstate the validity of Swedish protective passports. It mentions that Wallenberg quartered 5000 Jews in so-called Swedish houses and one evening, when an armed patrol entered this area to remove some of the inhabitants to labor camps, Wallenberg met the patrol and, after advising it that it was trespassing on Swedish territory, informed the group that it could not trespass further without first shooting him, adding "none leaves this place as long as I live." Later the same evening Wallenberg was advised that 11 persons with Swedish passports had been arrested by the Gestapo and had been loaded on a labor train destined for Vienna. It states that Wallenberg raced to the railway station but the train had departed. Wallenberg then chased the train until it stopped at station just short of the German border and he managed to remove these 11 persons from the train.

The article pays remarkable tribute to Wallenberg's courage and day and night effort to help the Jews, despite the fact that there was a constant object of personal attack and anonymous threats of bodily harm. The article will be forwarded in the next pouch.

JOHNSON

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DOCUMENT

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DMH-502  
Distribution of true reading  
only by special arrangement  
(██████ W)

Stockholm  
DATED June 21, 1944  
REC'D 2:50 p.m.

Secretary of State  
Washington  
U. S. Urgent  
2231, June 21, 1 p.m.

Please repeat to War Refugee Board as Legation's number 31.

Mr. Boheman has informed me that Mr. Raoul Wallenberg will be appointed an Attache to the Swedish Legation at Budapest for the specific purpose of following and reporting on situation with respect to persecution of Jews and minorities. It is likewise intention of Foreign Office to secure if possible an appointment as representative of other Swedish Red Cross for Professor Maltet, a Swede who is now teaching in University of Budapest. Professor Maltet will not be connected with Swedish Legation but will cooperate closely with Wallenberg (my 2069, June 9, 6 p.m.). As Wallenberg's functions in Budapest will be purely official and he has for time of appointment severed all business connections, Boheman does not anticipate any trouble in his securing the necessary visa. He said if the visa is refused the Swedish Government will simply refuse in turn to receive the Hungarian Charge d'Affaires. Mr. Boheman made it clear that Foreign Office and his government are disposed to cooperate as fully as possible in all humanitarian endeavors and the appointment of this Attache is undoubtedly an evidence of official Swedish desire to conform to the wishes expressed in Department's telegram 1010, May 25, 2 p.m.

Olsen and I are of opinion that War Refugee Board should be considering ways and means of implementing this action of Swedish Government particularly with respect to financial support it may be possible to arrange for any concrete rescue and relief progress which may be developed.

JOHNSON

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TELEGRAM SENT

July 7, 1944

( [REDACTED] )

AMLEGATION,  
STOCKHOLM.

1353

The War Refugee Board cable 41 below is for Johnson and Olsen.

Bohn, Anderson and Polen Hjalpen reports received. Reference your 2231, 2344, and 2360 of June 21, 27 and 28, your 31, 39 and 40 to War Refugee Board. While it is difficult to attempt precisely to outline program from here, the following general approach is suggested:

Since money and favorable post-war consideration may motivate action impeding, relaxing or slowing down tempo of persecution and facilitate escapes and concealments, it should be ascertained in what quarters such inducements may be effective. In this connection, contact should be established, at discretion, with appropriate persons mentioned in Department's 1246 of June 23 and such others as may become known. If circumstances warrant funds will be made available at neutral bank for post-war use or in part in local currency now, procured against blocked counter-value here or in neutral bank. For latter purpose local funds may be procurable from appropriate persons mentioned in Department's 1246 such as (c) in first group and such others as may become known. Whenever a concrete proposal based on financial arrangements of substantial character or on favorable post-war consideration is broached, the matter should be referred to the Board for clearance, which will require evidence of effectiveness and good faith in the meantime. In order to care for less substantial transactions a fund of \$50,000 will be placed at Olsen's disposal which may be used in his discretion in addition to the fund already available to him for discretionary use.

The problem may be dealt with on various levels such as high official, low official and unofficial, central and local. In connection with unofficial channels an informed source suggests that ships and barges going down the Danube are generally empty and may afford a means of escape for a limited number of refugees in the guise of seamen or otherwise. Same source suggests that skippers can be approached on financial basis and crews through so-called communist channels. Board is also advised that railroad line from Budapest to Mohacs, said to be about ten miles from partisan-controlled Yugoslav territory, might afford similar opportunities if contacts made with trainmen through what are termed communist channels. Board further advised that Transylvanian Unitarian Church, socialist and partisan groups may be in a position because of

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geographical situation and absence of real occupation to shelter refugees if they can reach that area. In addition, Board believes that Roman Catholic clergy and Nuncio may be helpful both in action and with advice.

Further in connection with lower official and unofficial channels the following list of persons, secured from same sources as list given in Department's 1246 may be useful: In or near Budapest: (a) Dezso Vilmanyi, said to be former official in the Police Headquarters in Budapest, in 1939 transferred to the Police Department in the Ministry of Interior, in charge of passport matters and to have granted many persons passports for consideration. Also said to have ingratiated himself with the Arrowcross Party and was counted among their fellow travelers by them, but that Jews could always count on his favors if they met his terms, in cash; (b) Zoltan Timke, said to be Chief Prosecutor, Superior Court of Hungary, a chauvinist and reactionary, but opposed to the Nazis. It is said that he can be depended on to help Jews of reactionary and financial-commercial background; (c) Colonel Denes Deak-Horvath, said to be wealthy, independent, and politically unaffiliated. It is said that he is Chairman of Barcs Farmers' Granary Cooperative, General Manager of Hungarian Food Supply Co. It is also said that since 1940, he has been one of the leaders of the action protecting Polish refugees in Hungary and that he was fined for violation of the anti-Jewish laws. He is also said to have close connections with certain members of the present Hungarian government through which he may render useful services to our cause, notably with Anthony Kunder, the present minister of commerce; (d) Rezse Koszeghy, said to be 49 years of age, a native of Hungary of German-Swabian descent, and a former official of the National Bank of Hungary who is now general manager of a textile and fur concern. Said to be trustworthy as assistant and go between and to have a student son in Switzerland. Said to have good contact with rank and file in government officers; (e) Dr. Jenő Bozoky, said to be a lawyer who for a number of years very skilfully played the role of an ardent Nazi and anti-Semite, with the objective of helping distressed or endangered Jews and liberals.

With reference to high official channels exploration may be made of the possibility, suggested by pages 29 and following of Bohm's report, of evacuation of Jews and persons similarly situated belonging to specific groups such as (a) holders of Palestine certificates, (b) holders of visas for entry into neutral countries, (c) persons to whom the issuance of visas for entry into an American republic is authorized provided they appear personally therefor before a consular officer in a neutral country, (d) persons holding passports or consular documents issued in the names of American republics, or who are under the protection of a neutral country as indicated by Bohm at page 26, (e) women and children, (f) aged and infirm men, and (g) parents, husbands, wives, children, etc., of American citizens.

You should advise Wallenberg of the foregoing to the extent that you deem advisable and inform him that the same constitutes a general outline of a program which the Board believes can be pursued. While he cannot, of course, act as the Board's representative, nor purport to act in its name, he can, whenever advisable, indicate that as a Swede he is free to communicate with Stockholm where a representative of the Board is stationed. He may thus express his willingness to lay before the Board's representative specific proposals if in any particular case he should deem so doing to be advisable, or if by reason of the nature of the proposal Olsen's or the Board's approval is necessary. Wallenberg should have with him copies of the President's Statement of March 24, Department's 502 of March 24, the Statement of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Department's 1311 of July 1, the Statement of June 28, and Archbishop Spellman's statement, Department's 1283 of June 29. These he might on proper occasions call to the attention of appropriate persons, expressing the view, having just come from outside German-controlled territory, that there is no question of American determination to see to it that those who share the guilt will be punished, but that helpful conduct now may result in more favorable consideration than actions heretofore might warrant.

Wallenberg should consult with the representative of the International Red Cross and impress upon him the urgent need of increasing Intercross representation in Hungary and intercession in an effort to secure permission to visit and inspect concentration camps, ghettos and other places of detention. Wallenberg might undertake also to see whether such permission might be granted him and his colleagues. To the extent that you deem it advisable you may call Wallenberg's attention to Bokm's suggestions so that he may undertake to determine their feasibility and whether they offer channels through which effective measures can be taken. Please express to the Foreign Office and to Wallenberg the Board's sincere appreciation for their wholehearted cooperation. The Board is aware of Sweden's great concern and active measures of assistance for the victims of Nazi persecution and is confident that through cooperation such as has been evidenced in this and other instances, further lives will be saved.

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LEGATION OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

848/ICO/NET

Stockholm, Sweden  
November 14, 1944

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

Dear Mr. Pehle:

I am enclosing a copy of a letter which I received recently from Mr. Wallenberg regarding the assistance which we have given to the Hungarian Jews. I believe this letter will be of much interest to the Board.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed)  
IVER C. OLSEN

Iver C. Olsen  
Special Attache for  
War Refugee Board

Enclosure - 1

COPY  
Königlich  
Schwedische Gesandtschaft

W./F.

Budapest, 12th Okt. 1944.

Mr. Olssen,  
Strandvägen 7  
Stockholm.

Dear Mr. Olssen,

When I now look back on the 3 months I have spent here I can only say, that it has been a most interesting experience and I believe, not quite without results.

When I arrived, the situation of the Jews was very bad indeed. The development of military events and a natural psychological reaction among the Hungarian people have changed many things. We at the Swedish Legation have perhaps only been an instrument to convert this outside influence into action in the various Government offices. I have taken quite a strong line in this respect although, of course I have had to keep within the limits assigned to me as a neutral.

It has been my object all the time, to try to help all Jews. This, however, could only be achieved by helping a whole group of Jews to get rid of their stars. I have worked on the hypothesis that those, who were no longer under the obligation to carry the star, would help their fellow sufferers. Also I have carried out a great deal of general enlightenment work among the keymen in charge of Jewish questions here.

I am quite sure, that our activity - and that means in the last instance yours - is responsible for the freeing at this time of the interned Jews. These numbered many hundreds. At first only those were freed who possessed Swedish protective passports, but later all who had not committed a criminal offence, were freed.

I have also received a promise that all "Swedish" Jews in civilian service (Arbeitsdienst) will be ordered back. The number of these Jews is about 500 but I doubt that more than half of them may be brought back from their present assignments, which are situated partly in front-districts.

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Mr. Olssen, believe me, your donation in behalf of the Hungarian Jews has made an enormous amount of good. I think that they will have every reason to thank you for having initiated and supported the Swedish Jewish action the way you have in such a splendid manner.

Yours faithfully

(Signed)

R. WALLENBERG

000201

COPY

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

169



December 6, 1944

OFFICE OF THE  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

My dear Mr. Minister:

In connection with the outstanding service performed by Mr. Raoul Wallenberg of the Swedish Foreign Office in the program to save and protect the persecuted peoples in Hungary, the Board wishes to send him the enclosed letter of appreciation which is transmitted to you herewith for delivery to Mr. Wallenberg.

I should like to take this opportunity to thank you personally for the cooperation and deep interest which have been given to the operations of the War Refugee Board in Sweden by you and the Legation staff.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed)  
J. W. PEHLE

J. W. Pehle  
Executive Director

Honorable Herschel V. Johnson,  
American Minister,  
Stockholm, Sweden.

Enclosure

000202

COPY

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

WAR REFUGEE BOARD

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

December 6, 1944



OFFICE OF THE  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

My dear Mr. Wallenberg:

Through the American Minister in Stockholm and Mr. Iver Olsen, the War Refugee Board has kept closely informed of the difficult and important work you have been doing to alleviate the situation of the Jewish people in Hungary. We have followed with keen interest the reports of the steps which you have taken to accomplish your mission and the personal devotion which you have given to saving and protecting the innocent victims of Nazi persecution.

I think that no one who has participated in this great task can escape some feeling of frustration in that, because of circumstances beyond our control, our efforts have not met with complete success. On the other hand, there have been measurable achievements in the face of the obstacles which had to be encountered, and it is our conviction that you have made a very great personal contribution to the success which has been realized in these endeavors.

On behalf of the War Refugee Board I wish to express to you our very deep appreciation for your splendid cooperation and for the vigor and ingenuity which you brought to our common humanitarian undertaking.

Very truly yours,

(Signed)  
J. W. PEHLE

J. W. Pehle  
Executive Director

Mr. Raoul Wallenberg,  
Swedish Foreign Office,  
Stockholm, Sweden.

000203

SUMMARY REPORT OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE WAR REFUGEE BOARD  
WITH RESPECT TO THE JEWS IN HUNGARY

Prior to Germany's military occupation of Hungary on March 19, 1944, and the reconstitution of the Hungarian Government as a Nazi puppet, Hungary was the only refuge for Jews in Axis Europe. Although anti-Jewish laws had been on the Hungarian statute-books since as early as 1938, their enforcement and the condition of the Jews in Hungary were such as to invite the clandestine immigration of tens of thousands of Jews from Poland, Slovakia and Rumania, and the Jewish population of Hungary was swelled to over 800,000. The refugees were cared for by the native Jewish population who tried to see to it that no large numbers of newcomers congregated in any one place. However that may be, the movement was so large that the conclusion is inescapable that it was known to and connived at by the Hungarian authorities. During the first month of the Board's existence, the clandestine movement of Jews from Poland and Slovakia into Hungary still continued and the Board facilitated the efforts of private agencies to increase the traffic. During the same period, Hungary was also envisaged as an important source of food for the International Red Cross and other relief organizations to distribute to persecuted groups in concentration camps in German-controlled areas. On the Board's recommendation, Treasury licenses were issued to permit purchases of Hungarian foodstuffs for such purpose.

There were, however, lapses in the Hungarian Government's passive attitude. Thus, it was reported that during 1941 a substantial number of Jews from Poland and Hungarian-born Jews of Polish origin but of uncertain

000204

nationality were in part deported to Poland and in part detained in concentration camps. It was also reported that in December, 1943, the Germans began to press Hungary to adopt a stricter anti-Jewish policy. Late in February, 1944, reports reached the Board that Hungary was yielding to German pressure to deport foreign Jews and to close its borders to refugees from Poland and elsewhere. Consequently, on March 7, 1944, the American legations at Bern and Lisbon were instructed to communicate to Hungarian authorities, through channels known to be available, a message expressing this Government's disapproval of such persecution and warning them of the consequences thereof. In part, this message read:

.....the Government of the United States is aware that  
...../the Hungarian Government is/ pursuing programs of  
persecuting.....Jewish minorities and refugees of other  
nationalities who have escaped into...../its/ territories.  
This persecution consists among other forms in sending  
such refugees beyond the borders.....into Poland where  
they undergo various forms of cruelty and even death,  
dictated by Nazi degeneracy. Still another form of perse-  
cution consists in preventing the refugees from escaping  
to neutral countries where their lives may be saved.

The Government of the United States is determined to do everything it can to rescue such unfortunates who are in danger of losing their lives and to find for them havens of refuge. Any continuation by...../the Hungarian Government/ of the execution of these policies of Hitlerite persecutions is viewed with great seriousness by this Government and will be kept in mind. The President, in establishing the War Refugee Board, recently restated unequivocally the position of the United States Government in this matter.....The Govern-  
ment of the United States takes the view that...../the Hungarian Government/, as well as...../its/ subordinates and functionaries, are fully responsible for the actions of persecution committed on their territories and in the interests of humanity they should desist immediately. Moreover, they should be informed that in their own interest they will be well advised to take advantage in the future of such opportunities as may be available to them to allow refugees to depart across their borders into territories of any neutral countries which may be prepared to receive them."

On March 11, we were advised by our Minister at Lisbon that this message had been delivered to appropriate Hungarian authorities. A similar response was later received from our Minister at Bern.

On March 19, however, the German military occupied Hungary and the following days witnessed the creation of a Nazi puppet government, one of whose avowed purposes was to make Hungary "Judenrein".

On March 24, the President publicly condemned the Nazi policy of exterminating Jews and other civilian populations. He made particular reference to Hungary and warned that all those who took any part in such persecutions would be punished for their crimes. He called upon the decent people in Nazi Europe to assist the victims of persecutions in their efforts to hide and escape. This statement of the President was broadcasted from United Nations and neutral radio stations in whole or in part for many weeks. It was dropped in leaflet form from the air over Hungary and other Axis controlled countries.

On the theory that the presence of foreigners in official or unofficial capacities might have a deterrent effect, the Board, under date of March 25, requested the International Red Cross to "send effective representation to Hungary in order to protect the well-being of groups facing persecution". Under date of April 13, the following reply was received through the American legation at Bern:

In order to give it more efficacy the International Committee has as a matter of fact concerned itself for some time in enlarging its delegation at Budapest. For the time being it has not considered sending to Hungary a special delegation with instructions to assume the particular protection to which the State Department's message referred since under the present circumstances such mission might be considered as unrelated to the committee's traditional and conventional competence.

000206

The International Committee shall continue to devote its entire attention to all categories of war victims as it has in the past without intruding into the domestic policy of any of those states and the War Refugee Board as well as all the humanitarian and government institutions of several belligerent states can rest assured of this. Within full scope which circumstances demand and according to means placed at its disposal it shall always attempt to broaden and increase its action along its own line of activities in favor of those victims.

The aid of the Holy See was also enlisted. Thus on March 24, the Board wrote the Apostolic Delegate in Washington:

Recent events have brought new tragedy to millions of people in Hungary and Rumania. The occupation of these countries by German military forces will spell added persecution, if not transportation and death, to nearly two million Jews unless the people and such native regimes as may continue to exist take measures to protect them. Consequently, the War Refugee Board earnestly seeks your good offices in presenting to the Holy See the suggestion that action by the Holy See, through the Nuncios or otherwise, may be effective to foster and facilitate the adoption of such measures of protection. The War Refugee Board is cognizant of the Holy See's deep interest in the welfare of these unfortunate people and ventures to hope that the Holy See will be able to take all appropriate action.

The following day the Delegate replied:

It is a pleasure to inform you that I have already sent a communication to His Eminence, the Cardinal Secretary of State, invoking every possible assistance by the Holy See, through its diplomatic representatives, the Bishops and clergy, that the lot of these unfortunates may be rendered less difficult.

I am confident that the Holy Father personally, and the agencies of the Holy See will cooperate to the utmost in the humanitarian cause.

On April 1, the Cardinal Secretary of State informed the American representative and the British ambassador at the Vatican that instructions had already been given to the representatives of the Holy See in Hungary to do everything possible for the relief of the Jews.

000207

In the meantime, reports continued to arrive that German pressure on Hungary was being intensified, and on April 12, a second informal warning was addressed to Hungarian authorities through the American Legation at Lisbon. The instruction read, in part, as follows:

In view of the German military's reported operations in Hungary, we request that you again approach the channels to the Government of Hungary that are available to you and state again the position taken by this Government and make it clearly understood that in spite of the current pressure by the Nazis any action on the part of the Hungarian Government to inflict new and further persecutions or to continue existing persecutions designed against foreign or native Jews or the deportation to Germany itself or any territory controlled by Germany of foreign or native Jews will be considered by this Government with the greatest disfavor and will be taken into account at the end of the war.

On April 18, the Board was advised that this warning has been placed in proper channels for transmission to the government of Hungary.

In view of the rising tide of persecution, avenues for escape were explored. The most promising clandestine route at the time appeared to be through that portion of Yugoslav territory occupied by the partisan forces of Marshal Tito. Consequently, during the first week of April, 1944, one of the Board's representatives discussed at length the feasibility of such an escape route with representatives of Marshal Tito as well as American and British military authorities at Bari, Italy. On April 13, the American Minister to the Yugoslav Government-in-Exile, in Cairo, informed the Board that the British Government was also taking steps to contact Marshal Tito in this connection. On April 22, the Board informed the American Minister to Yugoslavia that it was "prepared to arrange for any assistance, including funds." On April 29, the Board was advised that

000208

support in rescuing Hungarian Jews has now been promised by Tito. He will aid them to escape and join his army or be evacuated whenever possible.

The possibility of escape through emigration was also explored, and the Turkish government was urged to facilitate the departure of Jews from Hungary by issuing Turkish transit visas in considerable numbers. There was some reason to believe that the holders of Turkish transit visas and Palestine immigration certificates might obtain Rumanian and Bulgarian transit visas.

On May 2, the efforts of the Board in this connection received a severe set-back. On that day, the U. S. Embassy at Ankara reported that

the Turkish consul at Budapest had sent word that every Jew entering the Turkish consulate in Budapest was arrested as soon as he left and transported to an unknown place.

While pursuing its efforts to influence the Hungarian authorities by official and unofficial pressure, and to aid in the escape of Jews from Hungary, the Board did not neglect the possibility of enlisting the self-interest of individual German and Hungarian officials in a position to alleviate the fate of Jews. Thus on April 20, in cooperation with a private agency, steps were taken to establish contact with a mysterious person known only as "Willy" who was reported to have been successful in arresting the deportation of Jews from Slovakia. An intermediary in Switzerland was asked to explore with him the

possibility of arranging for evacuations from Hungary to neutral countries or for holding up deportations or permitting sending relief to those detained. If any such arrangements possible, please indicate amounts you consider would be involved and extent to which such amounts could remain in neutral countries.

000209

Another effort along such lines was made three months later with the assistance of a prominent Hungarian in this country.

On May 4, the Board was advised by the American embassy in London that the deportation of Jews from Hungary had begun and that 24,000 Hungarians had already been deported from Carpatho-Russia, in addition to an unknown number of Jewish refugees from Poland.

This report was rapidly followed by reports from other sources that the deportation of Jews from Hungary was being relentlessly pursued and with attendant brutalities.

On May 11, the American consulate in Jerusalem was requested to obtain from the Jewish Agency the names of Hungarian officials responsible for the persecution of Jews.

On May 17, the American embassy at Moscow was informed of the situation in Hungary and given the following instruction:

Please endeavor to have Russian broadcasts in appropriate languages beamed on Germany and German-satellite countries transmit warnings to German and German-satellite military and civilian personnel carrying out deportation proceedings that they personally will be held responsible by the United Nations for their actions and the deaths that may result from deportation. Please also approach the Foreign Office in an attempt to have it use its influence upon the satellite governments and populations by all possible means to cause their resistance to German demands for the deportation and persecution of minority groups under their control.

For your information, the OWI transmitters are carrying similar warnings and the American Embassy, London, is being requested to make similar approaches to the Ministry of Information and the Foreign Office.

A similar instruction was sent to the American embassy in London.

Under date of May 25, the following information and suggestions were cabled by our Minister at Bern:

According to all reliable information unmistakably steps are being taken preparatory to massive deportation and extermination of the Jewish population especially in Carpatho-Russian and Maramaros regions. The number of people immediately involved is about 200,000 and the action shows every sign of being extended to the Jewish population in Hungary proper.

This action has all the namelessly tragic and brutal earmarks of similar actions carried out in Poland by the Nazis and their henchmen. It is being most savagely taken in northeastern Hungary.....

For all reliable reports - and this is even reflected in the Hungarian press especially in the provinces - the Hungarian population have not sympathized with such brutal anti-Jewish measures. On the contrary they have openly sided with the persecuted Jews and have continually attempted to aid these wretched souls by bringing them food and clothing.

On the other hand the Hungarian authorities have taken severe measures to isolate such concentration camps and to cut off all assistance from outside.....

The lot of these Jews in such improvised "camps" is wretched. Such cattle markets, tile factories and wood yards are almost completely devoid of sanitary facilities and in many instances thousands of men women children old and sick people are forced to live in the open under conditions of frightful crowding and promiscuity. They were permitted to take nothing with them in the way of blankets or covers and it becomes tragically obvious that a great many will die of exposure disease and slow starvation even before they are jammed 80 to 100 to a wagon into cattle cars for deportation.....

It is my urgent suggestion, in close collaboration with the War Refugee Board representative here, that the Government of the USSR be prevailed upon in regard to the purpose of the occupation of Hungary by the Nazis, to associate itself with the declaration of March 24 by President Roosevelt (Eden March 31). Since the Soviet armies are standing on the frontiers of Hungary and the fear of the Russians in the hearts of a large number of "collaborators" in Hungary is mortal, a declaration by the Soviet Union would have all the more weight.

000211

The suggestion was cabled to our ambassador in Moscow on June 10.

Among other steps taken to ensure the safety of Jews in Hungary was the extension to Hungary of this Government's emphatic demand that persons in German-controlled territory holding documents issued in the name of any American republic, or otherwise claiming the nationality of an American republic on other grounds, be accorded all rights and privileges of such nationals, unless and until the government whose nationality is claimed denies the validity of such documents or claims. In the course of a prolonged exchange of communications with other American republics, this Government succeeded, on humanitarian grounds, in securing the consent of most of them to this procedure, and they agreed to postpone examination of such documents and claims until such time as the persons in question should no longer be subject to enemy persecution. Through the protecting powers of the American republics--Spain and Switzerland--Germany and Hungary were informed of these demands. Several thousands Polish and other Jews in Axis-held territory who, in an attempt to escape death, succeeded in obtaining documents of various Latin American countries, were the beneficiaries of this program. Although many of these "Latin American nationals" were made the victims of what the German Foreign Office, in one of its notes to Switzerland, described as "the general treatment accorded to Eastern-European Jews," a considerable number of such Jews have, nevertheless been enabled to survive by reason of this measure.

Further information regarding the situation in Hungary was requested of the European neutrals between May 20 and May 23, and, on

000212

May 25 and 26 American missions in Ankara, Bern, Lisbon, Madrid and Stockholm were instructed as follows:

Please represent to the ..... government that, according to persistent and seemingly authentic reports, systematic mass extermination of Jews in Hungary has begun. The lives of 800,000 human beings in Hungary may well depend on the restraint that may result from the presence in that country of the largest possible number of foreign observers. To this end, please urge appropriate authorities in the interest of most elementary humanity to take immediate steps to increase to the largest possible extent the number of .....diplomatic and consular personnel in Hungary and to distribute them as widely as possible throughout the country.

It is hoped, of course, that all such diplomatic and consular representatives will use all means available to them to persuade individuals and officials to desist from further barbarisms.

Sweden agreed to comply with our request and appointed as its special attache to its Budapest legation a Swedish businessman who had already expressed his willingness to the Board's Stockholm representative to undertake a similar mission in his private capacity. The Swedish Foreign Office invited the Board's suggestions as to the new attache's activities, and on July 7 the Board cabled its Stockholm representative:

Since money and favorable post-war consideration may motivate action impeding, relaxing or slowing down tempo of persecution and facilitate escapes and concealments, it should be ascertained in what quarters such inducements may be effective.....If circumstances warrant funds will be made available at neutral bank for post-war use or in part in local currency now, procured against blocked counter-value here or in neutral bank.....Whenever a concrete proposal based on financial arrangements of substantial character or on favorable post-war consideration is broached, the matter should be referred to the Board for clearance,

000213

which will require evidence of effectiveness and good faith in the meantime. In order to care for less substantial transactions a fund of \$50,000 will be placed at Olsen's disposal which may be used in his discretion in addition to the fund already available to him for discretionary use.

The problem may be dealt with on various levels such as high official, low official and unofficial, central and local. In connection with unofficial channels an informed source suggests that ships and barges going down the Danube are generally empty and may afford a means of escape for a limited number of refugees in the guise of seamen or otherwise. Same source suggests that skippers can be approached on financial basis and crews through so-called communist channels. Board is also advised that railroad line from Budapest to Mohacs, said to be about ten miles from partisan-controlled Yugoslav territory, might afford similar opportunities if contacts made with trainmen through what are termed communist channels. Board further advised that Transylvania Unitarian Church, socialist and partisan groups may be in a position because of geographical situation and absence of real occupation to shelter refugees if they can reach that area. In addition, Board believes that Roman Catholic clergy and Nuncio may be helpful both in action and with advice.

With reference to high official channels exploration may be made of the possibility.....of evacuation of Jews and persons similarly situated belonging to specific groups such as (a) holders of Palestine certificates, (b) holders of visas for entry into neutral countries, (c) persons to whom the issuance of visas for entry into an American republic is authorized provided they appear personally therefor before a consular office in a neutral country, (d) persons holding passports or consular documents issued in the names of American republics, or who are under the protection of a neutral country.....(e) women and children, (f) aged and infirm men, and (g) parents, husbands, wives, children, etc., of American citizens.

You should advise.....[the new Swedish attache at Budapest] of the foregoing to the extent that you deem advisable and inform him that the same constitutes a general outline of a program which the Board believes can be pursued. While he cannot, of course, act as the Board's representative, nor purport to act in its name, he can, whenever advisable, indicate that as a Swede he is free to communicate with Stockholm where a representative of the Board is stationed. He may thus express his willingness to lay before the Board's representative specific proposals if in any particular case he should deem so doing to be advisable, or if by reason of the nature of the proposal Olsen's or the Board's approval is necessary.....

000214

[He] should consult with the representative of the International Red Cross and impress upon him the urgent need of increasing Intercross representation in Hungary and intercession in an effort to secure permission to visit and inspect concentration camps, ghettos and other places of detention. [He] might undertake also to see whether such permission might be granted him and his colleagues.....

The new Swedish attache assumed his duties with vigor and in addition to his efforts generally to alleviate the condition of Jews in Hungary, soon had a substantial number of persons under effective Swedish protection.

On May 26, the following message from the Government of the United States was cabled to Rome for delivery to the Cardinal Secretary of State:

The wave of hate which has engulfed Europe and the consequent mass persecution, enslavement, deportation and slaughter of helpless men, women and children have, we know, sorely grieved His Holiness. We know also that His Holiness, with great compassion for the sufferings of a large portion of mankind has labored unceasingly to re-inculcate a decent regard for the dignity of man. So, too, we know of His Holiness' tireless efforts to alleviate the lot of the persecuted, the hunted and the outcast. His Holiness, we are certain, is aware of the deep feeling of abhorrence which the persecutions, mass-deportations, enslavements and slaughters in France, Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, the Balkans, Norway and elsewhere have aroused in the American people. His Holiness, we are confident, is also aware of the deep concern of the Government of the United States with respect to these reversion to usages of ancient barbarism, and of its constant efforts to prevent their recurrence.

In view of the common concern of the Holy See and the Government and people of the United States with such matters, we believe it appropriate to call to the Holy See's attention the seemingly authentic reports that the present authorities in Hungary have undertaken to persecute the 800,000 Jews in Hungary merely because they are Jews, and are planning their mass slaughter both in Hungary and after deportation to Poland. The Government of the United States has warned the authorities and people of Hungary of the material consequences that will follow the perpetration of such inhuman acts of barbarism. We believe, however, that it is both timely and fitting that

000215

the Hungarian authorities and people should be reminded of the moral values involved and of the spiritual consequences that must flow from indulgence in the persecution and mass-murder of helpless men, women and children. To that end we earnestly suggest that His Holiness may find it appropriate to express himself on this subject to the authorities and people of Hungary, personally by radio and through the Nuncio and clergy in Hungary as well as through a representative of the Holy See specially despatched to Hungary for that purpose. His Holiness, we deeply hope, may find it possible to remind the authorities and people of Hungary, among whom great numbers profess spiritual adherence to the Holy See, of the spiritual consequences of such acts and of the ecclesiastic sanctions which may be applied to the perpetrators thereof.

On June 25 the Pope addressed a personal appeal to Regent Horthy.

It was learned from the Apostolic Delegate in Washington under date of July 24, that

the personal appeal of the Holy Father to Regent Horthy has led the latter to assume a more determined attitude of opposition to the racial laws. Likewise the members of the Catholic Hierarchy were encouraged to carry on a more intense activity in favor of victims of racial laws.

It seems that the Government of Hungary has now given assurance to His Eminence, Cardinal Seredi, Primate of Hungary, that deportations of Jewish people will cease. The Apostolic Nunciature adds that in fact the whole racial situation is somewhat improved.

In a direct effort to confront the Hungarian authorities with their responsibility for the treatment of Jews, the following instruction was sent on June 6 at the urgent request of the Board, to our legation at Bern:

In view of consistent neutral press reports carrying Berlin and Budapest date lines and other information to the effect that the eight hundred thousand Jews in Hungary are being segregated in ghettos and concentrated in camps, there seems little doubt that the pattern heretofore set in Poland and repeated elsewhere is again being followed. In an effort to develop means to forestall the effectuation of the ultimate ends of such program, that is mass-executions either before or after deportation, consideration has been given to the advisability of requesting the Swiss Government to address an inquiry on behalf of this Government to appropriate authorities

000216

in Hungary asking them to state their intentions with respect to the future treatment to be accorded to Jews in ghettos and concentration camps and specifically whether they contemplate forced deportations to Poland or elsewhere or the imposition of discriminatory reductions in food rations, or the adoption of other measures which like those mentioned will be tantamount to mass-execution. At the same time, the Swiss government would be requested to remind the same authorities of the grave view that this Government takes with respect to the persecution of Jews and other minorities and of the determination of this Government to see to it that all those who share the responsibility for such acts are dealt with in accordance with the President's statement of March 24, 1944.

Please give the foregoing your most careful consideration and unless you are of the opinion that to do so would involve positive disadvantages you should proceed promptly to make the requests outlined above.

A note in the tenor indicated was transmitted to the Swiss Foreign Office on June 13, and was communicated to Hungarian officials two weeks later.

From the very outset of the German military occupation of Hungary, the Board cooperated closely with private agencies in organizing clandestine escapes. Thus, the Board made available to representatives of private rescue agencies in neutral countries the names and addresses of persons in Hungary who were believed, on the basis of available information in the United States, to be inclined and in a position to be of assistance. Every facility was extended for the transmission of private funds to finance such operations and the Board communicated to private agencies information concerning acceptable sources of pengo currency. The Board's representatives abroad were on the constant lookout for underground groups that might be of assistance and through their efforts arrangements were concluded between

000217

such groups and private rescue agencies.

The Board also extended its facilities fully for the transmission of applications for the issuance of Palestine immigration certificates to people in Hungary and, after Rumania was induced to abandon the persecution of Jews as a national policy, the Board exerted pressure upon the Rumanian Government to permit the entry of Hungarian refugees. On June 2, the Prime Minister of Rumania advised the Rumanian Delegate to the International Red Cross that he might give formal assurances that Jewish refugees from Hungary would be allowed to enter Rumania notwithstanding formal declarations to the contrary, and that "their safety would be looked out for by the Rumanians".

In addition to the above steps, wide publicity over a period of many months was secured in Hungary, by radio and otherwise, for a series of warnings and appeals to the people of Hungary. These included the President's statement of March 24, statements by the members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, by the House Foreign Affairs Committee, by Archbishop Spellman of New York, by a group of representative leaders of American opinion headed by Governor Alfred E. Smith, and by Hungarian leaders in this country.

On July 6, our Minister to Stockholm advised us that the King of Sweden addressed a strong personal appeal to Admiral Horthy. Finally, on July 13 the Board was advised that as the result of persistent suggestions by the Board's representative and private organizations that the International Red Cross intervene in the Hungarian situation, Professor Huber, President of the International Red Cross, addressed a personal letter of protest to Admiral Horthy on July 6.

000218

Meanwhile, the reports regarding the situation in Hungary became more alarming. On June 24, the American Legation in Bern cabled the following information:

Now there is no doubt that the majority of the Jewish population east of the Danube especially in eastern, northern, and north eastern Hungary has been deported to Poland. Further reliable information confirming this fact has come in in the course of the past two weeks from the following independent sources: (a) Swiss official employee just returned from Budapest, (b) Railway workers in Czech resistance movement, (c) other reliable secret source. Regard information as to sources as absolutely confidential since any publicity regarding them would endanger lives.

Prior to the deportations, there were two weeks to a month of brutal concentration during which thousands of Jews were crowded together in primitive quarters with insufficient food, clothing and water, regardless of state of health, sex or age. The Hungarian gendarmerie on Laszlo Endre's orders largely carried out this action.....

Some 350,000 Jews have already been concentrated in Budapest and environs. This began around June 16 and on the 21st it was to be finished. In the city proper they have been settled in requisitioned blocks of houses in a chess board pattern so that they will not escape bombardment.

In an effort to check such continued deportations..... we recommend British and Soviet broadcasts and especially leaflets. If it is possible, the Vatican should be prevailed upon to associate itself with such protest.

There is little doubt that many of these Hungarian Jews are being sent to the extermination camps of Auschwitz (Oswiecim) and Birkenau (Rajaka) in western upper Silesia where according to recent reports, since early summer 1942 at least 1,500,000 Jews have been killed. There is evidence that already in January 1944 preparations were being made to receive and exterminate Hungarian Jews in these camps. Soon a detailed report on these camps will be cabled.

On July 14, our Minister in Bern reported that, according to information received by him from the Swiss Foreign Office on July 6, some

000219

250,000 Jews had been deported from Hungary.

Although it was at first reported that the deportations were being conducted by German authorities, on August 18, our legation in Stockholm informed us of reports from several sources that

in the main the Hungarian police have themselves been the instrument for arresting and deporting Jews from Hungary under conditions which are tragically cruel.

In the same message, the legation related the following incident witnessed by a member of the Swedish legation in Budapest and related by him to a friend in Stockholm, one of the most prominent personalities in Sweden:

Approximately 20,000 Hungarian Jews, children, men and women, had been concentrated in the open air for 4 or 5 days with nothing even to sit on except the ground. Then they had been herded into boxcars 80 persons per car, the car then nailed up and sent off to foreign destinations. The people are packed in the cars like sardines with no possibility of sitting or even moving. Many must have been dead on arrival. The friend was specifically asked by this source if the Germans were instrumental in this operation and he was assured by his friend that the people handling this affair were not Germans but Hungarian Gendarmes.

In a message of August 22 concerning that incident the American legation at Stockholm identified the place as Budakalasz. The message added that

the informant was particularly impressed by the ruthless demeanor of Hungarian gendarmes. They were described by him as bloodthirsty as the Gestapo of Germany. Jews old, young and children, male and female were herded into boxcars by gendarmes who drove them on with rifle butts and a whip was even used by one gendarme.

From Jewish girls of Hungary now in Hamburg and other places soldiers of Germany have brought back messages to Budapest to their friends. After having been deported from Hungary these girls have been turned over to German armed forces and wear armbands inscribed war harlot (kriegshure).

In provincial Hungary, camps of Jews were emptied before a halt was made to deportations by officials of Hungary. As a rule while the camps were still operating

000220

they were managed by Hungarian personnel aided by an SS adviser thought competent in giving instructions in competent managing of Jews to the Hungarians.

In view of persistent Hungarian denials of the complicity of Hungarian officials in the commission of atrocities (see Hungarian note transmitted by American legation in Bern under date of August 5, below), our legation in Bern was instructed on August 25 to request the Swiss Government to bring this incident and other reports of Hungarian participation in atrocities to the attention of appropriate Hungarian authorities.

On July 19, the American legation <sup>at Bern</sup> cabled as follows:

A note from the Foreign Office, dated yesterday, states that according to a telegram from the Swiss Legation at Budapest, authorization has been given by the Government of Hungary for the departure of all Jews from Hungary who hold entry permits for another country, including Palestine.

This same message states that transit through occupied territories will be permitted by the German Government. As soon as possible the Swiss Legation, in collaboration with the Palestinian Bureau, Budapest, will take necessary measures for evacuation. It is probable that Hungarian police passports will constitute travel documents.

In order to take the fullest possible advantage of this development, the European neutrals were requested on July 28 to advise Germany and Hungary that they were prepared to receive all Jews permitted to emigrate. This request was accompanied by assurances that this Government would undertake to make arrangements for the support and early evacuation of such refugees. The British government was urged to join us in the request and commitment. Thus, the American legation at Bern was instructed as follows:

You are requested to consult with your British colleague and either in collaboration with him or alone, as the circumstances may develop, approach appropriate

000221

officials of the Swiss Government with the request that Switzerland advise the Hungarian Government that it is prepared to receive Jews released by Hungary and permitted to go to Switzerland. You may assure appropriate Swiss officials that if Switzerland so advises the Hungarian Government, Jews arriving in Switzerland from Hungary will be evacuated to United Nations territory as promptly as possible and that in the meantime the United States will undertake to make arrangements for their maintenance and support in Switzerland. You should inform the Department and the Board promptly of the results of your consultation with your British colleague and your approach to the Swiss Government."

On the same day, our embassy in London was instructed as

follows:

This Government is prepared to advise the Hungarian and neutral governments that all Jews arriving in neutral countries from Hungary will be afforded havens in United Nations territory just as promptly as military considerations permit, neutral governments to be given adequate assurances as to the maintenance of such persons in the meantime and to be requested to advise the Hungarian Government of their willingness to receive such persons. Please endeavor to ascertain from the Foreign Office whether the Government of the United Kingdom will join this Government in this attempt to save lives. American missions in neutral countries are being instructed to take appropriate action along these lines in collaboration with their British colleagues if possible, alone if necessary. Since time is of the essence, British missions should be advised of Foreign Office views promptly.

Please keep Department and Board advised.

Please advise Sir Herbert Emerson of the Intergovernmental Committee of the foregoing and endeavor to ascertain from him some indication as to the extent to which IGC funds may be available for the maintenance of such refugees from Hungary as may arrive in neutral countries following such approaches. The War Refugee Board would appreciate as early a response to this inquiry as possible.

Under all of the circumstances it might prove tragic if the fullest advantage of the present opportunity were not (repeat not) taken. Consequently, you are requested urgently to propose to the Foreign Office the necessity of

000222

immediately making available to Jews in Hungary Palestine certificates in substantial additional numbers. In this connection, the possibility should not be overlooked that once the holders of such additional certificates arrive in Turkey or Spain, they may be routed to havens other than Palestine if circumstances should be deemed to preclude their entry into Palestine. Please advise the Department and Board of such views as the Foreign Office might express.

Realizing that such a broad program might meet with difficulties, European neutral countries were requested, at the same time, on the basis of a commitment similar to that mentioned above, to express to enemy countries their willingness to receive persons for whom American immigration visas had been authorized after July 1, 1941. American consular officers in such countries were simultaneously authorized by the Department of State to

issue new American immigration visas to any such person to whom an American visa was issued or for whom such visa was authorized after July 1, 1941, provided that (a) such person other than a child under 16 years of age is found upon telegraphic reference to the Department for security check not to be the subject of an adverse report dated subsequent to the previous approval, (b) such person is not affirmatively found by the consul to be inadmissible into the United States under the law, or (c) the consul does not consider that the case is one which should be recommended for consideration under the committee procedure.

The Swiss government was asked to advise Germany and Hungary that

American consular officers in neutral countries have been authorized to issue an immigration visa to any person to whom an American immigration visa was issued or for whom a visa was authorized on or after July 1, 1941 and who has been in areas controlled by Germany or any of Germany's allies since December 8, 1941, provided that such person presents himself to an American consular officer in a neutral country and is found not to have become disqualified for the issuance of a visa.

000223

This authorization was in accordance with a program proposed by the Board as early as March 16 pursuant to which American immigration visas authorized after the present security checks had been put into effect, but which had become invalid by lapse of time, would be replaced in the case of persons in enemy controlled territory and subject to enemy persecution. The Department of State agreed to this program on July 20.

Turkey was also requested to admit all persons in enemy territory holding Palestine certificates and to advise enemy governments of its willingness to do so. The assurances given by this Government regarding maintenance and evacuation of refugees were extended to cover such refugees as well.

In pursuance of our request, Sweden and Turkey advised the Hungarian Government of their willingness to receive holders of American immigration visas, and Turkey also agreed to receive holders of Palestine certificates.

In the meantime, the following letter, dated July 25, was received from the Washington delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross:

We have received today the following communication from the I.C.R.C. in Geneva:

The Hungarian Government is willing to make possible the emigration of certain categories of Jews and has advised the I.C.R.C. of its readiness in this respect.

Very obviously from the viewpoint of maintaining the principle of neutrality, which in effect is based on reciprocity, the I.C.R.C. feels that the number of emigrant Jews to be admitted to the United States should be substantially increased, and that a corresponding number of Entry permits should be accorded.

000224

It would, furthermore, be desirable if the United States Government would make a public statement on this subject, indicating the number of Entry permits accorded. The I.C.R.C. is of the opinion that such a statement would impress the Hungarian Government as the visible sign of a favourable reaction to their decision to cease the persecution of the Jews also on this side. Moreover, the possibility of an eventual withdrawal of the concession granted would be made difficult by a public declaration, as suggested above, which would at the same time also forestall an attempt on the part of the countries of emigration to throw the blame for an eventual failure on the countries of immigration.

The I.C.R.C. would like to be informed whether the United States Government would be willing to transmit and support this proposal to the Governments of the South American Republics or whether the I.C.R.C. should do so directly.

The I.C.R.C. reserves the right to issue a communique concerning this proposal, which has simultaneously been submitted to the Government of Great Britain.

The letter did not elaborate on what categories of Jews would be permitted to emigrate.

Despite the vague nature of the Hungarian "offer," it seemed imperative to reply to it as soon as possible and to stress that this Government's acceptance thereof was not limited to any special category of Jews, but embraced all who should be permitted to leave Hungary. In the opinion of the Board, engaging in protracted negotiations with Latin American governments as to the number of entry permits they would be willing to grant would have further endangered the lives of Jews in Hungary. As, however, the Red Cross inquiry was addressed to the United Kingdom as well as to the United States, an exchange of views with Great Britain ensued.

On August 11 the following reply was handed by the American Minister at Bern to the Red Cross:

000225

The United States Government has learned through the ICRC of the Hungarian Government's willingness to permit the emigration from Hungary of certain categories of Jews. This Government, despite the substantial difficulties and responsibilities involved, has consistently made clear its determination to take all practicable steps to rescue victims of religious or political oppression. In view of the overwhelming humanitarian considerations involved concerning the Jews in Hungary, this Government now repeats specifically its assurance that it will arrange for the care of all Jews permitted to leave Hungary in the present circumstances who reach neutral or United Nations territory, and will find for such people temporary havens of refuge where they may live in safety. These assurances have been communicated to the governments of neutral countries who have been requested to permit the entry of Jews who reach their borders from Hungary. This Government now awaits information concerning the concrete steps to be taken by the Hungarian Government to carry out its proposal.

On August 16 we were advised that the British had agreed to join the United States in this response. On August 17 the following joint statement was issued by the two governments:

The International Committee of the Red Cross has communicated to the Governments of the United Kingdom and the United States an offer of the Hungarian Government regarding the emigration and treatment of Jews. Because of the desperate plight of the Jews in Hungary and the overwhelmingly humanitarian considerations involved the two governments are informing the Government of Hungary through Intercross that, despite the heavy difficulties and responsibilities involved, they have accepted the offer of the Hungarian Government for the release of Jews and will make arrangements for the care of such Jews leaving Hungary who reach neutral or United Nations territory, and also that they will find temporary havens of refuge where such people may live in safety. Notification of these assurances is being given to the governments of neutral countries who are being requested to permit the entry of Jews who reach their frontiers from Hungary. The Governments of the United Kingdom and the United States emphasize that, in accepting the offer which has been made, they do not in any way condone the action of the Hungarian Government in forcing the emigration of Jews as an alternative to persecution and death.

Following this reply to the Red Cross, further steps were taken to increase the number of Jews in Hungary who would be likely to

000226

obtain Hungarian and German permission to leave the country and the consent of neutral countries to receive them.

Thus, earlier arrangements made by the Board for havens in Latin-American countries and Ireland for refugee children from France, were, with the approval of such countries, extended to cover Jewish children from Hungary. On August 21, American consuls in Switzerland, Spain and Portugal were authorized to issue up to five thousand immigration visas within the limits of existing quotas, to refugee children from Hungary who succeeded in reaching these neutral countries.

On May 24, the Board had proposed to the Department of State that the issuance of visas be authorized for victims of enemy persecution so related to American citizens and alien residents of the United States as to be entitled to non-quota or preference visas. The Board's purpose in this, as in its proposals that lapsed visas be renewed and that visas be authorized for refugee children, was to facilitate the escape of persecuted persons into neutral territory, and not to foster immigration into the United States.

On August 5, the Department of State gave its approval to this. Several weeks passed in clearing various technical details with the Department of Justice. By then, information from abroad made it very doubtful whether German authorities would permit the exit of any Jews from Hungary or other German-controlled areas, whatever permits or visas they might have. Nevertheless, the Board decided to continue its efforts to rescue Axis victims by all possible means. Accordingly, the following instruction was cabled

000227

on August 24 to the American legation at Bern:

Notwithstanding recent developments.....this Government intends to pursue further the reported offers of Hungarian authorities.....

Accordingly, please request appropriate officials of the Swiss Government to advise enemy governments, particularly neutral countries have been authorized to issue an immigration visa to the alien husband, wife, parent, and unmarried minor child of an American citizen, and the wife and unmarried minor child of an alien resident of the United States who has been in an area controlled by Germany or any of Germany's allies, provided that such person presents himself to an American consular officer and is found not to be disqualified for a visa. At the same time, please attempt to secure the prompt agreement of the Swiss Government to advise enemy governments of Switzerland's willingness to permit the entry into Switzerland of persons falling within the categories described above. You may assure Swiss officials that any such persons so admitted will be adequately maintained and that any who may be found not to be qualified for the issuance of a visa will be evacuated as promptly as possible.....

Consular officers in Switzerland are hereby authorized to issue immigration visas to any alien who is the husband, wife, parent, or unmarried minor child of an American citizen and on whose behalf nonquota or first preference status has been established by the approval of the Department of Justice of a petition filed by such citizen relative, or who is the wife or unmarried minor child of an alien lawfully admitted into the United States for permanent residence and as such is entitled to second preference immigration status. The issuance of visas is subject to the proviso, however, that (a) such person other than a child under 16 years of age is found upon telegraphic reference to the Department for security check not to be the subject of an adverse report or to be open to reasonable suspicion because of the circumstances of the case such as those attending the release of a male applicant of military age, (b) such person is not affirmatively found by the consul to be inadmissible into the United States under the law, or (c) the consul does not consider that the case is one which should be recommended for consideration under the committee procedure.

Similar instructions were cabled to our missions at Ankara, Lisbon, Madrid and Stockholm.

000228

Private agencies in this country were advised by us of the visa procedures above described, and with their help lists of persons who could benefit thereby were compiled. Upon certification by the Department of State (in the case of holders of lapsed visas) and by the Department of Justice (in the case of relatives) of the eligibility of the persons listed, their names were transmitted to our missions abroad for action in accordance with our instructions of July 28 and August 24.

Practically no Jews, however, were evacuated from Hungary as the result of the foregoing. Under various pretexts, the German authorities refused to grant the Jews in Hungary permission to leave the country or to travel through German territory to adjoining neutral countries. Thus, under date of September 12, the International Red Cross reported:

.....at the present time emigration from Hungary towards Rumania and Bulgaria is absolutely impossible. On the other hand emigration towards the other neutral countries which are accessible, namely, Sweden and Switzerland, meets with very serious obstacles.

The Governments of those two countries are undoubtedly quite ready to receive a large number of Hungarian Jews but the difficulty for those emigrants is to reach those countries.

While the Hungarian Government declared that it was disposed to let the Jews emigrate to countries which are willing to receive them particularly Palestine on the other hand the German Government is little inclined to deal with requests for permission to leave Hungary or to cross Germany in transit.

The Germans similarly denied exit permits and transit visas to substantial groups of Hungarian Jews who had been granted Swedish and Spanish entry visas.

At first, the Germans explained that their friendship for the Arabs made it impossible to permit Jews to emigrate unless it was assured that they would not go to Palestine. Then they demanded assurances that

000229

all Jews permitted to emigrate would go to Britain or America. Finally, however, it became clear that the Germans were willing to let the Jews go only in exchange for such articles as trucks, tractors, machine tools, and similar material to support the German war effort. Gestapo agents were reported by our Minister at Bern on September 16 to have demanded \$25,000,000 in neutral countries for the purchase of war materials, as well as Allied permission for the export to Germany of the commodities which they might buy.

The attitude of the Hungarian authorities during the period after their July offer is not too clear. There were several reports from neutral, Vatican and Red Cross sources that deportations had stopped and that the International Red Cross was being afforded an opportunity to supervise the treatment being accorded to the remaining Jews. On the other hand, the Hungarian government attempted to gloss over and, indeed, to justify its persecution of the Jews. An illustration of this attitude is provided by the Hungarian reply to our inquiry transmitted by Switzerland to Hungary on June 26. The reply, cabled to us by the American minister at Bern under date of August 5, is in part as follows:

Military events on eastern front and approach of Soviet Army to Hungarian frontier made it necessary fully to mobilize all military material and moral forces of country for defense of nation's existence. This also meant elimination of everything that would undermine or diminish the country's resisting power. As defeatist propaganda and agitation of Jews--as in 1918--became more and more perceptible in this decisive phase of the war and in order to prevent repetition of tragic events of 1918-1919 government was obliged to eliminate on increased scale influence of Jews. They were consequently separated from rest of population and put to more useful work--either in country itself or abroad. In so doing Government and its functionaries did not fail to consider laws of humanity and justice. If individual cases of injustice occurred they were always due to sporadic [apparent omission in the cable] of some subordinate organs which in each case responsible.

000230

Numerous Jews were placed at the disposal of German Government as workers as was case for years for tens of thousands of workers of Hungarian nationality and Christian faith.

Our minister at Bern was instructed on August 19 to request the Swiss Foreign Office to convey the following reply:

With....reference to Hungarian communication....the Government of the United States notes the explanation contained in said communication regarding Jews deported from Hungary to the effect that they have been "placed at disposal of German Government as workers as was case for years for tens of thousands of workers of Hungarian nationality and Christian faith."

In view of the policy of the German Government with regard to Jews, which, the U. S. Government assumes is well-known to Hungarian Government, the Government of the United States would appreciate a statement of such measures which have been taken and are being taken by Hungarian authorities to insure humane treatment of Jews placed at Germany's disposal and to safeguard them against starvation and other forms of persecution.

The Hungarian authorities will readily perceive that unless such measures are taken with respect to all Jews "placed at disposal of German Government" the explanation offered would appear to be at utter variance with the facts and any cases of abuse will be imputed to those Hungarian authorities responsible for placing such Jews at Germany's disposal.

Prompt response to the inquiry herein made is being awaited by the Government of the United States with extraordinary interest.

On August 23 the following additional instruction was cabled to Bern:

Please request the Swiss Foreign Office to inform Hungarian authorities that although this Government has taken note of the communication....it does not accept the reasoning therein contained and reserves the right to return at a later date to the purported facts therein related. Hungarian authorities should further be informed that the limited assurances contained in such communication serve only to prompt a reiteration of this Government's warning that all those who share in the responsibility for the persecution of Jews and other minorities will be brought to justice. Hungarian authorities should also be informed

000231

that it is the Government's strong view that the deportation of any category of Jews comes within the foregoing and that permission freely to emigrate and Red Cross supervision of treatment and living conditions must as a minimum be extended to all categories of Jews.

On September 6, both messages were conveyed to the Hungarian Government by the Swiss Minister at Budapest.

At the same time, it came to the knowledge of the Board that in a note to the Swedish Foreign Office, the Hungarian legation in Stockholm stated that

It was further ordered that future deportees for labor service will have right of supervision by Hungarian Red Cross representatives in order to avoid further charges of brutality.

Taking advantage of this opening, the following instruction was cabled on August 19 to the American minister at Bern:

In view of issue involved, i.e. possible extermination of 400,000 Jews already said to have been deported, please suggest to Intercross the urgency of contacting Hungarian authorities and Hungarian Red Cross with a view to establishing immediate supervision of Red Cross over all camps to which Jews from Hungary have been deported in the past as well.

According to a report from the American legation at Bern dated September 15, as many as 360,000 Jews had been deported from Hungary. These were admitted by the Gestapo to have been exterminated. 160,000 Hungarian Jews had been put at forced labor in German-controlled territory outside Hungary. These are presumably alive. 200,000 Jews remained in Hungary, principally in the new Budapest ghettos.

There are indications that the Jews who have not yet been deported from Hungary have of late found themselves in a somewhat better

000232

position, due, perhaps, to the combined pressure of this Government and its Allies, of neutral governments, of the Vatican, and of the necessity of utilizing all available manpower for the defense of Hungary against the United Nations' advance. On September 25, the Apostolic Delegate in Washington wrote to the Board:

I have been just informed by the Holy See that according to a report of the Apostolic Nuncio in Budapest the situation among the Jewish people of Hungary is now much less acute. This is attributed to the fact that the officials responsible for the atrocities previously committed have now been eliminated from power.

However, beginning in the middle of September renewed reports of a disquieting nature began to arrive regarding the situation in Hungary. Cables from the legation at Bern, dated September 15 and September 28, advised us that Hungarian authorities were preparing to remove the bulk of the Jews from Budapest to camps in rural areas. It was hinted from Hungarian sources that in such camps the Jews would be more immune to sudden German mass-extirmination moves than if they stayed in the capital. Thus on September 15, the legation at Bern reported:

There follows a summary of the material portion of the Swiss note of September 13 which states that report from the Swiss Legation in Budapest indicates that it has followed the development of the situation of Budapest Jews.

It is currently established that the Hungarian Government, under German pressure, has decided on transfer of Jewish residents of Budapest to Hungarian provinces and that this is to occur in the immediate future.

After assembly Jews of both sexes from 14 to 70 years of age must be incorporated in the Hungarian labor service while persons above and below these age limits must be concentrated in provincial camps.

000233

It seems that the Hungarian Government is to O.K. these measures to protect Jews against whom the German Government for its part, without consulting Hungarian authorities, would otherwise have taken measures.

Later the same day, the legation reported:

.....during the past fortnight we have received reports..... that the Government of Hungary is planning to take the dispositions given below with respect to about 200,000 Jewish individuals remaining in Hungary, in Budapest mainly.

Every physically able bodied man and woman will be placed in compulsory work in agriculture and industry in various parts of the nation in the interests of national defense.

As early as August 24, preparations were being made to establish two large camps having a combined capacity of 120,000 individuals for all Jews from Budapest who were not suited for work from a physical standpoint.

On the other hand, there was suspicion that there was no manpower or material to build and equip such camps, and that the move was merely intended to get the Jews away from the eyes of neutral observers in the capital and to isolate them in rural camps where they could easily be killed or left to die. Consequently, under date of October 6 our Minister at Bern was instructed to request the Swiss to deliver the following message to appropriate Hungarian authorities:

The Government of the United States has learned of the plan of Hungarian authorities to remove the Jews still remaining in Budapest to putative work camps in the provinces. In view of the fate of Jews who were removed in previous months from other cities to similar camps, and in view of the approach of winter, the Government of the United States has good reason to regard the present plan as a further measure of mass extermination, for mass extermination may be accomplished either by the methods employed at camps of final destination in Poland, or by subjecting large numbers of people to under-nourishment, hard physical labor and unhygienic

000234

living conditions in improvised camps. Consequently, the United States Government considers it appropriate to remind Hungarian authorities of its determination, as expressed by the President of the United States on March 24, that "none who participate in these acts of savagery shall go unpunished..... All who share the guilt shall share the punishment." This determination was publicly reaffirmed on May 31 and June 28 by members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee, respectively.

The Government of the United States, however, recognizes the possibility that the present plan may in fact have been evolved to achieve genuine humanitarian ends as has been claimed by various Hungarian authorities. To the extent that the plan, if put in operation, may achieve such ends, the Government of the United States will, of course, recognize the validity of such claims. On the other hand, should the removal of the Jews from Budapest to provincial camps be but a prelude to their further removal to extermination centers or otherwise result in their deaths, Hungarian authorities are fully apprised of the attitude of the people and Government of the United States.

Despite the unwillingness of the German authorities to permit emigration from Hungary, the Board continued to the last its efforts in this direction. Thus, upon learning that the Germans <sup>had</sup> ~~have~~ given some vague indication that they might permit the emigration of about 2000 Jews from Hungary, the Board, on September 30, sent a cable to our legation in Bern, stating:

With regard to your suggestion that perhaps efforts could be made to facilitate the emigration of children and others who do not have Palestine certificates, your attention is called to the fact that the Legation in Bern already has broad authority to grant visas for entry into the United States.

Particular reference is made to...../previous communications/ which made available approximately 4,000 American visas for children in Hungary;.....which made special provisions in favor of persons to whom American immigration visas

000235

were issued or authorized after July 1, 1941; and..... making special provisions in favor of close relatives of American citizens and alien residents in the United States.....

You were requested to bring the foregoing arrangements to the attention of the Swiss Government and the International Red Cross, and through them, to the attention of the German and Hungarian authorities in an effort to effect the evacuation from Hungary of as many as possible of the refugees for whom arrangements have thus been made. We assume that you have done everything possible to execute these instructions, and if anything further can be done in this regard, we are sure that you will proceed to do so under the already existing authorizations. You will note that the authorizations above referred to are applicable to substantially more than the 2,000 refugees referred to in ...../previous communication/.

Other, less conventional methods of rescue were also followed up to the last. Thus, upon learning the names of some persons in Hungary who might be able to assist in the temporary hiding of Jews in that country, these names were cabled on October 2 to our minister in a neutral capital, who had contacts with a member of a neutral legation in Budapest, with the following instruction:

Please request.....if feasible, to ascertain whether they have any programs which he can facilitate. If they need any funds for any projects which give any reasonable promise of success, you may, in your discretion, make funds available to them. If their requirements for any such projects exceed the amount you have available for such purposes, please advise the Board.

LSLesser: BAKzin:dmc 10/9/44

000236

SUMMARY OF STEPS TAKEN BY WAR REFUGEE BOARD  
WITH RESPECT TO THE JEWS OF HUNGARY

Prior to Germany's military occupation of Hungary on March 19, 1944, and the simultaneous reconstitution of the Hungarian Government as a Nazi puppet, Hungary was the last remaining refuge for Jews in Axis Europe. Although anti-Jewish laws had been on the Hungarian statute-books since as early as 1938, their enforcement was haphazard and the condition of the Jews in Hungary was such as to invite the clandestine immigration of tens of thousands of Jews from Poland, Slovakia and Rumania. These were cared for by the native Jewish population who tried to see to it that no large numbers of newcomers congregated in any one place. However that may be the movement was so large that the conclusion is inescapable that it was known to and connived at by the Hungarian authorities. There were, however, lapses in the Hungarian Government's passive attitude. Thus, during 1941 it is reported that a substantial number of Jews from Poland and Hungarian-born Jews of Polish origin but of uncertain nationality were in part deported to Poland and in part detained in concentration camps. In December, 1943, the Germans indicated their desire that Hungary adopt a stricter anti-Jewish policy and by February unconfirmed rumors were abroad that Hungary was deporting foreign Jews and closing its borders to refugees from Poland and elsewhere. At this juncture the Board stepped in.

On March 7 the Legations at Bern and Lisbon were instructed to communicate, through channels known to be available to them, this Government's disapproval of such conduct and to remind them of the position of this Government as indicated by the President in the Executive Order setting up the War Refugee Board. We also urged them to permit the free exit of refugees to neutral territories.

On March 11 we were advised by our Minister at Lisbon that this message had been delivered to the appropriate Hungarian authorities. A similar reply was received from Minister Harrison at Bern.

Immediately upon the German occupation of Hungary with its indication of increased brutality to Jews and other minorities in that country, the programs of the War Refugee Board were geared to the urgency of the situation and our efforts have been unstinting to forestall deportations and executions and to rescue as many as possible of these victims. Every suggestion, from private as well as public sources, has been carefully analyzed and studied by the Board

000237

and every possible project to save these people has been vigorously pursued. The full power of the Board has been utilized with respect to the Hungarian situation in the effort to carry out this Government's determined policy to save these Nazi-oppressed peoples.

In an attempt to get the facts of the Hungarian situation, urgent cables were despatched to our missions in the neutral countries as well as to the Vatican requesting detailed information on the treatment of Jews in Hungary. We also urged the Pope to instruct the Catholic hierarchy in Hungary to lend every assistance. A favorable response was received on April 12th.

#### Efforts to Increase Protection to Jews of Hungary

With the receipt of reports that the Germans with the eager assistance of the puppet Hungarian Government were pursuing a program similar to those already undertaken in Poland and elsewhere, we commenced a series of measures designed to obtain some measure of protection for these people in Hungary. We instructed our representatives in the neutral countries to request the Governments to which they are accredited to increase to the largest possible extent the number of their diplomatic and consular personnel in Hungary in the hope that such representatives would use all means available to persuade individuals and officials in Hungary to desist in the persecution of Jews. Turkey, Portugal, Spain and Switzerland did not respond favorably to this appeal. This was undoubtedly due to the fact that this Government unbeknownst to the Board had previously requested such governments to refuse to recognize the new Hungarian puppet government which gave such governments a basis for not complying with this request.

Sweden, in view of the humanitarian considerations, agreed to arrange for extra diplomatic personnel in Hungary. At about the same time the American Legation in Stockholm advised us that a prominent Swedish businessman had agreed to take a trip to Hungary and to investigate conditions and take such action as might be possible. The Legation asked for such suggestions as we might be able to give the businessman. Shortly thereafter our Stockholm Legation advised us that arrangements had been made with the Swedish Government for it to designate this businessman (Mr. Raoul Wallenberg) as its special attache in Budapest. In this connection, the Swedish Government stated that they did not contemplate any difficulty in getting Hungary to accept Wallenberg as special attache because the Swedes were prepared to refuse to receive

000238

the new Hungarian charge d'affaires if Wallenberg was not permitted to go to Hungary.

On March 27th we urged the International Red Cross to send effective representation into Hungary in order to protect the well-being of the groups in that country facing persecution. While the reaction to this request was unfavorable at first, upon our repeated urging the International Red Cross now appears to be attempting to arrange for additional personnel in Hungary and they are cooperating with our representative in Switzerland in his efforts to help the Jews of Hungary.

At the urgent request of the Board, a cable was sent to the Vatican on May 26th in the name of the Government of the United States calling the attention of the Holy See to the reports of persecution in Hungary and calling upon the Pope to express himself on the subject to the authorities and people of Hungary personally by radio and through the clergy in Hungary. The cable also urged that His Holiness might find it possible to remind the people of Hungary of the spiritual consequences of the acts being perpetrated in Hungary and that the Vatican send extra representation into Hungary. The Apostolic Delegate has just advised us that on June 25th the Pope addressed a personal appeal to Regent Horthy to do everything possible in favor of these unfortunate persons suffering because of their race or nationality. Horthy responded that he would do everything in his power to cause the demands of humanitarian and Christian principles to prevail. In addition, the Apostolic Delegate advised that the Apostolic Nunciature in Budapest has been carrying on intense activity in behalf of the non-Aryan Hungarians and in every way is seeking to aid and protect them.

At the urgent request of the Board, Minister Harrison was asked to request the Swiss Government to address an inquiry in the name of the United States Government to the appropriate Hungarian authorities asking them to state their intentions with respect to the future treatment to be accorded Jews and to remind such authorities of the grave view this Government takes concerning the persecution of Jews and other minorities. The note containing this message was delivered to the Hungarian Foreign Office by the Swiss on June 27th. Under date of July 18th, our Legation in Bern was advised by the Swiss Foreign Office that, in answer to the foregoing note, the Hungarian Government informed the Swiss that authorization had been given by the Hungarians for the departure of all Jews from Hungary who hold entry permits for another country, including Palestine. (Our response to this message is related below.)

000239

Intensification of Psychological Warfare Program

In cooperation with OWI, arrangements have been made to beam messages continually to Hungary warning her people and officials to desist in persecuting the Jews and informing them of our determination to punish the perpetrators of such cruelties. OWI coverage has been very widespread from overseas as well as from the United States. The British and Russian Governments were immediately urged to cooperate in this psychological program by increased broadcasts to the Satellites.

The President's statement of March 24th on Nazi atrocities was repeatedly used in broadcasts from this country. Through our efforts the members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee signed a strong statement condemning the brutal treatment of Jews in Hungary and the House Foreign Affairs Committee followed suit by unanimously approving a resolution condemning the German persecution of minorities and, in particular, the barbarous acts being pursued in Hungary. These two statements have been used over and over again in OWI programs to occupied Europe. Through War Refugee Board representatives abroad the texts of these statements were made available to the press and radio of neutral countries. A statement decrying the Nazi atrocities signed by Governor Alfred E. Smith and 70 other prominent American Christians has been given similar coverage throughout the world.

Recently, at our request, Archbishop Spellman of New York, in an unprecedented move, issued a stirring spiritual appeal to the people of Hungary to desist in submitting to the lust and tyranny of the Nazi extermination program. This statement has been hailed by people all over the world and has been radioed repeatedly to Hungary, and the other satellite countries from the United States and the neutral countries. Pamphlets containing the Archbishop's statement and the other statements mentioned above have been dropped by planes over Hungary in an attempt to reach as many people as possible.

Operations from Sweden

The Swedish Foreign Office has cooperated closely with our Stockholm representative, Iver C. Olsen, and has made available to him various detailed official reports received from Swedish diplomatic personnel in Hungary. In its efforts to help the Hungarian Jews, the Swedish Government has granted passport visas or letters of protection to Jews in Hungary who have family or business ties with Sweden.

The Swedish Foreign Office has gone so far as to state that Wallenberg, their special attache in Budapest, was available for any work the War Refugee Board might wish to assign

000240

to him. We, of course, cabled that, while Wallenberg could not act as the Board's representative nor in its name, he was free to communicate with our representative in Stockholm and to lay before him any specific proposals to aid the Jews of Hungary. Olsen has been instructed to lend every assistance to the Wallenberg mission. In order to assist Wallenberg to get relief and rescue operations under way in Hungary, we have sent to Olsen for Wallenberg a detailed program suggesting names of persons in Hungary who might be helpful in arranging rescues and we have indicated various escape routes which might be available. To the best of our ability, we have taken full advantage of Wallenberg's presence in Budapest. It has just been reported through Olsen that the first thing Wallenberg did was to engage a 16 room office of whose extraterritoriality he took advantage by granting refuge there to a number of Hungarian rabbis and intellectual leaders.

We have arranged for funds to be sent to Olsen to be used expressly for rescue operations from Hungary and we informed him of our willingness and eagerness to discuss any suggestion or program designed to help the persecuted people of Hungary.

#### Operations from Switzerland

Board representative McClelland has received instructions similar to those sent to Olsen and he has been requested to coordinate the activities of American organizations in Switzerland in an effort to ensure the most effective rescue operations for Hungarian Jews. Names of individuals in Hungary and Switzerland who may be of assistance have been sent to him. One of such persons in Switzerland has actually gone to Hungary on a mission for McClelland.

In response to McClelland's urgent request for funds to finance the rescue of Nazi victims from Hungary, the Board arranged for extra remittances of \$1,125,000 of private funds, to Switzerland for such operations. Through a special appeal to the Swiss Minister, arrangements were made for the Swiss authorities to make the necessary Swiss francs available for these activities.

McClelland has recently reported that the Czechoslovak resistance movement is willing to assist in the rescue of Jews from Hungary by bringing them to Slovakia to be enrolled in the Slovak Masquis or to be hidden in Slovakia, but that funds were needed for such a program. After discussing the matter with the Czechoslovak Minister in Geneva, McClelland, from a special War Refugee Board fund, paid the Swiss franc equivalent

of \$10,000 to the account of the Czech resistance movement in Switzerland to be used for this program.

McClelland has reported that numerous other operations are now under way and that all reports and appeals from the Jews of Hungary are given careful consideration in an attempt to leave no stone unturned.

Attempts to Increase Flow of Refugees from the Balkans Through Yugoslavia and Turkey

With the tragic turn of events in Hungary, the Board intensified its efforts to develop a flow of refugees in two general directions. It has, in the first place, been devoting itself to opening channels through Yugoslavia and Italy since, on April 29th, Tito agreed to lend assistance in rescuing Hungarian Jews and to aid their escape to join his army or to be evacuated whenever possible. Funds have been sent in order to facilitate the rescue operations across the Adriatic and it is hoped that some refugees in Hungary will seep through this avenue of escape. In the second place, the Board has been involved in developing plans for substantial rescue operations through Rumania and thence by sea to Turkey and Palestine. The latter plan has been the more productive. The Rumanian authorities have set up a new bureau to facilitate emigration and five small ships have been made available for rescue work from Constanza to Turkey. One of these ships has already landed in Turkey with 761 refugees including several hundred orphan children. As a result of Ambassador Steinhardt's efforts, transportation across Turkey has been facilitated. The Board is making every effort to coordinate the activities of private agencies, to send increased remittances to Turkey, and to take every other possible step to maintain and increase this flow.

Military Operations

As the situation in Hungary has become increasingly desperate, the Board has received several proposals that certain military operations might take place with the possible purpose of forestalling or hindering German extermination operations. One of these was a suggestion that the railways leading from the points of deportation to the camps be bombed. This particular suggestion was discussed with Assistant Secretary of War McCloy. After careful consideration of the matter, the War Department ruled that the suggested air operation was impracticable.

000242

The Board has also received a variety of other suggestions in this category. It has been suggested that the concentration and extermination centers be bombed in order that in the resultant confusion some of the unfortunate people might be able to escape and hide. It has also been suggested that weapons be dropped by parachute simultaneously with such bombing. Finally, it has been proposed that some parachute troops be dropped to bring about disorganization and escape of the unfortunate people.

Arrangements are under way for the examination of these proposals by the competent military authorities.

Consideration of German-Inspired Proposals to Save the Jews of Hungary

Various large-scale and somewhat fantastic proposals are now being received through neutral countries suggesting certain concessions by the Allied Governments in return for the Germans' ceasing to kill and deport the Jews of Hungary. Most, if not all, of these propositions are of dubious reliability. Nevertheless, the policy which we are following is to avoid the outright rejection of any one of these in the hope that some valid and acceptable proposal might be received.

Hungarian Responsiveness to Our Inquiries and the Resulting Offers

As stated above, we were informed by our Legation in Switzerland that on July 18th the Hungarian Government, in answer to the American note delivered on June 27th, had authorized the departure of all Jews from Hungary who hold entry permits for other countries, including Palestine. Through the International Red Cross and our Embassy in Lisbon we were advised that deportations from Hungary had ceased, that the International Red Cross would be permitted to furnish relief to Jews in Hungary and that all Jewish children under 10 holding visas to other countries would be permitted to leave Hungary.

We immediately cabled our representatives in the neutral countries to request such governments, either in collaboration with their British colleagues or alone, to advise the Hungarian Government that such neutral governments would receive all Jews released from Hungary. We assured such countries that refugees received by them would be afforded havens in United Nations territory as promptly as military considerations permit, and that in the meantime the United States would undertake to make arrangements for their support and maintenance in the neutral countries. We also asked our representative in Bern to consider the advisability of requesting Rumania (through special channels available to him) to admit Jews from Hungary

000243

and to afford them refuge in southeastern Rumania until evacuation can be effected. We asked our representative in Ankara to request the Turkish Government to admit all persons in enemy territory holding Palestine certificates and to advise enemy governments of its willingness to do so.

At the same time, in order to afford protection to persons in enemy controlled areas to whom American visas were issued on or after July 1, 1941, and who, by reason of transportation difficulties had been unable to make effective use of such visas, instructions were issued to American consular officers in the neutral countries to issue under certain necessary conditions new American immigration visas to any such persons who arrived from enemy territory. It was also requested that such action on our part be immediately conveyed by the Swiss Government to the enemy governments.

With respect to children, we immediately undertook to make arrangements for the utilization for children from Hungary of some 5,000 United States visas which had been authorized previously for refugee children arriving in Switzerland, Spain and Portugal from France.

Through the International Red Cross, the Horthy government has recently indicated to the governments of the United States and Great Britain that it will permit the emigration of certain categories of Jews. The proposal apparently is the result of the various warnings and appeals that have been addressed to the Hungarian authorities. Since it is couched in terms which in effect say "we will permit Jews to leave Hungary if the United States and Great Britain will take care of them," it is regarded as a direct challenge to the two governments.

We propose to accept the challenge and have submitted our views to the British who we hope will agree to join us in a reply to the International Red Cross on August 7th, in which we will ask the International Red Cross to advise the Hungarian Government that we will undertake to care for all Jews who are permitted to leave Hungary and who reach neutral or United Nations territory, and to find havens of refuge for them.

We believe that our acceptance of the proposal should be so clear and unequivocal that in the eyes of the Hungarians and of the world our action will be regarded as a genuine expression of our willingness to save the Jews of Hungary.

000244