

Projects AND Documents, Volume II
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VI E.
OTHER EVACUATION

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OTHER EVACUATION PROJECTS

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By R. H. Parks Date: SEP 28 1972

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Rab

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PROGRAMS WITH RESPECT TO RELIEF AND RESCUE OF REFUGEES: OTHER
EVACUATION PROJECTS

EVACUATION OF REFUGEES FROM ISLAND OF RAB

In October 1943 the State Department transmitted to the U. S. Embassy in London (Airgram No. 1391 dated October 12, 1943) information received from the World Jewish Congress that there were some 4,000 refugees on the Island of Rab in the Adriatic badly in need of supplies and also in danger of recapture by the Germans. Rab, then reportedly occupied by Yugoslav Partisans, is said to have changed hands several times. The Embassy was instructed to refer the matter to the Intergovernmental Committee.

A reply from IGC transmitted by the Embassy (Dispatch No. 7682 dated November 4, 1943) suggested that the matter be brought to the attention of the military authorities in North Africa or Italy by the State Department. While it was recognized that the military forces might be unable to provide transportation for the refugees, then estimated at 1500, it was suggested that, if funds could be gotten to the refugees, they might be able to procure small Italian boats themselves. The use of the camp at Bari, or other camps in Italy, was urged. The question of the source of funds was raised for later consideration, and it was recommended that that problem should not be permitted to delay action.

The Chiefs of Staff on December 15 (as indicated in Airgram No. A-12 to London dated January 3; see attachment #1) informed the State Department that no direct assistance could be rendered by the military at this time, since supplies and facilities for refugees in Italy were already overtaxed and the Army had no desire to create a precedent which might result in a tremendous influx. It would, however, continue, as in the past, to care for refugees reaching safety.

On February 1, 1944, a memorandum was sent to the War Department by the Secretary of the Treasury with the approval of Mr. Stettinius (see attachment #2), proposing a method by which the refugees on Rab might be rescued. It was proposed that the War Department or the Theater

(cont.)

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Commander should transmit a message to the Yugoslav Partisans, requesting that the Partisans furnish local currency to the refugees so that they might arrange to escape to Italy, the Partisans to be reimbursed in U.S. dollars or such other currency as requested. It was further proposed that, in the event the Partisans could not furnish the local currency to the refugees, they should be requested to aid the refugees in escaping by guaranteeing payment to the boat owner assisting the refugees and that payment would be made to such boat owner by the American military authorities upon the arrival of the refugees in Italy. (In this connection see also Cable No. 370 dated January 14 and Cable No. 967 dated February 8.)

On February 8, 1944, Secretary Stimson advised the board that this proposal had been referred to the Combined Chiefs of Staff. A subsequent report from the War Department dated March 12 stated that the matter was being pressed with all the urgency which the situation permits.

In a communication from Ambassador Winant to State it was indicated that the British Foreign Office had informed the Director of the Intergovernmental Committee that lire would be the currency required in connection with the proposed escape of refugees from the Island of Rab. The Deputy Paymaster in southern Italy was said to be able to supply it. It was added that the British Government could arrange for the transfer of the dollar equivalent, if the Board had not found means of transferring funds (Cable No. 1492 dated February 23).

The Board advised Winant that the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee was willing to make an initial remittance of \$25,000 for the Rab project, when advised as to whether the funds should be deposited to the account of the British Foreign Office or the Finance Officer. Winant was also asked to inform the Board as to whether lire to cover the cost of evacuations would be transmitted to Partisans in Yugoslavia or would be made available to persons in Italy (Cable No. 1782 dated March 9).

In reply Winant informed the Board that the Embassy had been advised that a check in the sterling equivalent should be made out in favor of the Finance Officer and sent to the Foreign Office. Winant was unable to indicate whether lire would be transmitted to the Yugoslav Partisans or to persons in Italy. \$25,000 was subsequently remitted (Cable No. 2251 dated March 20).

Leonard Ackermann, the Board's Special Representative in the Mediterranean Area, has indicated that, according to information reaching Algiers, the Germans may have reoccupied the Island of Rab, rendering evacuation impossible unless the refugees who were there succeeded in reaching Vis. Ackermann reported that, despite this probable reoccupation, the message of the Combined Chiefs of Staff with respect to evacuation possibilities was being forwarded to Marshal Tito for his opinion (Cable No. 1062 from Algiers dated April 1).

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MEMORANDUM TO SECRETARY STIMSON FROM SECRETARY MORGENTHAU

February 1, 1944

I wish to preface my discussion by saying that in December the Joint Chiefs of Staff were approached at the instance of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees with a comprehensive project to rescue refugees from the Island of Rab. This plan would have necessitated direct assistance upon the part of the military authorities involving questions of transport, etc. On this basis the Commanding General in the North African Theater of Operations decided that the military situation did not permit the operation contemplated. However, since the proposal which I am about to make is entirely different and much simpler than that rejected by the Commanding General, and in view of our Government's policy with respect to refugees announced at the time of the establishment of the War Refugee Board, I recommend the following for your urgent consideration.

Information we have received indicates that there are presently some 1500 refugees, mostly Jewish, on the Island of Rab in the Adriatic off the Dalmatian coast. They apparently were taken there some time ago by Yugoslav Partisans after being freed from internment. The Island has changed hands several times, but it is understood to be again in the possession of the Partisans.

It is believed that many of such refugees might be able to hire boats to bring them to Italy if they had the necessary funds. Similar escapes apparently have been arranged by Yugoslav refugees now in Italy. Funds are available to the War Refugee Board, and probably also from private organizations for this purpose and, if possible, should be sent to these refugees as soon as possible.

As a method of accomplishing the foregoing, I suggest the following possibility. If means of communication exist between our armed forces and the Yugoslav Partisan leaders, it is suggested that you or the Theater Commander transmit a message to the latter requesting -

(a) that the Partisans furnish local currency to refugees on the Island of Rab so that the latter may by their own efforts arrange escape to Italy, it being understood that such expenditures will be reimbursed in United States dollars or in such other money as the Partisans request;

(cont.)

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By Authority of T.O. 160

By RAP Date SEP 28 1972

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VIE - 1
attach. #1

AIRGRAM NO. A-12 TO LONDON FROM THE STATE DEPARTMENT

January 3, 1944

With reference assistance to refugees on Island of Rab your 7682 November 4 following is quoted from letter received from Joint Chiefs of Staff dated December 15, 1943 quote:

The Commanding General, North African Theater of Operations, has been consulted with regard to this matter and, pursuant to his recommendation, it has been determined that the military situation does not permit the military authorities to render any direct assistance to these refugees at this time.

The Theater Commander has reported that supplies and facilities for displaced persons in Italy are already overstrained, and that demands for these items should, if possible, be reduced. Aside from the fact that operational needs do not permit the rendition of assistance to these refugees, it is considered that to take such action might create a precedent which would lead to other demands and an influx of additional refugees for the care of whom the military authorities would be unable to provide facilities and supplies. Although recommending that no direct assistance or funds be provided, the Theater Commander states that he will continue, as in the past, to care for any refugees who should be able to reach Italy as a result of their own efforts.

Our latest information is that the refugees on the Island of Rab, together with those at Otocac in Northwest Croatia, total approximately 1,500, and that the majority of these refugees are Jews unquote.

Since receipt of letter in reference Department has official information Germans now hold Rab.

Please transmit such portions of the above communication as you may deem appropriate to the Directorate of the Intergovernmental Committee and if the present information of the Committee suggests means of aiding these refugees Department should be informed.

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(b) that the Partisans, in the event they cannot furnish necessary local currency, aid the refugees in arranging escape by guaranteeing to the boat owners and other persons assisting in the escape that payment will be made to them by the American military authorities upon arrival of the refugees in Italy;

(c) that the Partisans keep the appropriate American military authorities advised of their operations in this field.

It will, of course, be necessary for the Theater Commander to make arrangements for payments in Italy in certain cases to persons bringing refugees there from the Island of Rab, and possibly for certain other financial transactions. It is also essential that the Theater Commander continue his policy of caring for any refugees who may be able to reach Italy as the result of their own efforts. Such other assistance as he may be able to give will, naturally, be extremely valuable. It may be made perfectly clear that the War Refugee Board assumes full financial responsibility for this operation and will reimburse all outlays.

If you think that the procedure indicated is feasible, I am sure that you will agree that it should be executed as promptly as possible in view of the uncertainty of the continued possession of the Island of Rab by the Partisans.

This has been cleared with Mr. Stettinius who is in agreement.

H. Morgenthau, Jr.

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By Authority of T.O. 160

By RHP Date SEP 28 1972

000943

Poland to Hungary (UOR)

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PROGRAMS WITH RESPECT TO RELIEF AND RESCUE OF REFUGEES: OTHER EVACUATION PROJECTS

TRANSFER OF JEWS FROM POLAND TO HUNGARY, ETC. (UOR)

According to a letter of January 21 to the Board from the State Department, it was reported by the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada that since Hungary and the Polish Government-in-Exile are not at war and Hungary has tacitly agreed to give refuge to Polish Jews, many thousands of Jews now in hiding along the Polish borders could be saved if funds were made available for rescue work.

Accordingly, with the consent of the State Department, a Treasury license was issued to the UOR on January 22, 1944, for \$100,000 to be forwarded to Sternbuch, UOR agent in Switzerland, who was to arrange for the evacuation of persons in enemy or enemy-occupied territory whose lives are in imminent danger (Cable No. 229 dated January 22; see also the memo of January 28 addressed to Secretary Morgenthau by Mr. Paul, which appears as attachment #1). The license provides that the money transmitted might also be used to sustain lives pending such evacuation.

The license permits procuring foreign currency by purchase (1) in Switzerland, (2) in enemy or enemy-occupied territory with blocked funds, subject to payment after the war, or (3) in enemy or enemy-occupied territory with free exchange, if necessary. The license covers the first six months of 1944 and transactions pursuant to it are to be reported through the Swiss Embassy.

The license was received by Sternbuch on January 27 and on February 19 Minister Harrison reported the purchase of 300,000 pengoes, which were turned over to three persons in Hungary for use in that country (Cable No. 1054 dated February 19 and Cable No. 1578 dated March 15). Similar arrangements were pending with regard to Slovakia.

In a message communicated to the Board through Harrison (Cable No. 1321 dated March 4) a report is made by UOR representatives concerning funds

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transmitted and other details relating to these rescue activities. Difficulties reportedly encountered by refugees, particularly younger men, attempting to enter Switzerland are also described (see IV D-3, Cooperation with Switzerland).

In a subsequent communication to Bern (Cable No. 843 dated March 14) in response to a message from Harrison (Cable No. 1321 dated March 4) the Board requested that Sternbuch be advised of the authorization by the UOR of the use of funds already remitted for the purpose of carrying on evacuation and relief operations in any enemy-occupied region whatsoever, including France, Holland, and Belgium. While the license issued by the Treasury to the UOR permits operations throughout enemy-occupied regions, Sternbuch's previous instructions from the UOR had mentioned only Poland and Hungary.

Although the money for this project was obtained through the first method provided in the license, Sternbuch has been advised that he need not be unduly concerned over the possibility that currency may be made available in enemy territory under the third method, since Treasury, State, and the Board regard the saving of lives as of paramount importance (Cable No. 856 dated March 15; see attachment #2).

In March application was made by the UOR through the Board for permission to forward another \$100,000 for relief and evacuation purposes; this permission was granted by the Treasury on March 21.

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VIE-2
attach. #1

MEMORANDUM TO SECRETARY MORGENTHAU FROM RANDOLPH PAUL

January 28, 1944

To: Secretary Morgenthau

From: Randolph Paul

In connection with the licenses recently issued to the World Jewish Congress and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee authorizing certain relief and evacuation operations in France and Rumania, you will be interested to know that, at State's request, Foreign Funds Control has issued a license to the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada to undertake the transactions necessary to rescue and evacuate to Hungary numbers of Jews who remain hidden in the forests of Poland and Slovakia. The operations will be carried on through underground channels by a committee of three persons in St. Gall, Switzerland, acting as the representatives of the Union. Initially, the operations will cost about \$100,000.

The license goes further than the two previous ones in that the necessary local funds, goods and services may be acquired from persons in enemy or enemy-occupied territory against payment in free exchange or free currency notes. This represents a change in our basic policy with respect to trading with the enemy problems. It is, of course, limited to cases such as these which involve the saving of lives.

Without clearing with the British, State has agreed to cable the text of the license to Bern stating that the operations under the license have its approval, as well as that of the Treasury. With State's approval on a license going this far, it is felt that the way has been cleared for the licenses which will be necessary in carrying out the relief and evacuation operations envisaged under the War Refugee Board.

R.E.P.

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By Authority of T.O. 160

By RNF Date SEP 28 1972

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VI E - 2
attach. #2

CABLE NO. 856 TO BERN FROM THE BOARD

March 15, 1944

War Refugee Board sends the following:

This message is in reply to your telegram no. 1054 regarding license of Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada.

In connection with the comment made by Sternbuch with respect to clause A(2) specified in the license, the State and Treasury Departments would like to make clear that for the operations described in the licenses all three methods detailed in this and similar licenses can be used. You are requested to inform Sternbuch at once of the foregoing and also the representatives of other organizations to which similar licenses have been issued and advise them that all three methods may be used in acquiring the required local currency. Although the third method may make foreign exchange available in enemy territory, that method should be used if it proves to be the most effective for the quick execution of the relief and evacuation operations which the license authorizes.

With a view to avoiding delay, you are requested to make liberal interpretations of the provisions of all the licenses issued, always bearing in mind that time is important and that the operations which these licenses authorize should be initiated at once. In the present situation the War Refugee Board, the Treasury and the Department consider the saving of lives of paramount importance.

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By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

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Poland to Hungary (JLO)

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PROGRAMS WITH RESPECT TO RELIEF AND RESCUE OF REFUGEES: RELIEF PROJECTS

TRANSFER OF JEWS FROM POLAND TO HUNGARY, ETC. (JLC)

On February 8, 1944, the Jewish Labor Committee was granted a license for evacuation work and necessary communication with persons in enemy or enemy-occupied territory, including evacuating Jews from Poland to Hungary and from France to Switzerland. This license (see Cable No. 584 to Bern dated February 21) 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 JLC it is specified that the total amount authorized for the first six months of 1944 may not exceed Swiss francs 214,320 or the dollar equivalent thereof (approximately \$50,000).

One group with which these rescue and relief activities are largely concerned consists of anti-Nazi labor and political refugees, now in Switzerland or being evacuated to that country, who are in desperate need of food, clothing, and housing. Outside of the support given them by the International Rescue and Relief Committee, there are said to be no organized relief activities on behalf of this group.

Another important part of the evacuation activities being undertaken by the JLC is the rescue of Jewish children from France (see VI D - 1, Evacuation of Abandoned Children from France) and of Jews who are now in hiding in Polish forests. The JLC has reported that this work is being carried on in cooperation with OSE, the French child-care group.

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Czech

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PROGRAMS WITH RESPECT TO RELIEF AND RESCUE OF REFUGEES: OTHER EVACUATION PROJECTS*

RESCUE OF CZECHOSLOVAKIANS

In a letter dated March 8 United Czechoslovak Relief applied for Board approval and assistance in securing a Treasury license for remitting funds for the following purposes in enemy and enemy-occupied territory, including Czechoslovakia, Poland, and France: the relief of families in Czechoslovakia of executed persons and political prisoners; the rescue of persecuted people from central Europe to neutral and Allied countries; the relief of persecuted people hiding in Czechoslovakia and, so far, unable to escape; the relief of Jews confined in ghettos in Czechoslovakia; the relief of Czechoslovak Jews transported to Poland; and the relief of Czechoslovak women and children refugees in France-- for the most part, families of Czechoslovak soldiers.

The Board subsequently worked out with United Czechoslovak Relief, the National CIO War Relief Committee, and the United Nations Relief, AFL, a program for the rescue and relief of such refugees. A remittance of \$150,000 to the representatives of United Czechoslovak Relief in London was approved by the Treasury for this purpose. The funds for these operations were obtained by special appropriation from the National War Fund at the request of the labor organizations serving as sponsors. The Treasury license issued in this connection (see Cable No. 2518 dated March 31) 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 United Czechoslovak Relief it is specified that the total amount authorized may not exceed \$150,000 or the foreign currency equivalent thereof, during 1944.

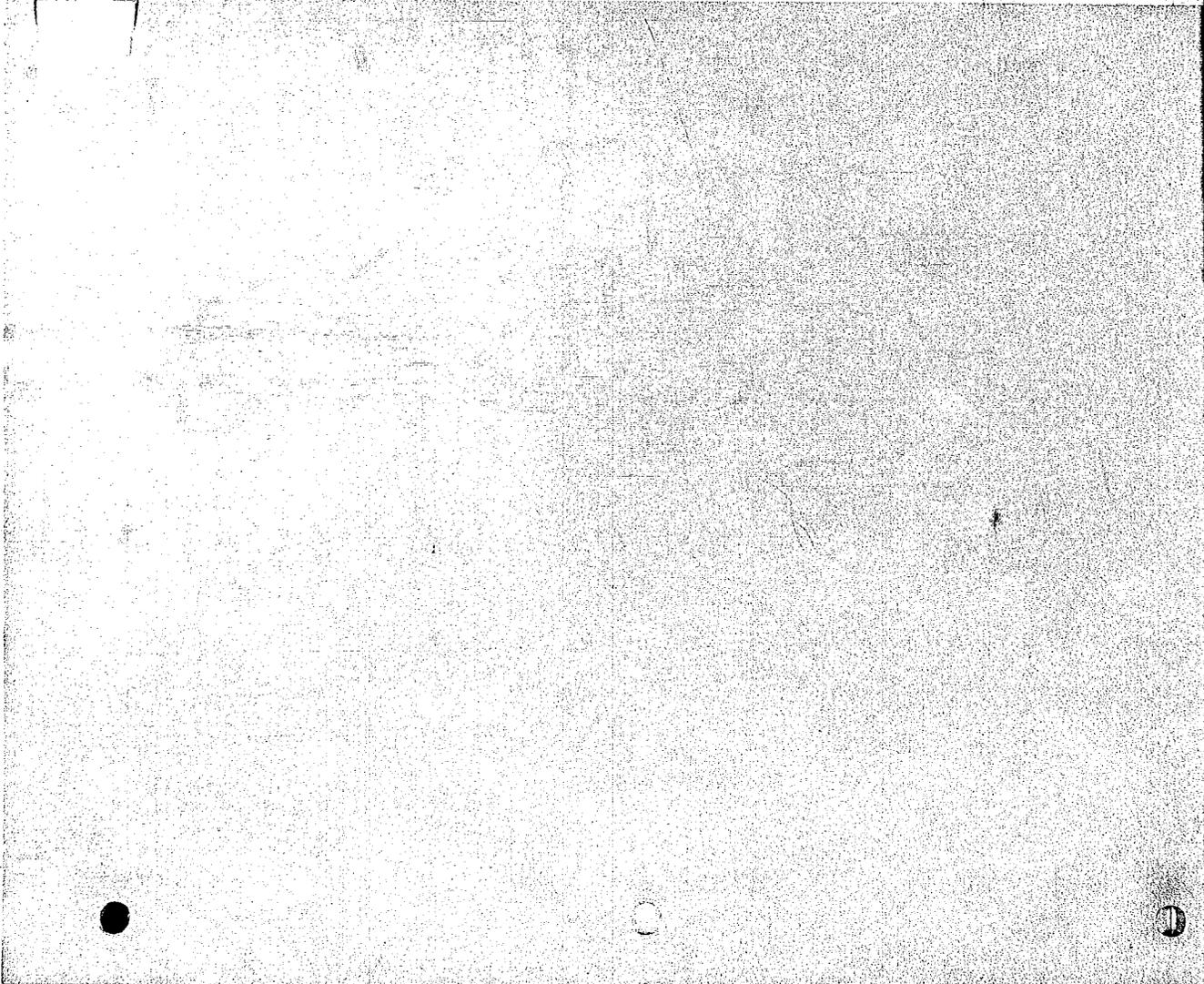
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Norwegians



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PROGRAM WITH RESPECT TO RELIEF AND RESCUE OF REFUGEES:
OTHER EVACUATION PROJECTS

RESCUE OF NORWEGIANS

The Board has worked out with the American Relief for Norway, Inc., the National CIO War Relief, the United Nations Relief, AFL, and the Norwegian Government a program for the relief of political prisoners in Norway and for the rescue of Norwegian political and other refugees from Germany. \$200,000 was obtained for this purpose by American Relief for Norway, Inc., by special appropriation from the National War Fund, the allocation being made at the request of the sponsoring labor organizations. The Treasury license issued in this connection 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 American Relief for Norway, Inc., it is specified that the total amount authorized may not exceed \$200,000 or the Swedish krona equivalent thereof, during 1944. (See Cable No. 619 to Stockholm dated April 8)

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By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

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Evac. from Finland

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PROGRAMS WITH RESPECT TO RELIEF AND RESCUE OF REFUGEES: OTHER EVACUATION PROJECTS

EVACUATION OF REFUGEES FROM FINLAND

Some time ago Minister Johnson reported from Stockholm that Sweden had refused entry to 113 Jewish refugees who had gone to Finland from central Europe in 1938 and 1939, despite repeated requests on Johnson's part and despite the fact that the Finnish Government itself had made application for the admission of these refugees to Sweden. Johnson subsequently prevailed upon the Swedish Government to re-examine the case, in view of the danger of serious persecution, not only to the Jewish refugees in question but to local Jews and many non-Jewish refugees who would be equally threatened as a result of increasing German influence in Finland. (In this connection see Cable No. 1235 from Stockholm dated April 11 and Cable No. 724 to Stockholm dated April 21.) The Board has now guaranteed to make arrangements for the evacuation from Sweden, as soon as practical, of all threatened persons other than Swedes who may be accorded refuge in Sweden, and for the maintenance while in Sweden of such refugees who cannot claim the support of their own governments. As a result, Swedish visas have now been authorized for 100 of the central European refugees now in Finland "as a starter" (Cable No. 1379 from Stockholm dated April 21).

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Italy & Med. Area

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PROGRAMS WITH RESPECT TO RELIEF AND RESCUE OF REFUGEES: OTHER
EVACUATION PROJECTS

EVACUATIONS TO ITALY AND THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA

According to a report from the U.S. Legation in Cairo, the British Foreign Office has instructed its Yugoslavian Embassy to approach Tito with a view to obtaining his active aid in facilitating the escape of Jews from Hungary through Partisan territory (Cable No. 88 from Cairo dated April 13). The Board's great interest in facilitating such escapes to Italy and the Mediterranean area, has likewise been indicated in a cable to Cairo. The U. S. Legation there has been advised that arrangements can be made for any assistance necessary, including financial, in order to enable these refugees to reach places of safety.

Board Representative Ackermann reported from Algiers that he has again discussed with a Yugoslav Partisan general certain problems involved in such evacuations. The Board was advised that from 15 to 20 schooners with a speed of at least ten knots are needed immediately. The need for a number of smaller vessels for the journey from the Yugoslavian mainland to the Dalmatian Islands was also reported. Ackermann further indicated that it may be possible to obtain certain 200-ton ships, for evacuation purposes, provided their allocation can be arranged through MEDBO (Cable No. 1337 from Algiers dated April 22).

At the Board's request, Admiral Land of the War Shipping Administration has agreed to instruct Kallcock, the WSA representative in that area, to explore with Ackermann the shipping problems involved in the projected evacuations and Ackermann has been so advised (Cable No. 1287 to Algiers dated April 28).

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PROGRAMS WITH RESPECT TO RELIEF AND RESCUE OF REFUGEES:
OTHER EVACUATION PROJECTS

EVACUATIONS TO AND THROUGH SWEDEN

The Board has arranged for the transfer of \$50,000 to Board Representative Olsen in Stockholm for use in connection with the rescue of persons now in hiding in the Baltic states. (See Cable No. 1952 from Stockholm dated June 1 and Cable No. 1114 to Stockholm dated June 5.)

The remittance to Stockholm of \$10,000 by the Union of Orthodox Rabbis has been authorized by the Treasury, upon our recommendation, to be used for rescue operations in the Baltic countries, as authorized by Board Representative Olsen (Cable No. 1150 to Stockholm dated June 8).

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PROGRAMS WITH RESPECT TO RELIEF AND RESCUE OF REFUGEES: OTHER EVACUATION
PROJECTS

RESCUE AND RELIEF IN FRANCE

Upon the Board's recommendation, a basic license was issued by the Treasury to the French Relief Fund, Inc., permitting it to carry on relief and rescue operations in enemy or enemy-occupied territory, primarily in France. The remittance of \$150,000 was authorized for these operations.

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VI F.
OTHER RESCUE MEANS

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OTHER MEANS OF EFFECTING RESCUES

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Passports

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PROGRAMS WITH RESPECT TO RELIEF AND RESCUE OF REFUGEES: OTHER MEANS OF EFFECTING RESCUES

RECOGNITION OF LATIN AMERICAN PASSPORTS

In December 1943 the State Department was advised by the Intergovernmental Committee that Paraguay was reported to be threatening to revoke the passports which had apparently been issued illegally to persons, mostly Jewish, in enemy territory, who were threatened with deportation to Poland. A large number of such persons were then interned in Camp Vittel in France. This policy of issuing passports on a purely humanitarian basis and without regard for legal requirements is reported to have had been followed by a number of Latin American Countries.

In response to a strong cable from the State Department, Paraguay denied that it was contemplating any cancellation of the passports in question.

According to one report to the Board, the Swiss Government was not cooperating in this matter. Switzerland had not only not taken active steps to protest the non-recognition by the Germans of such passports; it was proceeding to prosecute the individuals who had been instrumental in obtaining such passports.

On February 21, 1944, the Board submitted to State a proposed cable to Bern, asking the Embassy there to check on the Swiss attitude and to bring pressure upon that Government to take active steps toward inducing the Germans to give recognition to the passports in question. It was also requested that the Swiss Government abstain from prosecuting persons who had been instrumental in procuring these passports.

In a communication from Ambassador Winant (Cable No. 1708 dated March 2; see attachment #1) the Board was advised of the receipt of a letter from the Intergovernmental Committee on the passport problem. It was stated that Dr. Kullman, Honorary Deputy Director of IGC, had reported that the Swiss authorities were opposed to any approach to the

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Germans for the purpose of inducing them to recognize these passports; they were said to feel that such an approach would be unsuccessful and would do more harm than good. The Board's proposed cable to Bern urging that the Swiss make such an approach to the Germans was still pending at State when the cable from Winant was received. The proposed cable to Bern was therefore revised to point out that, although the Board had been informed of the reluctance of Swiss authorities to approach the Germans on this subject, the Board nevertheless still believes that an approach should be made by the Swiss and that the German authorities should be made aware that the treatment of Jews and others under their control is being followed closely (Cable No. 1181 dated April 7; see attachment #2).

On March 31 the Board sent a circular airgram to Honduras, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Haiti, Venezuela, and El Salvador, asking the U. S. Missions there to approach the governments to which they are accredited in an endeavor to secure their agreement, on humanitarian grounds, to take no action until after the war to revoke, cancel, or otherwise impair the effectiveness of the passports held by Polish Jews and other persons now interned in enemy-occupied Europe (Circular Airgram dated March 31; see attachment #3).

In an appeal from the representative of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis in Switzerland it was indicated that 238 Jews interned in Camp Vittel had on March 20 been isolated for deportation on the ground that they possessed only accommodation passports and were thus not eligible for exchange (Cable No. 1958 dated March 30).

Another communication from the UOR representative reported that the Spanish Ambassador in Berlin, as the protecting power of Paraguayans there, was either ignoring the interests of such citizens or was not watching them well enough. It was suggested that the Paraguayan Government be urged to intervene with the Spanish Government at Madrid in an effort to obtain some amelioration of the drastic treatment reported (Cable No. 2139 dated April 6; see also Cable No. 2163 dated April 7).

A subsequent report from Minister Harrison advised of the receipt of a report that the 238 internees to which reference had previously been made, including four claiming U. S. citizenship, had been evacuated from Vittel on March 31 to some unknown location. It was also reported that the Swiss Minister and the Spanish Ambassador in Berlin had declined protective offices. Immediate intervention with Madrid and Bern was again urged (Cable No. 1994 from Bern dated March 31; see attachment #4).

The Board immediately cabled Minister Harrison its conviction that German doubts as to whether these persons are exchange material must be

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promptly and effectively dispelled; Harrison was asked to request the Swiss to use their good offices to inform the Germans that this Government is undertaking discussions with Latin American countries with a view to arrange an exchange against German nationals in the western hemisphere of such internees from enemy territory. Harrison was asked to make it clear that this Government considers all internees who were at Vittel to be eligible for such an exchange; the Germans were to be advised that in the meantime the Board expects the Vittel group to be accorded the same treatment Germany expects to be accorded to her citizens in the western hemisphere (Cable No. 1221 to Bern dated April 10; see attachment #5).

The Board also cabled the U. S. Embassy in Madrid, asking Ambassador Hayes to inform the Spanish Government of the vital interest of this Government in the matter, as well as of the pending discussions with the Latin American countries with respect to the projected exchange (Cable No. 992 to Madrid dated April 10; see attachment #6).

Both the Swiss and Spanish Governments were also asked to make every effort to have returned to Vittel the 238 persons reportedly removed from that camp.

Ambassador Hayes has in turn reported that representations were made to the Spanish Foreign Office as the Board had requested. Hayes stated that although the Spanish Government indicated that it had no information on the matter, it gave assurance that it would attempt to learn the facts as soon as possible with a view toward endeavoring to arrange for the return of these refugees (Cable No. 1397 from Madrid dated April 21).

A circular airgram to the U. S. Missions in Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Haiti, Peru, Nicaragua, and Venezuela was also despatched, asking that the governments of those countries be requested to give their approval to this Government's approach to the German Government through appropriate channels with a view to initiating the proposed exchange negotiations. The Board also requested that these Latin American governments likewise approach the Germans through the protecting power with the demand that all internees holding Latin American passports or consular documents be accorded the same treatment as that given to prisoners of war under the Geneva convention (Circular Airgram dated April 11; see attachment #7).

Minister Harrison meanwhile communicated to the Board the details of approaches made by the Vatican to various Latin American governments in an attempt to work out relief measures and possible evacuation plans for Jews interned in Axis territory and holding Latin American passports or papers (Cable No. 2282 from Bern dated April 13; see attachment #8). Under the circumstances reported, the Board's efforts toward exchange arrangements become all the more urgent. Accordingly, Harrison has been

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instructed to proceed with all possible dispatch in pressing Spain and Switzerland to inform the German authorities that this Government is prepared to consider as exchange material all internees in possession of Latin American papers.

Since certain individuals among the refugees interned in France and Germany claim American citizenship, the Board asked Harrison to advise Switzerland, as the protecting power, that while such claims are under investigation and until the Swiss Government is advised to the contrary, this Government expects such refugees to be treated as U. S. citizens, with all the rights, privileges, and immunities to which such citizens are entitled (Cable No. 1269 to Bern dated April 13). Harrison subsequently advised the Board that these instructions were observed (Cable No. 2510 from Bern dated April 20).

A circular airgram to various Latin American countries dispatched by the Board on April 22 asked that U.S. Missions there communicate to the appropriate officials the urgency of the Vittel group's situation and the need for immediate and favorable responses along the lines previously suggested (see attachment #11).

In a circular airgram dated May 1 and addressed to various Latin American countries, reference was made to the fact that this Government does not expect such countries physically to admit any of these persons, but that arrangements will be made for refuge elsewhere. The Vatican's efforts in this connection were mentioned, and U. S. Ambassadors were asked to impress upon the officials concerned the fact that failure to act will almost certainly spell death for the persons involved (see attachment #12).

The Board also communicated with the Vatican, asking Vatican support of Board efforts on this basis.

In a circular airgram to the various Latin American countries dated May 11 the Board advised U. S. Embassies there of the instructions issued by this Government with respect to honoring all claims to American citizenship by refugees in German-controlled areas. It was suggested that these instructions might be of value in connection with pressing for cooperation in the rescue of refugees holding Latin American travel documents. The Board also asked that the various Latin American republics be approached again with respect to supporting the representations made through Spain and Switzerland (see attachment #13).

With respect to Cuba, the report from Bern had indicated that Cuba's reply to Vatican inquiries had been to the effect that passports issued in her name to Jews in German-held territory would be recognized by Cuba

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if Great Britain and the United States had no objection. Ambassador Braden in Havana was therefore instructed to convey to the Cuban authorities this Government's appreciation of the Cuban attitude, along with assurance that the United States has no objection to Cuban recognition of such documents (Airgram No. A-738 to Havana dated May 3). Ambassador Winant in London was asked to request that a similar assurance be given by Great Britain to Cuba (Cable No. 3644 to London dated May 6). The Board's circular airgrams of March 31 and April 11 were also repeated to Havana for Braden's information and action.

Venezuela at once promised full cooperation in connection with the projected exchange. Venezuela also agreed to approach the Germans, through the protecting power, with a demand that the rights of internees holding Venezuelan passports or claiming citizenship on the basis of such consular documents be respected (Airgram No. A-323 from Caracas dated April 15 comprising attachment #9). The U. S. Embassy in Venezuela was subsequently instructed to press for immediate action in this connection (Airgram No. A-245 to Caracas dated May 2).

According to a report from Ambassador Frost, representations to the Honduran Government were likewise completely successful, both with respect to passport recognition and the proposed exchange negotiations (Cable No. 127 from Tegucigalpa dated April 26; see attachment #9). The text of formal notes from the Honduran Foreign Minister on both scores was subsequently forwarded to the Board (Cables No. 128 and 129 from Tegucigalpa dated April 26). In the course of conversations leading to these decisions, the Honduran Minister for Foreign Affairs is said to have indicated that while no inquiries concerning the validity of passports had been received from the Spanish Government, he proposed to ignore any such inquiries as might later be received. Since the Board believes that ignoring such inquiries might lead Spain to give Germany misleading information with respect to the Honduran attitude, Ambassador Frost was immediately requested to suggest that in case of inquiries by Spain, the Spanish Minister should be informed of the substance of the Honduran notes to this Government on the matter (Airgram No. A-100 to Tegucigalpa dated May 9).

According to a report from the U. S. Embassy in Lima, the Peruvian Foreign Office has indicated that the Swiss Government some three months ago submitted a list of 48 persons interned in Axis countries and inquired as to whether Peru would honor the Peruvian passports held by these internees. The Peruvian Government's reply was in the negative, as far as those 48 persons were concerned. In response to this Government's recommendation that in the future such passports be honored for humanitarian reasons, a Foreign Office spokesman is reported to have expressed sympathy with the suggestion (Airgram No. A-357 from Lima dated April 10).

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The Board was subsequently advised by the U. S. Embassy in Costa Rica that the Costa Rican Minister for Foreign Affairs had indicated that it had been his original intention to declare a number of these passports invalid and to restrict the periods of validity of others. As a result of Board representations, however, the Minister is said to have stated that he would be inclined to cooperate along the lines recommended, in view of the humanitarian considerations involved (Dispatch No. 1279 from San Jose dated April 17). The Embassy there has since been instructed to press for more specific action, namely, an approach by Costa Rica to the German Government through the protecting power along the lines previously suggested (Airgram No. A-229 to San Jose dated May 10).

Although there has been no formal reply from the Nicaraguan Government to approaches through the U. S. Embassy there, the Board has been advised of a statement by the Nicaraguan Foreign Minister to the effect that between 125 and 150 persons in occupied Europe are believed to have obtained Nicaraguan passports fraudulently. It was also reported that the practice of the Nicaraguan Government has generally been to decline to confirm the validity of such travel documents when questions were asked by the German Government through the protecting power. The Foreign Minister is now reported to have agreed to discuss with the President of Nicaragua the feasibility of approaching the Germans through the Swiss with a request that the interests of all bearers of Nicaraguan passports be safeguarded. The Foreign Minister is said to have expressed his belief that the President would agree to such an approach. With respect to exchange possibilities, it was indicated that inasmuch as it is not anticipated that Nicaragua will be obligated physically to admit any of the holders of such travel documents, the Nicaraguan President would also probably support this Government's negotiations for such an exchange (Dispatch No. 2137 from Managua dated April 17).

According to a report from the U. S. Embassy in Paraguay, the Paraguayan Foreign Minister has stated informally that his Government will steadfastly recognize until after the war the validity of Paraguayan passports held by internees in Axis territory. The Paraguayan Minister is also reported to have taken a favorable attitude with respect to the projected exchange negotiations. No formal affirmative decision, however, has been forthcoming in either respect (Airgram No. A-139 from Asuncion dated April 22).

See also IV D - 1, Cooperation with Spain; IV D - 3, Cooperation with Switzerland; and IV E, Cooperation with Latin American Governments.

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CABLE NO. 1708 TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT FROM LONDON

March 2, 1944.

Director IGC has written Embassy further regarding passports referred to in Embassy's 1543, February 24th. His letter dated February 29th which suggests at its conclusion certain action by Department states as follows:

"Doctor Kullmann has returned from Switzerland where he was able to obtain a good deal of information. He discussed the matter with various Swiss authorities, with the United States Minister, the Polish Minister, the International Red Cross and with representatives of several voluntary organizations.

The facts are briefly as follows. There has been a large trade in passports. It is estimated that 4,000 have been issued from Switzerland and it is known that others have been issued from other neutral countries including Sweden. Some informants estimated the total number to be as high as nine to ten thousand but some thought that it did not exceed 5,000. In Switzerland it was organized by private individuals and reached such proportions that the Swiss Federal Government had to intervene since it threatened to embarrass their position and to give the German authorities the pretext of interfering with the Swiss administration of refugees affairs a matter in which the Swiss Government has hitherto successfully avoided any intervention and has been able to carry out a liberal policy to the great advantage of refugees in general. Legal action was taken against several of the organizers and at the same time enquiry was made regarding the authority of some of the representatives of the South American states to carry on these transactions. Doctor Kullmann was informed for instance that the Honduras Consul who had lost his exequatur for other reasons in 1942 had subsequently issued 400 passports. He further learnt that the Consuls in Switzerland of Haiti, Paraguay and Peru had been dismissed. The average price paid for a passport was approximately 700 Swiss francs. On the other hand the Consul of San Salvador has acted from purely humanitarian motives and has charged no fee at all.

There seems little doubt that the German authorities are aware of what has been going on but for reasons of their own they have hitherto

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not adopted a general policy of withdrawing the passports. While in many cases the possession of these documents has afforded the owners protection against persecution and even special treatment in some of the camps, in other cases they have afforded no protection at all and particularly so where the persons concerned were not interned. Originally the German authorities seem to have cherished the hope that the persons with these South American passports might constitute a basis for the exchange of German nationals in South American countries and it is not improbable that they still have vague hopes of this. Other reasons have been suggested for their lack of consistency. Recently however they have been making enquiries through some of the protecting powers of the South American Governments concerned regarding the genuineness of the documents and they have been submitting lists of persons concerned with a view to verification.

Of the countries mentioned in your letter of the 13th January the Consuls in Switzerland of Chile, Haiti, Paraguay, Peru and probably Ecuador were concerned in the issue of passports. It is probable though not certain that passports of Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Venezuela have been issued by Consuls in countries other than Switzerland.

The above is a brief statement of facts. In regard to action the Swiss authorities are very definite that any approach to the German authorities would not only infructuose but would do more harm than good. There remains the approach to the Governments of the countries concerned which I mentioned in my letter of the 21st February. It is now clear that this approach should cover two points, (first) that the Governments should refrain from withdrawing the passports which have been issued and (second) that if and when the protecting power on the request of the German authorities submits lists of persons with such passports they should instruct the protecting power that the passports have been confirmed. The second is a new point but a very important one and I would ask that the State Department be requested to include it in its representations. I would also request that representations be made to the Government of San Salvador."

WIMANT

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

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CABLE NO. 1181 TO BERN FROM THE BOARD

April 7, 1944

The Department has received from London Kullmann's report of his discussions with you, the Swiss authorities, the Polish Minister, the International Red Cross and representatives of voluntary agencies concerning the attitude of Switzerland towards those who assisted Poles, including Polish Jews, in France to obtain passports issued in the names of Latin-American countries, and the attitude of the German authorities with respect to the persons in enemy-controlled areas holding such passports. This Government is approaching the Latin-American Governments and is urging them on humanitarian grounds to take no action, at least until after the war, to revoke or cancel such passports or to indicate that they are or may be revoked or cancelled or may be considered ineffective or invalid. As you probably know, the Government of Paraguay has already advised this Government and the Intergovernmental Committee that it has not cancelled and is not considering cancelling such passports issued in its name.

There is some hope that Poles, including Polish Jews, holding such passports will continue to receive more favorable treatment than persons who do not. It is this Government's view that any action that might result in endangering their lives or subjecting them to transportation or worsening of their condition should be avoided. It is also of the view that all appropriate action calculated to protect the lives and welfare of these persons should be taken.

Accordingly, you are requested to approach appropriate officials of the Swiss Government and advise them of this Government's views. You should request appropriate officials of the Swiss Government to approach the Germans in an effort to induce them to continue to recognize the validity of Latin-American passports held by persons in Vittel and elsewhere unless the Government in whose name the passport has been issued takes affirmative action to cancel or revoke it or deny its validity. In this connection, Kullman and others report that the Swiss Government has taken legal action against the persons in Switzerland who were instrumental in securing these passports and that the Swiss Government has also undertaken an inquiry regarding the authority of some of the persons who have issued such passports. It is this Government's view, and appropriate Swiss

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authorities should be so advised, that the validity of the passports in question is not in issue and should not be put in issue by Swiss authorities in the absence of affirmative renunciation by the Latin-American Governments concerned. In any event, it would seem that such action and inquiry might, on humanitarian grounds, if no other, be postponed until after the war, and you should so inform the Swiss Government.

For your information, Kullmann has reported that the Swiss authorities are definite that any approach to the Germans would not only be ineffectual but would do more harm than good. This Government cannot agree with that view. The Department and the War Refugee Board have reasons to believe and are strongly of the view that it is of the utmost importance and can only help persons subject to enemy persecution that German authorities be kept continuously aware that the treatment of Jews and others in enemy-controlled areas is being followed with the closest attention.

Please keep the Department advised of any developments in regard to this situation.

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EXCERPT FROM CIRCULAR AIRGRAM TO HONDURAS, COSTA RICA, ECUADOR,
NICARAGUA, HAITI, VENEZUELA, EL SALVADOR, AND PERU

March 31, 1944

Refer our previous communications regarding War Refugee Board. Information has been received that there are in enemy-occupied Europe a number of persons holding passports issued in the names of various Latin American countries including the country to which you are accredited. Our information is that in a large number of cases such persons are interned under conditions which are immeasurably better than the treatment they would receive if they did not have such passports. It is reported that without such passports, such persons would be transported to Poland and death.

The plight of these refugees was the subject of a memorandum presented to the Department by the Polish Ambassador in Washington on December 24, 1943, in support of the request of his government that this Government intercede on humanitarian grounds to save the persons concerned from deportation to Poland by interceding to prevent the withdrawal of these passports in cases in which they may have been improperly issued.

The following are excerpts from a report of Dr. Kullmann, Vice Director of the Intergovernmental Committee, who has recently made an exhaustive investigation of the matter in Switzerland: QUOTE It is estimated that 4,000 (passports) have been issued from Switzerland and it is known that others have been issued from other neutral countries including Sweden. Some informants estimated the total number to be as high as nine to ten thousand but some thought that it did not exceed 5,000. In Switzerland it (the securing of the passports) was organized by private individuals and reached such proportions that the Swiss Federal Government had to intervene. Legal action was taken against several of the organizers and at the same time enquiry was made regarding the authority of some of the representatives of the South American states to carry on these transactions.

There seems little doubt that the German authorities are aware of what has been going on but for reasons of their own they have hitherto not adopted a general policy of withdrawing the passports. While in many cases the possession of these documents has afforded the owners protection against persecution and even special treatment in some of the camps, in other cases they have afforded no protection at all and

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particularly so where the persons concerned were not interned. Originally the German authorities seem to have cherished the hope that the persons with those South American passports might constitute a basis for the exchange of German nationals in South American countries and it is not improbable that they still have vague hopes of this. Other reasons have been suggested for their lack of consistency. Recently however they have been making enquiries through some of the protecting powers of the South American Governments concerned regarding the genuineness of the documents and they have been submitting lists of persons concerned with a view to verification. UNQUOTE

Sir Herbert Emerson, Director of the Intergovernmental Committee, on the basis of the foregoing recommends that the Latin American Governments in whose names such passports have been issued, be approached on two points, QUOTE (first) that the Governments should refrain from withdrawing the passports which have been issued and (second) that if and when the protecting power on the request of the German authorities submits lists of persons with such passports they should instruct the protecting power that the passports have been confirmed UNQUOTE.

Although the Department does not condone the unauthorized issue of passports, it does not follow that the Department should withhold its intercession in a situation in which the lives of so many persons are at stake. The Department and the War Refugee Board agree with Emerson that where thousands of human lives lie in the balance because of war conditions and enemy persecutions, appropriate steps should be taken to avoid the nonrecognition by the Germans of such passports.

The Department understands that these passports, appearing on their face to have been issued by competent officials, are valid until they are cancelled. While Department agrees that the Government to which you are accredited is entirely within its rights in cancelling such passports, it urges that the right of cancellation be not exercised until the holders shall have reached a place of safety, so that the act of cancellation shall not be, in essence, condemnation of the holder to a terrible death. All that is here asked is that the Government to which you are accredited deal with the question at a time when it shall occasion the least possible measure of human suffering.

* * *

HULL

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CABLE NO. 1994 FROM BERN TO THE BOARD

March 31, 1944.

With reference to the situation of the Jews who reportedly have been interned in Vittel, Isaac Sternbuch has approached the Legation. (Please refer also to my number 1958 dated March 30, 1944.) A total of two hundred and thirty eight persons comprised of children and adults most of whom have obtained documentation of ten Latin American Governments - Peru, Paraguay, Costa Rica, Honduras and others, are involved.

According to Sternbuch interested persons are attempting some kind of remedial action with Government whose officials abroad have issued the false documents which these persons possess. The statement has been made repeatedly that the State Department has interested itself and is urging the Governments concerned to find some means of alleviation either by complete recognition of nationality or by assuming responsibility in some other way for the victimized persons. Kindly inform me if this report is authentic. We have now clandestinely received information that largely because of some alleged action by the Spanish Embassy in Berlin as the protecting power of the Paraguayans, these persons are about to be or already have been removed elsewhere by the German authorities. The Swiss Foreign Interests Division has told me informally that the Government of Spain had been requested by the Germans to inquire into the bonafides not only of the Paraguayans but of all suspected claims and that other Governments denied responsibility and claims. However there is not available to me a complete picture of the affair.

The following four persons who claim U. S. nationality are contained in the list of internees concerned: Nettie and Lieba Wachtel, Malka Hager and Hirsch. According to the records of the Legation, applications for documentation of Nettie and Lieba Wachtel and Hirsch as American citizens were submitted to the Department. In a list received from the Swiss authorities and transmitted to the Department as Legation's dispatch 6037 dated September 3, Malka Hager was reported as an American citizen. We have not yet received the Department's decisions concerning citizenship claims of these persons.

Interested Jewish circles in Switzerland and Sternbuch are fearful of the fate awaiting the above described group and believe that it may be possible to arrange with authorities of Germany an exchange of Germans who may at present be in North and South America for members of this

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group. Such arrangements it is realized would require time for negotiations and meantime pending submission of such proposal to German authorities it is Sternbuch's hope that the German authorities might be prevailed upon to postpone any summary action by which the group would be affected. The possibility that the Department might be willing to telegraph the American Embassy at Madrid asking it to communicate with the Spanish Foreign Office with a view to appropriately communicating with the Spanish Ambassador in Berlin in the premises, was therefore suggested to the Legation by Sternbuch. Sternbuch further suggested that in such an arrangement the Spanish Ambassador in Berlin might be asked to request the authorities of Germany to withhold any action until there could be an investigation of the possibility of arrangements for exchange against the Germans.

Accordingly Sternbuch's proposal is being submitted to the Department by me. Urgency is stressed by Sternbuch. That representations may also have been made in London to the International Committee and possibly in Washington too, I have reason to believe.

Until the status of the Hager and Wachtel cases is definitely determined I am requesting the authorities of Switzerland to ask the Germans to take no action.

My despatch number 6921 dated December 27, sent to the Department in microfilm number 33 reported the developments reported in the foregoing.

HARRISON

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V.I.F. - 1
attach. #5

CABLE NO. 1221 TO BERN FROM THE BOARD

April 10, 1944

Not Paraphrased.

FOLLOWING FOR MINISTER HARRISON, BERN.

Following our 1181 of April 7 and referring to your 1958 of March 30 and your 1994 of March 31, although the motives of the Germans in accord- ing better treatment to Jews of Polish origin holding passports and other documents issued in the names of Latin American countries are not too clear, it would appear that they include (1) some hope that they might be considered exchange material against Germans in the Western Hemisphere and (2) some fear that their ill-treatment might afford the Latin American countries a pre-text for further limiting the freedom and economic activi- ties of Germans resident in such countries.

The measure reported in your 1958 of March 30 may be an indication that Germany is beginning to doubt whether such Jews are considered ex- change material and whether their treatment would affect the treatment of Germans in Latin America. This Government regards it as essential that these doubts be promptly and effectively dispelled.

Accordingly, please request the good offices of the Swiss Government in informing the Germans that this Government is undertaking discussions with Latin American countries for a further exchange of Germans in the Western Hemisphere for persons in German-controlled territory and that in this connection, the United States considers that all persons in Vittel and elsewhere holding passports and other documents issued in the names of Latin American countries will be eligible for such exchange.

Simultaneously, please request the appropriate Swiss authorities to advise the Germans that in the meantime this Government expects that these persons will be accorded the same rights, privileges and immunities that the German Government expects will be accorded to Germans in the Western Hemisphere. You may add that a considerable number of German civilians interned by various Latin American countries have been placed by such countries in the custody of the United States and are presently in such custody within continental United States.

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For your information, the substance of this message is being communicated to our Missions in the Latin American countries concerned. We are also making inquiry of such Latin American countries with respect to the authenticity of the information informally conveyed to you by the Swiss Foreign Interests Division which you referred to in your 1994 of March 31.

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CABLE NO. 992 TO MADRID FROM THE BOARD

April 10, 1944

War Refugee Board sends the following for the Ambassador.

1. There are interned at Vittel, Belsen-Bergen, Leibenau, Tittmoning, Bergau and Compiegne and possibly at other places in enemy territory and areas controlled by the enemy a large number of persons, the majority of whom are Jews, holding consular documents, passports and other papers issued in the names of certain Latin American countries including Paraguay, Peru, Venezuela, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras, Ecuador, Costa Rica, Chile, and Haiti.

The Germans presumably know that the Polish Jews in question have obtained these passports and other documents in an extraordinary manner. In spite of this, they have received considerably better treatment than is generally received by Polish Jews. But for the fact that they were in possession of these papers, most if not all of these internees would already have been transported to Poland to their death.

Intercross has some measure of access to the camps in Vittel, Liebenau, Tittmoning, and Compiegne. In Belsen-Bergen and Bergau, where Intercross has no access, conditions are reported to be bad.

2. Late in 1943, the Department received reports that persons holding Paraguayan papers were threatened with the danger of deportation to Poland and death. Since these persons are generally of Polish origin, the Polish Ambassador at Washington earnestly sought our intervention in an attempt to save their lives. The Department assured the Polish Ambassador that the Department would take such steps as could be taken on behalf of these unfortunate people who are the victims of the Nazis.

During last December, the Paraguayan Government, following our demarche in Asuncion, assured the Intergovernmental Committee and this Government that the passports of these Polish Jews had not been canceled and that the Polish Government did not intend to cancel the passports issued in the name of the Paraguayan Government and held by internees. This was most important as most of these internees hold papers issued by the Government of Paraguay.

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On February 29, 1944, Sir Herbert Emerson, the Chairman of the Intergovernmental Committee, informed us as follows:

There seems to be little doubt that the German authorities are aware of what has been going on but heretofore they have not adopted the general policy of withdrawing the passports for reasons of their own. In many cases those who possess these documents have been afforded protection against persecution and in some of the camps possession of these documents has even obtained special treatment for them. However, in other instances, especially where the persons concerned were not interned in camps, no protection at all has been afforded. It seems that originally the German authorities had the hope that these persons with such South American passports might constitute a basis for the exchange of German nationals in South American countries and it is not improbable that they still have vague hopes of this. Other reasons have been suggested to account for the inconsistency of the action taken by them. However, they have recently been making inquiries concerning the genuineness of the documents, through some of the protecting powers of the South American governments, and lists of persons concerned have been submitted with a view to verification.

Therefore, Sir Herbert recommended that an approach be made on two points to the governments in whose names the passports held by such internees were issued: First, instructions to the effect that the passports have been confirmed should be given to the protecting power if and when the protecting power, on the request of the German authorities, submits lists of persons with such passports; and two, the governments concerned should not withdraw the passports which have been issued.

4. The following is the substance of a report non made by Minister Harrison.

We have secretly received information that authorities of the German Government have either already moved these persons elsewhere or are about to remove them primarily because of some alleged action by the Spanish Embassy in Berlin as the Paraguayans protecting power. The Swiss Foreign Interests Division has informally told me that the Germans have requested the Spanish Government to investigate the bona fides not only of these holding Paraguayan passports but of all suspected claims and further that other governments have denied responsibility and claims.

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Minister Harrison also reports as follows:

It is reported that four American citizens and 234 South American internees were evacuated on March 31 from the internment camp at Vittel to some prison, the location of which remains unknown. In this report, it is also stated that the Spanish Ambassador and the Swiss Minister in Berlin declined protective offices.

5. We have already requested the Governments of Latin America for humanitarian reasons to avoid questioning the validity of these passports and other documents until after the war and to inform the Germans through the protecting power that no question concerning these papers is to be raised. Also, our missions in the countries concerned have been requested by us to ascertain from the Spanish Government the substance of any communications it has had regarding this.

6. On the basis of the report Sir Herbert Emerson made, it is thought to be probable that it will not be possible to continue safe guarding the lives of these internees unless it is clearly understood that they are to be considered eligible for exchange against German civilians interned in countries of the Western Hemisphere.

The following is the substance of a cable which we have sent to our Legation in Bern.

We request you to seek the Swiss Government's good offices in informing the German Government that this Government is undertaking discussions with Latin American countries for a further exchange of persons in German-controlled areas for Germans in countries of the Western Hemisphere and that, in this connection, it is felt by the United States that all persons in Vittel and elsewhere who hold passports and other documents issued in the names of the Latin American countries concerned will be eligible for the above mentioned exchange.

At the same time, you should request the appropriate Swiss Government authorities to advise the Germans that in the meantime this Government expects that these people will be accorded the same privileges, immunities, and rights that the German Government expects will be extended to Germans in countries of the Western Hemisphere. It may be added that a large number of German civilians who were interned by various Latin American countries have been placed by such countries in the custody of the United States and they are in such custody within the continental United States at the present time.

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Our Missions in Latin American have received cables of similar intent opening discussions on this subject.

7. In line with these steps which proceed from this Government's determination to make every attempt in this humanitarian task, you will urgently represent to the Government of Spain this Government's earnest preoccupation with this project, you will advise it of the discussions which are planned with the Latin American countries with reference to a further exchange of civilians with Germany, that we hold that all persons holding Latin American papers located in Vittel and elsewhere are eligible for exchange as outlined above, and that it is expected that during the time before such exchange the Germans will accord them the same treatment which the Germans expect their interned civilians to receive from Latin American countries.

At the same time, you should also make clear to the Spanish Government that this Government expects that Spain, for the good name of Spain and in the interest of humanity, will do everything possible to save these people who are threatened with death through no fault of theirs. We specifically request that you ask the Spanish Government to act accordingly in Madrid and Berlin and that instructions be given to the Spanish Ambassador in Berlin to afford these people all possible protection and that steps be taken at once by the Spanish Government to offset the impression that may have been created in Berlin with reference to the alleged absence of interest of the Western Hemisphere countries in the treatment of persons who hold papers issued in the names of countries of the Western Hemisphere.

In presenting the foregoing to the Spanish Government, it is requested that you explain that this proposal is on a level apart and entirely different from any discussions of a political or economic nature between our two governments. The issue involved concerns elementary humanitarian considerations only and is completely non-political. The United States Government is loath to believe that in an issue of this nature it would not count on Spain's wholehearted and immediate cooperation.

You should make every effort to secure the return to Vittel of the 238 who, according to the report made to Minister Harrison, have been evacuated from Vittel. Emphasis should immediately and specifically be placed on the problem of safeguarding these 238 persons, and it is requested that in reporting this specific subject you do not wait to make your general report.

HULL

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100983

EXCERPTS FROM CIRCULAR AIRGRAM TO COSTA RICA, ECUADOR, EL SALVADOR,
HAITI, PERU, NICARAGUA, AND VENEZUELA

April 11, 1944

(REPEATED TO HONDURAS ON APRIL 20)

Refer our previous communications regarding War Refugee Board.
Reference is made to Department's 1181 of April 7.

Minister Harrison at Bern has informed us that the Swiss Foreign Interests Division has advised him informally that the Spanish government had been requested by the Germans to inquire into the bona fides of certain Latin American passports, held by internees in enemy-controlled territory and that the Latin American governments have denied responsibility as well as any claims of the persons holding such passports. Please approach appropriate officials of the government to which you are accredited and inquire whether it has received any such inquiries through the government of Spain or otherwise from the Germans with respect to the validity of passports held by such internees and if such inquiry has been made, please ascertain the nature of the response, if any.

In view of the perilous situation in which these internees find themselves, the conclusion has been reached that perhaps the only way of safeguarding the lives of these unfortunate victims of Nazi persecution is forthwith to initiate through proper channels negotiations, for an exchange of nationals for which these people will be eligible. In contemplating such exchange negotiations, it is not expected that the government to which you are accredited will physically admit any such persons into its territory even on a temporary or tentative basis. This Government is prepared to take full responsibility for all arrangements necessary to route these persons to places elsewhere.

Proceeding on this basis, please approach the government to which you are accredited with the request that it give its approval to the Government of the United States approaching the German government through appropriate channels with a view to initiating such negotiations. Please also advise appropriate officials of the Paraguayan government that similar requests are being made of other Latin American countries, it being the hope of this Government that it will be put in a position to initiate exchange discussions on a hemispheric basis. Please also

(cont.)

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advise such officials that in any exchange negotiations that may be entered into, it is of course understood that unquestioned citizens of the United States and of the Latin American countries will be considered by this Government as being in a category entitled to priority over other.

Please also request the government to which you are accredited, on humanitarian grounds, affirmatively to approach the German government through the protecting power with a demand that the lives of all persons holding passports issued in its name or claiming its citizenship on the basis of consular documents be safeguarded and that they be given all rights, privileges and immunities accorded to civilian internees of enemy nationality to whom the Geneva Convention regarding the treatment of prisoners of war is currently applied by analogy.

In view of the imminent danger in which the persons concerned find themselves, you are requested to act with the greatest possible dispatch.

Finally, we communicate to you, for communication to the government to which you are accredited, the substance of a cable which the Department has sent to our Minister at Bern as follows: QUOTE Although the motives of the Germans in according better treatment to Jews of Polish origin holding passports and other documents issued in the names of Latin American countries are not too clear, it would appear that they include (1) some hope that they might be considered exchange material against Germans in the Western Hemisphere and (2) some fear that their ill-treatment might afford the Latin American countries a pretext for further limiting the freedom and economic activities of Germans resident in such countries.

The measure reported in your 1958 of March 30 may be an indication that Germany is beginning to doubt whether such Jews are considered exchange material and whether their treatment would affect the treatment of Germans in Latin America. This Government regards it as essential that these doubts be promptly and effectively dispelled.

Accordingly, please request the good offices of the Swiss Government in informing the Germans that this Government is undertaking discussions with Latin American countries for a further exchange of Germans in the Western Hemisphere for persons in German-controlled territory and that in this connection, the United States considers that all persons in Vittel and elsewhere holding passports and other documents issued in the names of Latin American countries will be eligible for such exchange.

Simultaneously, please request the appropriate Swiss authorities to advise the Germans that in the meantime this Government expects that

(cont.)

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these persons will be accorded the same rights, privileges and immunities that the German government expects will be accorded to Germans in the Western Hemisphere. You may add that a considerable number of German civilians interned by various Latin American countries have been placed by such countries in the custody of the United States and are presently in such custody within continental United States.

For your information, the substance of this message is being communicated to our Missions in the Latin American countries concerned. We are also making inquiry of such Latin American countries with respect to the authenticity of the information informally conveyed to you by the Swiss Foreign Interests Division which you referred to in your 1944 of March 31. UNQUOTE.

* * *

HULL

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By R. H. Parks Date SEP 28 1972

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CABLE NO. 2282 FROM BERN TO THE BOARD

April 13, 1944

Details of approaches which the Vatican made to various Governments of South America in an attempt to work out relief measures for Jews interned in Germany or German-occupied territory who hold documentation issued by those Governments were supplied to me on April 19 by the Papal Nuncio Bern. Apparently the question of eventual immigration to respective countries in course of possible exchange was raised in addition to the question of recognition of documentation. The following is the substance of the replies.

1. Because of laws forbidding admission, a negative reply was made by Panama with respect to Polish Jews.
2. Both Nicaragua and Costa Rica are disposed to recognize passports which their respective Consuls issued up to eight families which could remain in these Republics only during the war if the families are neither industrialists nor farmers.
3. They would be received in Bolivia.
4. A negative reply was made by Salvador and Guatemala.
5. Instructions to verify and recognize passports have been issued by Chile.
6. Each case would be considered individually by Uruguay.
7. No action could be taken by Haiti.
8. Passports could not be recognized by Peru.
9. Passports could be recognized by Cuba if no objection is made by Great Britain and the United States.
10. Passports of Polish Jews at Vittel have been recognized by Paraguay.

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Bolivia and Paraguay are represented in Germany by Spain and the rest of the countries listed above are represented by Switzerland. We assume that they will inform their respective protective powers concerning any action which they take in the future following representations of the American Government.

It is stated by the Nuncio that in the present reportedly aggravated situation of certain victims the Holy See had requested its Madrid representative to ask the Government of Spain to inform the Spanish Ambassador at Berlin of the gravity of peril of Polish Jews who have Paraguayan documentation and to insist to him upon the urgency of effective protection for them.

Information had been received by the Nuncio that the cause of the trouble arose when the proposal was made to exchange these Jews for Germans located in South America. Jews who had Paraguayan passports were included in the list by Germany. A protest was made by Paraguay which stated that the passports had been illegally issued and Paraguay refused to recognize the passports. The Germans withdrew as a result of this and protection was suspended by Spain. I have been further informed by Nuncio that this has been confirmed by International Red Cross which has promised its intervention if an exchange is objective conditioned on Holy See's action. It is not known to me whether details of this proposal for exchange and its results are given in Kullmann's report quoted in your telegram of April 7, 1944, no. 1181. I discussed with Kullmann the idea of exchange and I urged him to foster it but I had not previously known that the idea had been taken up formally.

HARRISON

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VI F - 1
attach. #9

AIRGRAM NO. A-323 FROM CARACAS TO THE BOARD

April 15, 1944

Having memorized the contents of Department's airgram of April 11, I took advantage of the first opportunity to discuss these matters orally with the Venezuelan Foreign Minister. I found him to be quite conversant with the situation and in entire sympathy with our aims. Dr. Parra-Perez informed me that he had already been approached on this subject by representatives of the Refugee Committee in London and the Belgium Government. He expressed approval of our desire to initiate negotiations for exchange on the basis indicated and promised full Venezuelan cooperation.

He said that he had received no inquiries through either Spanish or Swiss channels as to the validity of Venezuelan passports held by internees in occupied countries. He assured me that his Government would not "invalidate" any such passports even though under the strict letter of Venezuelan law governing issuance of passports their re-validation should become necessary by lapse of time. He also promised me that his government would affirmatively approach the German Government through the protecting power with a demand that the rights of individuals holding Venezuelan passports or claiming citizenship on the basis of consular documents be respected.

CORRIGAN

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

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attach. #10

CABLE NO. 127 FROM TEGUCIGALPA TO THE BOARD

April 26, 1944

This morning the matters contained in the Department's A-77 of April 20, received last evening, were discussed by me with the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Complete success on all points. I was given by the Minister two signed notes relating respectively to exchange negotiations and to the material at top of page three of the airgram which is under reference. Later today we will cable translations.

Inquiries from the Spanish Minister concerning validity of the passports have not been received by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and such inquiries as may be received later will be ignored by him.

FAUST

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By R. M. Parks Date -- SEP 28 1972

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AIRGRAM NO. 135 TO PARAGUAY

SIMILAR TO AIRGRAMS SENT TO BOLIVIA (Airgram No. A-161), CHILE (Airgram No. A-296), COSTA RICA (Airgram No. A-211), EL SALVADOR (Airgram No. A-143), GUATEMALA (Airgram No. A-308), HAITI (Airgram No. A-144), NICARAGUA (Airgram No. A-151), PERU (Airgram No. A-327), AND URUGUAY (Airgram No. A-194)

May 1, 1944

With reference to Department's A-118 of April 11 and A-129, April 22, 6:45 p.m., the Department has now been apprized that Papal Nuncio at Bern informed Minister Harrison that Vatican had attempted to work out relief measures for Jews holding Paraguayan documents and interned by Germany. Apparently, the question of eventual immigration as result of possible exchange was raised in addition to the question of recognition of documents. Paraguay is reported to have replied that the passports of Polish Jews at Vittel have been recognized by Paraguay.

It is further learned from Vatican sources that the trouble arose when the proposal was made to exchange these Jews for Germans located in South America. Jews who had Paraguayan passports were included in the list by Germany. A protest was made by Paraguay which stated that the passports had been illegally issued and Paraguay refused to recognize the passports. The Germans withdrew as a result of this and protection was suspended by Spain.

At the time this attitude is reported to have been taken by Paraguay, the assurance contained in our circular airgram of April 11 had evidently not (repeat not) yet reached Paraguayan government.

Please verify information received from Bern and reiterate this Government's assurance that, in the event of exchange, Paraguay will not (repeat not) be expected to grant physical admission to any of the persons concerned even on a temporary or tentative basis.

In the light of these assurances, please impress upon the Paraguayan Government the extreme urgency with which this Government views the necessity of acting favorably without delay on proposals previously submitted and detailed in the airgrams under reference. You should impress upon Paraguayan officials that since failure to act would almost certainly spell death for the persons involved, and that since no (repeat no)

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CIRCULAR AIRGRAM TO COSTA RICA, ECUADOR, EL SALVADOR, HAITI, HONDURAS,
NICARAGUA, PERU, AND VENEZUELA

April 22, 1944

Referring to the Department's circular airgram of April 10, 11:00 a.m., and of March 31, 1:05 p.m., the following is the substance of a message received from London by Sir Herbert Emerson, Director of the Intergovernmental Committee, who is now in Washington: QUOTE According cables Jewish Agency, Jerusalem, now commander Vittel Camp advised March 20 about 250 to 300 internees holding South American passports that they were not recognized by government concerned. It is alleged these persons already isolated for deportation which caused panic and despair. Agency here has partial list of people affected, mostly Polish Jews previously put on list of veteran Zionists, Rabbis, et cetera, for grant of Palestine certificates. Agency trying to obtain from Colonial Office formal assurance to Swiss protecting power that these persons placed on Palestine exchange list in order to stave off deportation UNQUOTE.

In view of the imminent danger which faces the persons involved, and in the light of this Government's deep concern for their welfare, you should communicate to appropriate officials of the Government to which you are accredited the urgency with which favorable responses and active measures along the lines described in our circular airgrams of April 10 and March 31 are needed. You may also wish to inform such officials that in addition to the approach to Switzerland referred to in our circular airgram of April 10, we have also requested Ambassador Hayes similarly to approach the Spanish Government. Please keep the Department promptly advised of all developments in this matter.

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responsibilities or obligations would result for Paraguay from acquiescence in our requests, we would be sorely disappointed if Paraguayan authorities should not (repeat not) whole-heartedly cooperate with our efforts to save these people.

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CIRCULAR AIRGRAM TO CHILE, COSTA RICA, CUBA, ECUADOR, EL SALVADOR,
GUATEMALA, HAITI, HONDURAS, NICARAGUA, PARAGUAY, URUGUAY, AND
VENEZUELA

May 11, 1944

With reference to previous communications from the Department and the War Refugee Board regarding protection of refugees with Latin American documents in German-held territory, you are informed that pursuant to our instructions the Legation at Bern has advised the Swiss Government with respect to claims to American citizenship by refugees in German-controlled areas as follows:

QUOTE The Department will undertake fully to investigate any claim to United States citizenship, asserted by any person within territory under enemy control, upon receipt from the Swiss Government of all pertinent information available to the Germans relative thereto. The claimant must be presumed to be a United States citizen and must be accorded all the rights, privileges and immunities to which such citizens are entitled while any particular claim to United States citizenship is under investigation by the Department and until the Swiss Government is specifically advised by the Department to the contrary, with the exception that until the Department so authorizes financial assistance may not (repeat not) be extended UNQUOTE.

You are authorized to advise the government to which you are accredited of the foregoing if you think it will help to obtain its effective cooperation in rescuing refugees with Latin American documents.

The Legation at Bern has also been instructed to request Swiss authorities to obtain from Germany immediate return to Vittel of previously deported refugees with Latin American documents. The Embassy at Madrid, pursuant to our instructions, has obtained assurance that Spain will endeavor to arrange for return of deported refugees to Vittel.

It is essential that demarche of Madrid Embassy be supported by similar urgent representations of other American republics in Madrid on various points covered in our circular airgram of April 11 and other relevant communications. Please act accordingly and advise us of results.

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Turk. Citizen.

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PROGRAMS WITH RESPECT TO RELIEF AND RESCUE OF REFUGEES: OTHER MEANS OF EFFECTING RESCUE

REINSTATEMENT OF TURKISH CITIZENSHIP TO REFUGEES IN FRANCE

While in Turkey in the early part of 1944, Ira Hirschmann, the Board's Special Representative, took steps to save some 10,000 Jews in France threatened with deportation because they had been divested of Turkish nationality by operation of Turkish law. The Turkish Government was asked to extend protection to these Jews by reinstating their Turkish citizenship. The British Ambassador in Turkey supported this request and urged the Turkish Government to make the necessary representations to Vichy.

According to a report from Hirschmann, by mid-March the Turkish Government had authorized entrance visas for about 700 of the 10,000 Jews of Turkish origin in France. Several thousand of these Jews of Turkish origin are said to have been deported to Poland, notwithstanding repeated protests by the Turkish Ambassador to Vichy. The Turkish Ambassador, according to Ambassador Steinhardt, is continuing to protest these acts of the Vichy Government. Hirschmann has urged that the Board consider means whereby it might exert pressure indirectly on the Vichy Government to bring a halt to the deportations (Dispatch No. 596 from Ankara dated March 13).

According to information subsequently reaching the Lisbon representative of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, Turkish repatriates have been arriving in Turkey from France at regular intervals and in groups of fifty or so (Cable No. 1006 from Lisbon dated April 14).

The Board was more recently advised that approximately 800 Turkish Jews among those still in France are in increasing danger of deportation. Lists of these refugees are said to have been forwarded to Ankara by Turkish consuls, who are now awaiting a decision concerning their status. The Turkish Ambassador in this country is being pressed to lend every possible assistance in effecting the reinstatement of Turkish citizenship to these refugees (See Cable No. 350 to Ankara dated April 19, Cable No. 732 from Ankara dated April 22, and Cable No. 1242 from Lisbon dated April 25.)

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Ambassador Steinhardt in Ankara subsequently discussed again with the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs the plight of these particular refugees. Specific instructions on this score are said to have been sent to the Turkish Ambassador at Vichy. (See Cable No. 1304 from Lisbon dated April 29.)

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Spanish Jews Athens

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PROGRAMS WITH RESPECT TO RELIEF AND RESCUE OF REFUGEES: OTHER MEANS OF EFFECTING RESCUES

RECOGNITION OF SPANISH JEWS IN ATHENS

The Board has learned that some 400 Sephardic Jews, Spanish nationals residing in Athens, have recently been imprisoned there in a concentration camp. Accordingly, a message was sent to Ambassador Hayes in Madrid, asking that he approach appropriate Spanish officials to advise them of the situation of this group and to enlist the aid of the Spanish Government in recognizing and extending protection to these refugees, thereby forestalling deportation and almost certain death. Hayes was authorized to assure the Spanish Government that funds will be available for the support in Spain of such persons as may be evacuated to that country, and that prompt action to speed their departure from Spain to other places of refuge will be taken by the Board (Cable No. 1108 to Madrid dated April 21).

As a result of intercession by the Holy See, the Spanish Government has on several occasions in the past been prevailed upon to recognize groups of Sephardic Jews in Axis-held territory as Spanish nationals. For this reason, the Board also cabled Harold Tittmann, U. S. Foreign Service Officer at Vatican City, asking that he approach Vatican officials so that the Papal Nuncio at Madrid may be advised of this situation and his aid enlisted in obtaining Spanish recognition and protection for the refugees concerned (Cable No. 1414 to Bern dated April 24).

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Joint Exchange

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CONFIDENTIAL

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PROGRAMS WITH RESPECT TO RELIEF AND RESCUE OF REFUGEES: OTHER MEANS OF EFFECTING RESCUES

JOINT EXCHANGE PROJECT

The Board has been urged by the World Jewish Congress to make a special joint effort, with Great Britain, to arrange an exchange of Jews in German-occupied countries against German nationals in Allied countries. The WJC indicated that the candidates for exchange which it proposes are some 3500 Jews holding Palestine immigration certificates and whose names have already been supplied by the British Government, through Switzerland as the protecting power, to the Government of Germany. Germany is said to have accepted this principle of exchange, but the lack of German candidates has prevented the exchange from materializing. The holders of these Palestine certificates are now interned in special camps and are in increasing danger of deportation as exchange arrangements are prolonged. (See Cable No. 2444 from Bern dated April 18.)

In order to clarify certain aspects of the proposed exchange, Minister Harrison in Bern was asked to forward, if possible, more detailed information with respect to how the exchange proposal originated and with respect to the date and manner of the German Government's reported acceptance (Cable No. 1442 to Bern dated April 26; see also Cable No. 2603 from Bern dated April 24).

In response to this inquiry the Board was advised that details were lacking in Bern but that official information could probably be obtained from London (Cable No. 2738 from Bern dated April 29).

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