

Projects AND Documents, Volume II
(Folder 2 of 4)

000233

Evac. from France (JLC)

000034

PROGRAMS WITH RESPECT TO RELIEF AND RESCUE OF REFUGEES: EVACUATION TO
AND THROUGH SPAIN (AND PORTUGAL)

EVACUATIONS FROM FRANCE (JLC)

Upon the recommendation of the Board, a license was issued on April 12 to the Jewish Labor Committee permitting its representative in Portugal to carry on relief and evacuation operations in enemy territory (see attachment #2 to VII C 7, Cooperation with the Treasury Department). An initial remittance of \$10,000 was authorized to begin operations designed to rescue persecuted persons from France.

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-79
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

000035

VIC:
TURKEY

000836

VI C

EVACUATION TO AND THROUGH TURKEY

000837

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ VI C
PROGRAMS WITH RESPECT TO RELIEF AND RESCUE OF REFUGEES: EVACUATION TO AND THROUGH TURKEY

Following the appointment of Hirschmann as Special Representative of the Board in Turkey (Cable No. 120 dated February 12; see III A, Appointment of Special Representatives, and attachment #1 thereto), a cable was sent to Ambassador Steinhardt requesting him to obtain from the Turkish Government effective measures to encourage the entry of more refugees by relaxing border and other controls, thereby facilitating the entry of refugees from Bulgaria and Rumania, and to make an announcement that the entry of refugees into Turkey is permitted. It was indicated that the War Refugee Board would take all measures, financial and otherwise, to aid in the evacuation to Turkey, to maintain refugees in Turkey, and to arrange for their removal to other places, if such action became desirable. It was suggested that Steinhardt might wish to discuss the possibility of setting up camps in Turkey. Since one of the basic difficulties of evacuation is transportation, Steinhardt was asked to advise the Board of any measures that can be taken by the United States to see that shipping is available (Cable No. 146 dated February 25; see attachment #1).

Before this message reached Steinhardt, a cable was received from Hirschmann pointing out the desperate need for a boat to evacuate refugees from Constanza to Istanbul. He stated that a 3,700-ton vessel, the "S.S. Vatan" could be chartered to bring out to Istanbul 800 to 1,000 refugees in dire danger of starvation and death. The International Red Cross had agreed to procure safe conduct for this ship from all belligerent powers concerned. However, since the Turkish Government fully controls all private shipping, it had refused to permit the owners to enter into a charter agreement unless the Turkish Government were assured that the vessel, if lost, would be replaced with one of comparable tonnage (Cable No. 282 dated February 18; see attachment #2). The same day that this cable was received, the matter was discussed with Mr. Stettinius, who called Admiral Land of the War Shipping Administration. A memorandum on the matter dated February 23 (see attachment #3) was transmitted to Admiral Land, and the Board subsequently obtained a letter (see attachment #4) from WSA committing the United States to replace the "S.S. Vatan" if sunk, subject to clearance by Lend Lease. The necessary clearance from Lend Lease was obtained, and a cable was dispatched to Hirschmann indicating that he could give the Turkish Government the assurance it had requested with respect to the replacement of the "S.S. Vatan" (Cable No. 144 dated February 25; see attachment #5).

(cont.)

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-75
By R. H. Parks: Data SEP 28 1972

000038

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

IV C

A communication received from Hirschmann stated that he had talked with the Russian Ambassador in Turkey concerning Russia's help in breaking the Bulgarian bottleneck. The Russian Ambassador agreed to discuss the problem with the Bulgarian Ambassador in Turkey. In connection with the problem of getting Russian support for the Board's request to the Turks for permission to use a ship for evacuating refugees, the Russian Ambassador suggested to Hirschmann that a cable be sent from Washington to Harriman asking him to take up the matter in Moscow (Cable No. 314 dated February 22; see attachment #6). This was subsequently done (Cable No. 554 dated March 11; (see attachment #1 to IV C, Cooperation with Russia).

Hirschmann also advised the Board, shortly after his arrival in Turkey, of his efforts to obtain a Swedish ship for evacuation purposes and urged the Board to put emphasis in this direction (Cable No. 299 dated February 19; see attachment #7). Subsequent efforts were made by Hirschmann and the Board to induce the Swedish Government to make a vessel available for evacuation work (in this connection see Cable No. 306 dated February 21 comprising attachment #8; memorandum dated February 24 to the Minister of Sweden to the U. S., comprising attachment #9; Cable No. 148 dated February 26 comprising attachment #10; and Cable No. 784 dated March 7 comprising attachment #11). Such efforts, however, proved unsuccessful as indicated in Press Release No. 5 dated March 28 (see attachment #12).

On February 26 the Board transmitted to Hirschmann a copy of the British letter to the State Department dated September 9, 1943, giving the British position with respect to Palestine certificates for refugees who escape to Turkey (see attachment #3 to IV C -1b), Cooperation with Great Britain.

Hirschmann advised the Board on February 26 that arrangements had been made with the Turkish Ambassador for the rail transport of Jewish refugee children from Bulgaria to Palestine via Turkey at the rate of 150 every ten days, thus breaking the land transport bottleneck which had theretofore existed (Cable No. 344 dated February 26; see attachment #13).

On March 9 Admiral Land ordered Myron Black, Field Director of the War Shipping Administration, from Cairo to Ankara to assist Hirschmann with the Black Sea shipping problem (Cable No. 180 dated March 9; see attachment #14). In a cable from Steinhardt dated March 3 it was reported that negotiations had begun for the purchase of the "S.S. Necat" at

(cont.)

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

200239

a cost of approximately \$400,000, the vessel to be donated to the Turkish Red Crescent after evacuating 5,000 Jewish refugee children from Rumania to Palestine. He estimated that the purchase price of this vessel would be approximately the same as transporting 5,000 children by a vessel under charter and that by donating the vessel to the Turkish Red Crescent the latter might be persuaded to evacuate additional refugees after the 5,000 children had been evacuated (Cable No. 380 dated March 3; see attachment #4 to IV D -2, Cooperation with Turkey). This proposal was discussed with representatives of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and Hirschmann was advised that if the "S.S. Necat" could be purchased for \$400,000 on terms satisfactory to him and Steinhardt, the necessary funds would be forthcoming (Cable No. 214 dated March 17; see attachment #15).

Hirschmann advised the Board on March 4 that the first group of Jewish children evacuated from Bulgaria had arrived in Istanbul en route to Palestine. He felt this was the beginning of a continuous movement of children; that the Turkish authorities had issued instructions for 140 children with 10 adults to pass from Rumania through Turkey every ten days. Hirschmann further reported that 90 other refugees had recently reached Turkey from Bulgaria en route to Palestine and that 74 had arrived from Greece. Hirschmann also advised of the efforts he was making to obtain the use of a Turkish ship for evacuation work (Cable No. 388 dated March 4; see attachment #16).

Hirschmann advised the Board on March 15 that the Turkish Government is making available the "S.S. Tari," a 4,000-ton passenger vessel having a capacity of 1,500 persons, apparently in lieu of the "S.S. Vatan," which was a cargo vessel, to evacuate refugees from Constanza to Istanbul. However, the Turkish Government, he said, would not permit the vessel to continue with this evacuation work after the completion of the first trip unless by that date this Government had made a substitute vessel available to the Turks (see Cable No. 455 dated March 15 comprising attachment #17 and Cable No. 472 dated March 16 comprising attachment #18). Thereafter Hirschmann went to Istanbul regarding the charter of the vessel and informed the Board that the U. S. Naval Attache, Black of the War Shipping Administration, the British Naval Attache, and he had agreed that the "S.S. Tari" is highly desirable for evacuation purposes and that it will sail for Constanza as soon as supplies have been loaded, charter price agreed upon, safe-conduct obtained, and insurance placed. Hirschmann reported that the probable cost would be about \$4,000 per day exclusive of insurance. The length of the voyage was estimated at from thirty to thirty-six days. Hirschmann requested authority to enter into a charter party on behalf of the Board with the

(cont.)

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

000040

Turkish State Steamship Lines for the charter of the "S.S. Tari" for one voyage at not more than \$4,000 per day. He also estimated that the premiums for insurance on the vessel would amount to approximately \$80,000 if the insurance were placed in Turkey. Hirschmann also asked that this Government give the Turkish Government a guarantee of replacement in the event of the loss of the "S.S. Tari" similar to that given the Turks in the case of the "S.S. Vatan" (Cable No. 501 dated March 21 comprising attachment #19). The Board cabled Hirschmann authorizing him to enter into a charter party for the "S.S. Tari" at the price indicated and to place the insurance on the vessel in Turkey (Cable No. 250 dated March 24; see attachment #20).

The International Red Cross is attempting to obtain safe-conducts for the "S.S. Tari" from all belligerents except Russia. Safe-conduct from the latter has been requested through the Russian Ambassador in Ankara (Cable No. 472 dated March 16 comprising attachment #18). At Hirschmann's suggestion the Board cabled Harrison at Bern instructing him to ask the Swiss Government to support the International Red Cross request for safe-conduct (Cable No. 970 to Bern dated March 23).

Representatives of the Board discussed with the War Shipping Administration the matter of this Government's making a substitute vessel available to the Turks so that the "S.S. Tari" may make additional voyages to evacuate refugees after completion of its initial trip. The WSA cabled its representative in Turkey for further information and advised him that any recommendation made by him will receive sympathetic consideration even if practical difficulties are involved. WSA also cabled its representative in Algiers to ascertain if the French or Italians are willing to charter a vessel for this purpose or if there is any small freighter available in the Mediterranean which could be chartered to the Turks. However, WSA is of the opinion that the best solution of this problem would be to treat it as one of allocation and attempt to work out an arrangement with the Turks whereby an equivalent amount of space on an Allied vessel proceeding to the eastern Mediterranean would be made available for Turkish requirements in lieu of chartering a vessel to them. The Board has advised Hirschmann of these developments, pointing out to him the difficulties in the way of putting a vessel in the hands of the Turks by the date of the completion of the "Tari's" first voyage and suggesting to him that, if he could induce the Turks to accept an arrangement whereby equivalent space on an Allied vessel would be made available to them in lieu of a substitute ship, such an arrangement would be more feasible from a shipping standpoint (Cable No. 243 dated March 23; see attachment #21).

(cont.)

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Lettar. 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 20 1972

000241

CONFIDENTIAL

In connection with the projected voyage of the "S.S. Tari," the representative of the Jewish Agency in Ankara informed Hirschmann that it would be five or six weeks before a sufficient number of refugees at Constanza would be ready to embark despite his previous assurances that they would be ready to embark on ten days' notice (Cable No. 472 dated March 16, comprising attachment #18).

With respect to the proposed purchase of the "S. S. Necat" for donation to the Turkish Red Crescent, to be used for evacuation work, Hirschmann advised on March 15 that the Turkish Government deems it impossible to withdraw a ship in addition to the "Tari" from its small supply to be used for evacuation purposes. Hirschmann also advised that if this Government should donate a vessel to the Turkish Red Crescent, the Turks would be willing to have the Turkish Red Crescent operate it under the Turkish flag to evacuate refugees for the duration of the war, the vessel to become the property of the Turkish Red Crescent (Cable No. 458 dated March 15; see attachment #22).

The Board received a cable from Hirschmann dated March 27 in which he advised that the Turkish authorities have agreed to charter the "Tari" for 175,000 Turkish pounds (approximately \$97,200) for the contemplated evacuation voyage. Eight days are to be allowed for embarkation and debarkation under the arrangement, and a charge of approximately \$3,245 per day for each day in excess of eight will be made. Hirschmann has warned that delays in embarkation are probable and that the voyage can be completed within two months only under the most favorable circumstances. The representative in Turkey of the War Shipping Administration, who participated in all the negotiations for the "Tari," regards the price agreed upon as reasonable under existing conditions. The Turkish Government, Hirschmann has indicated, requires a guarantee that the "Tari" will be replaced in case of loss, by a comparable passenger vessel, and will not accept a guarantee of replacement covering a cargo vessel. In view of the fact that the "Tari" will be prepared to sail shortly, Hirschmann has stressed the necessity of expediting the German safe-conduct (Cable No. 547 dated March 27; see attachment #23). In connection with furnishing the Turkish Government with a substitute vessel for the "Tari" so that the latter may make more than one trip, a message was dispatched to Winant (Cable No. 2516 dated March 31) asking him to obtain British assistance in the attempt being made to obtain an Italian ship in the Mediterranean area, which might be chartered to the Turks. This assistance was subsequently promised by the British through their representative on the Mediterranean shipping board (MEDBO).

In a letter dated February 25 from the International Red Cross it was stated that three Bulgarian vessels, the "Bellacitta," the "Milka," and the "Maritza," were available to transfer refugees to Istanbul.

(cont.)

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

000842

The Board cabled Hirschmann concerning the use of these ships (Cable No. 230 dated March 22; see attachment #24). Hirschmann replied that he had taken no action with respect to the "Milka" and "Maritza" as the International Red Cross had objected to the use of these vessels upon the ground that they were unseaworthy. With respect to the "Bellacitta," he stated that efforts had been made to expedite her departure from Constanza which had been delayed for a reason he had been unable to ascertain (Cable No. 527 dated March 25; see attachment #25). Hirschmann later reported that he had been advised that the "Milka" would arrive in Istanbul on March 29 with some 250 Jewish refugees who had embarked at Constanza. Hirschmann assisted in arranging for the issuance of Palestine entry certificates and began efforts to arrange transportation for them through Turkey (Cable No. 549 dated March 28; see attachment #26). On March 29 Hirschmann advised that the Turkish authorities had indicated that they would refuse admittance to the refugees on the "Milka" inasmuch as they did not obtain Turkish visas before leaving Constanza (Cable No. 564 dated March 29; see attachment #27).

In connection with a report received by the Board that the administration of Transnistria was being turned over to the Germans by Rumania, Hirschmann was requested to ascertain whether the Germans had made such a demand and if so, to insist that Rumania resist it. Hirschmann subsequently advised the Board that, with the approval of Ambassador Steinhardt, he had conferred on this matter and on the general attitude of Rumania toward Jews and other minorities with the Rumanian Minister to Turkey. As a result of these conversations, the Rumanian Minister took the matter up with his government, and Hirschmann was advised that the Rumanian Government had pledged itself to facilitate in every possible manner the emigration of Jews and that it would transfer all Jews in Transnistria to Rumania proper.

Steinhardt subsequently reported the substance of a conversation between the Rumanian Minister to Turkey and the International Red Cross representative in Ankara late in March, in which the former advised that the Antonescu Government was still in power in Rumania, and that no noticeable political change had taken place. The Rumanian Minister stated that, although during the preceding few weeks transportation conditions had become very difficult, the Rumanian Government was doing everything possible for the Jews in that country; so long as the present Rumanian Government remains in power, it was averred that not a single Jew would be molested by that government. The Minister stated that as rapidly as transportation facilities permit, the Jews in Transnistria are being moved into Rumania proper, this report has been confirmed by Jewish refugees arriving in Turkey from Rumania (Cable No. 581 from Ankara dated March 30; see VI C - 1, Transfer of Jews from Transnistria to Turkey).

(cont.)

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

700843

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

- 7 -

The Board was also advised by Hirschmann that he conferred with the Bulgarian Minister to Turkey with regard to the treatment of minorities, especially Jews, in that country and that he had advised the Minister that Bulgaria would be well advised in its own interest to cease collaborating with the Nazi persecution program and to permit refugees to depart from its territory. At Hirschmann's suggestion the Bulgarian Minister agreed to send a message to his government recommending that the same treatment be accorded to Jews and to other minorities in Bulgaria as that received by Bulgarian citizens, that the deplorable conditions in which such minorities are living be immediately ameliorated, and that the Bulgarian Government take steps to authorize the granting of visas and to provide transport for all refugees who wish to leave for Palestine or Turkey (Cable No. 499 dated March 20; see attachment #28).

Through the persistent intervention of Hirschmann and Steinhardt with the Turkish Government, and with the help of representations made by the British Minister in Ankara, the 239 refugees who eventually arrived on the "S.S. Milka" were permitted to enter Turkey and rail transport was obtained to enable them to proceed to Palestine. (Cable No. 579 from Ankara dated March 30 comprising attachment #29; see also Cable No. 564 and 573 from Ankara dated March 29 and 30).

Meanwhile the "S.S. Bellacitta," which was said to be available to transport Jewish refugees from Mangalia to Istanbul, was held up by the failure to secure safe-conduct from Germany. Cables to the U. S. Legations at Bern and Stockholm were dispatched, asking that the Swiss and Swedish governments be asked to support, in their own names, the request of the International Red Cross for safe-conduct from the German Government.

In connection with continuing negotiations with the Turkish Government for use of a Turkish vessel, the Board was advised by Steinhardt that Black of the War Shipping Administration had expressed the opinion that the premium asked by local Turkish underwriters for war risk insurance on the "S.S. Tari" was outrageously high. In view of this Government's guarantee to replace the vessel, in the event of its loss, Black suggested that no war risk insurance be placed on the "Tari" or else that it be covered through WSA (Cable No. 590 from Ankara dated April 3). The Board accordingly advised Steinhardt that if the "Tari" is chartered to the Board, the war risk will be insured through WSA at a rate considerably less than that being asked in Turkey (Cable No. 306 to Ankara dated April 8).

At the suggestion of Steinhardt and Hirschmann, the representative of the International Red Cross in Ankara conferred with the German Ambassador von Papen in Ankara, who agreed to recommend to his government

(cont.)

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks, Date SEP 28 1972

200844

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

- 8 -

that the "Tari" be given safe-conduct and that the German Government exercise restraint in its treatment of Jews in Hungary (Cable No. 596 from Ankara dated April 4).

At the same time, the Governments of Switzerland and Sweden and the Holy See were all asked to support the request of the International Red Cross for German safe-conduct for the "Tari". Russian safe-conduct for the "Tari" was requested and obtained through Ambassador Harriman in Moscow (see Cable No. 644 from Ankara dated April 11; see also IV C - 2, Cooperation with Russia). Minister Harrison meanwhile reported from Bern that President Huber of the IRC in Geneva had indicated grave doubts as to whether the German Government would consent to the departure of Jewish refugees from any country under its influence or that it would grant safe-conduct for any ships engaging in such operations (Cable No. 2049 from Bern dated April 3; see attachment #30).

Although it was felt that the signing of the charter party for the "Tari" should be delayed as long as possible until more definite word with regard to German safe-conduct is obtained, the Board has authorized Steinhardt to use his own judgment in this matter and to charter the ship when and if he deems it advisable. (See Cable No. 324 to Ankara dated April 13.)

In another message to the Board Steinhardt asked that \$160,000 be placed at his disposal in connection with the signing of the charter party for the "Tari" (Cable No. 594 from Ankara dated April 4; see attachment #31). The Board in turn advised Steinhardt that this had been done (Cable No. 324 to Ankara dated April 13; see attachment #32).

A comprehensive report on the refugee situation as it exists in Turkey and the Balkans was forwarded to the Board by Hirschmann before his departure from Ankara late in March. A detailed summary of observations, conclusions, and recommendations was also submitted (enclosures to Dispatch No. 596 from Ankara dated March 13). Steinhardt subsequently reported that the Turkish Government has now put into effect a plan worked out before Hirschmann's departure, for the evacuation of refugees from the Balkans by rail via Turkey (Cable No. 643 dated April 10; see attachment #5 to IV D - 2, Cooperation with Turkey).

In an effort to help compensate for the shortage of Turkish shipping facilities that would result from use of a Turkish vessel in evacuation operations, Ambassador Winant in London was asked to communicate with the appropriate British officials as soon as possible with a view to their asking Britain's representative on the Mediterranean shipping board (MEDBO) to assist in efforts to arrange for the possible charter of an Italian vessel to the Turks (see attachment #8 to IV C - 1 a, Cooperation with Great Britain).

(cont.)

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

1000245

While negotiations for Turkish shipping have received the greatest emphasis, alternative and supplemental facilities are also being explored. A communication from Steinhardt in this connection indicated that a member of the Swedish Legation at Ankara had expressed the belief that a Swedish vessel, the "S. S. Bardalanda," engaged in the Greek relief program in the eastern Mediterranean, might be made available to transfer refugees from Constanza to Haifa. Steinhardt stated that such a ship could be used in addition to the "Tari" and asked that the Swedish Government be approached on the matter (Cable No. 642 from Ankara dated April 10).

Since the Board's previous efforts to obtain the diversion of Swedish vessels engaged in Greek relief had been opposed by the British, the Board cabled Ambassador Winant in London, requesting that he take up with the British Government the possibility of using the "Bardalanda." Informal approval of the use of a Swedish vessel has now been obtained from the British; when this approval becomes official Winant is to take the matter up with the Swedish Ambassador in London; the Swedish Government is also to be asked to request a German safe-conduct for the ship involved (Cable No. 3005 and 3434 to London dated April 15 and 28; see IV C - 1 a, Cooperation with Great Britain).

Since there apparently are a sufficiently large number of refugees to justify the use of ships in addition to the "Tari" and since the obtaining of a German safe-conduct for the "Tari" is uncertain, Steinhardt has asked that the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee representative at Lisbon attempt to conclude negotiations for a Portuguese vessel (Cable No. 626 from Ankara dated April 8). The JDC has cabled its Lisbon representative to this effect, and the Board has asked Minister Norweb and Board Representative Dexter there to lend all possible assistance in this effort (Cable No. 1059 to Lisbon dated April 17; see IV D - 4, Cooperation with Portugal).

With respect to further "illegal" voyages by the "Milka" and "Maritza" -- that is, evacuations in which the proper maritime papers, Palestine immigration certificates, and Turkish entrance and transit visas are lacking, Steinhardt has indicated that if the number does not go beyond 500 refugees per month, he is reasonably sure that entry and transit can be arranged with the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs as each occasion arises, subject to the limited carrying capacity of the railroad to the Syrian frontier from Istanbul. Because of the recent substantial increase in the transit to Palestine from Istanbul of refugees arriving "legally," Steinhardt estimates that this 500 is the maximum number of refugees arriving illegally each month for whom rail transportation could be provided. (See Cable No. 713 from Ankara dated April 19; see also Cable No. 351 to Ankara dated April 19.)

(cont.)

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-73
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

In a cable to Ankara Steinhardt was advised that the Board has now obtained from the War Shipping Administration and from the Foreign Economic Administration authorization to commit this Government to the replacement of the "Tari," in the event of the loss of that ship in projected evacuation efforts, with a passenger vessel, as requested by the Turkish Government. In order to remove the one remaining obstacle, the granting of safe-conduct by the German Government, Steinhardt was asked to urge that both the International Red Cross representative in Ankara and the Apostolic Delegate from Istanbul arrange to see von Papen in person. Steinhardt was also being asked to advise the Board when the "Tari" is ready to depart, in order that war risk insurance may be placed here.

On April 7 the "S. S. Maritza" arrived at Istanbul from Constanza with 244 Jewish refugees. Again Turkish authorities were prevailed upon to permit these refugees to land and to furnish them with rail transportation to Palestine although, according to Steinhardt, only a few of them had Turkish visas and Palestine certificates (Cable No. 625 from Ankara dated April 8; see attachment #33).

Later in April Steinhardt reported the safe arrival in Istanbul of the "S. S. Bellacitta" with 152 Jewish refugees on board (Cable No. 746 from Ankara dated April 25; see attachment #34). The Board was also advised of the safe conclusion of the second voyage of the "S. S. Milka" with 272 refugees on board (Cable No. 1316 from Lisbon dated May 1). A total of 907 refugees were evacuated during the month of April from Constanza across the Black Sea to Turkey. All of the refugees have been permitted transit through Turkey to Palestine.

Another report from Steinhardt indicated that information has reached the International Red Cross representative in Ankara to the effect that if the projected destination of the "Tari" were changed from Haifa to Iskenderun (Alexandrette), a German safe-conduct for the ship might be granted. Inasmuch as such a change of destination would involve reshipping the refugees from Iskenderun, presumably on some United Nations' ship, Steinhardt advised the IRC representative that such a change would be agreeable only after all hope of securing a German safe-conduct to Haifa has been abandoned (Cable No. 725 from Ankara dated April 22).

The Board cabled Steinhardt that his action with respect to the proposed change of destination has its approval. For his information, however, the Board relayed information received through the JDC to the effect that the Turkish representative of the Jewish Agency can probably arrange for coastal schooners to convey refugees from Iskenderun on to Haifa, if the voyage of the "Tari" were to terminate at Iskenderun.

(cont.)

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
SEP 28 1972
By R. H. Parks Date _____

000847

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

VI C

- 11 -

Steinhardt was asked to explore this possibility, since expediting the German safe-conduct may become a paramount issue (Cable No. 377 to Ankara dated April 27; see attachment #35).

In connection with pressing for the German safe-conduct to Haifa, it was reported that the IRC representative had conferred with von Papen on three occasions; the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs also personally twice requested such a safe-conduct. Steinhardt indicated that he was satisfied that von Papen had in turn been pressing for the safe-conduct from his government (Cable No. 726 from Ankara dated April 22).

As a result of a talk with the Apostolic Delegate in Ankara Steinhardt later indicated that he has been assured that the Vatican will be urged to make every effort to obtain German safe-conduct for the "S.S. Tari" (Cable No. 758 from Ankara dated April 26).

According to another report from Steinhardt, German Ambassador von Papen in Ankara promised the International Red Cross representative there that he would send a fourth telegram to Berlin requesting that safe-conduct be granted for the "Tari". Von Papen is also reported to have stated that he asked the German Minister in Ankara to take up the matter personally, immediately upon his expected return to Germany (Cable No. 744 from Ankara dated April 24).

In connection with the possibility that the Germans might grant safe-conduct to the "Tari" more quickly if its voyage terminated at a Turkish port instead of Haifa, the Board has suggested to Steinhardt that the "Tari" could be routed to Istanbul and the refugees could then remain on the boat until transported by rail. It was further indicated that, while the Ambassador's knowledge of the railroad situation in Turkey is undoubtedly greater and more immediate than that available to the Board here, discussions with the Foreign Economic Administration would seem to indicate that existing railroad facilities are sufficient for the transportation across Turkey of many more refugees than are now being accommodated (Cable No. 388 to Ankara dated May 3).

See IV D - 2, Cooperation with Turkey, and the following specific projects involving rescues to and through Turkey: VI C - 1, Transfer of Jews from Transnistria to Turkey; VI C - 2, Rescues from Hungary and the Balkans (UOR); and VI F - 2, Reinstatement of Turkish Citizenship to Refugees in France.

See also IV C - 2, Cooperation with Russia; IV D - 3, Cooperation with Switzerland; IV D - 5, Cooperation with Sweden; and V B - 1 a through V B - 1 d, Conditions in Hungary, Rumania, Slovakia, and Bulgaria.

DECLASSIFIED

State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72

By R. H. Parks Date

SEP 28 1972

000248

V.I.C.
attach. #1

CABLE NO. 146 TO ANKARA FROM THE BOARD

February 25, 1944

Not paraphrased.

Department's 68, January 25, concerning War Refugee Board and 120 of February 12, 8 p.m., concerning appointment Special Attache Hirschmann.

Special attention should be given to the following matter.

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

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

The Department desires to support the above program of the Board and you are requested at the earliest possible moment to approach the Turkish Government with a view to obtaining their agreement to the plan and immediate action on their part. In addition to making clear this Government's determination to do everything within its power to rescue refugees and its hope for full cooperation from the Turkish Government you may, if you deem it advisable, indicate that (a) The War Refugee Board is prepared to take all possible measures, financial and otherwise to aid the evacuation of refugees to Turkey; (b) The Board is prepared to render full assistance in the maintenance of refugees in Turkey; and (c) If the Turkish Government takes necessary steps to facilitate the entry of a substantial number of refugees the Board will make all efforts to move refugees from Turkey to other places if such action becomes desirable. You may wish to discuss specifically the possibility of setting up camps in Turkey in which refugees entering the country could live. The Board would, if necessary, make arrangements for financ-

(cont.)

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

000849

ing the establishment and maintenance of these camps and the support of the refugees in them. This plan may facilitate the removal, on a compulsory basis if necessary, of refugees from Turkey to other places if such action becomes desirable in order to permit the entry of more refugees into Turkey from occupied areas.

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

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

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

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

STETTINIUS

DECLASSIFIED

State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72

By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

000250

VI C
attach: #2

CABLE NO. 282 FROM ANKARA TO THE BOARD

February 18, 1944

Not paraphrased.

FOR JOHN PEHLE DIRECTOR OF WAR REFUGEE BOARD
FROM HIRSCHMANN.

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

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

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

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

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

(cont.)

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-73
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

000851

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

VLC
attach #2

-2-

of the Turkish Government will be highly evaluated.

I am informed that in view of the Bulgarian impasse the Jewish agency officially dealing with transportation of Jewish refugees from the Balkans has extreme difficulties with land route bottlenecked in Bulgaria. They obtained promise of provisional charter for SS VATAN 3700 tons owned by Kalkawan Riza Turkish shipowner who is willing to take her with Turkish to Constanza to bring out to Istanbul 800 to 1000 refugees, mainly children from Transnistria whom Rumanians are at present willing to release, but who may at any moment be in danger of starvation and death. International Red Cross promises to procure safe conduct for this ship from all belligerent powers concerned. The Turkish Government fully controls all private shipping and is faced with extreme transport difficulties of its own. It refuses to permit owner to enter into Charter Agreement because of danger of loss of ship even when under safe conduct as has occurred.

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

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

Please advise.

STEINHARDT

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-1-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

100852

VIC
attach. #3

MEMORANDUM TO WAR SHIPPING ADMINISTRATION FROM THE BOARD

February 23, 1944

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

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

J. W. Pehle

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date CED 9/2/07

100853

VI - C
attach. #4

LETTER FROM WAR SHIPPING ADMINISTRATION TO THE BOARD

February 23, 1944

Dear Sir:

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

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

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

Sincerely yours,

E. S. Land
Administrator

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 11652, Sec. 3(E) and 5(D) or (E)
Commerce Dept. letter #11-15-72
BY RWP NARS Date SEP 28 1972

000854

CABLE NO. 144 TO ANKARA FROM THE BOARD

February 25, 1944

Not paraphrased.

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

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

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

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

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

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

STETTINIUS

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

000855

VI C
attach. #6

CABLE NO. 314 TO ANKARA FROM THE BOARD

February 22, 1944

Not paraphrased.

Secretary of State,

Washington.

CABLE NO. 314 TO ANKARA FROM THE BOARD February 22, 7 p.m.

At our Ambassador's suggestion, I conferred today with Soviet Ambassador Vinogradov here. He agreed at first opportunity to speak with the Bulgarian Minister urgent that the Bulgarian bottleneck for the evacuation of Jewish refugees be opened up. He was not very hopeful on this situation since he stated that Soviet efforts to secure concessions from the present Bulgarian Government to date had been futile. I told him of our intention to exert pressure on the satellite countries and asked him to take parallel action.

On the matter of supporting our request of the Turks for permission to use a ship for evacuating refugees, he was also pessimistic, stating that the Soviets had had no success with the Turks in any request. On both of the above matters he remarked that he could not act formally except through Moscow. He suggested that you, acting for the combined secretaries of your board, should telegraph Harriman to request assistance from Moscow. He agreed to do likewise. Please advise of your action.

STEINHARDT

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 26 1972

000856

VFC
attach.#7

CABLE NO. 299 FROM ANKARA TO THE BOARD

February 19, 1944

Not paraphrased.

AHC-170
This telegram must be
paraphrased before being
communicated to anyone
other than a Government
Agency. (BR)

Ankara

Dated February 19, 1944

Rec'd 10:39 p.m.

Secretary of State,

Washington.

299 February 19, 9 p.m.

FROM HIRSCHMANN FOR JOHN PEHLE

Referring to my telegram of February 18 regarding the desperate need for a boat immediately to evacuate refugees from Constanza to Istanbul further explorations indicate that Turks are consistently slow in making decisions or taking action even though we hope to secure from you authority to offer to replace the ship VATAN in the event of loss.

While I would not under any circumstances suggest that you relax your efforts in trying through every means to help us secure this boat I now believe that our best immediate hope is to get a boat through the Swedish Government and I would urge that to put more emphasis on your efforts in this direction than indicated in my previous telegram. I am seeing the Swedish Minister here with Red Cross official and trust you will push action through Washington to Sweden with all vigor also you will be interested to learn that Ambassador Steinhardt had a talk on February 18 with the British Ambassador who has agreed to send a note to the Foreign Office concerning the plight of Jews in France of Turkish origin. The note will be presented to one of the higher officials of the Foreign Office by a member of his staff who in discussing the subject with him will indicate that the British Government supports the request made by Ambassador Steinhardt on two previous

(cont.)

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

000257

V.I.C.
attach.#7

- 2 -

occasions on the Foreign Minister to make the necessary representations to the Vichy Government that Jews of Turkish origin be not expelled from France.

As you undoubtedly know the 10,000 Jews were allegedly divested of their Turkish nationality by operation of Turkish law. We are importuning the Turkish authorities to interest themselves to the point of protecting these 10,000 Jews of Turkish origin now in France to save them from being deported to Poland.

Also I have asked the Soviet Embassy here to help in the matter of securing detailed information regarding the causes of the bottleneck situation in Bulgaria.

STEINHARDT

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

000058

VI-C
attach: #3

- 2 -

funds are not otherwise available.

Ambassador Steinhardt has arranged for me to be received by the Russian Ambassador tomorrow morning when we will press for assistance in breaking the Rumanian and Bulgarian bottlenecks.

WSB

STEINHARDT

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

000060

MEMORANDUM FOR THE MINISTER OF SWEDEN TO THE U. S. FROM THE BOARD

February 24, 1944

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

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

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

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

(cont.)

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

000261

VI C
attach.#9

- 2 -

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

J. W. Pehle
Acting Executive Director

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

000862

VI C
attach.#10

CABLE NO. 148 TO ANKARA FROM THE BOARD

February 26, 1944

Not paraphrased.

TELEGRAM SENT

GAR

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

February 26, 1944
7 p.m.

U.S. URGENT

To: AMEMBASSY,

ANKARA.

148

FOR HIRSCHMANN FROM THE WAR REFUGEE BOARD.

We recognize fully the importance and urgency of the shipping problem and are doing what we can here to solve it.

We have discussed with the Swedish Minister here the possibility of using Swedish vessels to evacuate refugees from Black-Sea ports. The Swedish Minister is cabling his Government immediately requesting that consideration be given to this matter.

With respect to the guarantee which this Government has now given to replace the S.S. Vatan if lost, we would like immediate advice from you as to the possibilities of obtaining other Turkish vessels if similar guarantees were given to replace those vessels.

STETTINIUS

RECEIVED
State Dept. Letter 1-11-73
By R. H. Parris Date SEP 28 1972

000863

VI.C
attach.#11

CABLE NO. 784 FROM STOCKHOLM TO THE BOARD
March 7, 1944

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Legation, Stockholm
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATED: March 7, 1944
NUMBER: 784

The Legation has been informed by the Foreign ministry that the War Refugee Board recently approached the Swedish Government on two occasions relative to Swedish assistance in rescuing Jewish children from Southeastern Europe. The board's representative in Ankara made the first approach to the Swedish Minister there and this was followed up by an approach to the Swedish Minister in Washington by Mr. Pehle, the board's director. On both occasions it was urgently requested by the board that permission be given for one of the Greek relief ships which call at Salonika to proceed to Constanza and take on board from eight hundred to one thousand Jewish children for transportation to Istanbul. It was understood that the Turk Government is willing to permit transit through Turkey, presumably en route to Palestine and the intention was to make an urgent approach to German, Bulgarian, Rumanian, Governments to allow the children to leave if the shipping question could be agreed upon in principle.

The chairman of the Swedish Shipping Committee was consulted by Mr. Thyberg of the Foreign Ministry and the chairman remarked that Greek relief ships are not fitted for accommodation of passengers. Mr. Thyberg realizes that this objection may be minor in the circumstances. Instructions have given to the Swedish Legation in Washington to suggest that the matter be taken up with other American and British agencies concerned by the War Refugee Board.

Without taking into account the fact that German consent still is lacking for three additional vessels to enter Greek relief traffic in order to transport increases granted recently (see my telegram of January 28, 1944, No. 291), ordinary deliveries from Canada to Greece have fallen behind. It is felt by the Swedish Foreign Ministry and by the British Legation that any extraneous delay in the shipping schedule for Greek relief must have serious and deplorable effect and this Legation agrees.

Johnson

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

000864

VI C
attach #12

BOARD PRESS RELEASE NO. 5

March 28, 1944

WAR REFUGEE BOARD

Executive Office of the President

Washington

FOR RELEASE, MORNING NEWSPAPERS,
Tuesday, March 28, 1944.

RELEASE NO. 5

In a news dispatch from Stockholm, dated March 25, the Associated Press reported that Sweden had turned down an American Government request that some Swedish shipping be used to evacuate Jewish refugees from Rumanian and Black Sea ports to Palestine. The reason given for the Swedish attitude was said to be lack of available shipping. The War Refugee Board confirms that the matter has been under discussion. The fact that no arrangement for Swedish shipping has as yet proved possible does not reflect any negative attitude on the part of the Swedish Government which has continually shown a sympathetic interest in humanitarian efforts of this kind. The Swedish Minister has assured the War Refugee Board that the Swedish Government is prepared to do everything possible to aid the efforts of the Board.

-oOo-

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Ent. SEP 28 1972

000865

VI C
attach.#13

CABLE NO. 344 FROM ANKARA TO THE BOARD

February 26, 1944

Not paraphrased

CM-202

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

Ankara

Dated February 26, 1944

Rec'd 8:30 p.m.

Secretary of State,

Washington.

344, February 26, 5 p.m.

FOR THE WAR REFUGEE BOARD FROM HIRSCHMANN

Since telegraphing you last we have broken the bottleneck for the land transport of Jewish refugee children from Bulgaria to Palestine via Turkey.

The Turkish authorities have today given assurances that Jewish refugee children will be transmitted through Turkey at the rate of 150 every ten days beginning next week.

STEINHARDT

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-73
By R. H. Parks Date **SEP 28 1972**

100266

VIC
attach #14

CABLE NO. 180 TO ANKARA FROM THE BOARD

March 9, 1944

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM SENT

FROM: SECRETARY OF STATE, WASHINGTON

TO: AMEMBASSY, ANKARA

DATED: March 9, 1944

NUMBER: 180

War Refugee Board sends the following for Hirschmann.

We have requested Myron Black, the field director of War Shipping Administration's Foreign Service Division, who is now in Cairo, to proceed immediately to Ankara to survey with you the entire shipping situation. Although Mr. Black can remain in Turkey only a few weeks, he will arrange to have someone detailed permanently to Ankara from the Cairo office if it is deemed necessary.

Please inform us at once of any and all developments regarding shipping problems. This problem is a most important one and it is hoped that we can solve it with the assistance of the War Shipping Administration which has been most helpful.

STETTINIUS

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-77
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

000067

CABLE NO. 214 TO ANKARA FROM THE BOARD

March 17, 1944

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM SENT

FROM: SECRETARY OF STATE, WASHINGTON
TO: AMEMBASSY, ANKARA
DATED: March 17, 1944
NUMBER: 214

Following is War Refugee Board's cable no. 5 to Ankara for Hirschmann's attention.

Your cable of March 3, 1944, no. 80 is referred to herewith.

We greatly appreciate the splendid cooperation Ambassador Steinhardt has given you. Also we appreciate your suggestions for action, your reports and the steps being taken by you and the Ambassador. We will keep you currently informed of our progress in following up the points made by you.

1. Negotiations are being continued by us with the Government of Sweden in an attempt to obtain its agreement to make vessels for this project available. The immediate prospects in this connection are not encouraging but you will be informed of the developments as they take place.

We still believe that all possible steps should be taken to obtain Turkish vessels. Tentative consideration is being given to a plan whereby the United States Government would make a vessel available to the Government of Turkey at once if, in your opinion, the Government of Turkey would immediately make available an equal amount of tonnage for the purpose of evacuating refugees in accordance with the program which the Board has formulated. It is requested that you inform us whether such an offer from this Government would, in your opinion, make a Turkish vessel for refugee work available quickly. As soon as we received from you a positive indication that such an arrangement as suggested above would be of substantial help, we will take this matter

(cont.)

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72

By R. H. Parks Date

SEP 28 1972

000268

up with the appropriate authorities. Your reply will be awaited before approaching the War Shipping Administration or other appropriate government agencies. We request your urgent advice.

2. If arrangements which are satisfactory to you and Ambassador Steinhardt can be made, the necessary funds will be forthcoming to buy the Turkish vessel SS NECAT for about \$400,000, it being understood that the vessel will be donated to the Turkish Red Crescent. The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee has indicated an interest in furnishing the purchase price of the ship if it appears reasonably certain that the vessel will be able to transport from Rumania to Palestine the 5,000 Jewish children as indicated in your reference cable. The JDC has inquired whether they will have to bear the additional expenses involved in transporting the children, such as wages, cost of fuel, et cetera. We concur with your suggestion that it would be most desirable to try to obtain the Turkish Government's consent to continue the ship in operation for the purpose of transporting additional refugees after the 5,000 children have been transported as planned.

It is further suggested by us that you get in touch with Mr. Resnick, representative in Turkey for J.D.C., in connection with this project.

HULL

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

000869

VIC
attach #16

CABLE NO. 388 FROM ANKARA TO THE BOARD

March 4, 1944

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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

FOLLOWING FOR PEHLE FROM HIRSCHEMAN.

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

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

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

(cont.)

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

000270

- 2 -

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

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

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

STEINHARDT

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

000071

VI C
attach. #17

CABLE NO. 455 TO THE BOARD FROM ANKARA

March 15, 1944

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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

FROM HIRSCHMANN FOR THE ATTENTION OF PEHLE

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

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

(cont.)

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

000072

initial trip is completed, he would put it in operation to carry Turk commerce after placing the Turk flag on the vessel so loaned.

By this means he would be permitting the vessel assigned to us for the initial trip to make further trips to Balkan ports to evacuate refugees, but that failing, a substitute vessel only as in the voyage to and from Constanza could be permitted. Because of the desperate situation in which the Turk Government finds itself for lack of ships, he added that no amount of money could be accepted in lieu of a substitute vessel and that if we desired the ship about to be made available to us to make repeated trips it would be necessary, as soon as possible, to provide a substitute vessel. Numan referred to the fact that even a single voyage to and from Constanza represented a genuine sacrifice on the part of the Turk Government. If the representatives of the International Red Cross encountered new difficulties in regard to obtaining safe conduct for the vessel, the Foreign Minister agreed, at the conclusion of their talk, to intervene with the German Ambassador in Ankara.

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

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

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

* Apparent omission.

STEINHARDT

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

000873

VIC
attach. #18

CABLE NO. 472 FROM ANKARA TO THE BOARD

March 16, 1944

FROM HIRSCHMAN FOR ATTENTION OF WAR REFUGEE BOARD

Reference my 455, March 15.

This morning the Ambassador was informed by Turk authorities that the passenger vessel SS TARI of 4000 tons, owned by the Turk Government and now at Istanbul, has been placed at our disposal for a trip to Constanta to evacuate Jewish refugees. A request has been made of the British arrival authorities in Istanbul as to the maximum number of refugees this vessel can carry safely. In this connection an inspection will immediately be made of the life saving devices on this vessel.

A cable is being dispatched today to Geneva for Simond of the International Red Cross asking for safe conduct for the vessel from the belligerent powers excepting Russia. Today request was made by the Ambassador of the Russian Ambassador in Ankara to obtain safe conduct from his government and he has also telegraphed Harriman in Moscow asking him to give the Russian Ambassador's request support.

It is suggested by us that the Board concurrently request the German safe conduct through the Swiss.

Tomorrow I am leaving for Istanbul to make the necessary arrangements with Turk steamship authorities which will involve among other things the charter price, fuel, food, passenger accommodation, etc., and with the British naval authorities which will involve inspection of life saving devices, safe conduct, etc. In Istanbul I will be joined by Simond. Immediately upon arrival of Black (WVA) whose arrival in Ankara is expected shortly, he will be requested by the Ambassador to proceed to Istanbul to assist me.

We were astonished to learn from Barlas of the Jewish Agency, upon informing him that we anticipated the departure of the SS TARI for Constantza under safe conduct in the very near future to evacuate Jewish refugees, that in spite of his repeated assurances that a sufficient number of Jewish refugees would at any time be available for embarkation in 10 days notice, he now asserts that there will be required at least 5 or 6 weeks before a sufficient number will be ready to embark.

STEINHARDT

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-73

By R. H. Parks Date

SEP 28 1972

000874

VFC
attach. #19

CABLE NO. 501 (SECTION ONE) FROM ANKARA TO THE BOARD

March 21, 1944

Not paraphrased.

BE-561

This telegram must be paraphrased before being communicated to anyone other than a Governmental agency. (SC00)

Ankara

Dated March 21, 1944

Rec'd 10:22 p.m.

Secretary of State
Washington

U. S. URGENT

FOR WRB FROM HIRSHMAN

My 472 March 16, and 487 March 18.

I returned today from Istanbul after completing preliminary discussions with Director General of Turk State Steamship Lines regarding charter of SS TARI placed at our disposal by the Turk Government. Naval Attache, Black of WSA British Naval Attache and I are agreed vessel which is in regular passenger service is seaworthy highly desirable for our purpose and to our agreeable surprise already equipped with life saving devices for 1500 people. She will be prepared to sail for Constanza as soon as adequate food, fuel and other supplies have been loaded, charter price agreed upon, safe conduct obtained, insurance for voyage has been placed. The Director General estimates about five days to load necessary supplies. As you have been advised, safe conduct has been requested of belligerents. Insofar as concerns insurance the Director General estimates that if placed with a Turk company for the trip to Constanza to Haifa and return premium will amount to \$80,000 (repeat \$80,000). Board may accordingly wish to consider placing insurance elsewhere notwithstanding delay that may result. Regarding charter price which the Director General stated he was not as yet in a position to quote, duration of voyage is estimated at a minimum of 30 and maximum of 36 days unforeseen delays excluded. Having regard to prohibitive prices at present prevailing in Turkey

(cont.)

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

000875

VI.C
attach 19

-2-

for all commodities particularly charter of vessels it is probable we may be required to pay about \$4000 a day exclusive of insurance. This would include among other things compensation for crew for navigating in war zones, minor alterations to accommodate 1500 people pointing.

STEINHARDT

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 20 1972

000076

VIC
attach #19

CABLE NO. 501 (Section Two) FROM ANKARA TO THE BOARD

March 21, 1944

Not paraphrased.

and lighting to meet International Red Cross requirements, food for the passengers, etc. Accordingly I request authority to enter into a charter party on behalf of the WRB with the Turkish State Steamship Lines for the charter of the SS TARI for this voyage at a price of not more than \$4000 per day. In this connection I should appreciate confirmation that the guarantee given the Turk Government by our Government of the replacement of the SS VATIN in the event of loss will apply to the SS TARI as her substitute in the event of her loss by any cause on the proposed voyage.

In view of the steadily deteriorating situation in Rumania the Ambassador and I urgently request an immediate reply authorizing me to enter into the Charter Party along the lines outlined above.

(END OF MESSAGE)

STEINHARDT

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

000877

VI G
attach. #20

CABLE NO. 250 TO ANKARA FROM THE BOARD

March 24, 1944

Not paraphrased.

ORIGINAL TEXT OF TELEGRAM SENT

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

FROM THE WAR REFUGEE BOARD FOR THE AMBASSADOR AND HIRSCHMANN.

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

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

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

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

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

200878

VTC
attach. #21

CABLE NO. 243 TO ANKARA FROM THE BOARD

March 23, 1944

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM SENT

FROM: SECRETARY OF STATE, WASHINGTON

TO: AMEMBASSY, ANKARA

DATED: MARCH 23, 1944

NUMBER: 243

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

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

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

(cont.)

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-73
By R. H. [unclear] Data
SEP 28 1972

000079

Algiers, asking that they be informed whether there is available in the Mediterranean any small freighter which could be used under charter by the Government of Turkey.

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

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

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

HULL

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-73
By R. H. Parks Data SEP 28 1972

000000

VIC
attach. #22

CABLE NO. 458 FROM ANKARA TO THE BOARD

March 15, 1944

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Embassy, Ankara
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATED: March 15, 1944
NUMBER: 458

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

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

Hirschmann and I recommend that the foregoing proposal be accepted and in considering this proposal the War Refugee Board may wish to bear in mind the present exorbitant cost per capito of evacuating refugees.

(cont.)

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

1000001

V.I.C.
attach. #23

CABLE NO. 547 FROM ANKARA TO THE BOARD

March 27, 1944

Not paraphrased.

BJR - 874

This telegram must be paraphrased before being communicated to anyone other than a Governmental agency. (SC00)

Ankara

Dated March 27, 1944

Rec'd 9 a.m. 29th

FROM THE AMBASSADOR AND HIRSCHMANN FOR THE WRB.

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

Ankara's 9.

(One) The Turk authorities have now agreed to a charter price of 175,000 Turk pounds (approximately \$97,200) for the projected voyage, eight days being allowed for embarkation and debarkation. For any period of time in excess of eight days required for embarkation or debarkation we will be required to pay 5833 Turk pounds (approximately \$3245) per day. In view of the fact that the Jewish Agency for Palestine had made a firm offer of \$250,000 (repeat dollars) for the charter of the SS VATAN for the projected voyage and was merely awaiting the consent of the Turk Government to the charter, and that we have obtained a desirable passenger vessel in lieu of an old cargo ship which would have required the installation of passenger facilities entailing a delay of two months, and which could not have carried more than half the passengers the SS TARI will take, we consider the price now agreed upon to be extremely favorable having regard to the exorbitant prices demanded for charters in these waters. Our financial negotiations were made difficult by the price offered the Turks for the SS VATAN. Black, who has been present throughout the negotiations, regards the price finally agreed upon as reasonable under all of the circumstances.

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

(cont.)

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 11-1-73
By R. H. Parka Date SEP 28 1972

000000

-2-

(Three) We, too, are assuming that there will be refugees available for evacuation when the voyage is undertaken and are relying on assurances to this effect from the representative of the Jewish Agency in Istanbul, the representative of the International Red Cross in Bucharest and the Rumanian Minister in Ankara. Obviously having no control over the movement and departure of refugees Rumania at this time, we are in no better position than the Board to give positive assurances on this subject.

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

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

STEINHARDT

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

000283

VI.C
attach. #24

CABLE NO. 230 TO ANKARA FROM THE BOARD

March 22, 1944

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM SENT

FROM: SECRETARY OF STATE, WASHINGTON
TO: AMEMBASSY, ANKARA
DATED: MARCH 22, 1944
NUMBER: 230

Following for Hirschmann from War Refugee Board.

War Refugee Board cable no. 7

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

HULL

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-73
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

000004

VIC
attach #25

CABLE NO. 527 FROM ANKARA TO THE BOARD

March 25, 1944

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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

The following message from Hirschmann for the WRB. No. 8.
Reference is made to Department's cable No. 230.

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

STEINHARDT

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-73
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

000285

VIC
attach #26

CABLE NO. 549 FROM ANKARA TO THE BOARD

March 28, 1944

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Embassy, Ankara
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATED: March 28, 1944
NUMBER: 549

Following is Ankara's No. 10 from the Ambassador and Hirschmann for Pehle War Refugees Board.

The Ankara representative of the International Red Cross and the representative of the Jewish agency in Istanbul inform us that the Bulgarian SS MILKA will arrive in Istanbul March 29 with 250 Jewish refugees from Cernowitz who embarked at Constanza. In order that the 250 refugees will be permitted to land in Istanbul, we have assisted in arranging for the issuance of Palestine entry certificates. This was done on the assumption that the vessel declared to be unseaworthy by the International Red Cross (see my cable of March 25, No. 527) will arrive safely. Also, we are helping to arrange for transportation through Turkey to Palestine for these refugees.

STEINHARDT

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Order, 1-11-73
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

000286

VLC
attach: /27

CABLE NO. 564 FROM ANKARA TO THE BOARD

March 29, 1944

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: The American Embassy, Ankara
TO: The Secretary of State, Washington
DATE: March 29, 1944
NUMBER: 564

The following message is from Hirschmann for the War Refugee Board and is Ankara's number 13. Please refer to my number 549 dated March 28, 1944.

On the grounds that they left Constanza without Turkish visas it is the intention of the authorities of Turkey to refuse permission for the landing in Istanbul of the approximately 250 Jewish refugees on the SS MILKA and they have so advised the British. In an effort to obtain a reversal of decision the British Minister is calling on the Secretary General of the Foreign Office and Ambassador Steinhardt is calling on the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Mindful of the foregoing, if considerable numbers of such refugees arrived without visas it will be extremely difficult to persuade the authorities of Turkey to agree to a further increase in the number of transit visas to be granted Jewish refugees from the Balkans.

STEINHARDT

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

100287

CABLE NO. 499 FROM ANKARA TO THE BOARD

March 20, 1944

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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

The following is Ankara's No. 3 from Hirschmann for WRB. Since our direct approach to the Rumanian Minister in Ankara (see our telegrams of March 13 and March 16 Nos. 440 and 474) produced satisfactory results, it was decided by the Ambassador and me that equally satisfactory results might be produced by a similar direct approach to the Bulgarian Minister here. Therefore, acting under authority which the Secretary of the Treasury vested in me (see the Department's telegram of February 12, 1944 No. 120) Simond was requested to arrange a meeting at Simond's home between Balbanoff, Simond and myself. I made it clear to Balbanoff at the beginning of our conversation that my sole function in Ankara was as WRB representative to deal with refugee problems; that any discussion which we might have would be confined to this subject exclusively; and that any other construction placed on our talk by him or his Government could "only be occasioned by deliberate distortion". The reply was made by Balbanoff that he understood that it would be limited to the subject of refugees and that he welcomed a frank. (*) Balbanoff was informed by me that the reports of the brutal treatment accorded to the minorities in Bulgaria, especially the Jews, had outraged the government and the people of the United States and that Bulgaria would be called upon in the near future to answer therefor. I then informed him that our Government was determined to do everything possible to rescue these people who were in danger of losing their lives and to find havens of refuge for them and that any continuation by the Bulgarian Government of the execution of these policies of the Nazi persecution would be born in mind by our Government in the future and that his Government would be well advised in its own interest to take advantage of such opportunities to permit refugees to depart across its borders as might be available to it in the future.

*Apparent omission

(cont.)

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter 1-11-73
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

100000

- 2 -

I suggested at the conclusion of my remarks that he report them to his Government. It was stated by Balabanoff in reply that the maltreatment of the minorities in Bulgaria had resulted from the policies of Gabrowski, the former Minister of Interior, who he asserted had been a tool of the Germans and was no longer a member of the Government. It was then stated by him that of late the Jews had been given much better treatment in Bulgaria and that he had reason to believe the "pressure" against them would continue to relax. It was suggested by me that Balabanoff dispatch to his Government an urgent message recommending that the same treatment as that received by other Bulgarian citizens be accorded henceforth to the Jews and all other minorities in Bulgaria and the deplorable conditions under which the Jews and other minorities are living in concentrated camps be ameliorated at once and that the Bulgarian Government take immediate steps to authorize the granting of visas and to provide transportation for all refugees who wish to leave for Palestine or Turkey.

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

STEINHARDT

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-73
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

000009

VI C
attach. #29

CABLE NO. 579 FROM ANKARA TO THE BOARD

March 30, 1944

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

Reference my number 573.

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

STEINHARDT

DECLASSIFIED:
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

000090

CABLE NO. 2049 FROM BERN TO THE BOARD

April 3, 1944

On March 25 the contents of your message number 970 dated March 23, which granted safe conduct for the steamship TARI, were given by me to ICRC, Geneva. However no reply has been received from the Foreign Office as yet.

In a reply dated March 30 President Huber, ICRC, expresses appreciation of the American Government's position not only concerning TARI but also the refugee position with which he states ICRC has for months been deeply concerned. President Huber states that upon receipt of information from its delegate at Ankara it directed a request on March 24 to the Government of Germany for safe conduct for a voyage from Istanbul to Constanza and return by the steamship TARI. According to ICRC a charter contract for TARI is dependent on obtaining not later than April 10 all safe conducts and that ICRC can extend to TARI Committees insignia protection only if safe conducts are obtained. Super-cargo would also have to be carried by TARI.

I am advised by Huber that he is most doubtful that the Government of Germany will consent to the departure of Jewish refugees from any country under its influence or that it will grant safe conduct. It was pointed out by Huber that last January the Germans were approached by ICRC with a request for safe conduct for the Bulgarian steamer BELLACITTA. This vessel is now at Constanza and whenever the needed safe conducts are obtained it is ready to clear with the refugees. The Government of Germany in spite of several requests has not answered although safe conduct for the BELLACITTA has been granted by the governments of both Britain and America.

It is further stated by Huber that ICRC regrets very much that the prospect of obtaining safe conducts from Germany for these vessels is not at all hopeful and that there appears to be little prospect of organizing Jewish emigration on a sound basis for the Balkans. Since ICRC has done everything in its power for months past to hasten measures for emigration before it was too late, Huber says this is all the more regrettable.

HARRISON

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By E. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

000291

VI C
attach. #31

CABLE NO. 594 FROM ANKARA TO THE BOARD

April 4, 1944

The following message is for the War Refugee Board and the Department. As Ankara's number 30 this message was sent.

I would appreciate it if the Department would take up with the War Refugee Board the matter of placing \$160,000 at the disposal of the Embassy since the charter party for the SS TARI should be ready for signature within the next two or three days. The aforementioned amount is estimated as the amount necessary for the insurance and to make the initial payment of the charter price.

It is my suggestion, in view of Hirschman's departure tomorrow, that these funds be placed to the credit of Keiley in the same way or funds transferred for the Embassy's operating expenses unless the Department perceives some objection.

STEINHARDT

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Lettcr, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Data SEP 28 1972

000092

CABLE NO. 324 TO ANKARA FROM THE BOARD

April 13, 1944

Not paraphrased.

FROM WAR REFUGEE BOARD FOR AMBASSADOR STEINHARDT.
This WRE cable to Ankara no. 20.
Please refer to your Nos. 585 and 594 of April 4.

1. We talked last week with Turkish Ambassador in Washington regarding impossibility of replacing TARI with passenger ship and Ambassador cabled his Government accordingly. Turkish Ambassador here now understands that the Turkish Government is no longer insisting on guarantee to replace TARI with passenger boat but will accept guarantee of cargo vessel. Ambassador is asking confirmation of this from his government. As we advised in No. 250 of March 24 the United States Government, in view of military necessities is not (repeat not) in a position to replace the SS TARI with a passenger vessel. It was accordingly suggested that you put the issue squarely to the Turkish Government whether it is prepared to cooperate by chartering the SS TARI without further delay and upon the basis of the guarantee already offered, namely a cargo vessel of comparable age and tonnage.

2. Transfer of \$160,000 to Kelley as requested in your no. 594 has been arranged. These are confidential funds from the Emergency Fund of the President and may be disbursed without following the procedure usually required in government disbursements. Kelley will be responsible to Mr. Pehle, Executive Director of the Board, alone for expenditures but should keep careful records and obtain receipts.

3. The charter party should be signed in the name of the War Refugee Board. Ambassador Steinhardt or any member of his staff designated by him is hereby authorized to sign the charter party in the name of the War Refugee Board.

4. With reference to German and Russian safe conduct the following steps have been taken by the Board. The Governments of Switzerland

(cont.)

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter: 1-11-73
By R. H. Parks Data **SEP 28 1972**

000093

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

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

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

000894

VI. C
attach. #33

CABLE NO. 625 FROM ANKARA TO THE BOARD

April 8, 1944

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

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

STEINHARDT

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

000895

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

VIC
attach.#34

CABLE NO. 746 FROM ANKARA TO THE BOARD

April 25, 1944

~~Not Declassified~~

FOR WRB FROM THE AMBASSADOR ANKARA, No. 46.

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

STEINHARDT

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-73
By R. H. Parks Date: SEP 28 1972

000896

VI.C
attach.#35

CABLE NO. 377 TO ANKARA FROM THE BOARD

April 27, 1944

Not Paraphrased.

FROM WAR REFUGEE BOARD TO AMBASSADOR STEINHARDT, ANKARA, TURKEY.

This is WRB Cable to Ankara No. 31.

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

HULL

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter 1-11-72
By R. H. Farks Date SEP 28 1972

000097

Transnistria

000298

PROGRAMS WITH RESPECT TO RELIEF AND RESCUE OF REFUGEES: EVACUATION TO AND THROUGH TURKEY

TRANSFER OF JEWS FROM TRANSNISTRIA TO TURKEY

The Board has been working on various programs to evacuate Jews from Transnistria to Rumania in order to save them from the path of the retreating German Army. A report was received that the Germans had taken over from Rumania the administration of Transnistria, which, if true, makes immediate evacuation of refugees from that area essential. A cable was sent to Hirschmann asking him to check on this report and, if verified, to insist that Rumania resist this German demand (Cable No. 194 dated March 13; see attachment #1).

Hirschmann has advised that, with the approval of Ambassador Steinhardt and through the offices of a Swiss representative of the International Red Cross in Ankara, he conferred with Cretzianu, the Rumanian Minister to Turkey. Hirschmann advised Cretzianu of the outraged feeling of this Government concerning the brutal treatment being accorded to Jews and other refugees in Rumania, and of this Government's determination to do everything in its power to rescue these people. He further advised Cretzianu that this Government will keep in mind any continued collaboration by the Rumanian Government in the execution of Hitler's persecution programs and that the Rumanian Government in its own interests would be well advised to permit these refugees to depart from Rumania. Cretzianu stated that Transnistria, where most of the Jewish refugees are now located, is a military zone and that, if the military commander in Transnistria received instructions from Antonescu, he would protect the refugee population. The rapid advance of the Russian Army toward Rumania might provoke the German military authorities to take over control of Transnistria, according to Cretzianu; if there were sufficient time to control the situation, he was certain that no bodily harm would be done to these refugees. Cretzianu, however, gave definite assurances to Hirschmann that on the arrival of evacuation vessels at Constanza to embark up to 5,000 Jewish children, the necessary transportation and exit visas would be provided promptly. Cretzianu agreed to send an urgent message to Bucharest recommending that efforts be made at once to transfer the Jewish refugees from Transnistria to the interior of Rumania although he admitted that might not be possible,

(cont.)

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter 1-11-78
By R. H. Parks - Date SEP 28 1972

000099

-2-

because of the military situation there. Cretzianu assured Hirschmann that he would keep him advised of any reply he receives from Bucharest (Cable No. 440 dated March 13; see attachment #2).

Hirschmann was informed on March 16 by the Rumanian Ambassador to Turkey that the latter had received a reply from his government to the effect that it had decided to transfer to Rumania proper all Jews in Transnistria at the present time and that the Government of Rumania will facilitate in any possible manner the emigration of Jews (Cable No. 474 dated March 16; see attachment #3). The International Red Cross has reported (Cable No. 497, dated March 20) that this movement from Transnistria to Rumania has already begun and that 48,000 Jewish refugees had been moved up to March 20.

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Dat SEP 28 1972

000900

VIPO-1
attach #1

CABLE NO. 194 TO ANKARA FROM THE BOARD

March 13, 1944

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM SENT

FROM: Secretary of State, Washington

TO: American Embassy, Ankara

DATED: March 13, 1944

The following to Hirschmann from War Refugee Board.

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

STETTINIUS

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-73
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

100901

VLC - 1
attach #2

CABLE NO. 440 (SECTION ONE) FROM ANKARA TO THE BOARD

March 13, 1944

Not paraphrased.

Ankara

Dated March 13, 1944

Rec'd 3:31 p.m., 14th

FROM HIRSCHMANN FOR PEHLE WAR REFUGEE BOARD

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

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

(cont.)

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-73
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

000902

-2-

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

STEINHARDT

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

000903

CABLE NO. 440 (SECTION TWO) FROM ANKARA TO THE BOARD

March 13, 1944

Not paraphrased.

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

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

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

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

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

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

(cont.)

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-73
By R. H. Parks, Date SEP 28 1972

000904

VFO - 11
attach. 72

-2-

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

STEINHARDT

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

000905

VIC - 1
attach.#3

CABLE NO. 474 FROM ANKARA TO THE BOARD

March 16, 1944

The following is for WRB's attention.

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

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

- (1) It has been decided by the Government of Rumania to transfer
to Rumania proper from Transnistria all Jews who are actually in
Transnistria at the present time. This transfer from Transnistria has
already started.
- (2) The Government of Rumania pledges itself to facilitate in
every possible manner the emigration of the Jews.

STEINHARDT

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-73
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

000906

Hungary & Balkans (UOR)

000907

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

VI C - 2

PROGRAMS WITH RESPECT TO RELIEF AND RESCUE OF REFUGEES: EVACUATION TO AND THROUGH TURKEY

RESCUES FROM HUNGARY AND THE BALKANS (UOR)

The Union of Orthodox Rabbis, upon the recommendation of the Board, has been licensed by the Treasury to communicate with persons in enemy territory and to carry on the requisite financial transactions involved in the projected rescue of refugees from Hungary and the Balkans (Cable No. 311 to Ankara dated April 8). An initial remittance of \$25,000 to the UOR's representative in Turkey was authorized to begin such operations.

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date **SEP 28 1972**

000908

VI D.
SWITZERLAND

000909

EVACUATION TO SWITZERLAND

000910

VI D

PROGRAMS WITH RESPECT TO RELIEF AND RESCUE OF REFUGEES: EVACUATION TO SWITZERLAND

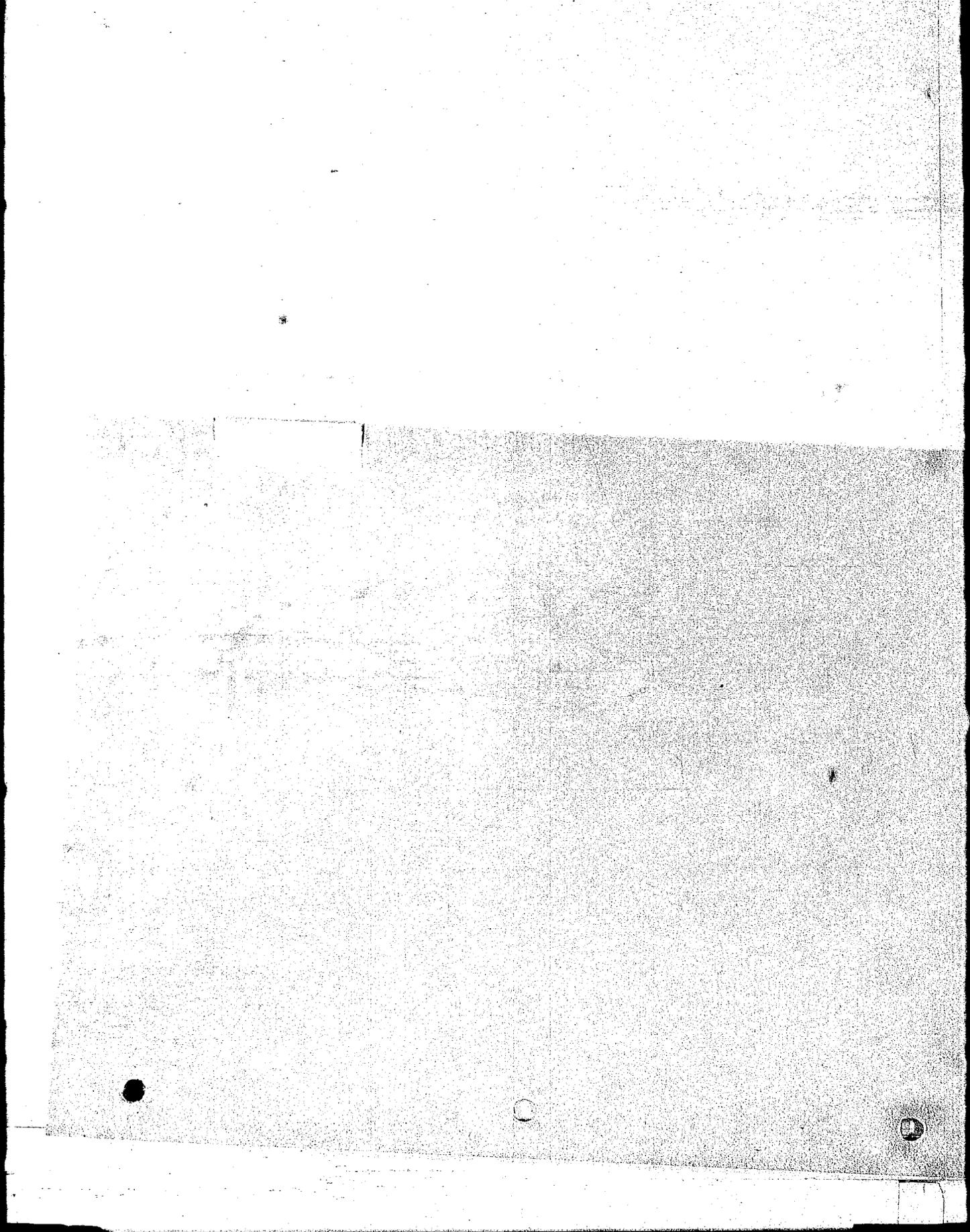
The Board is attempting to make it possible for refugees, particularly children, to go to Switzerland from all surrounding European territories. Toward this end every effort is being made to satisfy the Swiss Government's concern regarding the removal of refugees after the war. Moreover, arrangements are being made for their maintenance while in Switzerland. (In this connection see IV D - 3, Cooperation with Switzerland.)

In a communication from London (Dispatch No. 14413 dated March 11) there were forwarded to the Board memoranda submitted by Lord Winterton, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Intergovernmental Committee, on subjects growing out of the recent visit to Switzerland of Dr. Kullman, Honorary Deputy Director of the IGC. It was indicated that Lord Winterton had requested an opportunity to talk with Ambassador Winant about certain definite and confidential proposals contained in these memoranda, relating to the financing of refugee relief work inside Switzerland as well as rescue and relief activities using Switzerland as a base. (See VII A, Cooperation with Intergovernmental Committee.)

See also III A, Appointment of Special Representatives, and the following detailed summaries of specific projects involving evacuations to Switzerland: VI D - 1, Evacuation of Abandoned Children from France; VI D - 2, JDC Operations in France; VI D - 3, WJC Operations in France and Rumania; VI D - 4, Rescue of Refugees from France and Italy (IRRC); and VI D - 5, Rescue of Refugees from France (SECE).

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-73
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

000911



000912

PROGRAMS WITH RESPECT TO RELIEF AND RESCUE OF REFUGEES: EVACUATION TO SWITZERLAND

EVACUATION OF ABANDONED CHILDREN FROM FRANCE

Various reports have indicated that there are in France between 8,000 and 10,000 Jewish children who were forcibly abandoned by their parents upon the seizure or deportation of the latter, and who now likewise face deportation or death at the hands of occupying authorities unless they can be evacuated immediately. Among these reports are memoranda to the Board from Moses Leavitt of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee; from the American Committee of OSE (a French child-care group), and from Donald Lowrie of the YMCA World's Alliance.

The desperate plight of these children is further revealed in various official reports from the U. S. Embassy in Bern. In one instance in the fall of 1942, approximately 4,000 Jewish children between the ages of 2 and 14 are reported to have been deported to undisclosed destinations in windowless box-cars, without food or water. Moreover, official and other reliable reports indicate that the French police, under German orders, are currently completing a census of abandoned Jewish children still in France, this registration being preliminary to their eventual deportation or death.

A program was worked out by the Board with the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee for rescuing thousands of these children by means of evacuation to Switzerland, as well as for helping sustain the lives of other child victims of enemy oppression until evacuation can be accomplished (see VI.D - 2, JDC Operations in France).

While efforts are being directed toward taking full advantage of all possible places of asylum other than Switzerland, the latter, because of its proximity and status, represents the most feasible immediate refuge for these victims of enemy oppression. To date, some 3500 such children are reported to have reached Switzerland. Because of economic and other considerations, however, the Swiss Government has demanded adequate assurances that such children, whether already in Switzerland or to be admitted in the future will be evacuated after the war, before it will agree to permit the entry of additional child refugees from France.

(cont.)

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

000913

- 2 -

In connection with the eventual evacuation of these children from Switzerland it is significant to note that during 1942 the following countries had offered asylum to child refugees, variously conditioned: Argentina, up to 1,000 visas for children under 14 years of age; Australia, 150 Jewish refugee children from Vichy France between the ages of 7 and 14; Canada, admission of 500 children under 18 years of age, under non-immigrant status and for the duration of the war; Chile, admission of a small number; Dominican Republic, transportation and asylum for 3500 children from France; Palestine, 1,000 certificates for unaccompanied children under 18; South Africa, temporary stay to 200 Youth Aliyah certificate holders if no passports were available to Palestine; and the United Kingdom, unlimited number having near relatives (mother, father, grandparent, uncle, aunt, brother, or sister) in the United Kingdom.

It is hoped that the Governments of these and other countries can be persuaded to make or renew such offers of asylum. As one step in this direction the Board reopened with Eire the question of whether that country was prepared to admit 500 Jewish child refugees, and an affirmative reply was received (see IV D - 6, Cooperation with Eire, and attachments #1 and 2 thereto).

A message sent by the Board to the U. S. Legation at Canberra is also significant in this connection. The Board requested that appropriate Australian officials be advised of the necessity of giving assurances to neutral countries contiguous to occupied Europe that refugees accepted by such countries and who do not return to their homes after the war will be admitted as immigrants to other countries. The Australian Government was to be advised of the steps that have been taken by this Government in an effort to help solve the problem, notably the issuance of U. S. visas to refugee children reaching Switzerland. The Board also asked Minister Johnson to inquire as to whether the Australian Government would take parallel action in order to induce these neutral countries to accept additional refugees from Axis territory (Cable No. 40 to Canberra dated April 12; see IV C - 9, Cooperation with Australia).

In recent correspondence between the JDC and the British Embassy with respect to the issuance of immigration certificates into Palestine for refugee children who escape to Switzerland, the British held that, in the absence of representations on the part of the Swiss Government to either the Intergovernmental Committee or the British Government, the entire question was "hypothetical." Under these circumstances, the British indicated that they could not make such commitments for the future, particularly since the children for whom it was proposed that such certificates be reserved "might not even wish to proceed to Palestine after the war." A letter of February 18 from the British Foreign Office to the U. S. Embassy in London on this subject (see Attachment #1) was forwarded.

(cont.)

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

000914

to the Board along with a report on the matter (Dispatch No. 14,393 from London dated March 11). These objections were likewise presented by Mr. Hayter, of the British Embassy to the State Department in December, 1943. A cable drawn by the State Department in reply to Winant urged British reconsideration of this matter.

As for the United States itself, arrangements were made in the fall of 1942 by the U. S. Committee for the care of European Children, with the approval of the Attorney General, for the evacuation of 1,000 child refugees from France to the United States. Later in 1942, as arrangements were being completed with the Vichy regime to allow the departure of the first 500 of these children, came the complete occupation of France by the Nazis. The entire project thus appears to have been halted, at least on the diplomatic level.

In March, in an attempt to expand evacuation efforts and provide such guarantees as the Swiss demand, authorization was given to U. S. consular officers in Switzerland to issue during the present quota year up to 4,000 immigration visas to refugee children arriving during the first half of 1944. Such visas are to be replaced as they expire, so that except for children who in the interim reach the age of 16, the child refugees concerned will hold valid visas for the duration of the war and for six months thereafter. Harrison was also directed to advise the Swiss Government that Switzerland will in turn find it possible to relax her border controls and to take such other action as will encourage and facilitate the entry of refugee children (Cable No. 891 to Bern dated March 18; see attachment #2).

In an effort to induce the Latin American republics to give assurances to Switzerland similar to those given by this Government through its instructions to U. S. consular offices in Switzerland authorizing the issuance of up to 4,000 immigration visas to refugee children arriving in Switzerland, instructions were dispatched to the U.S. Missions in Brazil, Panama, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Colombia, Peru, Chile, Uruguay, Mexico, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Ecuador, and Paraguay, with the request that the governments of these countries be asked to give similar assurances to the Swiss Government. Those Latin American governments which do not have consular representatives in Switzerland qualified to issue visas were to be advised that U.S. consular offices are prepared to issue such visas on behalf of the respective Latin American governments, where such assistance is desired. (See Cable No. 1215 to Rio de Janeiro dated April 14 comprising attachment #3 and the Circular Airgram dated April 15 comprising attachment #4.)

Minister Harrison advised the Board that despite repeated informal representations on the part of the Swiss Government to the Vichy regime

(cont.)

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP-28 1972

000915

with respect to the release of abandoned children facing deportation from France, Laval's decision was negative, with no explanation being given. It was urged that no publicity be given concerning Swiss intervention in this matter on Vichy's refusal, for fear of halting further efforts by the Swiss Government in this direction (Cable No. 2236 from Bern dated April 11; see also Cable No. 1342 from Stockholm dated April 18).

Minister Harrison and Board Representative McClelland have now been asked to request that appropriate instructions be issued to the Swiss Legation at Vichy with respect to a formal approach to Laval on the matter. The Board is also requesting the U. S. Ministers in Lisbon and Dublin to approach the Portuguese and Eire Governments with requests for parallel action.

A According to a report from the JDC representative in Lisbon, during the past four or five weeks over 300 such children from France have reached Switzerland clandestinely and are being cared for by local groups (Cable No. 1155 from Lisbon dated April 18).

According to a report from Ambassador White in Lima following his approach to the Peruvian Foreign Office along the lines suggested, the Foreign Minister subsequently requested information concerning the nationalities included in the proposed immigration. In response to this inquiry the Board indicated its belief that, for the most part, Polish, French, Belgian, and stateless children of German and Austrian origin would be involved. It was urged, however, that emphasis be placed upon the humanitarian aspect of the action suggested (Airgram No. A-330 to Lima dated May 1).

Ambassador Braden in Havana has indicated his belief that if the care of child refugees were left to Cuban authorities, local irregularities would probably occur, particularly in connection with any financing that might be arranged by the Board. Braden has therefore suggested that, before he approaches the Cuban Government on the matter of giving Switzerland the assurances requested, it should be ascertained whether the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee would be prepared to care for such children through the Joint Relief Committee in Havana and to provide the latter with the necessary funds (unnumbered airgram from Havana dated April 22).

The U. S. Embassy in Honduras has indicated that the matter of giving similar assurances to Switzerland with respect to child refugees was discussed with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who appeared to be sympathetic to the suggestion. Consul Faust indicated his belief that the Honduran Government could probably be persuaded to accept a few refugee children on the basis of an adequate financial guarantee (Airgram No. A-163 from Tegucigalpa dated April 25).

(cont.)

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

000916

Ambassador Messersmith has reported from Mexico City that in order to secure anything like a favorable reception toward the suggestion that Mexico give such guarantees to the Swiss Government, "it will be necessary to prepare the ground carefully in the Mexican Government and among the highest officials." Messersmith indicated his feeling that no immediate reaction from the Mexican Government could be expected on this matter (unnumbered airgram from Mexico City dated April 25).

Minister Harrison and Board Representative McClelland were asked for clarification as to whether the Swiss Government's approach to Vichy, in connection with allowing the departure of child refugees, was to consist of formal requests for children or a request that the children be allowed to go to Switzerland temporarily. It was also indicated that the Board would welcome any additional suggestions for expediting the rescue from France of orphaned and abandoned children subject to enemy persecution (Cable No. 1459 to Bern dated April 27).

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72

By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

000917

VI D-1
attach. #1

LETTER TO U.S. EMBASSY FROM THE BRITISH FOREIGN OFFICE

February 18, 1944

Dear Bucknell,

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

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

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

So far the Swiss Government has not obtained any promise of exit permits. They have also made, so far as I am aware, no representations to the Intergovernmental Committee or to us regarding conditions on which they would receive children in their own territory. The question of the children going eventually to Palestine is therefore entirely hypothetical, and the feeling of our authorities is that in these circumstances it would be undesirable to freeze any substantial number of certificates for cases which may never arise, as this would reduce the stock available for the regular allocations which are made in agreement with the Jewish Agency. Of course, if the German Government agreed to give exit permits and if asylum offered in countries other than Switzerland proved insufficient or it proved impracticable to transport the children to those countries, and if the Swiss Government then agreed to take a certain number of children themselves only on the condition that the children in question were received elsewhere at the end of the war, it would be open to the Swiss Government then to go the Intergovernmental Committee, which would have the duty of seeing how far the Swiss Government's condition could be met. In this concrete case the British

(cont.)

DECLASSIFIED
By Authority of British

Gov't telegram 1-12-72

By RHP Date SEP 28 1972

000918

Government could be approached in respect of Palestine or other territories for which it is responsible in exactly the same way as other members of the Committee could be approached. The mere existence of the Intergovernmental Committee and the fact that Switzerland is a member of it would appear to be a sufficient assurance to the Swiss Government that they will not have to shoulder the present or future burden of refugees in Swiss territory with no prospect of international assistance, but the assurances your Government and mine have given the Swiss Government of sympathetic consideration over any obstacles to a continuance of the Swiss Government's humanitarian action surely makes all apprehensions rather unreal.

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

Yours sincerely,

A.W.C. Randall

P.S. Since writing the above I have heard that the Swiss Government have undertaken to receive 1500 children from France if they can reach the frontier, and no conditions so far as I know have been attached to this offer.

DECLASSIFIED

By Authority of British

Gov't telegram 1-12-72

By RNF Date SEP 28 1972

000919

CABLE NO. 891 TO BERN FROM THE STATE DEPARTMENT

March 18, 1944

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

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

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

(cont.)

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-73
By R. H. Parka Date SEP 28 1972

000920

pertinent adverse change in the present quota laws. You should report to the Department for further instructions the cases of children who have passed their sixteenth birthday in the interim desiring to obtain new visas or replace old ones. There is no need to register and fingerprint children under 14 years of age.

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

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

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

HULL

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

100921

VI D - 1
attach. #3

CABLE NO. 1215 TO RIO DE JANEIRO FROM THE BOARD

April 14, 1944

Not paraphrased.

FROM WAR REFUGEE BOARD TO AMERICAN EMBASSY, RIO DE JANEIRO

With reference to the Department's circular airgram of January 26, 7 p.m. and to your despatch no. 14890 of March 11, 1944, you are informed that the Department has now authorized the American consular officers in Switzerland to issue up to four thousand quota-immigration visas to refugee children under sixteen years of age without regard to religion, nationality or stateless status, to close relatives residing in enemy, enemy-occupied or controlled territory, or to the availability of means of transportation to the United States. The purpose of this authorization is to facilitate the escape to Switzerland of orphaned or abandoned children by giving assurances to the Swiss Government that these children will not remain its charge after the termination of hostilities in Europe. The authorization contains provisions for the continued renewal of the visas until such time as adequate transportation facilities to the United States becomes available. Private sources have posted bond with the Attorney General to assure this Government that the immigrating children are not likely to become public charges.

If, in addition to those children mentioned in your despatch no. 14890, there are private agencies in Brazil willing and able to undertake a program for the care of refugee children, regardless of religion, the War Refugee Board is confident that it can make arrangements to provide these agencies with adequate funds for the maintenance, education and welfare of as many children as the Brazilian Government would be willing to grant entry. Should they prove necessary, funds would undoubtedly be available to meet transportation expenses from Switzerland to Brazil. In view of Senhora Vargas' known interest in charitable undertakings, the War Refugee Board hopes that you will be able to approach her regarding this program with a view to obtaining such cooperation and leadership in Brazil as she may care to give.

Would you approach appropriate officials of the Brazilian Government informing them of the foregoing and requesting them to give

(cont.)

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-73
By R. H. Parks, Date SEP 28 1972

000922

assurances to the Swiss Government through their diplomatic mission in Bern of Brazil's willingness to accept the five hundred Jewish children and as many more refugee children as may be possible in a manner similar to this Government's offer. For the information of the Brazilian Government, it is conservatively estimated that there are in France alone approximately eight to ten thousand abandoned or orphaned refugee children. Should the Brazilian Government be willing to make this further humanitarian offer, please request the Minister of Foreign Affairs to authorize its Chief of Mission in Bern to issue the appropriate number of immigration visas and to maintain their validity until suitable transportation facilities from Switzerland to Brazil become available. The Brazilian Government may be informed that the special representative of the War Refugee Board attached to the American Legation in Bern will be glad to cooperate with the Brazilian diplomatic and consular officers in this as well as all the other refugee matters.

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

A report has been received by the War Refugee Board that Senhor Juan Alberto, Minister of Economic Coordination, recently stated in a private interview that he believes that Brazil could reasonably undertake a progressive five-year program for the settlement of Jewish and other European refugees beginning with one hundred thousand during the first year. The state of Goiaz was suggested by Senhor Alberto as having climatic conditions and natural resources suitable for colonization by Europeans. It is understood that the Ministry is preparing a plan for transmission to the War Refugee Board. Any further information concerning the plan that the Embassy can submit, together with its comments thereon, will be appreciated by the Board.

HULL

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-73

By R. " " 's Date SEP 28 1972

000923

VI D -
attach #4

CIRCULAR AIRGRAM TO PANAMA, CUBA, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, COLUMBIA,
PERU, CHILE, URUGUAY, AND MEXICO

April 15, 1944

(REPEATED TO COSTA RICA, EL SALVADOR, GUATEMALA, HONDURAS,
NICARAGUA, ECUADOR, AND PARAGUAY ON APRIL 20)

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

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

Kindly approach appropriate officials of the Government to which you are accredited, inform them of the foregoing and request them to give assurance to the Swiss Government through their diplomatic mission

(cont.)

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

100924

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

in Bern that they will accept up to a fixed number of refugee children in a manner similar to that of this Government. For the information of the Government to which you are accredited, it is conservatively estimated that there are in France alone eight to ten thousand abandoned or orphaned refugee children. Should that Government be willing to make this humanitarian offer, please request the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to authorize its chief of mission in Bern to issue the appropriate number of immigration visas and to maintain their validity until suitable transportation facilities from Switzerland to its country become available. The Government may be informed that the special representative of the War Refugee Board attached to the American Legation in Bern will be glad to cooperate with the diplomatic and consular officers of the other American Republics in this as well as in all other refugee matters.

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

HULL

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-78
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

000925

JDC Operations

000926

PROGRAMS WITH RESPECT TO RELIEF AND RESCUE OF REFUGEES: EVACUATION TO SWITZERLAND

JDC OPERATIONS IN FRANCE

The Board has worked out with the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee a program to evacuate 5,000 to 6,000 abandoned Jewish children from France to Switzerland and to sustain their lives pending evacuation. Licenses were granted in January 1944 permitting these operations up to a total cost of \$600,000 for six months. An initial remittance of \$200,000 was sent to the JDC representative in Switzerland and operations are under way. (For further evacuation details see VI D - 1, Evacuation of Abandoned Children from France.)

The license issued to the JDC was broader than that originally given to the World Jewish Congress in that it permitted expenditures for relief as well as for evacuation work (a difference since removed by the broadening of the license to the WJC).

In February 1944 the JDC license was amended to conform with that issued to the Union of Orthodox Rabbis, so as to permit the purchase of local currency against free exchange where such action is necessary to acquire the local currency (see attachment #1 to VII C - 7, Cooperation with Treasury Department).

See also VI A - 2, Relief through Vatican to Jews in Italy, and VI E - 1, Evacuation of Refugees from Island of Rab, for which projects the JDC has remitted funds.

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

000927

WJC Operations

000928

PROGRAMS WITH RESPECT TO THE RELIEF AND RESCUE OF REFUGEES: EVACUATION
TO SWITZERLAND

WJC OPERATIONS

In July 1943, in response to a report that Rumania could be prevailed upon to release some 70,000 Jews, the Treasury reviewed its position with regard to the licensing of evacuation and relief operations in Europe. The proposed evacuation was said to require \$170,000 and was to be handled by the World Jewish Congress. The Treasury declared that it was prepared to license the transaction provided that (1) no foreign exchange or other benefit accrued to the enemy, (2) blocked accounts in this country for the payment of such funds were subjected to extra safeguards, and (3) the past ownership of the local currency was established.

In September the U. S. Minister in Bern was instructed to issue a license to the WJC authorizing it to undertake transactions necessary for the evacuation of Jewish refugees from Rumania and France. Reimbursement for the purchase of local currency was to be made from blocked accounts in the United States or Switzerland, created by the deposit of funds by private groups in this country. Funds were then to be allocated to the persons furnishing the currency, such persons to be certified by the WJC. No payment from such blocked accounts would be permitted until the end of the war and without the approval of the WJC, and no assignments of interest in such blocked accounts would be permitted. The acquisition of ownership of the francs purchased was to be checked. This license was not issued by the U. S. Minister due to British opposition, among other things.

Winant advised that, while the British Ministry of Economic Warfare was prepared to agree in principle with the financial arrangements proposed by Treasury, the British Foreign Office saw grave objections because of the difficulties which they perceived in the evacuation of "any considerable number of Jews from enemy-occupied territory in view of the problems of "shipping" and of "finding accommodations in the countries of the Near East."

The license was finally issued in December 1943 and the first \$25,000 remitted. A total amount of \$100,000 covering a period of six months, as requested, was licensed. (In this connection see Cable No. 242 dated January 10 to London).

(cont.)

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72

By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

100929

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

- 2 -

In January this license was amended so as to permit free exchange being made available in enemy territory, if necessary, to obtain local currency, thereby making this license similar to that issued to the Union of Orthodox Rabbis. A subsequent amendment permitted operations in "enemy or enemy-occupied territory" in place of the original "France and Rumania."

In communications from Bern through the State Department (Cable No. 1160 dated February 26 and Cable No. 1851 dated March 25) information has been relayed to the WJC concerning disposition of certain of the funds transmitted for these relief and rescue activities.

On May 5 the WJC license was further amended, permitting among other things the remittance to Switzerland of the Swiss franc equivalent of another \$100,000 for evacuations from France, Rumania, and other enemy territory. (Cable No. 1640 to Bern dated May 11).

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-73
By R. H. Corke Date SEP 28 1972

000930

France and Italy (IRRC)

000931

VI D - 4

PROGRAMS WITH RESPECT TO RELIEF AND RESCUE OF REFUGEES: EVACUATION TO SWITZERLAND

RESCUE OF REFUGEES FROM FRANCE AND ITALY (IRRC)

Early in February 1944 the International Rescue and Relief Committee, Inc., requested permission to send \$60,000 over a period of six months to its Swiss representative in Zurich for use in connection with the rescue and temporary relief of certain refugees trapped in France and northern Italy.

The license subsequently issued (see Cable No. 839 to Bern dated March 14) contains the same provisions as do the licenses issued to the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (see attachment #1 to VII C - 7), the World Jewish Congress, and the Union of Orthodox Rabbis, except that in the license issued to the IRRC it is specified that the total amount authorized for the six-month period beginning February 15, 1944, may not exceed Swiss francs 255,000 or the dollar equivalent thereof (approximately \$60,000).

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

000932

France (SECE)

000933

PROGRAMS WITH RESPECT TO RELIEF AND RESCUE OF REFUGEES: EVACUATION TO SWITZERLAND

RESCUE OF REFUGEES FROM FRANCE (SECE)

Since 1937 a group known as Selfhelp to Emigres from Central Europe, Inc., has operated primarily for the purpose of assisting victims of Nazi oppression, many of them of the intellectual group. Though its committees in Prague, Brussels, and Paris have had to be dissolved, Selfhelp of Emigres still continues its work in Switzerland through its Zurich committee and through the Comite pour le Placement de Refugies Intellectuels in Geneva.

Through urgent Red Cross messages, it was learned that a great many refugees from Hitlerism now in France are in desperate need of money, partly in order to buy food, partly to facilitate their liberation from camps, but largely, it is inferred, to enable them to make the dangerous trip to such neutral countries as Switzerland and Spain. Because of limitations imposed by the Trading with the Enemy Act, Selfhelp of Emigres had to restrict its work in recent years to the assistance of such refugees as had already reached Switzerland. In early February 1944, however, Selfhelp petitioned for a license to permit the transfer of funds to its representative in Geneva to be used for the rescue of these refugees in France and other enemy-occupied countries -- including Italy, Belgium, and Holland -- and for their relief pending evacuation.

The license subsequently issued (see Cable No. 782 to Bern dated March 9) contains the same provisions as do the licenses issued to the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (see attachment #1 to VII C - 7), the World Jewish Congress, and the Union of Orthodox Rabbis, except that in the license issued to the SECE it is specified that the total amount authorized for the period ending August 31, 1944, may not exceed Swiss francs 93,618 or the dollar equivalent thereof (approximately \$23,000).

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

000934