LIFE LINE TO A *Promised Land*

BY IRA A. HIRSCHMANN

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LIFE LINE TO A

Promised Land

TO

the survivors of Hitler's hate, who will most deeply love, and live for, freedom

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I am deeply indebted to John Pasciutti for his collaboration.

I.A.H.

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Preface

This book is a chronicle of events. I am not a writer by profession but a man connected with music, public, and business affairs, whose indignation led him for a time to leave his familiar surroundings to go to Turkey and become involved in Balkan intrigue. I undertook this unfamiliar work for two reasons that every American will understand: (1) I felt that we should all share in the global work of making life more tolerable for everyone and (2) I could no longer look upon the spectacle of millions of helpless people being trampled without trying to do something about it.

In my work as representative of the War Refugee Board, I witnessed a procession of human misery so tragic as to be unbelievable. No wonder, then, if I satisfy a burning desire to write about matters I believe should be shared with my fellow Americans.

The campaign—which I commend—to encourage Americans to think of themselves as citizens of the

world and not a mere segment of it—has given rise to many clichés about the shrinking nature of our planet. These clichés lead to misconceptions that are neither helpful nor constructive.

It is true that rapid means of travel have succeeded in bringing remote parts of the globe closer together in point of time but the world is not for that reason less diverse and divided in its thinking, geography, activities, and customs than before. It is true I saw the sun set at LaGuardia Field on a Sunday and floated down to the airport in Ankara, Turkey, almost halfway around the globe, the following Saturday. It has also been amply demonstrated that long-range bombers can destroy cities thousands of miles away from their base. But if Turkey is less than a week away from the United States in terms of transportation, it still remains, as do many other countries, centuries apart in its thought and in its way of daily life.

The rapidity of my trip did not make me feel that New York and Ankara are now any closer together than they have ever been. They are still separated by the distance between the two civilizations of which they are a part. Such means of contact as we have today serve principally to emphasize the wide chasms in the standards, the aims, the thought, and the customs of the two nations.

The airplane makes the world smaller only for those few thousands privileged to travel by air. The

"Common Man," whether he be white, brown, black, or yellow, is not traveling in airplanes. In fact, he does not travel at all. The world will have grown truly "small," and its billions of people bigger, only when the peasants of Anatolia begin exchanging neighborly visits with the farmers of Iowa or Kansas, the gauchos in the Pampas, and other good neighbors.

Turkey is sometimes referred to as the "window to the Balkans." During the war, a dark curtain of censorship and mystery hung over this window. When, occasionally, we were able to push it aside, we saw in the Balkans and in Europe actions so stark, so grim, so tragic that the mind refused to accept them. There, five million people belonging to minority groups, including the old and the infirm, the women, and the children, were being massacred for the crime of their existence. I saw mass graves in which men, women and children had been buried together in large numbers. The expression of horror still on their faces served as the strongest protest against the hesitant mercy of a world which stood by passively as they were being cruelly and methodically exterminated. More tragic still was the sight of those who survived, stateless and homeless, their minds warped and their bodies crippled.

There were instances without end of the privations of little, hungry children, who managed to escape

from their tormentors, and of their sisters and brothers shot down in their tracks while running for their lives. The wandering children were sometimes trapped a second, a third, and even a fourth time. And on each occasion the number of those who contrived to escape to freedom, a freedom which meant homeless wandering, starvation, and fear, was only a fraction of those who had been caught.

What a civilization that does not offer refuge even to helpless, homeless children! The result is a hideous story from which we might prefer to avert our eyes. But dare we do this? Can we afford to look the other way when we know that the children were tortured and killed without even a pretense of justice? Indeed, without any imputations of guilt! Dare we ignore their plight, when we know that if right and justice are denied to some they are endangered for all?

The question may well be asked: "Who is responsible for this monstrous crime?" No doubt the blame falls first directly on the perpetrators. Indirectly, the guilt rests on the entire human race. To have looked on passively as millions of defenseless children, women, and old men were being maltreated or massacred was simply to become an accomplice in the crime.

Americans are kindly and humane. Their failure to act before the establishment of the War Refugee Board was due, in my opinion, chiefly to the fact

that they were not then, and are not even today, fully aware of the horror and extent of the stupendous tragedy prepared for a guiltless people. The war has insidiously dimmed our perceptions and blunted our moral faculties.

It was in January, 1943, that America finally acted decisively. President Roosevelt, in an historic Emergency Order, superimposed the War Refugee Board on the Intergovernmental Committee for Refugees, which had been—and still is—nothing more than a decorous façade concealing the inactivity of the thirty-two governments which had set it up. The successful work of the new board was guided by John W. Pehle, Executive Director, who gained his inspiration and support from the former Secretary of the Treasury, Henry W. Morgenthau, Jr., the architect of the executive order. This instrument put new life into failing hearts. Pehle was carried along by a powerful emotional urge that made short work of red tape. He and his irrepressible group of young aides did not hesitate to take chances when there was the slightest prospect of rescue.

History will tell that our Government achieved marked success through the War Refugee Board in rescuing the remnants of persecuted minorities and in checking their slaughter. Had we acted as vigorously and decisively at an earlier date, we undoubtedly could have saved many times the number of

people that we did. The end of the War Refugee Board in September, 1945, left the refugee problem to U.N.R.R.A. Europe's homeless millions again began their aimless quest.

This book chronicles events that demonstrate our ability to save as well as to kill in time of war. The task of saving in peacetime has just begun and remains as a challenge.

LIFE LINE TO A

Promised Land

1. *Death in the Bosporus*

On December 16, 1941, the S.S. "Struma" slowly entered the harbor of Istanbul and dropped anchor. The "Struma" was a totally unseaworthy vessel of one hundred and eighty tons, flying the Panamanian flag. Many days before, it had left the port of Constanta, Rumania, and limped along the Black Sea with Palestine as its goal. It proceeded under its own power until it reached the harbor of Istanbul, in the Bosporus. The captain of the "Struma" then decided that his ship could not safely continue on its journey through the Dardanelles and into the eastern Mediterranean where Palestine's ports are situated.

Danger beckoned from the leaky hull and the outworn motors. The engines had broken down on the second day at sea and had been repaired but were functioning imperfectly. Another hazard was the fact that the ship was overloaded. Instead of the hundred passengers it was built to accommodate, it was carrying 769. Instead of the short coastwise excursions for which it was designed, it was making a voyage in

a treacherous sea. That the men, women, and children huddled on board were willing to risk the danger involved in taking passage on this ship, in waters infested with mines and submarines, testifies to the terror that was driving them onward.

The passengers on board the "Struma" were survivors of maltreatment in concentration camps and elsewhere. Their eagerness to emigrate at the risk of their lives was the result of desperation; behind them lay the terror of torture, starvation, and methodical extermination. And yet they had no legal claim to any destination. They possessed neither immigration permits nor visas. When they put in at Istanbul they hoped that the Turkish government would grant them temporary refuge until some nation, mindful of the obligations of civilized living, would rescue them from their predicament; or until they should manage to reach Palestine, where open arms would welcome them.

Unable to go forward and unwilling to return, the refugees on the "Struma" remained in Istanbul harbor for over two months, suffering from hunger, crowding, disease, and despair. Because they had no immigration permits, the British Administration in Palestine classified them as "illegal immigrants" and refused them entry. The Turkish government, in turn, would not let them land as transients, since they had no visas or destination.

Various agencies working in behalf of refugees warned the British Administration that failure to admit the "Struma" passengers would mean certain death, either by drowning or by surrender to the enemy, but the British authorities refused to be moved by these pessimistic forebodings. Nor did the Turks relent and finally, on February 24, 1942, they ordered the "Struma" out of the harbor.

The last desperate act of the passengers was to paint a sign, easily visible to the citizens of Istanbul and to the diplomatic representatives of all the nations on the shore. It read:

SAVE US!

When, on the twenty-fourth, the "Struma" failed to put to sea, the Turkish Government sent a tug to tow it out. No pilot was provided to guide the ship through the mine fields. No heed was paid to the pleas of the captain that his ship was unseaworthy. Five miles out of the harbor, the tug cut the "Struma" loose. A few minutes later the ship broke apart and went to the bottom of the ocean. Two of the passengers, a man and a woman, managed to swim to shore. The rest, 70 children, 269 women, and 428 men found their eternal rest in the bed of the Bosporus.[1]

[1] One or two days before the tragedy the British Administration had agreed to admit the children under sixteen years of age to Palestine. The fact became known only after all of them had perished.

2. *Aftermath*

In nearly all communities where newspapers are published, people read about the S.S. "Struma." The sinking obviously called for an explanation from the governments concerned.

The United States of America led off with a rash of editorials and statements by prominent citizens, deploring the apathy which refused sanctuary to homeless refugees. There was sharp criticism of the leadership of democratic countries. One group saw in the "Struma" tragedy a contradiction of the principles of justice and humanitarianism for which we were fighting. The Jewish Agency for Palestine declared that the tragedy was a "reflection on the intelligence and the heart of responsible government." Dr. Albert Einstein, himself a refugee, pointed out that the callous disregard of human life and suffering which sent the "Struma" victims to their deaths is the symptom of a cancer eating at our vitals. The late isolationist, Senator Johnson from California,

came forward with a bitter attack on the British policy of appeasement which led to the disaster. "The most tragic thing about this mass murder," he said, "is that it need not have happened. It was the result of acts of stupidity, callousness, cruelty. Hard-hearted colonial politicians sent these victims to a watery grave."

The Government of the United States was not directly involved. The anger of the outraged public opinion was directed at the British and Turkish Governments. The British officials directly responsible for the tragedy were explicit and to the point. In an open debate in the House of Commons, Harold Macmillan, Under-secretary of State for Colonies, said tersely: "The Turkish authorities would not allow the passengers to land, and the Palestine authorities (British) also refused them admission."

This was three weeks after the "Struma" went to the bottom. Lord Cranborne, Secretary of State for Colonies, added a grim and revealing precept: "Under the present, unhappy situation in the world it is to a certain extent inevitable that we should be hardened to horrors."

These "horrors" were reserved mostly for those friendly to our cause, however. Said D. L. Lipson in Commons: "If the 'Struma' had been an enemy ship, the German, Italian, or Japanese passengers would have been interned."

The favorable treatment accorded enemy ships is not the only instance in which Axis nationals fared better than refugees at the hands of the British Government. During the same week the "Struma" was sunk because the British could not find room for 769 fugitives, Anthony Eden announced in the House of Commons that half the Arab followers of the ex-Mufti of Palestine, who had fled or had been deported in 1939 because of Axis leanings, had been readmitted into the country with the consent of the British Administration.

Nor were the British inclined, after the "Struma" disaster, to make changes in policy in order to prevent a recurrence. Said Macmillan: "The Government earnestly hopes that such a tragedy will not occur again. It does not lie in their power to give a guarantee nor to take any measures that would undermine the existing policy on *illegal* immigration." (Italics mine.)

The immediate cause of the sinking of the "Struma" was never definitely ascertained or, if ascertained, never revealed. We are again indebted to Lord Cranborne, for the statement: "All the facts are not yet known. Probably they will never be known. It might have been destroyed by a torpedo, struck by a mine, it might have tried to beach itself or it may have been deliberately blown up by the wretched passengers themselves in their despair, although there is no

evidence till now to accept that most horrible theory."

Within a month of the sinking, the newspaper flare-up in America and the attack on England's do-nothing policy had subsided. England, despite a falling birth rate which has caused an alarming fear of depopulation and weakness, has been unwilling to raise its quota for the admission of the homeless into the spacious areas which it controls throughout the world. The immigration laws of the United States also work against the refugees. The other nations of the world stood by idle or helpless while the "Struma" tragedy was being enacted.

The people on the "Struma" had been deprived of their citizenship by their own governments. Life in the countries of their origin was unbearable. As a result they had become exiles and, in a sense, were stateless orphans and the wards of the international community. It is in this respect that every nation which calls itself civilized was just as responsible for the tragedy as the "callous, stupid officials" of the British Government. Any nation willing to furnish permits of entry into its territory could have saved the passengers. Every nation which calls itself civilized was morally implicated, by its failure to answer to this human challenge. We operate on the dying enemy, our soldiers give blood to Tojo, we pick up

enemy servicemen at sea. We do countless other acts of mercy in accordance with international morality but we will not open the doors of a great, spacious country to a boatload of bewildered, homeless people.

If the S.S. "Struma" had been an isolated case, an exception to the rule, perhaps it would be desirable to forget it. But the "Struma" tragedy was not an isolated case. To forget it would be to bypass a defect in our social structure which has resulted in millions of people being delivered over to despair, persecution, and death. Many other ships have shared a similar fate, and the passengers have suffered even more tragic consequences, for they were returned to Nazi concentration camps.

One of the more conspicuous examples of the failure of a ship to carry passengers into freedom was the S.S. "St. Louis." The "St. Louis," with over a thousand refugees on board, left Europe in May 1939, bound for Cuba. The passengers had what they thought to be valid landing permits. Many, however, expected to remain in Cuba only until they received visas to enter the United States.

The Cuban Government found the documents they carried inadequate and refused admission to the refugees. Even the offer of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee to post guarantee bonds of $500 for each passenger was of no avail. The "St.

Louis" then cruised about, knocking at many doors in the waters of the New World, now grown tragically "old." None opened. Not one nation said, "Come in." Then began the heart-breaking journey back across the Atlantic, back in the direction of the Nazi concentration camps.

Freedom had proved a vain hope. The refugees were to be returned to their cells, but not immediately. Death for them must be slow, gradual, ever imminent, and ever in abeyance. On June 14, the Joint Distribution Committee arranged for their admission into four European countries of asylum—upon a $500,000 guarantee that the refugees would not become public charges and, in due course, would emigrate. The countries which received these pitiable wanderers are: Belgium, 412; England, 287; France, 225; Holland, 181. Since three of these countries were later occupied by the Germans, one wonders by what unnamed cruelties these refugees were eventually called upon to atone for the sin of their birth.

In November, 1940, about eighteen hundred refugees from Nazi-occupied lands reached Palestine on board two vessels, the "Pacific" and the "Milos." Since they had run for their lives it is not surprising that they, too, had no immigration permits. For this reason the British authorities ordered them deported. Deported to where?

One may be justified in pausing to ponder over the mentality that is nurtured in official quarters. We condemn the slaughter of minorities but nevertheless demand that those who escape secure permission to emigrate from their would-be butchers. Failing this, we cast them back into the nets of their persecutors. Co-operation with the Nazis could not have been more perfect.

The public is not unaware of the meticulous, silk-hat niceties with which the diplomatic corps operates. A margin that is too wide in an official report, a redundant adjective, an improper seating at table, will send cold shudders through the diplomatic corps. One may ask: is there nothing unconventional, nothing shocking, in a boatload of people lying at the bottom of the sea?

The passengers of the "Pacific" and the "Milos" were loaded into the "Patria," then at anchor in Haifa harbor. On November 25, the "Patria," without ever having left port, was destroyed by a mysterious explosion. More than two hundred and fifty of the refugees lost their lives. The survivors were again ordered deported from Palestine. Only a protest from the United States finally prevented the execution of this outrage.

There were other fated ships: The "Pencho," with 1,440 passengers, was "lost at sea." About five hundred survivors from this ship were landed at Rhodes.

The tiny ship, "Salvador," belying its name, was lost in the Sea of Marmara, not far from that inhospitable Turkish shore. All its passengers, between two and three hundred, mostly children, perished with the ship. And so the log of death grew:

The "Alsina"

The "Atlantic"
The "Darien"
The "Patria"
The "Pencho"
The "Salvador"
The "Struma." . . .

That the Allied Governments looked with apparent helplessness on this sad spectacle and made only feeble attempts to use the weight of their influence and moral indignation to call a halt will stand as one of the black pages in history.

In the summer of 1938, President Roosevelt had moved to supplement the ineffectual refugee machinery of the League of Nations. Thirty-two governments accepted his invitation to a conference to be held at Evian, France. The problem of "stateless" people, then in an early stage, looked as if it might increase to prodigious proportions.

It took the conference, which I attended, only a few days to run up a blind alley from which it never

emerged. Despite the best attempts of President Roosevelt's mission, the effort to substitute planned migration for chaotic dispersion, which resulted in the tragedies narrated above, failed to inspire the representatives of the thirty-two nations present. Many crocodile tears were shed at a festive banquet over their inability to admit the refugees. Little Santo Domingo alone made an effort in the proper direction, by inviting one hundred thousand refugees. The Intergovernmental Committee for Refugees was the only result of the Conference. And this Committee was nothing more than a façade behind which the civilized governments hid to implement their claims of concern at mass murder when they were challenged.

Another conference—Bermuda, April, 1943—had for its goal the working out of some method to make the Intergovernmental Committee for Refugees function. Said Breckinridge Long, former assistant to the Secretary of State in charge of problems arising from the war, to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs:

"We decided that the thing to do . . . was to revitalize it, to reform it, invigorate it, hitch up the horse to the old surrey and go down the road with it. That was the best instrumentality that we had at hand."

Indeed, that is a fair statement of the situation. Just as we were reaching the atomic age in killing, our

diplomats were going out in a horse and buggy on their missions of rescue.

Obviously, one could hope for very little from the governmental agencies charged with the work of mercy. The British authorities had not modified their policies or their practices in Palestine, and our State Department officials charged with matters concerning the refugees had forgotten all about the "Struma" two years after the event. The evidence for this is taken textually from the *Hearings Before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives,* in the *Proceedings* of the Seventy-eighth Congress.

Mr. Mundt. Another statement made by a witness . . . was this . . . there was a shipload of Jews from Turkey to Palestine that had been turned back, and after they were turned back the ship struck a mine or was hit by a torpedo, and all on board were murdered. Do you have any record of that?

Mr. Long. There was a ship in 1941 which approached Istanbul. I do not know whether it ever got there or not. The boat was re-routed back and something happened in the Black Sea, and I think the boat was destroyed and there was only one survivor.

Mr. Mundt. Why was it turned back?

Mr. Long. I do not remember now all the details of it. I could look it up, Mr. Mundt, and have you advised. It never passed Istanbul.

Mr. Mundt. The chances are the boat was turned back?

Mr. Long. It never got to Palestine. It never got through the straits.

Mr. Mundt. Was the boat simply trying to get to Palestine?

Mr. Long. It was trying to get out of the Black Sea through the straits, the Dardanelles.

Mr. Mundt. In other words, the failure of the boat to arrive safely at some port was in no way due to the failure of the Intergovernmental Committee?

Mr. Long. No; it was before the United States got into the war and before the Intergovernmental Committee was very active. The boat was blown up in the Black Sea, east of the Dardanelles. It was a terrible thing to happen, but it was one of those things that do happen.

It was after listening to this evidence that one of our Congressmen ironically remarked: "I feel what we need here is diplomacy."

One may be pardoned for wondering when the Intergovernmental Committee began to function. It was admittedly not active at the time of the "Struma" sinking, in February, 1942, four years after it was established. The following summer the Bermuda Conference was called specifically to "revitalize, reform, and invigorate" it. When was it supposed to become active, if not when needed most? The time to replace this decorous and entirely ineffectual instrument had long since arrived.

It was in July, 1943, that I first saw a report on the

number of refugees in the Balkans who had been either persecuted or killed. It was an avalanche of sad statistics; the number ran to four millions. Members of the Emergency Committee to Save the Jewish People of Europe had been discussing the question of sending someone to Turkey to make a report on the scene, in order to see what could be done. I volunteered to go as a private citizen, provided the State Department and the military authorities would authorize the trip and the purpose.

A week later I was admitted into the office of Breckinridge Long, the former assistant to the Secretary of State in charge of problems arising from the war. He listened intently as I told him that it must be "within the resources of civilized men to check this human carnage," but remained adamant in his conviction that *all was being done that could be done in time of war:* that the Intergovernmental Committee was working on the matter; that it was the accepted agency charged with the rescue of victims wherever possible; that it had achieved *appreciable results.*

I pleaded for permission to go to Turkey to make an independent study.

"What can you do there alone, as a private citizen?" It was not an illogical question.

"I want to see with my own eyes what is being done and see whether we can't do more. Sometimes

a nonprofessional in a new situation may be able to pry open a window or a door which others find hopelessly barred," I replied.

He then agreed to telegraph Laurence A. Steinhardt, American Ambassador to Turkey. Mr. Steinhardt replied that he could see no reason why such an investigation should not be made. On January 21, I went to Washington to make the necessary preparations for my flight to Turkey. Before leaving I visited the various agencies, enlisting whatever aid I could get. Among the men with whom I talked was Oscar S. Cox, former General Counsel of the Foreign Economic Administration. Cox listened attentively and then drew two sheets of paper out of his desk drawer and swore me to secrecy concerning them. They were copies of President Roosevelt's Emergency Order creating the War Refugee Board. Drafted and designed by Treasury officials, the Order was on the President's desk awaiting his signature.

As I read the Order of the President, I could see at once that the mechanism of the War Refugee Board could not have been more admirable for effective use in wartime. Because the Board comprised the Secretaries of State, War, and the Treasury, it had the necessary access to the highest authority. Action could be taken on the top levels with the speed essential to emergency efforts. Its powers were broad:

To take action for the immediate rescue from the Nazis of as many as possible of the persecuted minorities of Europe, racial, religious, or political, and all civilian victims of enemy savagery . . . To take all measures within the government's power to rescue the victims of enemy persecution who are in imminent danger of death, and otherwise to assist such victims with all possible relief and assistance consistent with the successful prosecution of the war.

Here at last was not a gesture, but a powerful weapon forged by the people of the United States. The emergency powers of the President were now behind the war task of saving people as well as killing them. Here was the United States of America acting in a familiar role.

Early next morning the telephone awakened me. It was Oscar Cox.

"The President has just signed the order creating the War Refugee Board. It's no longer a secret. Furthermore, we have been discussing you for the post of first Special Attaché of the State Department charged with carrying out the orders of the Board in Turkey and the Middle East."

"You mean that you are going to put teeth into my efforts?"

"We are going to see that you do not work in a vacuum."

3. *A Window to the Balkans*

The day following the creation of the War Refugee Board, I was in Miami, awaiting passage to Turkey. A week went by before my turn came to board a plane. During that time I experienced a taste of Army life, as the Air Transport Command made no distinction that I could observe between civilians and soldiers.

I shared a room with two officers of the Air Corps. In the morning a flashlight roused us while it was still dark. We jumped out of bed and attended formation. During the day, we stood in line to have our credentials checked, undergo medical examination, listen to lectures on what to wear, "ditching" in the Atlantic Ocean, where to sleep, and the prevalent diseases in the Orient and what to do about them. The habits and characteristics of two germs, those causing malaria and dysentery, were explained to us in detail. (In spite of this I was to become a victim of both during my mission.)

At the end of a week, we were briefed for the cross-

0 20 40 60 80 100 MILES
Ploesti
RUMANIA
Bucharest
Constanta
Danube
Varna
Black Sea
BULGARIA
Burgas
Plovdiv
Igneada
Bosporus
Istanbul
Haydarpasa
Sea of Marmara
TURKEY
Ankara
Dardanelles
Aegean Sea
ANATOLIA
Izmir (Smyrna)

Berlin
GERMANY
Warsaw
POLAND
Prague
SILESIA
CZECHOSLOVAKIA
Sosnowiec
Katowice
Oświęcim
SOVIET
UNION
Vienna
AUSTRIA
Košice
Munkács
Lwow
Budapest
HUNGARY
Chust
BUKOVINA
TRANSNISTRIA
(UNDER RUMANIA)
BASARABIA
UKRAINE
YUGOSLAVIA
Cluj
RUMANIA
Ploesti
ITALY
Bucharest
Constanta
Sofia
Varna
Black Sea
BULGARIA
Burgas
Igneada
Istanbul
Bosporus
GREECE
Dardanelles
Sea of Marmara
Ankara
Smyrna
TURKEY
TAURUS MTS.
Adana
Mersina
Mediterranean Sea
Rhodes
Aleppo
SYRIA
Bengasi
Tobruk
Haifa
PALESTINE
Tel Aviv
Jerusalem
TRANS-
JORDAN
0 100 200 Miles
EGYPT
Cairo
BOUNDARIES AS OF 1939

ing and we hopped off on Sunday, January 30, in a C-54. A group of young officers en route to the India theater were my traveling companions. Their destination was a secret until the plane left the field. One could feel the tension as they opened the envelopes containing their orders, which had been given to them as they boarded the plane.

"Delhi," murmured a captain in a voice which seemed to be measuring the distance to India, not in miles alone.

"Delhi," re-echoed several others, letting the name float in the air like smoke.

We were to fly over the Atlantic by way of South America. The first leg of the journey took us to Puerto Rico. I had plenty of time to think, as the plane's motors kept it soaring over interminable stretches of water. The hop across the ocean proper began at Natal, Brazil, which we reached on the third day. From there we crossed to Accra, on the Gold Coast of Africa, stopping only at the Ascension Islands. We then flew the whole width of Africa in a night and a day from Accra to Cairo, with three brief stops—a miracle of travel, thanks to General George's magnificent Air Transport Command.

In Cairo I had an encouraging talk about my mission with Alexander Kirk, then our Minister in Egypt. As the Turkish Government delayed the authorization of my visa, I could not proceed immediately, and

on the advice of Ambassador Steinhardt I spent several days in Palestine while he arranged for the necessary permit to enter Turkey.

The last leg of my flight was in a plane of the BOAC (British Overseas Air Command). We were landed in the border city of Adana, Turkey. Ankara, capital of Turkey, my ultimate destination, lay at the end of a twenty-eight-hour journey by train over the Taurus Mountains. Earl Le Noir Packer, First Secretary of the Embassy, and Joseph M. Levy, of the New York *Times,* met me at the station. It was the evening of February 4, 1944.

Ankara was disappointing to a newcomer. A tour of its few streets did not take long. It is an artificial city in the Anatolian mountains, four thousand feet above sea level. It was built between two overhanging hills with the aim of keeping it immune from air attack. Like Canberra, the capital of Australia, and the Washington of an earlier day, the city lives a one-sided, exclusively political existence. It was erected as a matter of policy, and only the will of the indomitable Ataturk could have called a city into being in this desolate locality.

My first official duty was to attend one of those inevitable diplomatic luncheons, at the residence of Ambassador Steinhardt, which was on a hill overlooking the Anatolian mountains. After the other thirty-

nine guests had left, I remained behind for my first conference with the Ambassador. Steinhardt told me that special instructions had arrived from Washington that I was to remain in Ankara indefinitely, and that I was to be associated with the Embassy as a special attaché.

The instructions provided me with unprecedented authority, for they included the abrogation of the Trading With the Enemy Act, a power not enjoyed by the Ambassador or other American envoys. Pehle had apparently been busy.

The following excerpts from the paraphrase of my orders, dated February 12, 1944, and addressed to Ambassador Steinhardt, illustrate the determination, foresight, and thoroughness with which the headquarters of the War Refugee Board had covered my designated task.

Advise Hirschmann that he will be:

1. Charged with the responsibility and duty of carrying out the Board's program and policies in Turkey.
2. That he will be responsible to you and should discuss his problems and activities with you fully and regularly.
3. That the Embassy will provide him with facilities for necessary communication to carry on his official duties.
4. That he is expected to extend all possible assistance to you in carrying out the instructions received by you from the Department on the subject.

5. That he is to work with and give every possible assistance to all private and public agencies operating in this field in Turkey irrespective of whether these organizations are foreign, international, or American.
6. That he is to assist and develop programs and implementations of measures for the transportation, rescue, relief, and maintenance of refugees.
7. That he shall send to the Board frequent reports and recommendations concerning the progress of his work and any difficulties encountered.
8. Insofar as concerns the Trading With the Enemy Act, the Treasury Department has vested in The Refugee Board and its representatives full authority to communicate with enemy territory in carrying out the purpose of the Order. The Treasury has also delegated to the Board and its representatives authority to empower any public or private agencies subject to the provisions of the Act to communicate with enemy territory to carry out the Order. Hirschmann will enjoy such authority.

These instructions, which were an implementation of the Presidential Order establishing the War Refugee Board, launched our Foreign Service on an activity which shattered all precedents. The State Department, until World War II,

. . . had been the agency of the American Government to protect *solely* the interests of United States Citizens abroad. If an American citizen got into difficulty abroad and his rights were being infringed, the State Department

immediately intervened in his behalf . . . Furthermore, if he owned property in other lands and that property was confiscated by law or some damage done to its physical being, the State Department immediately intervened and tried to secure for him reparation.[1]

It is true that a small beginning had been made in 1939 in the kind of humanitarian work we were now undertaking. This was done at the request of William Green, President of the American Federation of Labor. The State Department at that time intervened in favor of a small number of persons associated with the labor movement in Germany and Poland, whose lives were threatened and who had fled to Lithuania. Our Government succeeded in having those trade-union leaders released from confinement. Moreover, all of them were given visas to come to the United States. "Up to that time, the State Department had never intervened or undertaken movements on behalf of persons who were not American citizens." [2] This had been an isolated instance and not intended to establish a precedent.

There was now a complete break with this tradition, and it came through the exercise of the war emergency powers of the President. America, a land of

[1] Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, Seventy-eighth Congress, First Session, on H. R. 350 and H. R. 352, November 26, 1943.
[2] *Ibid.*

people with a conscience, now had a government with a conscience, as well as a policy. Public policy came to reflect private conviction that human need, mercy, brotherliness, and justice recognize no national boundaries.

President Roosevelt's Executive Order establishing the War Refugee Board ranks with the great liberal documents in history and continues the tradition of Magna Carta and the Bill of Rights. From a restricted and self-interested concept of our position in the world, we passed to a higher, a more universal, ideal when the President instructed the representatives of our Government abroad "to take all measures within the Government's power to rescue the victims of enemy persecution who are in imminent danger of death," regardless of their nationality.

The war had burst like a bomb on the people of Europe. The human fragments of whole nations, provinces, and families were scattered in all directions and to all parts of Europe and of the world. They were impelled east through the Urals, south through the Indian Ocean and the Caspian and Black Seas, north through the Arctic, and south again through the Mediterranean. As Breckinridge Long testified:

When the war began and Germany invaded Poland, there was a mass of people frightened to death. They had been frightened by the broadcasts emanating from

Germany. The Germans tried to terrorize the neighboring people of those countries, and when the destruction started, and the airplanes and the big guns and the big tanks rolled through Poland, the people were frightened, and literally several million of them moved eastward in front of the German armies. The roads were filled with people talking and riding with donkeys and horses and carts and automobiles. The people that did not have any conveyance were traveling on foot, the young and the old and the weak and the strong and the sick and the well, and as they went east they were eventually dispersed over various parts of Russian territory and found themselves behind the Russian lines. Some of them were killed at the roadside. Some of them were sick. Some of them were killed by machine guns of the Germans. Some of them rested where they were. Some of them, their shoes worn out and their feet bleeding, were in a terrible state of affairs. . . .

Now, that was the eastern movement. There was a northern movement. People fled from Poland, northern Poland, and from northeast Germany and fled north to Lithuania, Estonia, and Russia. Subsequently, the war in the west had started. Germany invaded France and the Low Countries, and when she attacked Holland and Belgium, the migration started westward . . . This hegira westward preceded the onslaught of the German armies, and the German airplanes flew over the roads and strafed these people. The roads were so crowded that sometimes there was no movement on them. Automobiles would break down, tires would get punctured, carts would break, and the people that were in them could not move . . .

The roads were clogged and literally millions of people went from northern France westward, and from Holland and Belgium westward, until they got in the neighborhood of Paris, and then converged on Paris. They went through Paris and around Paris and the German armies approached. They kept going . . .[1]

These waves of refugees were made up of the populations of defeated nations. Prominent among the refugees were the Jews, whom the Germans had singled out for extermination and unprecedentedly brutal treatment. As the German armies covered an ever increasing area, the advancing waves of refugees overtook those earlier groups of Jewish fugitives who had been on the run ever since Hitler came to power in 1932. Most of them hoped to go to the United States or to Palestine, or, more vaguely, to "freedom." A few realized their hopes. The great mass of these victimized humans, however, were stranded along the roads or in hiding in the countries bordering Germany. They lived like hunted prey, in constant fear of capture and without the simplest necessities.

Hungary, on the road south from Poland, Germany, and Czechoslovakia, afforded a rest for some of the hunted people. Arrangements were made for the legal entry of refugees into Hungary and for their safe

[1] Testimony of Breckinridge Long before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, *op. cit.*

departure when the time came. Moreover, some effort was made to provide for their needs, and their lives were safeguarded while there.

This firm and safe steppingstone on the road to freedom then led on to Rumania, which was much less safe for the refugees and for the minorities within. Marshal Ion Antonescu, the dictator, was under the inflexible influence of Berlin. Rumania, under Antonescu had, in Transnistria, one of the most notorious and diabolical concentration camps in existence, where one hundred and seventy-five thousand Jewish and other anti-Fascist victims were dying at the rate of thousands a day. Bulgaria, too, had responded to the German whip and had adopted anti-Jewish laws patterned after the Nuremberg Laws.

Hungary was a refuge in a storm, where one might pause to regain the strength to move on, not a permanent abode. The conditions that made this temporary haven possible might be terminated at any moment. The Government of Hungary was collaborationist in other matters of policy. Its territory was entirely surrounded by German, German-occupied, or satellite lands that had adopted or had accepted the official German policy toward the Jews. There was no telling when the tide of bloodletting might overflow the unprotected borders of Hungary and submerge that country, also.

The escape hatch for the Rumanians and Bulgarians, as well as for the refugees sifting down from the north through Hungary, was Turkey.

Turkey had many advantages for us as a base of operations. Because it was "neutral," we could work from there in sight of enemy lands. Moreover, the escape routes from the Black Sea ports, both of Rumania and Bulgaria, lay through the Bosporus, the Sea of Marmara, and the Dardanelles, all waterways controlled on both sides by Turkey. These waterways, which connect the Black Sea and the eastern Mediterranean, where Palestine is situated, form the lifeline of the refugee movement. The overland route from Bulgaria also passed through Turkey. The rail lines all converge on Istanbul. No other avenue of escape was open at this time from the Balkans and from Central and Eastern Europe.

For these reasons Turkey assumed a position of crucial importance for the refugees and for those working to save them. The fugitives must either pass through Turkey or perish. The Turks, in turn, did not relish this unwonted position of power over the lives of desperate, homeless fugitives into which circumstance had thrust them. Problems arose out of our activity which they claimed proved embarrassing to their diplomacy, which had been pro-German and which was now working to keep the nation neutral in the eyes of the world.

From our point of view, however, and that of the refugees, Turkey was actually a bottleneck which had to be broken if the desperate people on the wrong shore of the Black Sea were not to perish within sight of freedom.

4. *Breaking the Visa Bottleneck*

The gateway of escape through Turkey had been technically open since 1941 to a small number of refugees moving by rail from Bulgaria. In order not to overload their trains (and for other unexplained reasons), the Turks had made a restrictive limit of sixty persons to be carried each week from each of the Axis satellite countries—Hungary, Rumania, and Bulgaria.

The fatal results of this bottleneck can be measured by the fact that there were about a million people in Hungary living in mortal terror of the Germans and about one hundred thousand victims of anti-Semitism in Rumania and Bulgaria. At a maximum rate of one hundred and eighty persons a week, two hundred years would have had to pass before the last of the refugees could come through.

It was an unequal struggle from the start. The leisurely, sporadic, timid, vacillating work of saving the refugees hardly matched, stroke for stroke, the

determined, efficient, methodical work of persecution. It was like straws against cannons. The conditions within the satellite countries did not permit of anything like a leisurely solution. In Transnistria alone, one hundred thousand people perished in less than a year. In areas occupied by the Germans, including Hungary in the last year of war, the unpopular members of minorities were being sent to concentration camps and extermination centers as fast as freight trains could carry them.

Inadequate as the transit facilities were, they exceeded the actual demands made upon them. Immediately upon arriving in Ankara, I made extensive inquiries to discover the source of the obstruction. The explanation varied with the nationality and position of the person consulted. The British placed responsibility for the tie-up on the Bulgarians. The Bulgarians blamed the Germans. The Turks said blandly that the British were causing the delay. In many quarters there seemed to be little doubt that it was the Turks themselves who were obstructing the work of rescue. It was a dismal and confusing state of affairs. As I made the rounds from embassy to embassy, I began to feel like a refugee myself.

Obviously, I could not decide on a plan of action until I had found out the cause of the blockade around Turkey. The British, in their White Paper, had agreed

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to admit seventy-five thousand refugees to Palestine in the period 1940-44, inclusive. Two hundred refugees had come through during the last quarter of 1943. The names of at least twelve hundred persons were on the list of those approved for transit through Turkey and for visas to enter Palestine. Despite all this, the trickle of refugees had dried up completely. Why weren't they coming through?

Since we were at war with the Bulgarians and our ally, Russia, was not, I decided that a talk with the Russian Ambassador to Turkey might prove helpful.

This first conference at the Soviet Embassy was a memorable one. I had been cautioned by our Ambassador to be discreet and restrained. It was with tense anticipation that I entered the enormous mansion of the Russians, high on a hill, not far from the German Embassy. Ambassador Sergei A. Vinogradov and his First Secretary, Sergei Mikhailov, greeted me warmly. I congratulated them with enthusiasm on the feat of the Russians in breaking the backbone of the German Army and on the fortitude which had turned the tide at Stalingrad. Before long in the conversation, they were translating the Moscow war communiqués to me and we were following the progress of the Red Army over giant maps on the wall of the Embassy.

"These victories have cost us in blood and soil a price which no American can possibly estimate," they said. "It is true that we began the scorched earth

policy, but the Germans have finished it. Our land is seared; our cities sacked. Twelve millions of our citizens are dead. Do you know what twelve millions of people mean?"

My admiration for the Russians in their gigantic military operations was genuine, and the two officials could sense it. We got along well. They saw in me a sympathizer and a friend. When I mentioned the matter of their intercession with the Bulgarians, however, they shrugged their shoulders and said with typical Russian frankness:

"We are not at war with the Bulgarians, but we are certainly not allies. We do not trust them any more than we do the Turks. They do not invite us to their parties and we do not invite them to ours."

I continued to press for the help I desperately needed. Ambassador Vinogradov, a youthful and scholarly-looking man of about forty-two, looked at me sadly when I made a direct personal appeal to him and said:

"Young man, I will give you some advice. It is this. You should go home. There is nothing that you can accomplish here. Among the Bulgarians, Rumanians, and Turks, you will get nowhere. You will get only endless postponements and obstacles."

These words came as a blow. I knew the Russians to be realists and I respected their appraisal of the situation.

"I don't think I shall leave at once," I finally said. "In spite of your discouraging words, I think I shall explore a little further."

Vinogradov pressed his point. "How long have you been here, Mr. Hirschmann?" he asked.

"Two weeks," I answered.

"Well, I have been here six years," he said. "Don't you think I should know the situation here somewhat better than you?"

There was a dead silence which I finally broke by saying: "I have been here two weeks. You have been here six years. Won't you help me? You have done so already by giving me a realistic picture of what was not clear before. I know that as an ally you want to help. May I come another week and talk with you again? With your experience you can teach me."

Vinogradov agreed to another meeting, which was followed by many others.

The word "hopeless" had not been hurled at me by the Russians without reason. The words of Ambassador Vinogradov ran through my mind over and over again: "You should go home. There is nothing you can do here."

Since I could not obtain an official or authoritative version of the problem, I began to piece together snatches of fact as best I could. The resulting patch-

work of fragmentary knowledge depicted a fairly clear pattern of persistent bungling, confusion, and indifference to the problem of refugees on the part of the governments and their representatives.

The work of rescue was entangled in the regulations of many countries, their political problems of war and peace, their bureaucracy, their differing social outlooks, and lack of concern with the fate of dying strangers. The Bulgarians had brought to an almost complete stop the emigration of refugees from the Balkans by forbidding their transit and exit from their country. It seemed clear also that this was in conformity with the demands of their German masters. The Germans exercised a stringent control over the exit of refugees from southeastern Europe. The Rumanians, in turn, while brutally persecuting their minorities, were willing to permit a small number of families to emigrate; but safe transit facilities were not available by way of the Black Sea. It was for this reason that passengers like those of the "Struma" adopted the final desperate alternative of traveling without documents or safe-conduct agreements on leaky ships, in seas menaced by storms, mines, and submarines.

The work of issuing visas for legal immigration was reduced to a hopeless tangle by the Turkish and British officials charged with the work. At the beginning of the war, the British Government had

agreed to admit two classes of persons to Palestine. In the first group were persons who had been granted immigration certificates before the outbreak of war. The second group consisted of relatives of people already residing in Palestine. Later, in 1942, a third category was added, 4,500 children and 500 adults. Another revision of British policy came a year later, when it was decided to admit to Palestine 29,000 Jewish refugees from Europe. All of these people were to be included in the global total of 75,000 immigrants provided for in the White Paper. To date, however, these figures amounted to mere statistics, broken into convenient categories.

If these commitments, meager as they were, had been carried out efficiently and promptly, and if the quota had been applied to all refugees, a number of real benefits would have accrued to the millions who lived under the terror. First and most important is the fact that many who escaped would not have been turned back and sent to their deaths, in order to hold vacancies open for hypothetical refugees with visas who might never come or who had long since lost their chance of coming. This would have meant offering sanctuary to the "illegal immigrants"—persons whose "illegal" status derived from the fact that they had neither exit permits nor transit visas. The Nazis never invented cruelties more subtle than this technicality, which deprived these "illegal" immigrants

of their hope. Nor was obstructionism ever more apparent. Instead of filling the quota, many thousands of the victims of this technicality went to fill waiting graves.

On our side of the frontier, in the offices of the officials in charge of the work of rescue, were delays, indifference, red tape. On the other side were long lines of people without food, homes, country, or the protection of any law—people who were grieving, hungry, and trembling with fear. The conditions that prevailed in our own consular offices in occupied territory during the early years of war, before America entered the conflict, could not have been as bad as those in the landlocked tyranny of the satellite states. Here is the scene as related by Breckinridge Long, assistant to the Secretary of State.

Literally, the records of the reports of the consular officers to the Department of State form one of the most thrilling and one of the saddening and awful pages of our humanitarian history.

One man tried to kill himself right in front of the consul because he was ineligible to a visa to the United States under the immigration laws. Another man fell down and grasped the knees of the consul and begged, and others would fall down and kiss their feet and pray for a visa. Others that were able and were in a different status and of some little means would slip in the passport a sum of

money. They resorted to every expedient and manifested every form of human expression of a desire to get a visa . . .[1]

Officials representing each of the governments concerned admitted openly that thousands of refugees, who might otherwise have been saved, were being stopped in the Balkans. The routine necessary to secure a visa is described in detail in the following excerpt from my report to the State Department, dated March 6, 1944:

I think it desirable to acquaint you with the routine and the steps necessary to be taken in connection with the approval of visas and the time required under this routine to obtain visas and releases for the refugees from the Balkan States. The steps are as follows:

(1) Mr. Barlas of the Jewish Agency makes up his list on the basis of information given him by representatives and others who have come from the occupied countries. It is necessary to have the full data—name, date, where and when born, present address, etc. (This requires from 2 to 3 weeks.)

(2) These lists are then sent to authorities of the Jewish Agency in Palestine for them to obtain guarantees of admission to Palestine by the British Government representatives there.

(3) The British authorities in Palestine, after checking, send an edited and approved list to the authorities in London for authorization. (This requires 2 to 3 weeks.)

[1] Hearings Before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, *op. cit.*

(4) London officials send the authorized list to the British passport officer at Istanbul, Major Whittell, who is very co-operative. (This requires 2 to 3 weeks.)

(5) After the British passport officer at Istanbul obtains this data, he makes up a note each week which goes from Istanbul to Mr. Maby in the British Embassy at Ankara which contains the names of nine families. (This requires one week.)

(6) Mr. Maby then sends a note to the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs containing the names of the nine families from the three satellite countries. (This requires 3 to 4 days.)

(7) This list then reaches the hands of Aziz Kemal Payman of the Foreign Office, who routes it through the various departments of the Turkish Government, *viz.*, the Minister, police, military authorities, and other officials.

(8) When all the steps of approval as outlined above have been obtained, the names are dispatched to the Turkish consuls at Bucharest, Budapest, and Sofia (now Plovdiv due to bombing of Sofia).

As discouraging as the red tape and inefficiency was the transparent lack of interest of the officials in the embassies. Their bureaucratic mentality, malevolence, and ill will complicated matters as much as did the severity of the statutes. The diplomatic corps were cluttered with men who shunned the opportunity to act with the human decency that their positions as representatives of civilized countries demanded of them. At least one highly placed official in

the British Embassy in Ankara looked on my own enthusiasm for my mission with disdain and assumed an air of unbearable boredom during our unavoidable conferences. Others, with aloof effrontery, shunned the opportunity to serve humanity. A few did their duty. Only one or two men showed energy and responsibility. Aside from Ambassador Steinhardt, the names of Alfred C. Maby in the British Embassy and the former U. S. Consul General, Burton Y. Berry at Istanbul should be singled out for special praise.

In Turkish circles, refugee problems always aroused misgivings and distaste. Delay, obstruction, and indirection had to be taken for granted. The lists of visas to be forwarded to Turkish consuls abroad were often held up for two months in the office of Kemal Aziz Payman, Director General of the Department of Consular Affairs. The lists were also allowed to linger unduly in the British Embassy and at various other points in the diplomatic merry-go-round.

At last I came across two loose strands of concrete information which helped to unravel the complicated, tangled pattern which governed the issuance of visas. I learned that hundreds of visas for children, who had been herded along the borders of Bulgaria for almost two years, had either been lost or pigeonholed. I made a determined effort to locate these papers. Turkish officials said that the visas had prob-

ably been withheld in Sofia by the Bulgarians; the British said they might have been delayed in the Turkish Embassy in Ankara. Meanwhile, a deadlock. Nothing, absolutely nothing, was being done.

In desperation I sent an urgent request for help to the War Refugee Board in Washington, urging that Washington obtain co-operation from London through top levels. To John Pehle and his lively associates I owed my first success after weeks of fruitless effort. What means Pehle and his colleagues used to prod the British, I do not know. However, London immediately instructed the British Embassy in Ankara to take "parallel action" to aid me in my efforts. Suddenly, what can only be described as, at best, a desultory interest on the part of the British became productive. The visas were turned up in the British Embassy, where they had been on ice as the result of a technicality. They were quickly approved, and, within three weeks of my arrival in Ankara, the forty-five hundred children who had been approved for immigration to Palestine ever since 1942 began to arrive in Istanbul from Bulgaria, in groups of one hundred a week. It was a start. And it served to invigorate both Ambassador Steinhardt and me.

The second clue, also, had consequences superior to its seeming importance and contributed, to a large degree, to the unraveling of the snarl in the railway traffic from Bulgaria. The Turkish Government had

been issuing transit visas through Turkey on the condition that the refugees leave Istanbul within twenty-four hours of their arrival. The Turks claimed that some of the refugees were lingering in Istanbul in violation of this agreement. A check disclosed that there was some truth to this contention. Of course, the refugees could not go on to Palestine unless transportation facilities were available and until the authorities were willing to permit them to enter. The Turks demanded a letter from the British Government guaranteeing that all Jewish refugees entering Turkey would be permitted by the British to leave Istanbul for Palestine within twenty-four hours. Pending its receipt, no additional entrance visas were being issued.

The bitter irony in the situation lay in the fact that the British had not refused the required commitment. The British Government had, in fact, prepared the letter and sent it. The trouble was that *it had been mislaid somewhere.* After persistent pursuits, I finally had this letter located, again in the British Embassy, and the movement of the refugees out of Axis lands was resumed immediately. On March 3, Kemal Aziz Payman showed me, in the Turkish Foreign Office, the written authorization being sent to Turkish consuls in the Balkan States; this authorization provided for a regular flow of refugees on the basis of nine families a week and an additional one hundred and

forty children and ten adults every ten days to be drawn from the three satellite countries.

In co-operation with the representative of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, I next directed my efforts to the delays in the issuance of visas. Within a short time we managed to telescope the tortuous routine described on page 40 into a maximum period of three weeks, often less, instead of the ten to fourteen weeks formerly necessary.

For a time I had felt like a man in a nightmare. for I had run to a door only to find it shut. When I had run to another, and then another, they too, had been slammed in my face. I had been going round and round in a seemingly endless circle of frustration. Now I was hopeful that this vicious circle had been broken.

5. *Dealing With the Enemy*

"This is Transnistria, the notorious *Death* Valley."

John Pehle was pointing at a large wall map. I crossed his office to join him. His finger was on an area between the Bug and the Dniester rivers.

"One hundred and seventy-five thousand Jews and other anti-Fascists from the major cities have been sent here by the Rumanians," he continued. "It's disease-infested, and only fifty thousand remain alive. See what you can do about it."

I made a note in my little book: "Transnistria, Pehle says: 'Break it up.'"

John W. Pehle had been Mr. Roosevelt's choice for the important post of Director of the War Refugee Board. From his desk in the Treasury, Pehle ". . . engaged in something like the struggle between the angels and the devil for human souls." [1]

It was Hitler's own confession that, failing world conquest, only the total annihilation of the Jews

[1] Blair Bolles, "Millions to Rescue," *Survey Graphic*, September, 1944, p. 388.

would satisfy him. As the Nazis, with defeat growing more imminent, intensified the work of destroying human souls, President Roosevelt's Board, at the eleventh hour, accelerated the work of saving them. It was an almost hopeless race against time. But every soul snatched from Fascism's death traps was another life for freedom.

"Send us cables as fast and as hard as you can," Pehle had said, as we parted at the door of his office. "Tell us what you need and we'll find ways of backing you up."

Transnistria is in the southwestern part of the Russian Ukraine, bordering Rumania. It is a buffer region and has been the subject of recurring contention between the Russians and the Rumanians. During the period of the German drive on Stalingrad and the Baku oil fields, the Rumanians moved in. Into this region, laid bare by the annihilating advance of the Germans and the scorched-earth policy of the Russians, the Rumanians had concentrated one hundred and seventy-five thousand of their people.

Rumania's persecution, carried out in slavish imitation of the Germans, began in 1941. Up to that time anti-Semitism in Rumania had been active but sporadic. Now, however, the Rumanians proved no less efficient than their German allies in persecuting their own people.

The Rumanian authorities had at first put behind stockades the entire Jewish and anti-Fascist population in the principal provinces of Bucovina and Bessarabia. From there convoys were herded across Rumania to the Dniester River. One cannot imagine a more pitiable pilgrimage. The possessions of these citizens had been expropriated by conveniently improvised laws. What little money they were able to secrete on their persons and the contents of their little bundles were gradually depleted by thefts and the giving of bribes. Often, after the cruelly inadequate periods of rest during the forced marches, the refugees were unable to rise to their feet. Those able to stand, however, were ordered to plod on and to abandon not only the bundle they were carrying but a wife, a mother, a child, a husband. Thousands perished through cold and hunger. The snowbound roads and fields and the huts and stables in which they sometimes found shelter at night were littered with the sick, the dying, and the dead.

Upon arriving in Transnistria, the survivors of the death marches were put to hard labor and beaten without mercy and without reason. The duty and urgency of saving them weighed heavily on the few of us charged with the task of rescue. At times, in this race against the devil, I imagined that I could hear the cries of the victims calling out for the salvation which we owed them. But we were faced with

the incontrovertible, stubborn reality that these men, women, and children were prisoners in a country that was our *enemy*. A hostile frontier, barbed wires, armed guards, strafing airplanes—indeed, the most relentless of history's enemies stood in the way of our efforts to bring these people to safety.

There was no other recourse than to sit down *with* this enemy and to attempt to negotiate for the release of these innocent people, at the very moment when we were bombing the Ploesti oil fields and making a shambles of the city of Bucharest. It was certainly flying in the face of reason. Why should the enemy, who was being destroyed by us at that very moment, even consider any suggestion regarding their own people? What reasonable grounds could there be for dealing with an enemy whom, at the moment, we were bombing into destruction? Yet as desperate as the chance was, I decided to risk it.

Under our laws, it is a crime against the Government of the United States for any American citizen to consult or negotiate with the enemy in time of war. Even our ambassadors are restricted in this respect and are subject, as are all other citizens, to this law. The first thing that Ambassador Steinhardt had said to me upon my arrival in Ankara was: "They have given you the broadest powers of any envoy that I have known. You are even permitted to deal with the enemy."

I decided to use this unprecedented authority and to confer with the Rumanian Minister, Alexander Cretsianu. Up to this time no direct, two-way discussion had been held between a representative of the American Government and the enemy. A direct approach involved infinite hazards. Failure could be nothing short of catastrophe. In the first place, Nazi and Turkish agents were constantly on my trail. My every move was reported back to headquarters. (Later, when I was about to leave Turkey, I learned that the British Intelligence, also, had a complete dossier of my movements.) The German Gestapo, operating directly under von Papen, had the most active intelligence corps in Turkey. A leak revealing that an American envoy, who represented the Departments of State, Treasury, and War, was negotiating directly with a Rumanian minister could be exploited by our enemies with disastrous results for our cause. They could issue a story that the Americans, under the guise of saving refugees, were throwing out peace feelers. The value of such a revelation in restoring flagging morale in enemy territory would be inestimable.

Nor could we be sure that Cretsianu himself would not choose to misconstrue my overtures and use them for his country or for his personal advantage. Would he and his superior, Antonescu, concede that our motives were fair, open, and humanitarian? Long in ad-

vance, Ambassador Steinhardt and I had carefully examined the possible repercussions. Far into the night we explored the dangerous implications of our action if we should fail; the priceless benefits in life's gift to others, should we succeed.

Cretsianu was approached through Gilbert Simond, Ankara representative of the International Red Cross. Would he be interested in talking, exclusively on the subject of refugees, with a representative of the American Government? "Perhaps such a meeting might be arranged," observed Simond, a wiry little Swiss with a dry sense of humor. Two days passed. Telephones could not be trusted in this delicate work.

Cretsianu assented. The rendezvous was arranged for a Saturday, at 5:00 P.M. I was to appear at the home of Simond in a side street, an hour in advance, to forestall any suspicion on the part of the secret agents. It was a tense hour of waiting.

In the little sitting room in Simond's home, almost hermetically sealed by blinds, there was a grand piano. While waiting I tried to loosen my tension by playing some pages from a Beethoven sonata. My fingers trembled; Beethoven suffered. But the soaring spirit of the music served me well at this moment.

Ten minutes before Cretsianu was to arrive,

Simond began pacing the floor, and I sat down in an armchair, toying with papers and notes. The doorbell rang. I quickly disposed of my note paper and prepared to face Cretsianu with a cool exterior. When the door opened, a handsome man of about forty-five, with hair graying at the temples, entered the room and bowed. With charming manners, he offered me his card. I handed him mine. We both bowed again and sat down.

"Do you mind if I take notes?" he asked. He spoke English well.

"Not at all," I replied. During an insufferable silence we both poised pencil on paper. I then began to talk.

"Our Government is outraged," I said, "by the reports we have received of the massacre of your own citizens."

I described my authority, President Roosevelt's Emergency Order, and I quoted the exact words:

> . . . to take action for the immediate rescue from the Nazis of as many as possible of the persecuted minorities of Europe, racial, religious, or political, and all civilian victims of enemy savagery . . . to take all measures within the Government's power to rescue the victims of enemy persecution who are in imminent danger of death, and otherwise to assist such victims with all possible relief and assistance consistent with the successful prosecution of the war.

Alexander Cretsianu was listening with noncommittal politeness. He did not volunteer any comment.

Before leaving Washington, I had obtained a letter from Carol Davila who, prior to the declaration of war between the two countries, had been Minister to the United States from Rumania. A democrat, Davila had broken with the two Antonescus and the Iron Guard when they seized the government of Rumania and made their deal with the Nazis. He was living in America and actively supported the liberal Rumanians, who yearned for the day when their country would break from the Nazi yoke. The letter he had given me was addressed to Alexander Cretsianu, the enemy Minister who was now sitting before me.

I had investigated the record of Cretsianu and had learned that his father had established a good record as Minister to the United States in the years from 1926 through 1929. I also learned that the younger Cretsianu was ideologically sympathetic to the Allies. At the same time, young Cretsianu was an intimate friend of Mihail Antonescu, brother of the Fascist leader, who, subterranean sources reported, was repenting his ways. It was just possible that the favorable turn in the Allied fortunes during the winter of 1943 had had something to do with the change in the attitude of Antonescu. Might not the two men be inclined to seek Allied good will?

"There is a time when the conscience of free people will rise against barbarism and strike down the perpetrators of crime," I stated, looking squarely at him as I talked. "True, the people you are killing are your own citizens. But they have the same right to live as have you and your Government leaders. A day of reckoning is now approaching. You cannot avoid it."

Cretsianu protested that it was the Nazis who had perpetrated the crimes, that their crimes were not so brutal as had been pictured, and that recently there had been a movement to improve conditions.

"A great deal of improvement will be necessary before you will be accepted by the humane nations of the world as a self-respecting people," I said.

Tea was served, the tension relaxed somewhat, and the conversation flowed more easily. Cretsianu attempted to divert me to a general discussion of the course of the war, the bombing of the Ploesti oil fields, and the impending danger to Rumania from the Russian advance in Bessarabia.

"You know it is the Russians we fear, not the Americans," he said. "If we could only have some assurances that the American influence would remain in the Balkans after the war and that you would not pull out as you did after the last war."

I halted this digression abruptly. After all, I could

not forget that sitting before me was the Ambassador of an enemy state.

"I came to discuss only the subject of your own people, who are begging to be rescued from the Antonescus. You do not want these people. I beg of you not to kill any more of them. We will take them. We will provide the ships to bring them across the Black Sea to Istanbul and then the trains to carry them to Palestine."

We talked for two and a half hours. Toward the end, Cretsianu, with a diplomat's adroitness, inquired of me: "What precisely do you want, and what do you offer?"

"We request first," I replied, "that you disband the disease-ridden camp at Transnistria at once and that you return the remaining forty-eight thousand refugees, many of whom are children, to their homes." I had no need to remind him that, as a result of cruelty and disease, these were all that remained of the one hundred and seventy-five thousand who had been sent there.

"We ask, second, that you release five thousand children from Rumania; that you facilitate their passage to the port of Constanta on the Black Sea; that you provide exit certificates for them; and that you expedite the debarkation of ships which we will provide for these children to go from Constanta to Istanbul and then to Haifa, Palestine.

"Third, we ask you to arrange to have Antonescu issue, without delay, an order which will put an end to all forms of persecution and to the repressive acts against the minorities of Rumania."

Cretsianu, who had been taking notes throughout the conference, wrote down my requests.

"It is not impossible," he said. "I promise to recommend these measures warmly in a telegram to Bucharest tonight. What will you offer in return?"

"It should not be necessary to offer anything to a Government to have them free their own citizens," I answered. "However, if you will stop the massacre of your own people, I offer you the good will of the Government and the people of the United States of America. These moves will receive widespread publicity in the United States and will serve as a significant indication of a change in the policy of your Government away from your Nazi collaborators."

Nearly three hours is a long time to sit focusing on another man's face. I had never watched anyone so intently. As the conference progressed, I could feel his interest kindling. Toward the end, it was apparent that he could see a way out for his Government. And his years of professional training must have enabled him to sense an advantage for himself as well. He might be remembered when the day of reckoning came! The personal appeal was the rift in the armor of this seasoned diplomat.

"Your father, I understand, made a brilliant record in Washington. Who knows but that the tradition may continue in better times, when we are at peace?"

He bowed, promised to telegraph to Antonescu "with all urgency and warm recommendation," and volunteered to communicate with Simond the minute he had a reply.

A week later, as I was about to leave for Istanbul on the six o'clock train, there was a call from Simond to hurry to his home. I replied that I was rushing off to the station, but nothing would dissuade him. "Come at once," he said.

After a hurried consultation with Ambassador Steinhardt, I agreed to postpone my trip and hastened to the little house on the side street. Simond wanted to know whether I would see Cretsianu at once. I did not betray the anxiety I felt as I told Simond I would be willing to see him.

Five minutes later the dapper Rumanian envoy hurried into the room. His slick hair was somewhat disheveled; he had apparently been running. Sitting down and catching his breath with difficulty, he read from an incomplete telegram from his superior, Antonescu. Antonescu had agreed to his recommendations. Instructions had already been issued to General Gheorge Potopeanu to break up the camp in Transnistria. The inhabitants were already departing

for Bucharest. The five thousand children would be assisted in reaching Constanta, the port of embarkation. All persecutions would cease forthwith. The telegram ended abruptly, for there had been some difficulty with the decoding device.

"Now I must go and get the rest of the telegram," he said. I turned to him and to Simond and said quietly, "I am reminded of a phrase from the Bible—'To give quickly is to give twice.'"

"Ah, that is much better in the French," Cretsianu replied, "Qui donne tôt donne deux fois."

The next day, while I was sitting in Ambassador Steinhardt's office, the telephone rang. It was Simond. He said:

"I have just had a report from our representative in Bucharest. It reads: 'Due to reasons unknown to me, the camp in Transnistria has been disbanded.'"

6. *A Bridge of Ships*

The success in breaking up the camp in Transnistria renewed our courage and justified our faith. Our efforts could now no longer be thwarted by the diplomats on the grounds of hopelessness. The Board was elated. One sentence of the Rumanian Minister's kept ringing through my ears. "You should have come before."

Now that the Rumanians had agreed to release five thousand children for emigration to Palestine, it was up to us to provide the transportation. The solution to this problem seemed to lie in establishing a bridge of ships across the Black Sea to Istanbul, from Constanta to Turkey or to one of the Palestinian ports. With the assistance of Ambassador Steinhardt I had been working on the plan from the day of my arrival in Turkey.

When I first reached Ankara, on the evening of February 11, 1944, Dr. Mordecai Eliash stopped me in the lobby of my hotel, the Ankara Palas. He had come to Ankara several days before with Dr. Isaac

Halevy Herzog, Chief Rabbi of Palestine. They were also in search of a means of rescuing the refugees. Unfortunately Dr. Herzog was confined to his room with a high fever, the result of influenza. Dr. Eliash, however, was moved by such a feeling of urgency that he insisted on an interview before I had unpacked my bags. He wanted assistance in the work of prevailing upon officials of the Turkish Government to authorize the Jewish Agency for Palestine to complete their long negotiations for the Turkish cargo vessel, the S.S. "Vatan." This old tub was owned by a Turk by the name of Kalkawan Riza. The price tentatively agreed upon for the charter of the boat for a single trip from Constanta to Istanbul, requiring from three to seven days, was fifty thousand English pounds (about $200,000).

Even at this exorbitant figure, which would have amounted to $333 "per head," we were eager to make a deal. The difficulty lay in obtaining the permission of the Turkish authorities. No charters were possible without their approval. Chaim Barlas, representative in Turkey of the Jewish Agency, who was in charge of the negotiations, had reached an impasse. The Turkish Government had declined to give a definite reply—the traditional way of saying "no" in Turkey. The hitch was that the Turks were insisting that the ship be replaced if it were sunk en route.

In a conference with Ambassador Steinhardt I reported the facts and my own position in the matter. "If the Turkish Government is really interested at this time in showing its friendly attitude to the people of the United States," I told him, "here is a hand-picked opportunity for them to demonstrate it. Let them take one of their regular passenger vessels out of service and permit the United States Government to charter it at a fair price. Mr. Kalkawan Riza is demanding a piratical figure."

With the aid of Ambassador Steinhardt, the Turkish Government was approached again but without result. Three days later I telegraphed the information regarding the S.S. "Vatan" to John Pehle in Washington, urgently requesting that the United States Government guarantee to replace the ship if it were sunk. It would be a difficult request to fulfill. General Eisenhower at this time was beginning to assemble his forces for the offensive across the English Channel, and every ton of shipping was precious.

Pehle's last words to me gave me hope. "Let us know what you need, Hirschmann, and we'll find ways of backing you up." I knew that everything consistent with the successful prosecution of the rescue efforts would be done.

All telegrams of a confidential nature in government service are, of course, coded and sent through

the State Department. From Turkey they were filtered through to the proper persons in Washington in about two days, and the earliest possible reply required two more days. Counting the time necessary for consideration of the problem, it usually took a week between the dispatch of a telegram to Washington and a reply to Ankara. These intervals were always filled with anxiety. During that week of waiting I spent hours talking with Rabbi Herzog in his sickroom. He is a spare individual of about fifty years, who speaks quietly and persuasively in eloquent English. Without saying it in so many words, we both knew that my difficult request for a guarantee to replace the S.S. "Vatan" in the event it were sunk was the test of the War Refugee Board's ability to enforce its powers.

Precisely one week later, the telegram from John Pehle arrived. The first sentence of the telegram gave me direct and unrestricted authority through the War Shipping Administration and the Foreign Economic Administration to guarantee the Turkish Government the replacement of the "Vatan" with a ship as good or better, if the "Vatan" were lost.

The telegram was a masterpiece in its detailed coverage of all possibilities connected with the guarantee. It referred to a ship that would be sent from waters that were "as nearby as possible." It covered taking out insurance through our Foreign Eco-

nomic Administration representative in Ankara, Michael Cardoza.

The last paragraph was particularly interesting, for it asked me to emphasize to the Turkish Government the significance of the concrete efforts which the American Government was making in connection with the program of the War Refugee Board. It referred to the previous offer to arrange for the financing, support, and maintenance of refugees coming into Turkey. The telegram, signed by Edward Stettinius, Acting Secretary of State, ended: "We hope the Turkish Government will accordingly make the S.S. 'Vatan' immediately available for this mission of mercy."

I rushed back to the hotel and read the telegram to Rabbi Herzog and Dr. Eliash, who were about to leave for Istanbul to meet the Catholic Apostolic Delegate. Here was heartening evidence that our Government was backing its new policy and my efforts to the limit.

I then determined to make a personal inspection of the S.S. "Vatan" in the harbors of Istanbul and to investigate all the circumstances of the deal. Ambassador Steinhardt warned me in advance that the shipping business in Istanbul was somewhat "sticky" and that I should be on my guard.

Upon arriving in Istanbul I found that the Ambassador's warnings had not been overstated. The word

was quickly bruited about town that a representative of the United States Government with money and power to act was inspecting vessels. I became prey to numerous visits and "propositions," to all of which I listened with noncommittal attention.

It did not take too long to determine that the deal in contemplation for the S.S. "Vatan" was outlandishly exorbitant. Aside from the outrageous price asked for the vessel (in which I was convinced that a number of sticky fingers were involved), I decided, after thorough inspection of the boat with a member of our Naval Intelligence who was experienced in this field, that it would never do. It would be necessary to reconstruct the boat. With the acute shortage of materials in Turkey, it would mean months of delay.

I returned to Ankara and conveyed this information to Ambassador Steinhardt. Between us we determined that the time had arrived to approach the Turkish Government directly and make urgent demands for the chartering of a seaworthy passenger vessel at a reasonable price. Ambassador Steinhardt decided to take up the matter with Numan Menemenciogulu, Foreign Minister. This strategy was successful and it was because of Steinhardt's strong and insistent intervention, the S.S. "Tari" (formerly the "Tadla"), a 4,050-ton, passenger vessel built by the French—one of the few Turkish passenger vessels—was finally placed at the disposal of our Government.

Instead of paying two hundred thousand dollars for the "Vatan," a broken-down freighter which, at best, could transport only three hundred to four hundred refugees, we agreed, after much negotiation, to pay $175,000 for a first-class passenger vessel.

It then became my job to negotiate the charter of the ship. This was an entirely new undertaking, one in which I had had no experience whatever. I decided to go to Istanbul and to make arrangements with the head of the Turkish Maritime Office.

While I was sitting in my office mulling over the overwhelming complexities facing me in dickering with and chartering a ship from the Turks, a clerk from our code room handed me a telegram from Washington. It stated that Myron Black, Field Director of the War Shipping Administration in the Middle East, was en route to Ankara from Cairo to assist me. I read the telegram several times to make certain I was not dreaming. Who said the Administration in Washington was too big and too busy, that the Government machinery was complex and inefficient? Here my needs were being anticipated with a foresight and co-ordinating power that were almost too good to be true.

Myron Black came. He had been on the point of leaving for India when he received peremptory orders from Admiral Emory S. Land, War Shipping Administrator, to "proceed without delay to Ankara

to assist the representative of the War Refugee Board in the negotiations for a ship." Black paid a strange penalty for his sudden detour. His winter clothes were in another port. He arrived on February 27 in Ankara, where the temperature hovered barely above zero, in a tropical summer suit, covered by an enormous, hastily-borrowed overcoat about six sizes too large for him. He strode into the Embassy looking inflated, grotesque, and out of humor. Fortunately, as he is tall and lean, he wore the same size clothes as Ambassador Steinhardt.

That night, he and I left for Istanbul and went directly to the office of Avni Serter, Director General of the Turkish Lines. In long hours of conference, the negotiations with this sad-eyed little Turk proceeded. He persisted in protesting, as he upped the price, that his Government had only humanitarian purposes in view.

Black sat at my left. Our interpreter from the American Consulate was at my right. They served our Government well. Black nudged me, muttering imprecations at the price the Turks were quoting. Meanwhile the interpreter, as I later learned, was editing my remarks to the Turk, translating only what he thought would impress him, omitting my pointed references to "making profits on the United States Government in a rescue endeavor."

The little Turk would quote a figure. I would offer

a counterproposal. He would then rise despondently from his seat, leave the room in order to telephone or consult his superiors, and meander sadly back to haggle some more.

We finally agreed on what I considered a price that was not too high. Black dissented when I accepted, insisting that we were being overcharged. But there were other considerations. Every day's delay meant misery or death for fourteen hundred human beings who could be transported on the "Tari." I had decided not to delay the negotiations a moment longer for the sake of saving a few dollars.

"I should like to visit the ship and see it from stem to stern," I told Avni Serter after we had reached an understanding.

It was one of those windswept February days of torrential rain not uncommon in the region of the Bosporus. All during the negotiations, we could see and hear the lashing waters from the windows of the Turkish Maritime Company. Avni Serter rang a bell. A heavy-set Turk entered and eyed us ominously. He was given instructions to escort us to the ship, about two miles down the Bosporus. In a strong wind, Black and I boarded a small dinghy which plowed through choppy waves to the "Tari." Compared with the junk-like appearance of the freighters which had been under discussion for charter up to this time, the "Tari" loomed up like a modern liner.

Black smiled mischievously as we neared the ship. I guessed the reason for his amusement when I saw a rope ladder swinging in the wind from the side of the "Tari." This was the only access to the ship. The dinghy drew up to the "Tari" and rocked heavily beside her. Black, with ostentatious professional skill, caught the rope ladder as it swung near us and began climbing it, monkey fashion. I looked out, held my breath, and decided there was nothing to do but leap. My first lunge for the rope was successful. Climbing was another matter. As I struggled upward, Black was not helpful. Having reached the top, he had decided to shake the ladder to test my equilibrium.

"The directors of Bloomingdale's should see you now," he yelled down as I clung desperately to the line.

The boat was in good condition and was well equipped to accommodate nine hundred passengers. In order to provide for the extra five hundred, we decided to build special companionways and accommodations in the hold so that the passengers would have some degree of safety and decent comfort.

Small craft, of which we had several in operation, had a chance of getting through the Black Sea in spite of the submarines which lurked everywhere. With a vessel like the "Tari," to attempt a crossing without

safe-conduct agreements from every belligerent would have been disastrous. We had already obtained such agreements from each Government with the exception of Germany. I had reason to believe that even the Germans would give their consent in this case.

Perhaps this was sheer optimism. I hurried back to Ankara to begin, in roundabout fashion, the task of obtaining the needed agreement from the Germans. Simond of the International Red Cross was again on hand, tireless and resourceful. Simond was an important Catholic. Franz von Papen, the devil-genius of Europe, who was then Ambassador to Turkey, was also a prominent Catholic. Simond suggested that we approach the Apostolic Delegate in Istanbul and have him urge von Papen to try to obtain the needed safe-conduct.

In numerous conferences, Simond gave me repeated assurances that the Germans would grant us the safe-conduct agreement. Von Papen had given his promise to Simond, and Simond had accepted his word at face value.

The charter and plan for the "Tari" had been developed to the point where the ship was ready to sail. Through Cretsianu, I had completed the arrangements for bringing thirteen hundred children from the interior of Rumania to the shores of Constanta to embark on this ship. All other arrange-

ments had been made for their food, water, landing, and transportation to Palestine. Without the safe-conduct from the Germans, however, I refused to take the risk of authorizing the sailing. Now all depended on Simond and his intervention through von Papen. He was also working with the Apostolic Delegate, Angelo Roncali.

Having been recalled to Washington for consultation, on Thursday, April 8, at midnight, Black and I boarded the Taurus Express from Ankara to Adana, Turkey. Simond, who was among those seeing us off, gave me this last assurance as the train was about to pull out: "Don't worry about the 'Tari'; I saw von Papen again. He will see it through."

I had every reason to be encouraged as I left Ankara. In spite of obstructions, the bridge of ships at last seemed ready to begin its pilgrimage of rescue; the shipping bottleneck was being broken. Once a single trip of the "Tari" was successfully concluded, the ship could ply back and forth between Constanta and Haifa, bringing thousands of refugees to safety.

But the "Tari" did not sail. At the time the Germans were being urged to grant the safe-conduct, the Turks agreed, under insistent pressure from Great Britain and the United States, to discontinue the shipment of chrome—a key mineral for war—to Germany. One of the ways the Germans retaliated was by refusing to grant a safe-conduct to the "Tari."

Our Government could not take the risk of exposing the ship to the German submarines which hovered in the dangerous waters of the Aegean. The refugees were expendables, caught in the grip of war's relentless intrigue.

Ambassador Steinhardt, in Ankara, and I, working at the Treasury in Washington, made numerous last-minute efforts to move the "Tari," but without success. The Germans placed a steel grip on the ship and held fast. The Allied Governments were powerless now to send rescue ships.

Along the shore the refugees languished, waiting for a ship which was never to come. One cannot reckon the number of children from Transnistria who never saw their hope of freedom fulfilled.

7. *Rescue Via the Underground*

All nations knew black markets in the war years. The most gruesome, however, was the one in the Balkans, the black market in human lives. The refugees stranded in the satellite countries were so desperate that no risk or cost deterred them from making an attempt to escape. Consequently, they were fair game for the water-front scavengers of the Black Sea. Bulgarian and Rumanian promoters obtained the use of unseaworthy vessels and sold space on them at extortionate prices. Often the refugees never saw the ships on which they had bought passage. Nor could they obtain satisfaction, because this traffic was "illegal."

The ships started out with the aim of passing through the Dardanelles and slipping into Palestine, provided they were not intercepted by German mines or submarines, or the violent storms that raged in these waters. If the vessels did succeed in reaching Palestine, the passengers not admissible under the

quota were destined to be deported. A number of the ships were wrecked on the Turkish-European coast of the Black Sea; others went down in the vicinity of Mersin, on the Mediterranean. Some of these unseaworthy hulks made a trial voyage and turned back after a day or two.

Large ships were not available for this clandestine refugee traffic. Even if they had been available, they had little hope of getting through. It was the small vessels that stood a reasonable chance of crossing the Black Sea without attracting attention. And, once across, they could slip in and out of lonely inlets along the Palestinian coast to land their passengers.

The Allied and neutral Governments were attempting to restrict and discourage this traffic. They frowned upon the illegal nature of the movement; they also feared that it would lead only to heartbreak or disaster for the refugees. And the Allied Governments, preoccupied with waging war, were not disposed to get into the business of rescuing "the enemy." There were a number of reasons for this policy other than that of military expediency. The first and most important was the persistence of Allied leaders who made policy (notably Anthony Eden and Lord Cranborne) in the belief that the Germans would not permit the Jews to leave Europe. The door was said to be locked from the inside. They refused to authorize the sending of ships unless they had re-

ceived a previous official commitment that the Jews would be allowed to leave. Nor would they permit the issuance of visas and entry permits except to people who had been given a passport by one of the enemy states.

The immediate difficulty lay in arranging transportation across the Black Sea, without government aid, in time of war when all shipping was government-controlled. The refugees were in a hopeless predicament. The Turks and the British would not transport and receive those who slipped out illegally, and the satellite governments would not issue passports—the requirement for entry to Palestine. Still, the movement of small groups out of Axis territory, if negligible, was continuous.

Now that the effort to establish an authorized and regular flow of immigration by sea had failed, I intensified my efforts—desperate at best—to provide other means of extricating the victims from unfriendly shores. As the Allied armies began to advance swiftly, the situation of the refugees in the Balkans, which had been chaotic from the first, was rapidly deteriorating. The progress of the armies of the Soviet Union unsettled the political situation in all the satellite countries, toppling Fascist governments. The occupying German authorities were taking last-minute, frantic measures against the Jews to obtain benefits in labor, goods, and money. Some Ger-

man officials, frightened by the world reaction to the persecution of the Jews, were covering up their crimes by destroying the evidence. Others were using Jews for barter, not only for the benefit of the Wehrmacht, but for personal profit.

Into this situation, resulting from the inability of the contending governments to agree on a single mission of mercy, there entered a group of determined young Palestinians whom we called "the boys."

It was "the boys" who had begun the organization of the traffic of small, illegal ships to carry men, women, and children by underground and underworld routes into safety.

"The boys," aided by a number of fearless associates, worked as a team and demonstrated magnificent ingenuity, faith, and courage. Their youth (they ranged from the late twenties to about thirty-five years), temperament, and conviction combined to produce the boldness and resourcefulness which were indispensable to their hazardous task. No risks were too perilous for them to take. Discouragements only quickened them to further efforts. An American, especially, could admire the selfless spirit of dedication with which they courted danger.

In addition to the immediate job of rescue, they had several long-range objectives. The first of these was to prove to the Allied Governments that the Jews

could be evacuated from Europe. Once this had been demonstrated, they hoped to obtain the participation of the Allied Governments in the work. The second was to influence the United States and Great Britain to use pressure on the Turks to let the refugees pass through their country. And, finally, they wanted to prove that it was a political mistake to treat the Jews as enemy citizens instead of stateless refugees; that, by aiding them, we were aiding, not impeding, the war effort. The Jewish community in the Axis lands was the natural base for a resistance movement.

Since aid to the Jews of Europe was considered by the Allies damaging to the war effort, "the boys" had to work in great secrecy. They could not afford to let either the Germans or the British, Russians or Americans discover their plans. Their cause, however, inspired sympathy and support in many unofficial quarters.

Methodically, they set about executing a carefully studied two-part program. The first objective was to establish contacts with the European underground and smuggle aid into occupied lands in the form of gold, plans, and literature. Meanwhile, the Jewish population was to be helped to move from the more dangerous areas to places of relatively greater safety. They had a code word in Hebrew for this part of their activities—*Tiul*, a walk. The usual route of the "walk"

led from Poland through Czechoslovakia and Hungary to Rumania, from where, it was hoped, the refugees would be taken across the Black Sea. The second part of the program called for the organization of a regular traffic of small vessels across the Black Sea.

The logical location for the headquarters of the intricate undercover machinery which they were putting into motion was Istanbul. From there, diplomats, agents, military observers, and businessmen traveled back and forth to all the countries of Europe.

Posing as merchants, "the boys" studied the movements of these individuals and made good contacts—chiefly with Germans, Hungarians, Bulgarians, and Poles in the pay of the Nazis. As only gold or sound currency was acceptable in their work, they went into the black market and bought English sovereigns and the gold which the Germans paid to Turkish merchants for supplies.

The contacts made were as sound as the yellow metal which "the boys" had to offer. The men chosen were neither anti-Nazis nor anti-Semitic. They were men who, because of their background and their activities in Europe, were extremely well informed and did not believe that the Germans could win. They worked exclusively for the security of a bank account or a hoard of gold.

A regular courier service with all parts of Europe,

even with remote occupied lands like Poland, was established. None of the agents ever betrayed his trust. At least two of them, one a German officer, sacrificed their lives in this work. The German officer was a Viennese of the nobility. In June, 1943, he carried a letter and a consignment of money to the leader of the resistance movement near Silesia, where there was a large Jewish community at Bendin (Sosnowiec). Later, after the Warsaw revolt, the Jewish pioneer fighters escaped to Bendin and carried on the underground movement from there.

It was a risky assignment for the German officer. He had to go from Vienna, to Katowice, in Silesia, to Bendin. Since a Christian could not enter the ghetto, he had to establish contact with the girl leader of the underground and have her brought out. This was accomplished with the help of a medical orderly of the German Army. The letter he brought back has been preserved as one of the great documents of Palestine's fight for freedom. It told, in the simple language of a young girl, that our letter had reached them at a hard and bitter time. In ten days, it said, we will not be alive. Your letter is a joy and a symbol of hope in the time of our death. On June 28, 1943, this heroine led the revolt against the Germans. The Jewish pioneers fought hard; fought until all had died. Three witnesses of the disaster, two girls and a boy, survived.

Although the Governments of the United States

and Great Britain did not co-operate with "the boys," high officials of the British and American intelligence services placed great value on their resourcefulness. They exchanged many services and favors. Allied intelligence profited by being able to interrogate the messengers in the pay of the Palestinians about conditions inside enemy territory, and used them as couriers to the Axis countries. The British, in turn, did not interfere with the work of "the boys" in making deals with shipowners and captains. Moreover, British and American intelligence officers helped "the boys" find new contacts and trained the Palestinians who were to be dropped into Axis Europe by parachute in the techniques of jumping and undercover work.

Thirty-two Palestinians were parachuted into enemy-occupied lands to do a diversity of jobs—establish contacts, facilitate operation *Tiul*, organize resistance, and relay information and instructions to the Partisans. Of these, two were girls. Four boys and one girl, Hannah Szenesh, died in performing the dangerous duty for which they had volunteered. One other Palestinian, Enzo Sireni, dropped in Italy, was executed in Dachau.

Ever since the start of hostilities, British intelligence officers, contrary to the official Government policy, had hoped for their own purposes to see traffic resumed across the Black Sea. Contacts with that part

of the world had been infrequent and difficult. They were more than glad to have "the boys" start this traffic moving. "The boys" now placed representatives in charge of their operations in all parts of the Balkans. They sent one man to Constanta with enough money to buy a ship and made a deal with him to get out a shipload of refugees.

I developed a great fondness for "the boys" as I listened to their daring plans and helped them in their secret meetings. They were negotiating with Turkish, Rumanian, and Bulgarian shipowners, who demanded large sums—an average of about $150 for each individual—for the use of their tubs to transport victims across the Black Sea. Life came high in the Middle East. Death was much cheaper.

Since they flew enemy flags, the ships which they bought or chartered could not go beyond neutral Turkey without the prospect of being seized or sunk. Of course, the passengers would have neither exit papers nor permits to enter Turkey. The ever present problems of persuading the Turkish Government to grant them transit permits through the country and inducing the British to admit them into Palestine remained unsolved.

As a Government official, I could not associate myself openly with the work of "the boys." They were attempting to get results by overriding the obstructions of conventional diplomatic procedure. My aims

and my motives in going to Turkey, however, coincided with those of "the boys," which were to save people first and argue about the methods afterward. I made my position clear to them by saying: "As a Government official I cannot approve your illegal work, but go ahead, by all means."

And I made it my responsibility to see that this planning, this human dedication did not come to naught; that the refugees were not turned back after they reached Istanbul. I undertook to induce the Turks to grant entry permits through our Embassy and to convince the British that they dare not send them back, that they had to admit them to Palestine. There would be no more "Strumas"! Eventually, the Allied Governments not only accepted, but welcomed, the work of rescuing the refugees in this manner.

8. *Smuggling Human Cargo*

It was in early April, after months of planning, that the Bulgarian ship, the S.S. "Milka," the first of the illegal ships chartered by "the boys," came through the Black Sea. After many heartbreaking delays, "the boys" telephoned me from Istanbul that the "Milka" was en route from Constanta and would arrive outside the harbor of Istanbul. Chaim Barlas of the Jewish Agency, who had been conferring with Kemal Aziz Payman, of the Turkish Foreign Office, had been given assurances that the ship would be permitted to land, although it had no papers and the passengers had neither Turkish transit visas nor Palestine entrance permits. I was naturally skeptical of this information, for the experience of the "Struma," as well as of other ships which had been refused entrance, had been burned into my mind.

As I was about to leave the Embassy in Ankara on the evening of April 1, 1944, I was visited by Alfred C. Maby, Third Secretary of the British Embassy,

who had recently been put in charge of refugee matters. I knew him to be sympathetic. The British authorities knew that the "Milka" was an illegal ship, but I sensed they were aware that their fingers had been burned by the world repercussions following the "Struma" disaster. President Roosevelt's War Refugee Board was pressing them for parallel action with our Government in coming to the aid of refugees. They were now trying to co-operate.

Maby informed me that the Turkish Foreign Office had categorically refused to permit the "Milka" to dock. Here was another "Struma" in the making.

I knew that the "Milka" had to dock; that it was my responsibility to see that it did regardless of diplomatic hurdles. I knew also that if the "Milka" were refused entrance, all the other small ships now being engaged to take the waiting refugees from the shores of Constanta and Burgas would be stranded. This was the crucial test. Refugees who had moved heaven and earth to travel secretly from the interior of their countries to the shores of Rumania and Bulgaria would be left to starve and die.

The destination of the refugees was Palestine, and formal certificates for entrance into Palestine had to be provided by the British Government. I asked Maby if he would request the British Minister to visit the Turkish Foreign Minister and make a strong plea that the boat be permitted to dock and the refugees

to pass through Turkey. Sterndale Bennett, British Minister in Ankara, thereupon visited the Turkish Foreign Office, but was flatly refused. There was nothing left but an appeal to the Turkish officials by the United States Government.

Although I had been acting unofficially behind the scenes in aiding "the boys" in their undercover work, once the ships approached Istanbul it became my official duty to disclose that fact to Ambassador Steinhardt and to inform Washington not only of the vessels' imminent arrival, but of our attempt to obtain co-operation from the Turkish Government.

The following morning in the Embassy I met Ambassador Steinhardt on his way to his office and gave him the news. He went at once to the Turkish Foreign Office. During hours of waiting for his return I knew that a battle was on.

Ambassador Steinhardt returned dejected. He had battled hard and long, but Numan Menemenciogulu had stubbornly resisted our demands. He said that the ship and passengers had no legal authority to enter; that it was the Turkish Government's policy not to permit foreigners to invade its shores, even temporarily; that it would not be browbeaten by big governments insisting upon the abrogation of formalities necessary for entrance; that the boat would be permitted to remain outside the city; that food and

medicines would be provided, but that it could not anchor in the harbor, especially since the Turkish officials were well aware of the fact that it was only one of a series of ships which were on the way. (In the latter they were right.)

That afternoon I sat in the Ambassador's office and listened while he dictated a telegram to Secretary Hull, covering his conversation with Numan Menemenciogulu. The telephone rang. It was Numan. He agreed to make an exception of this one ship, but he would not permit the refugees to remain in Turkey. He would provide a special train with Turkish police supervision to remove the refugees from the ship directly to Haydarpasa, on the Asiatic side of Istanbul, where trains would carry them through Asia Minor across to Syria.

The following day Ambassador Steinhardt and I were able to send a cablegram to the War Refugee Board in Washington, a paraphrase of which read in part:

. . . in the case of the approximately 250 refugees without Turkish visas or Palestine entry certificates who are on board the S.S. "Milka." Numan agreed to make an exception. He has issued instructions that the refugees are to be allowed to land in Istanbul; that the Minister of Communications detach four nonpassenger cars from the semiweekly Istanbul-Aleppo train and attach four passenger cars.

The "Milka" was only the first of a series of such ships to bring refugees from the Balkans through Turkey. The final hurdle, that of obtaining permission for the refugees coming by sea to enter Turkey without visas, was eliminated through our efforts. The refugees were to be sent to Palestine immediately by rail.

One week after the arrival of the "Milka," the 250-ton Bulgarian S.S. "Maritza," with 244 additional refugees, arrived from Constanta. Again the refugees were permitted to enter Turkey en route to Palestine. The S.S. "Maritza" was followed by other ships, including the S.S. "Ballacitta," throughout the month of April. For reasons we could not fathom, the little ships ceased to come in during May and June. On May 30, on the way back to Constanta from Istanbul, the "Maritza" foundered in the Black Sea during a gale, but no refugees, of course, were going in that direction.

Meanwhile, on April 15, I had returned to America for consultation. Among the strong arguments used by Secretary Morgenthau and John Pehle in urging me to return to Ankara was the sudden stoppage of these "illegal" ships.

"If you do nothing else but help break this deadlock and start the little ships moving across the Black Sea again, your mission will be justified," urged Pehle.

How could anyone resist this plea? I had reason to believe that, by working closely again with "the boys,"

I could help start the little ships moving across the Black Sea once more. On June 7, I flew from LaGuardia Field, en route to Turkey. Istanbul was to be my new base for operations.

It was not long before the bottleneck was again broken, and the ships were once more coming in. On July 9, the "Kazbek" arrived in Istanbul with 758 passengers; the "capacity" of this little boat was 300. I went to see it as the passengers were being transferred from the ship to the train. Because no one was permitted by the Turkish authorities to board the ship, we had to shout our questions and our instructions to them from a rowboat. Among the 758 passengers were 256 children from Transnistria, who were literally hanging from the rigging. The expression in their eyes was tired, empty.

A group of us, including Dr. Judah Magnes, President of the Hebrew University in Palestine, Dr. Joseph Schwartz, European representative of the Joint Distribution Committee, and Joseph Levy of the New York *Times*, went down to the railroad station to see the passengers put on the special train by the Turkish police and to see them off. It was a dramatic scene. One could feel the air charged with tension and nervous excitement as the tired refugees marched languidly toward the trains. Here they were at last, not numbers in a report adding to Fascism's mounting total of *statistics* of death, but living, human

beings, ready to live again, marching from Europe's hate and persecution toward hope and freedom.

We onlookers gazed at each other, searching for some adequate word. Something welled up deep within us. Before our eyes we saw a fragmentary segment of a long line in a pilgrimage of men. Stateless, homeless, they marched quietly, stoically—but with heads up.

Considering the problem, the job on the whole was efficiently done. The refugees were taken off the ships to wait on the dock with their bundles and packages until the police escorted them in groups to the trains. No one was permitted to visit or talk with them. The accommodations, we were relieved to see, were European second- and third-class trains. The Joint Distribution Committee had provided food and water. Gradually, the cars filled up for the three-day ride to the Syrian border. They were crowded but luxurious compared with the miserable conditions from which the refugees had been extricated.

A few of the passengers were hysterical, running up and down the platform until someone came to help them. Attracted by the sound of the splintering of glass, I walked along the platform the length of several cars to where one woman had broken a window and was wildly waving her arms. Her hair was loose; her eyes stared madly. The refugee children

ignored her; apparently this was not their first experience with hysteria and terror. One of the passengers told me quietly: "She did this often on the boat. She's lost her mind. She saw her three children and her mother shot down in front of her eyes."

Just after sundown, the train finally pulled out of the station. As it began to move I felt that a great weight had been lifted from my heart. A trainload of humanity was moving into sunlight and safety. With Joseph Levy, I boarded the ferry back to Istanbul. We were in a quiet mood; neither wanted to say much. The night shadows slid across the waters. The world seemed to yawn, and the shadows of the mosques made fantastic silhouettes on the shifting waters—arabesques that looked for the moment like mocking figures. The world seemed very tired.

We knew that all arrangements that could be made from Turkey had been completed for the voyages of additional illegal vessels: the "Morina," the "Bülbil," and the "Mefkura." These were to follow the "Kazbek" from Constanta. In addition, the Greek flagship "Smyrnie" at Brăila, would be able, with some refitting, to accommodate from seventeen hundred to two thousand passengers. For weeks afterward we had no definite news of these ships. We were working in a vacuum. Information brought in by underground couriers was often delayed a week or

two. We had no way of checking on operations at the enemy port of embarkation, Constanta.

When, after an interminable wait, the three ships failed to put in an appearance, I pressed Simond of the International Red Cross to have his Rumanian representative, Kolb, make investigations in Bucharest. In desperation, I saw Minister Cretsianu. I begged him to find out whether the ships had departed, and if not why not. He reported back promptly that a snarl had arisen in the negotiations between the shipowners and the representatives of the refugee organizations in Bucharest.

A. L. Zissu, "enemy citizen," but a Zionist, was the representative in Bucharest of the Jewish Agency for Palestine. He had been empowered to choose from the many thousands the few hundreds of refugees who were to embark. There was a rumor that the delay in the departure of the ships was caused by a conflict between Mr. Zissu and his colleagues regarding the choice of the "lucky" individuals who were to find places on the ships. On July 21, I wrote the following letter to Zissu, stating the position of the War Refugee Board, pressing him to expedite the release of the three ships:

July 21, 1944

Dear Mr. Zissu:

I am informed that the Rumanian Government is not opposed but in fact is helping to facilitate, through its

Ministerial Committee, the transportation of refugees from Rumania via sea, and that following the successful voyage of the S.S. "Kazbek" there are four additional vessels now prepared to embark. Our Government is watching with great interest the plans for the quick movement of these vessels, and may I urge that nothing be done to obstruct the immediate departure of these four ships . . .

I am also informed that there have arisen a number of questions regarding those who should be chosen to make these voyages to safe havens. In this connection, may I say that it is not the province of my Government to make or influence such decisions. We are deeply interested in not permitting this question in any of its aspects to interfere with the prompt sailing of these and additional ships by even so much as a single hour.

You undoubtedly are more conscious of the acuteness and danger of the situation for these innocent citizens than we can be from here, and you will forgive me for emphasizing again the essential importance of not permitting anything, especially of jurisdictional or technical nature, to stand in the way of immediate release of these vessels.

The unconscionable delay was caused by the sudden vigilance of high German and Rumanian officials who had learned of the proposed sailing and whose adherence had not been bought. Two more weeks passed without news of the boats. Finally, on Saturday, August 5, Herbert Katzki, my assistant, phoned

me to say that one of the ships from Rumania had been sighted in the Black Sea. Then another call came that three ships had arrived, but an hour later still another revealed that only one had been seen, and that two had been lost in a violent storm.

Then the phones from Istanbul went dead (not a novelty in Turkey). I was frantic. Would fate snatch these victims within an hour of their liberation? All night I tried to break through the silence for some kind of news. It was heartbreaking.

Next morning I attempted desperately to obtain from Turkish authorities an airplane or a coast-patrol boat to locate the ships, but without success. It was a Sunday, and none of the officials of the Turkish Government was available; since most of their dealings were with Christian powers, only a skeleton staff was kept on duty at the Foreign Office on Sunday. Throughout the night I sat at the telephone, checking reports. The "Morina," with 308 passengers, had arrived safely in Istanbul. It was the "Bŭlbil" that had been sighted fighting the bad weather in the Black Sea. No word as yet from the "Mefkura." Since the three boats had left together as a convoy, there was reason for grave concern. Sunday, August 6, branded itself on my memory.

That evening I was alone in my office in the basement of the American Embassy, writing a note to my sister in what seemed a safely remote and serene

place, Baltimore. Only a Turkish porter was on duty in the Embassy. I felt singularly lonely in the deserted building. The black night had fallen. Then I heard the loud call of the telephone. In that ring were commingled hope, doubt, and fear. I felt it was from Istanbul and, somehow, that the news would not be good. My instinct was right—the worst had happened. The "Mefkura" had been torpedoed by the Germans. It had sunk forty-five miles out of Istanbul with 306 passengers aboard, 96 of whom were children.

All night we worked to get rescue missions out to the dense, mountainous military area off which the Turks reported the ship had been sunk. As I have mentioned, none of the Turkish officials through whom we had to operate was available. To add to our difficulties, the Asiatic tempo is so slow that quick action to meet an emergency is not in their scheme of things. The situation was confused; the information garbled. We finally learned the ship had been torpedoed off the Turkish coast of Iğneada, over forty miles from Istanbul, and that the "Bulbil" was still near it and about to steam for Istanbul. I decided that by some means a message had to be transmitted to the captain of the "Bŭlbil," instructing him to keep the ship anchored and not to venture out into the dangerous waters again. It would take a miracle to get a message to him. A message could be wired to Iğneada, but the "Bŭlbil" was anchored miles away

along the coast. The message would have to be carried by oxcarts over the uninhabited, intervening mountains.

If we could get a message to the captain of the "Bŭlbil" instructing him to keep his boat at anchor, and to land his passengers in the deserted, mountainous area where the boat lay, we eventually would find some way of getting lorries or oxcarts through the mountains to bring the passengers to Istanbul. At least they would be safe and not in the stormy and torpedo-infested waters of the Black Sea. Here were some three hundred human beings for whom we had used every means of rescue and who now were within sight of shore. To let them venture out to sea again at this time would be courting disaster. Worst of all, the orders that were necessary to transmit a message to the "Bŭlbil" could be issued only by the Prime Minister of Turkey. Reaching the Prime Minister in an emergency, even from the American Embassy, is no small task. With all the resources at our command there were still delays in finding him. My anxiety was indescribable.

I finally offered the Turkish Government a generous gift to the Turkish Red Crescent if they would undertake to get a message to the captain of the "Bŭlbil." This worked like magic. The orders got through to the "Bŭlbil" without further delay. We received word that the passengers had been landed but that

there was an emergency need for food and medicines. These were to be carried by oxcart over the mountains. I begged for permission to accompany the trek, but this was a Turkish military zone, and it was refused. A compromise was reached, however, and one of "the boys" was authorized to join the rescue party. Large quantities of fresh food, water, and emergency medical items were collected in Istanbul and the party was on its way.

Awaiting word from the Turkish Foreign Office, I walked in a daze down Ataturk Boulevard. Turkish citizens were sitting out in the cafés, eating ices and drinking the inevitable coffee. How indolent they seemed with the world ablaze! Yet was this not true of the citizens of other nations? The night that followed, deep in blackout, left the city an inky hollow. The stars sparkled above; not a foot of ground before me was visible. I felt as helpless as a man reaching for the stars.

At eight o'clock the following morning I left the Ankara airport in one of those shaky Junker three-motored planes which the Germans had sold to the Turks. The plane soared twelve thousand feet on the two-hour trip to Istanbul. Katzki met me at the airport. He was trembling. "There were only six survivors of the 'Mefruka.' Two of them are man and wife; she is in her eighth month of pregnancy. They swam fourteen miles to shore."

One can imagine my relief when I saw the tattered passengers of the "Bŭlbil" arrive at the little station in Istanbul. Among them were the six heroic survivors from the "Mefkura."

But the joy of seeing these people turned cold when the first bloated bodies of the "Mefkura" victims began to wash up on shore. They, too, had reached land!

The surviving refugees were boarding the train for Palestine. The sun was bright, the air sharp in the early morning. Children with thin arms and legs sat listlessly on their bundles, waiting to be placed on the train. Their strange, sad eyes stared blankly into space. When the train pulled out, they began to sing *Hatikva* (*Hope*), the Palestinian national anthem. Here were sounds surging up from hearts emptying out their gratitude. Some leaned out of the windows to wave a last farewell. *"Tausand Dank"* (thousand thanks), they called out—*"Tausand Dank!"*

9. *The Lost Children*

The disaster of the S.S. "Mefkura" spread gloom in Istanbul among all the groups who had worked frantically for months. When the news had been flashed to me in Ankara, one of the first messages I had sent back to Istanbul was to tell "the boys" not to let this disaster interfere with their operations; that we would continue to support their efforts with added energy and confidence. And I immediately telegraphed to Washington, asking for confirmation of my policy to continue our operations without a moment's interruption.

A telegram quickly came back from the Board, deeply regretting the disaster of the "Mefkura" but supporting the decision to continue without letup the operations of the small ships. I called a meeting of all the representatives of the relief organizations in Istanbul and read them my telegram and the Board's affirmative and conclusive reply. The position we took was that the catastrophe was an act of

war; that the risks involved were known to the passengers; that we should let nothing interrupt our rescue ships continued their errands of mercy long after I operations. Since my unofficial participation in the rescue work, the "Mefkura" had been the only casualty. Eight other voyages had been successfully completed and other ships were on the way. In fact, these left Istanbul in October.

The tension we experienced when a ship, overloaded with misery and hope, was on its way is hard to describe. My nights were filled with restless dreams, and often I would awaken with a start to recall visions of long lines of children marching to rescue trains under the direction of the Turkish police. In my dream as in reality they were shadows—thin, emaciated orphans with lined faces and vacant stares.

Children became my special interest. While the older people deserved and got all the help we could provide, the sight of the children with their staring eyes, looking into space as though seeking the return of the warmth and love of parents who had been killed in front of them, was infinitely moving. I wanted passionately to help them; to see them remade into normal human beings.

I determined that, so far as I could help, their warped minds would have the chance to open up to the sun and the light. I am reminded of a conversa-

tion I had had in Cairo with Sir William Matthews. As Director of the Middle East Relief and Rehabilitation Association, he was responsible for setting up the successful refugee camps in Egypt.

We had agreed it was a mistake to think that these young refugees who had lived many psychic deaths would be abnormal citizens. On the contrary, when these young people had been revived and been restored to normal health, theirs was a fierce devotion to the ideal and to the reality of liberty. We were convinced that they would be some of the great freedom-loving citizens of the world.

This talk came to mind when, on my way back to the United States, I visited Palestine and saw these liberated children. The thin legs were becoming sturdy; the bending shoulders were straightening; the swollen bellies were shrinking. The life-giving sun of Palestine was erasing the creases and pallor from their faces. Most important of all, those vacant stares had been replaced. Intead of walking haltingly with Turkish policemen as protectors, they were now beginning to run in the fields with other children. They were even learning how to play. Already they were beginning to feel a freedom of choice in their activities. They would give back much to those who had brought them freedom.

I saw hundreds of these children who had emerged from deathtraps in the Balkans. The scenes at the pier

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at Haydarpasa on the Asiatic side of Turkey, when the little tormented boats finally docked and disgorged their human cargo—mostly children—remain unforgettable. There was a six- to eight-hour wait while the passengers were checked, food and water provided on the trains for their three day trip to Syria and Palestine, and routine arrangements made by the Turkish police to transfer the refugees to the trains. Unusual precautions had to be taken by the Turkish authorities to check even these stateless travelers; for, among their other Satanic devices, the Nazis had slipped their agents, posing as Jewish refugees, into refugee transports.

During the six-hour wait, the children would be spread out on the cement pier, carefully guarded by encircling Turkish police who kept interested spectators at a distance of ten yards. In their exhaustion they would stretch out alongside their crude luggage and their little bundles wrapped in cloth. This "scene from childhood" on the pier, which I witnessed a number of times, was grotesque and weird in the extreme. The children looked quite unlike the healthy youngsters we were accustomed to seeing in America. Their frail, wraithlike little bodies would curl up and find rest among their bundles on the pier and find sleep at last among friends.

When the trains were made ready, the Turkish po-

lice would rouse the children and line them up on the pier to be marched in single file to the platforms some fifty yards away for final inspection. As the children were disentangling themselves, I had the fantastic impression of little, thin arms and legs suddenly emerging from packages and bundles and slowly disengaging themselves in a contorted effort to assemble themselves into human units. For a moment, it was difficult to distinguish between the bundle and the child. Finally, with much effort, the children would stand up, clutching with grim determination their little bundles, their life's possessions. With that now all-too-familiar distant stare, they would search for a sign of friendship or warmth. We tried to supply it where we could, to give them their first awareness of security since the long, tormented night in which they had lost the lives and love of their parents, and their rightful place in the world.

At the platform of the train, some of the children had to be helped up the steps of the coaches. By special arrangement (bribes), we were permitted to do that. I recall lifting one child up four times as he made a desperate and fruitless effort to have his thin, sticklike legs support him to negotiate the few steps into the train and to safety. When the train finally pulled out, it was a rewarding, magical experience to see a light kindle in the children's eyes and to hear their voices, so long stilled, pour forth their

song of gratitude. It was the strangest and most beautiful music I had ever heard.

I shall never forget the boy whom Chaim Barlas of the Jewish Agency brought to his apartment in Istanbul. David had made a five-year trek. At the age of eight, he had outwitted the Nazi police, who had murdered his mother and father in front of his eyes, and had run away, clutching his little sister by the hand. In one encounter with the Gestapo, his sister had been caught; but he had managed to slip away from them, run into a house, and jump into a barrel of water in the cellar. He had hidden there all night, with only his head above water. The Nazis had not found him, and, afterward, he had continued walking.

David had walked right into a concentration camp, but, since the Nazis did not have any record of him, he had slipped out again without their noticing it. He had kept on walking until he reached the Slovakian border. The underground movement had helped him into Hungary, and from there he had traveled with a group of homeless waifs like himself, led by a guide provided by the underground.

When I met David in Istanbul he was jittery and talked so fast I could hardly understand him. He showed me a snapshot of a beautiful girl who must have been about nineteen. I asked him why he carried the picture.

"Oh, she was our leader, our heroine," he ex-

claimed, his eyes lighting up. "She did many brave things to save us."

"Wonderful!" I said, "And where is she now? I want to see her and talk with her."

"Oh, she was hanged," he told me tersely. "The Germans caught her and hanged her."

"But why do you still carry the picture with you?"

"We all do," he told me. "We carry it in our pockets near our hearts. She is our heroine."

Maybe it was some instinct for the survival of the human stream that led us to make children our special concern. In the eruption of Europe a whole generation was being stifled, choked, and cut off before it had even a remotely fair chance to prepare for its part in life. The fact that those whom we saved were only the remnants of Europe's children was an appalling thought. Where would the new generation come from? Who would provide the sinews of civilization, the spirit of free belief? Who would fight to frame a liberated society, if only the old and the middle-aged were left to enter the sad and tired ranks of the world?

Imagine a world without children, or with only a handful of children who have forgotten how to smile, how to play, whose food has been bullets instead of butter.

Looking at a clod, one can imagine the earth; looking at a child's face, one can see the face of mankind.

10. *Bucking the British*

It was during the last days of the negotiations for the S.S. "Tari" that at my request I had been called to Washington for consultation. I had found it increasingly difficult, if not impossible, to present a true picture of conditions in the Balkans by cable. The obstructive tactics of the British and the Turks called for a conference face to face with the members of the War Refugee Board.

I started the flight back to Washington on April 7, 1944. My No. 2 priority moved me along without delay. We left Payne Field, Cairo, at three in the morning and taxied into Algiers at three the following afternoon. We were flying the northern route, the short route. It followed the path taken by General Montgomery when he chased Rommel all the way to Tunisia. The Americans, who flew the planes, called it the "milk route" because of the numerous stops at approximate intervals of four hours; Bengasi, Tripoli, Tobruk, Algiers, Oran, Casablanca. They wanted to

go right through, nonstop on a twenty-four-hour flight from Cairo to Casablanca. This enthusiasm to get on with the job afforded a refreshing contrast with the soft, sodden languor of the Turks and the Arabs.

When I left I had hopes of reporting the establishment, with the co-operation of all the belligerents, of a bridge of ships across the dreaded Black Sea. It proved a vain hope. Still, Transnistria had been freed! The illegal ships were continuing to bring men, women, and children into freedom. The visa bottleneck had been broken. Refugees who had worked their way down from all parts of the country were coming through from Bulgaria in weekly groups. When I arrived in Washington on April 15, I was shown a cable from Steinhardt confirming this:

I have been advised by the Foreign Office that the Government of Turkey has now put into effect a plan for the evacuation of the refugees from the Balkans by rail via the key agreed upon before Hirschmann left and that three "convoys" have already departed for Turkey from Hungary.

The schedule arranged with the Government of Turkey provided for from two to three hundred people (nine families and one hundred and fifty children), to come out weekly. This was a small percentage, indeed, of the hundreds of thousands of people caught in the trap of a brutal enemy. It was no more than a beginning, a trickle. While it did not

satisfy us, it served, nevertheless, to encourage us. When one saw a refugee, even a single survivor of that long night of Nazism, and beheld all the horror of it imbedded in his taut and puzzled stare, the statistical aspect vanished.

Morgenthau and Pehle both urged me to return to Turkey immediately after listening to my full report. At lunch in the Secretary's office, I had detailed the conditions of the refugees in the Balkans and the opportunities which we had created for dealing with the enemy and for opening the door which was closed from the inside; the formal obstructions which the Turkish and British Governments were placing in our way; the work of the underground in proving that large numbers of men, women, and children could be spirited out of the Nazi-controlled countries; and, finally, the immediate opportunity of President Roosevelt's Board for the rescue of thousands of these victims. I quoted the reports that had come to me through the underground, that the trapped people, upon hearing that our Government had sent emissaries to rescue them, had been lifted out of their despair. We could not now abandon them. It was only a question of the War Refugee Board exploiting the prestige of our Government to the utmost and pushing its program to a successful conclusion.

I had overstayed my leave of absence from business and felt that someone else should take up the

work. Neither Hull, Morgenthau, nor Pehle would hear of this. I agreed to go back and try to finish the job. This time I knew that I would remain in Turkey until the immediate rescue job I had started, or the war, or both, were concluded.

While I was in Cincinnati, I was suddenly called to Washington and rushed there by special plane. An emergency in which lurked unforeseeable possibilities, had developed. Two Hungarians, both Nazi agents, had been flown to Istanbul from Vienna by Himmler's first assistants. Information concerning them was scant in Washington. The agents brought with them an offer to exchange human beings, prisoners of war and refugees, for money and motor trucks. Just who was the authority for the offer, whether the German Government or some powerful Nazi officials in it, was not clear. The offer, however, veiled possible traps for Allied statesmanship and risks for the Allied war effort. We could not know. The danger involved was so patent that the British would have nothing to do with it. An "aide memoire" from Lord Halifax to Secretary Hull detailed the British Government's objection to participating in any discussions with the agents.

President Roosevelt, however, was interested in using these possible discussions as a means of saving lives and obtaining information. Once the door was open, we could gain time both for us and for the

minorities through a strategy of delay, while doing our utmost to find out everything possible about the offer and the officials who were participating in it.

It was now my mission to seek out and question the agents; to inquire into every aspect of the "offer." There wasn't even time for me to bid last-minute adieus. I received a handshake from Stettinius, a pat on the back from Pehle, and an all-embracing letter of support from President Roosevelt; I was on my way.

The sun was setting on Sunday, June 11, as my plane circled LaGuardia Field for the flight back over the Atlantic. The New York newspapers were carrying the detailed accounts of the landing of our troops on the Normandie beachhead, five days before. My thoughts traveled back and forth, now admiring the exploits of our troops, now preoccupied with my own new responsibilities. There were moments when doubt weighed heavily upon me. Responsibility was not a stranger to me, but the sort of work in which I felt at home was not espionage, facile diplomacy, nor yet Balkan intrigue.

The two-motored De Havilland plane on which I made the last lap of my return voyage from the border town of Adana to Ankara, Turkey, looked and felt like a toy compared to the C-54's, the four-motored giants on which I had crossed the ocean. As we settled down in the airport, the fresh breezes from the Ana-

tolian mountains were a welcome contrast to the oppressive 120 degree heat in Cairo and over Sinai desert. I went immediately to the Embassy to see Ambassador Steinhardt to arrange the interview with the two Hungarians. I wanted to determine as far as possible the authenticity of their credentials, ferret out as much information as I could about the conditions of the refugees, and obtain any information that might be valuable for our intelligence officers. And above all else I was to "keep the door open."

"As long as you can keep talking," John Pehle had said, "there is hope for the persecuted people of Hungary. Negotiate as long as you can. Find out what the Nazis want and let us know without delay."

I asked Ambassador Steinhardt about the two Hungarians. "The British have captured them and spirited them over the border into Syria," said the Ambassador. "They are now out of my jurisdiction."

"Where in Syria?" I asked.

"Nobody seems to know."

"I have instructions to interview these men at all costs," I said, "and we will have to ask the British to return them to Turkey; otherwise I shall have to go after them."

The next day, at a meeting we had with British Minister Bennett, I pressed for specific information on the whereabouts of the two mysterious figures. After an hour's stubborn insistence I wrung out of

him the admission that they had been taken to Cairo, that they were under the surveillance of the British Intelligence, and that the entire matter had now been placed in the hands of Lord Moyne, Cabinet member and Deputy Minister of State in the Middle East.

There was nothing for me to do but to fly back to Cairo, which I determined to do without delay. The prospect of this return flight over the mountains and deserts, almost one-third of the way back home, without a day's rest, was staggering. I was thoroughly exhausted from days and nights of continuous flight from Washington. Nevertheless, I asked the British to inform their Embassy in Cairo of my intended arrival. As a precaution, I carried a letter from Ambassador Steinhardt to Minister S. Pinkney Tuck in Cairo; he had only that week replaced Alexander Kirk, who had gone to his new post as Ambassador to Italy.

For two days I traveled night and day, by courtesy of the BOAC (British Overseas Airways Corporation). I arrived in Cairo at 5:20 P.M. on June 30. As I was working on telegrams to Washington in the palatial residence building of our Legation, a sudden wind swept all the doors shut with a bang. I had heard of the impenetrability of these typhoons of sand. A gray-brown haze blotted out the sun. Sand swirled in waves. The air was simply a sea of sand in motion, shutting off breath and escape.

The storm passed quickly but left behind an oppressive, sticky, sand-filled ether, speckled with millions of insects. Until five-thirty in the morning I struggled against insects and superheat for a wink of sleep, which I badly needed. Then I gave up, bathed in warm water piped from the Nile (there is none that is cold), and dressed for the day.

There was difficulty in meeting Lord Moyne, although I had flown from Ankara back to Cairo for that specific purpose. The British were reluctant to permit me to do anything in the matter of the German agents. When I arrived at the American Legation, Minister Tuck had a message for me from John Hamilton, assistant to Lord Moyne, to the effect that I was invited by Anthony Eden to leave at once for London by special plane; that the matter for which I had come to Cairo was to be taken up on the "highest levels" in London, and that there was no need for me to see Lord Moyne nor the German agents in Cairo.

Instinct and complete physical exhaustion both indicated that another plane trip at this point was a wrong move. Besides, my instructions were to see the Nazi agents in Istanbul. I had followed them back to Cairo. That was enough. I decided not to permit the British to change my instructions.

I communicated this decision to Minister Tuck, who retorted that I was perhaps being a little inflex-

ible. I insisted that arrangements be made at once for me to see Lord Moyne. Minister Tuck finally instructed the First Secretary of the Legation, Hooker A. Doolittle, to arrange a meeting. As he took me to the door, Minister Tuck said quietly: "I've been in the Service a long while. If I were you I would not buck the British." I thanked him politely and left. The next day Doolittle informed me that he had discussed the matter with Hamilton that morning and that Lord Moyne would receive me at noon.

Doolittle accompanied me to the British Embassy. We walked down narrow, winding streets from our own open, unguarded Legation. After three or four blocks we reached a section which was fenced off from the rest of the city with barbed wire. It was the British military area. Alert sentries stood at the entrance, bayonets glistening. When we reached the guarded Embassy we were checked first by signature and then by identification. Finally, John Hamilton, called from the top floor, came down and took us up in a cramped and apparently none too trustworthy elevator.

Outside Lord Moyne's office, I was introduced to Brigadier R. J. Maunsell, Head of Intelligence and Sir William Croft, Resident Minister, who were waiting for the meeting. I was soon to discover that protocol, the inner defense of diplomacy, was just as

prickly and forbidding as the barbed wire entanglements outside.

Promptly at twelve o'clock the door opened and I was ushered before a tall, thin, angular man of sixty-five to seventy years of age. The entire atmosphere surrounding him seemed gray. His eyes were cold and unemotional. I entered, followed by the entourage, and made a gesture to shake hands with Lord Moyne, who, it seemed to me, looked in the other direction. Withal, he was polite and offered me a seat facing him. (In embassy meetings one rarely sits behind a desk but around a central table in a circle.) I was placed in the center, surrounded by others, including secretaries, mostly in uniform.

In spite of the formal setting, I was intent enough on my purpose and sufficiently resistant to the official British atmosphere to be cooler than I had expected to be in this situation. I sat in the center, folded my arms and looked straight at Lord Moyne. He talked quietly, sagaciously, reservedly. He looked the part of the old British peer, which he was. He talked for about twenty minutes without committing himself to anything. He outlined the attitude of the British Empire, as contained in the memorandum of Lord Halifax. It was to the effect that the British Government would not be put in a position of accepting bribes or being caught in a net of trick psychological warfare;

that this could be one of the Nazis' many devious tricks. The very idea of exchanging money or material in the midst of war was revolting. Of course they would not do it, as it was contrary to principle.

I was surprised to see him adopt a technique of talking so long and showing his hand. I had found that the usual device in diplomacy is to make the other fellow talk.

By instinct, I sensed his plan to be a trap, and it proved later that I was correct. The statement was intended to dispose of the matter by shipping me to London to meet Eden on the subject.

I replied that my Government was also unwilling to bribe the Nazis or to be caught in any nets, but that we felt a broad moral responsibility to keep the door open by talking with anyone who had a plan to offer to save human lives; and that, furthermore, by talking to these men, we were bound to discover information that might be valuable to our Government and the Allies.

Lord Moyne disclosed that the British Intelligence had been questioning these agents for eight days, many hours a day; that one had revealed that he was a double agent, and that his record proved beyond doubt that he had worked for both the Allies and the Germans, and that he was selling goods and information to both sides indiscriminately. My own reports, gleaned in Ankara, had indicated the same facts re-

garding this agent, Giorgy (the alias he was then using). I quickly disposed of Giorgy by stating that so far as our Government was concerned, the British could keep him in prison. . . . I did not wish to see him. However, I persisted in my demand to see the other agent, Joel Brandt.

Lord Moyne pressed me to accept Eden's invitation, stating that the talks were going to be "centralized" in London. I was told that Moshe Shertok, representative of the Jewish Agency, who had come to Cairo on the same business, had warmly accepted Eden's invitation.

"I am flattered by the invitation from Mr. Eden," I said, "and I should like to meet him some day, but, quite simply, I must decline to go to London now. I take my instructions from Washington. I cannot and will not take them from London."

The counterplay of pressures continued for about one and a half hours. Finally I rose and said: "Mr. Minister, I come from a sporting people. So do you. I will agree to take my instructions from Mr. Eden if you will agree to take yours from Mr. Hull. I will go to London if you will go to Washington."

Lord Moyne apparently saw the logic in this. I then showed him the letter from President Roosevelt supporting my mission, and asked Moyne to co-operate in settling this matter on the spot, where he and I, as envoys with authority, could do so without delay.

He turned abruptly to Brigadier Maunsell and said: "Arrange for Mr. Hirschmann to meet Joel Brandt this afternoon at 3:00 P.M."

Maunsell then suggested that I should be briefed in the organization of the German Gestapo in order to learn the names and status of the individuals in the Gestapo organization who might be mentioned by Brandt. I agreed and retired through the labyrinthine offices of the British Intelligence to that of Brigadier Maunsell, which, happily, had one of the few air-conditioning units in Cairo. He let up a green shade which covered a blackboard on which was a chart of the German Gestapo organization. I made notes as, in careful and precise detail, he explained the operations, the names of each individual, and his specific work. As I listed the names of the Nazi leaders and their aliases on a small chart for my own use, I reflected that this assignment had extended to frontiers beyond anything I had expected.

11. *Interview With a Nazi Agent*

Shortly before the hour for my appointment with Joel Brandt, a British Intelligence car drove me to a house on the Nile. There I was ushered into a private apartment which looked out on the yellow-green water. After a few minutes the Intelligence officers brought in Brandt, a stocky, solid-looking Hungarian of about thirty-five years.

My eyes fell upon him with curiosity and with hope. Himself a Jew, he was here negotiating as a Nazi agent. It would have been difficult to cast a man in a more tragically anomalous role. A report to the State Department from Istanbul had discredited the veracity of both Giorgy and Brandt. I was working on the supposition that Brandt had seized on this mission as a desperate, last-ditch means of obtaining some advantage for his people without aiding the Germans.

I studied him carefully, hoping to learn the secret which had entangled him in a desperate mission of

intrigue and which might cost him his life. His eyes were weary and he showed the effects of tension. Yet in spite of physical fatigue, in broken English he spoke in an apparently frank, and often helpfully blunt manner. His concern for the safety of his own family and for the possibility of reprisals to others if he were not able to return to Hungary seemed to me genuine and moving.

It was not long before I was convinced that the British had erred in lumping Giorgy and Brandt in the same general category. Giorgy was taking advantage of the large clandestine traffic by couriers which went back and forth over the war-torn Balkans. These "couriers" or agents received large fees for their work. Giorgy, however, was a double agent and played it both ways. His role in the present negotiations was not clear. The Germans had insisted that Brandt be accompanied by Giorgy. Why? To watch Brandt?

For at least an hour, at any rate, Brandt and I were free from the ubiquitous Mr. Giorgy. Brandt brushed aside my exploratory solicitation. "I have had a very difficult time," he said. "Everyone has been polite, but it is as though I have been put in a prison—but I can understand it is necessary to keep me away from other people—I can quite understand it."

I inquired about conditions in Hungary. We had heard the shocking accounts of how the Germans had

taken over Hungary in March, 1944. Hungary, which, thanks to the hospitality of the people there, had been a haven where the refugees had enjoyed relatively tolerant, humane treatment, had been converted to a murder chamber overnight.

"What has been done in Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland in years, has been done in Hungary in a few weeks' time. It all came about very quickly; all the new laws and oppressions against the Jews came in Hungary in a very short time."

"Why did you leave?" I asked.

"Because I had been sent to come and try to make . . ."

"Who sent you?" I interrupted.

"Two different sources sent me: on the one side the Germans to make a bargain, and on the other side the Jews selected me to be their emissary."

Further questioning revealed that Brandt had been active in the Zionist movement for many years and had been selected in advance by Jewish leaders to represent the Jews in any possible negotiations to alleviate their persecution.

"What kind of relations did you have with the Germans?" I asked.

"I spoke to Eichmann [1]—he marched into Hungary with the German troops. I went at his invitation, or, rather, at his order."

[1] Gestapo leader in charge of Hungary, still at large.

"Who suggested the idea that you should come here? Where was it suggested?"

"Eichmann called me. That was the first time I spoke to him, and there he suggested that I should go and he would give an offer."

"What kind of offer did you bring from Eichmann —a written offer?"

"I did not have a clear offer. He only told me what kind of goods and money I should bring."

"Was there any specific offer?"

"Nothing specific."

"But how were you to know what to say?"

"He said I would find out for myself. He did not want to commit himself."

"What did he suggest to you that he wanted?"

"The main thing was trucks."

"How many?"

"He once said ten thousand, but—"

"What else?"

"He only spoke about trucks. He told me he would use them only on the Eastern front. Another gentleman—I did not know his name—who was present said once I should also ask for coffee, chocolate, and tea and soap. And Eichmann once mentioned money —dollars, Swiss francs and some South American money."

"Then you felt that you had some basis of an offer to discuss in Istanbul?"

"Yes, I had, for this reason, some basis. A year ago they had already suggested two million dollars as a basis. When I started the negotiations I did not speak with Eichmann. I spoke with Wislizeni [1] and I also suggested that this old offer should be accepted now."

"Where did you expect to get the money or the trucks?"

Brandt moved forward on his chair. "I thought I could get about one million dollars, not to take with me but to be paid to my credit somewhere. Then I should be able to open negotiations. It would not be necessary to go back with money or with goods. I had the promise from Eichmann that it would be all right if the offer was accepted. He agreed before I went away that he would make the first move. He would let out at first a certain number, ten, twenty, fifty thousand Jews. For this alone, it would have been a great thing."

"Did you have confidence he would keep his word?"

"I did not have the right to question my own conscience," Brandt replied. "There was no other way."

"Then it was a matter of conscience, not a matter of confidence," I said.

"No, there was one chance they would keep their word. They need things. Besides, I know from years of work that everyone of them can be bought. Many of them have been."

[1] In July, 1946, I witnessed this Nazi criminal on trial at Nuremberg.

"Mr. Brandt," I asked, "what do you think would happen to the money if it were available? I do not know if it would be available," I hastened on, "but if it were?"

"There are very many different cliques within the Nazi movement and there are certain circles who want to make money or more business for themselves. I can imagine them saying quite brutally, 'Well, you had eight million Jews; we have killed more than six million. We will give you the rest if you do not punish us for killing the others.' "

The man's words seemed to ring true, but I wanted to establish his relationship to Giorgy. "How did Mr. Giorgy come into this matter?"

"Gross is the real name. He brought letters from our friends in Istanbul and from us to them for a year and a half. I knew him to have been an official of the Hungarian General Staff at the time when the Hungarians' politics were considered to be fairly favorable to the Allies."

"Who was he working for, really?"

For the first time Brandt smiled sardonically, "I do not understand you. He was working for money. It is possible that the Germans have sent him for this mission—but not to my knowledge. He was not sent by the Jews." Another piece was falling into place.

"Did the Germans say anything to you about when they expected you to return?"

"They said I could take my time if I saw that I had possibilities of success."

I could hear Pehle saying, "As long as you can keep talking, there is hope for the persecuted people of Hungary. Negotiate as long as you can."

"What about Spain?" I asked. "Were the Germans definite in saying that they would release these people through Spain?"

"Yes." The man appeared to be groping for some way to convey to me the strength of his own impressions. "There are things which I know through years of work, and other things which I am only guessing. But I believe they want to do something legal. I think perhaps they want to do some big propaganda. To say that they wanted to set the Jews free, and the Allies did not want it, and so there was no other way but to kill them off. Understand?"

I nodded. "If you were in a position now to ask and to get what you wanted, what would you ask?"

"Nothing," his answer came back quickly. "I only ask permission to offer, not to give. I would go back and ask Eichmann, 'Will you release, as you once said, a hundred men for one truck? Send the first transport to Spain; then you would get these things.' That would be logical."

"Do you think that you could get what you want with an offer of money? Without an offer of trucks or goods?"

"I do not know. Perhaps I can."

"I do not want you to think that these things can be done. I do not want you to have any false hopes, but what do you think would be the best thing to do?"

"The best thing, I think, would be that one, two, or three officers from Hungary, and English and American representatives should come to a neutral country, say Spain or Turkey or Switzerland, and that we should try to come to some sort of bargain. That is my recommendation."

"You feel that if you went back with such a recommendation—"

"I believe I could stop persecution—the worst persecution."

"What number of people have been deported?"

"Until the week I went away, they started deporting about twelve thousand every day."

"Where from?"

"Kaschau, Klausenberg, Munkács, Huszt." [1]

"What kind of transportation—trucks?"

"No, railway lorries, sixty and eighty men in a lorry, the lorry sealed down."

"If you were detained here for a long time—though I have no reason to think that you would be—what do you think would happen?"

"I am afraid that in the first place my family would be persecuted, in the most terrible way. Secondly, my

[1] Košice, Cluj, Mukačevo, Chust.

friends will be persecuted. Thirdly, I fear that they would have executions and deportations. If for some reason or other I personally should not be allowed to go back, then at least somebody else should be sent."

"You think it would be necessary to send someone, or could a message be sent?"

"Perhaps a message on the radio or in a letter—it is terrible for me with my family there—they will take it that I have run away."

"Your family will?"

"No, my family knows—my wife knows pretty well what I am doing."

I had satisfied myself that I could find no shadow of evidence to support the reservations of the British. The interview had been running about two hours. Brigadier Maunsell's secretary had taken down every word. Brandt was holding up well under the cross fire, but I could see that the strain was telling on him.

I turned to the British agents. "One of the things that I admire most about the British is their superior way of making tea. It is five o'clock. Can't we all have some?"

Brandt sat among the circle around the table while tea was served. He relaxed and spoke even more freely. It was from these informal remarks over the teacups that we gained information on the movements of certain Nazis in Hungary. This information alone,

which was quickly transcribed and telegraphed to Washington, more than justified the interview.

As the agents were taking Brandt back to his place of detention, I tried to reassure him that no harm would befall him and that I would take all possible measures to protect his family. A wan and grateful half-smile broke through his grim, lined face as he thanked me and left between the two British Intelligence officers.

That evening I worked far into the cool, Cairo night dictating for Washington, to our Legation's most confidential secretary, my report and interpretation of Brandt's representations. It was an intense but not unrewarding task, a successful termination of one step in a mission.

By agreement, the same group which had met the day before in Lord Moyne's office met again the following morning to discuss my interview. This time Lord Moyne greeted me affably as I entered the room. He and his associates were marking up typed copies of my interview with Brandt, which I had insisted be taken down.

"Let me congratulate you," said Lord Moyne. "You have managed to ferret out from Brandt more information regarding the Germans than our Intelligence had done in the last week." I replied that I was glad that my conference had done the Allied cause no harm. I then asked for a copy of my interview with

the agent. It was handed me with some embarrassment—they had forgotten that I had no copy. I folded it without looking at it and nonchalantly put it into my pocket.

"May we send this to London as an official version of the proposal?" asked Lord Moyne.

"You may do whatever you wish with it," I said. But I insisted that a message informing the Germans that the talks were continuing be sent to Brandt's liaison officer in Istanbul, in order to save Brandt's family and to "keep the door open." After some discussion Lord Moyne agreed to this. The telegram which was finally drawn up was a masterpiece of discretion but it served the purpose.

The negotiations with Brandt did not bear immediate fruit. The British were unwilling to release him. On my way to America five months later I met him in Jerusalem, just after he had been released from solitary confinement in a Cairo prison. At that time his family was still writing him. They had been saved. The door had been kept open.

Our willingness to talk led to subsequent overtures by the Nazis. Negotiations were carried on in other places, especially Sweden, Switzerland, and Germany itself. The history of these negotiations is told in full in the final report of the War Refugee Board's Executive Director. The following excerpt from the

report describes the more interesting of these negotiations:[1]

The first German proposal was brought out by Joel Brandt, a member of the Budapest Jewish community, who was flown to Istanbul on a German courier plane. . . .

There followed overtures by the German authorities through Portugal, Switzerland and Sweden for the discussion of terms for the release of the Jews in Nazi hands. The proposal received in Lisbon suggested that discussions be conducted with a representative of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee. The United States Government refused to permit any discussions involving an American citizen. The Germans then attempted to initiate negotiations with Saly Mayer, a Swiss citizen, leader of the Swiss Jewish community and representative in Switzerland of the Joint Distribution Committee. As proof of their good faith, the Germans agreed to deliver a convoy of 500 Jewish internees from the concentration camp at Bergen-Belsen to Switzerland and to cease deportations from Hungary. The German negotiators were headed by the S.S. commercial representative for Hungary, Kurt Becher, who claimed to be close to Himmler, and the notorious Karl Eichmann, charged with deporting Jews from Hungary. In view of the rapidly changing military situation and the consideration that any time gained might operate in favor of the endangered Jews in Nazi hands, the War Refugee Board, with the approval of the State Department, agreed to interpose no objection to a meeting taking place between

[1] *Final Summary Report* of the Executive Director, War Refugee Board. Washington, Sept. 15, 1945.

Saly Mayer and the Gestapo authorities. The Board made it clear, however, that ransom transactions could not be entered into or authorized by the United States Government, and it specified that Saly Mayer could only participate as a Swiss citizen and not as a representative of any American organization.

There followed a protracted series of meetings between Saly Mayer and the German representatives, with full knowledge of the Board and the State Department. The British and Russian Governments also were kept advised. Through the ingenuity and perseverance of Saly Mayer, every imaginable dilatory tactic was employed and the talks continued for month after month. Mayer finally succeeded in shifting from discussions of ransom to the consideration of his proposal that if the Germans would cease exterminations he would arrange for relief supplies to be sent into Germany through the International Red Cross to keep the Jews alive. The Mayer proposal was purposely so vague that clarification of its terms had not yet been completed when the hostilities in Europe ceased . . .

In addition to obtaining invaluable first-hand information concerning the progress and the plans of Nazi treatment of the Jews, there were other more tangible results during the course of the protracted discussions. . . . Two groups of Jews from Hungary totaling 1,673 persons were brought to Switzerland from the concentration camp at Bergen-Belsen as a token of good faith on the part of the German negotiators. The deportation to Auschwitz [1] of upward of 200,000 Jews remaining in Budapest in August, 1944, was canceled, and transports

[1] Oświecim.

of some 17,000 Hungarian Jews headed for Auschwitz were diverted to Austria. Tacit S.S. agreement was obtained to permit the International Red Cross in Budapest to shelter 3,000 Jewish children, and facilities were obtained for the procurement and distribution of foodstuffs and clothing to some 7,000 Jews in labor camps in the Vienna region. In April, 1945, 69 prominent Jews from Slovakia and Hungary reached Switzerland.

A second series of meetings between high Nazi circles and a Swiss citizen for the release of Jewish deportees came to the attention of the Board in December, 1944. The negotiations were conducted in Germany by Jean Marie Musy, a former Swiss Federal Councillor acting as a private citizen, with Himmler and other high S.S. officers. Whatever his motives, Musy, who claimed to be an old friend of Himmler, succeeded in obtaining the release to Switzerland of 1,200 Jews from the Theresienstadt concentration camp in early February, 1945 . . .

Various German proposals concerning the Jews came through Sweden commencing in June, 1944. The first approaches were indirect and informal. They were made through the Board's Stockholm representative. . . . The German offers at first contained specific ransom proposals and later shifted to humanitarian considerations. The talks in Sweden were conducted by Germans claiming to be close to Ribbentrop, Himmler, and other high Nazi officials. In March and April, 1945, the presence of the German representatives in Sweden and their participation in special discussions leaked out to the press. This resulted in a series of rumors that German peace offers had been received in Sweden. Although the discussions were limited to the question of the treatment

of the Jews and prisoners of war in Nazi hands, the final German offers had clear marks of surrender feelers.

As a result of these talks in Sweden and contacts established by the Swedish section of the World Jewish Congress, a member of the Swedish Mosaic community flew to Berlin for a meeting with Himmler on April 21, 1945, to discuss the Jewish question. In reporting this incident the Board's Stockholm representative commented:

> "Himmler arrived at the meeting at 2:30 A.M. on April 21, having just driven 80 km. from Hitler's birthday party. Probably no more bizarre scene could be staged to record Himmler's unconditional surrender to world opinion—a two hour drive through wrecked German roads and a conference until dawn with a Jew from Stockholm."

Immediately following this meeting, a few thousand Jewish internees were released from the concentration camp at Ravensbruck, Germany, and transported to Sweden by the Swedish Red Cross. This was another last minute gesture on the part of German officials who hoped to gain more favorable treatment for themselves from the Allies.

That night, following my interview, I dictated for Ambassador Steinhardt and the Board a full report of my conversations, underscoring my belief in Brandt's integrity. At 3:00 A.M. I boarded a plane back to Adana, Turkey. First, one engine sputtered and stalled. The plane veered and turned back toward Payne Field outside Cairo. Would we make it with

a limping second motor? As the plane lost altitude, a fat little Egyptian boy sitting opposite me dropped to his knees and began to pray, beads of perspiration forming on his face. An American girl, a second lieutenant in the WACs, burst into song.

The courier of the plane tried to reassure us. "This pilot," he said, "is a West Pointer. If anybody can get us down safely, he can."

He lined us up and had us toss the heavy bags of mail to the back of the plane. This work served to distract us from the fact that the plane was settling rapidly. We landed in the heat of the desert with nothing more serious than a jolt. The West Pointer had been true to his trust.

Again I was transported back to Cairo. When I finally reached Ankara, a sore throat and fever warned me that my body was rebelling against the strains. For seventy-two hours I fought a 104° fever. I think I owe my life to Joe Levy's night-and-day nursing and the extrahuman efforts of Dr. Albert Eckstein, a brilliant German refugee who had left Berlin in 1936. Salvation seems to work both ways.

12. *Turkey at the Crossroads*

Before arriving in Turkey, I had heard only favorable reports about the new, young, liberal leadership of the Turkish Government and the marked strides it had made since the advent of Ataturk in improving the lot of its people. I expected, therefore, to see a modern society in the making, eagerly studying the technological advances and introducing the progressive social legislation of the Western world. This was far from the truth—at least as far as I was able to observe.

People who had visited Turkey years ago told me that conditions have somewhat improved. The sweeping reforms initiated by Mustafa Kemal (Ataturk) were aimed at rejuvenating the nation and modernizing, Westernizing, its life. Whatever the progress realized, a deep chasm still divides Turkey from the role Ataturk envisaged for his nation.

For a nation to be "modern" it must be industrial. The Turks are not mechanically trained, with the re-

sult that they fumble with gadgets and machines. The railroads, telephones, and bridges in Turkey have been imported from Germany or built by Germans. Machinery of all kinds, including automobiles, is imported. When machines or other equipment break down the Turks fumble and delay. Electric wires hung loose in nearly all the hotel rooms I occupied in Turkey.

Inflation was rampant. Money was plentiful for those in trade, but the peasants lived in poverty, as they had done for centuries. *Baksheesh,* or bribery, which Ataturk was supposed to have swept away, is an integral part of daily life. Nor do Turks attempt to conceal the fact. Tickets for train berths, usually unobtainable, miraculously appear at the sight of American cigarettes or razor blades. Official favors come higher. When the S.S. "Mefkura" was torpedoed and sunk in the Black Sea, I offered to compensate the Turkish Government through the Turkish Red Crescent (the equivalent of the Red Cross) for their rescue efforts. They accepted with alacrity. The bill, which was paid by the voluntary efforts of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, contained an item for the payment of bribery to petty officials. It was not so stated in these words, but upon inquiry I was told that an item designated "service" was for baksheesh.

I have not been able to forget the shock I experi-

enced when I first saw the thousands of peasants and Turkish soldiers from the Anatolian hills. With the exception of the officers, the vaunted Turkish soldiers were dressed in sleazy, soiled burlap. The peasants, wearing loose-fitting "wrap-arounds" and bent under prodigious loads, bore their lot stoically. The average Turkish peasant continues to live under conditions of medieval servitude.

The sidewalks in Istanbul are far too narrow to hold the mass of moving humanity. Those who wish to move faster than a snail swarm out into the street and take the chance of being hit by a clanging trolley or a madly dashing taxi. Pushes, kicks in the shin, and head-on collisions are all part of casual pedestrian traffic. The female American secretaries complained of "pinching." It was not unusual in Ankara to see a huge limousine carrying a Turkish official stop in its tracks and furiously honk its horn at a donkey carrying a peasant who swung his legs jauntily, with absolute unconcern for either the vehicle or its occupant.

Istanbul is a city of hills rising up from the Bosporus. Its life is maritime. Ships of all sizes, ages, and shapes ply back and forth endlessly. It was so when Istanbul was called Constantinople and when it was called Byzantium and was the Eastern capital of the Roman Empire. The fresh, salty tang of the Bosporus is in the

air. On wharves down in the section of the city known as Galata, men whose horizon never changes swarm in feverish activity.

After a day's work at the Consulate my assistants and I always took the precaution of burning all the papers used during the day. Then we threaded our way through the congestion of the narrow, winding Rue de la Pera to the Park Hotel, which sits on a bluff overlooking the Bosporus. I had to remind myself that the hotel was not a gigantic movie set constructed in some Hollywood studio. The fairly modern hotel stood next to the palatial German Embassy and was practically taken over by Franz von Papen and his hirelings. The place was infested with spies: the clerks, waiters, and bellboys were all in Nazi pay. Not for a moment could we relax our vigilance, even in our rooms, for they were wired. The waiters would linger unnecessarily in the hope of picking up a random word or casting their eyes on a stray memorandum.

The narrow lobby was a beehive of espionage and counterespionage. Germans, Japanese, British, Americans, Bulgarians, and Rumanians rubbed shoulders. The Japanese had brought their families. Their children were forever underfoot. Both Japanese and Germans were arrogant; the Japanese reservedly, the Germans boisterously. The Japanese would surrender the large dining room early in the evening to the ex-

pansive Germans, who stayed on, swilling wine until midnight.

The same officials who played host to the Axis diplomats were responsible for retarding the development of Turkey after the passing of Ataturk. I saw considerable posturing by members of the Government to lend the impression that they were preoccupied with furthering humanitarian aims. For example, there had been the offer of a haven of refuge in Turkey for the liberal scholars and artists of Germany at the outbreak of the Nazi excesses in 1933. Time was to prove that this spectacular liberality was a token gesture, not a continuous policy. A few men of outstanding caliber, artists and scientists that any nation would have been glad to number among its leaders, found a welcome. The rest found the door of Turkey, like the doors of other nations, shut.

In a number of telegrams sent me in the early days of my work in Ankara, I had been urged by the War Refugee Board to "appeal strongly to the humanitarianism of the Turks." In self-defense, Ambassador Steinhardt and I finally had to urge the Board to stop referring to this nonexistent virtue. Only money, shrewd trading, and political pressure, could produce results. Concern with the little man was not in their language.

The Turks also created the illusion of being impartial in venting their prejudices. The *Varlik Vergesi*

decree of 1942, amounting to a ruthless discrimination against all non-Turkish minorities—national, ethnic, religious—revealed a starkly predatory policy. The measure provided for a general capital tax, nominally affecting all residents of the country. Its burden, however, fell with unequal weight upon the various minorities; the tax rates on Armenians, Greeks, Jews, and Slavs were various multiples of the basic tax and were obviously designed to bring about the economic bankruptcy of Turkey's non-Moslem population.

Although the Turkish Government flatly denied the charge, declaring that the tax was impartially aimed at all wealthy tax evaders and profiteers, a survey by C. L. Sulzberger of the New York *Times* showed that the assessments levied on businesses and fortunes of Christians and Jews possessing Turkish citizenship were decidedly heavier than on Moslem Turkish businesses, and a survey by the Foreign Chamber of Commerce showed the following ratio of assessments for the Istanbul province: Moslem Turkish merchants, 4.94 per cent; Greek Orthodox Turkish merchants, 156 per cent; Jewish Turkish merchants, 179 per cent; Armenian Christian Turkish merchants, 232 per cent.

The capital levy was so drastically applied to the Turkish minorities that thousands of them were ruined. An estimated thirty thousand non-Moslems

were unable to meet the payments demanded and were sent to camps in eastern Turkey for forced labor on roads. The sentence was tantamount to servitude without time limit.

In August, 1944, Premier Shukri Sarajoglu said that the Government had originally hoped to obtain £T.250,000,000 through the capital levy, but that £T.300,000,000 had already been collected. But in Istanbul Province alone the assessments actually totaled £T.344,000,000, or nearly half the total amount of currency in circulation.

The fact that the foreign policy of the Government was veering toward support of the democratic nations made a modification in those laws necessary. In December, 1944, just before President Inönü left Ankara for his meeting with Roosevelt and Churchill at Cairo, a decree was issued ordering the release from forced-labor camps of those who had paid part of the amount assessed against them. Following the conference, more than a thousand inmates were released. The discriminatory tax was not abrogated, but one of its worst effects was at least temporarily suspended.

Withal, diplomacy continued its tightrope-walking act in Ankara. During my stay in Turkey, everyone was conscious of the fear exhibited by the Turks of being forced into the war. Turkey was watching Europe with deep anxiety, and the primary policy

of the Government was to indicate, if not maintain, a strict neutrality.

The war was being brought home to the Turks by the intense bombings of the coveted Ploesti oil fields in Rumania; by the feverish activity of agents from the entire world; by an intense bidding of warring nations for Turkish goods and food. Sofia, 330 miles from Istanbul, was ravaged by Allied bombs. Rumania had become a bloody field of battle. The Russians, by their surprise offensive in March, had thrown the Rumanian army off balance and sent it reeling back. During a conference I had with Cretsianu at that time, the Minister showed his anxiety by his nervousness and volunteered: "We never thought it possible that the Russians could mount an offensive at this time of the year through five and six feet of mud." He did not know the Russians.

From the Nazi side, the Turkish officials were presented with the active and Machiavellian devices of the large German colony in Turkey, headed by the archdemon Franz von Papen. German diplomacy, while bungling elsewhere, was consistently adroit and successful in Turkey. In the pursuit of Nazi policy, von Papen played his role with matchless perfidy, as events subsequently have proved.

My own joust with von Papen came in the nature of a musical competition. A week before my arrival

in Ankara, he had staged a grandiose musicale and buffet in the ballroom of the Ankara Palas Hotel for the Turks and the non-Ally diplomatic colony. This affair, at which Walter Gieseking, the Nazi pianist, was the sole performer, was the talk of Ankara.

The musicale I staged two months later is said to have overshadowed the effort of the devil-diplomat. Hungering for music and anxious to redeem this art from the ministrations of the Nazis, I tracked down a first-rate violinist by the name of Gilbert Back, a former member of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. I arranged for him to select three Turkish musicians and create a string quartet. For two months, at my commission, they rehearsed the Mozart *Quartet in B major* and the Beethoven *Quartet in B flat.*

We could never tell how long the rehearsals would last. Turkish musicians are not very energetic fellows. In the midst of a rehearsal it was not uncommon for one musician suddenly to stop playing, quietly fold up his music stand, and walk away. However, on the night of the concert they played like angels. The musicians sat in the center of the large ballroom and the ambassadors and their wives in a circle around them in the first row. Then, in accordance with protocol meticulously worked out by Dulcie Steinhardt, other members of the embassy staffs of all the nations—excepting the Germans and those of the satellite states

—occupied succeeding rows in the rear. The concert was a huge success and represented, I am told, a diplomatic as well as a musical achievement.

The last days of July were critical for the Turkish people. Parliament, which usually adjourns through the summer, was suddenly called back. Special trains were put into service to bring the delegates to Ankara without delay. Rumors flew thick and fast. Would war be declared on Germany? Would Germany retaliate with bombers? Istanbul is a city of wooden houses on precipitous hills leading to the Bosporus. A dozen German bombers could level the city in an hour and demolish its water and electric power; and Istanbul is the heart of Turkey.

Suddenly the Bosporus and the Marmara were empty. Only a few stray boats appeared in the curving expanse. The Turkish authorities had called in all their shipping. There was an ominous feeling in the air. At dinner in the Park Hotel there was an unusual rustling and whispering among the agents of the various countries. The Germans looked frightened and ate in silence. Something was in the wind. Newspapermen were all over the place, hawklike at the chance of a big story. They insisted that Turkey was going to war.

The following day, the silence maintained by Turkish officialdom only increased the tension that gripped

the city. People walked about in a daze. I was witness to a phlegmatic city suddenly caught in the grip of war hysteria. Next morning the city was even more feverish. Our Consul General, Berry, called a brief meeting in his office. He announced tersely that our Embassy in Ankara had informed him that on the following day the Turks would break off diplomatic and commercial relations with Germany, that von Papen had been handed his passport, and that the German diplomatic colony of some twenty-five hundred was already moving out of the country. The Germans who chose to remain would be placed in concentration camps in the Anatolian mountains. The Turks would not break off their relations with the Balkan satellites.

There was a grave question regarding the ability of the Turks to defend Istanbul, Ankara, or Smyrna, all of which were equally exposed and easy to demolish, from air attack. A stringent blackout was ordered. The German bombers did not come, but the blackout continued and was still being enforced when I left in late October.

The Russians took a cynical and disdainful attitude toward the blackout and after a month they blasted word on the radio that they did not know against whom the blackout was directed. Since the Germans apparently were not coming, perhaps the Turks feared the Russians. "If so," said the Russians, "you may as well light up, for if we decide to bomb Turkey,

we will do it in the daytime." In addition, as if to add insult to injury, they ordered their Embassy fully lighted up at night. It made a brilliant sight in the inky darkness. People came from miles around to stare with amazement at the island of illumination. The Russians nonchalantly went on with their work.

Finally, an editorial in one of the official Turkish newspapers asked by indirection about the lights in the Embassy. The Russians obliged the editorial writer with another radio blast. "The reason should be obvious to anyone. If we decide to bomb Turkey, we want to be sure to know *what* building *not* to hit."

But I am getting ahead of my story. The night of the Consul General's announcement, the first complete blackout was ordered. When I returned to the hotel, milling groups in the lobby and halls were in a frenzy. German families were emptying out in a mad stampede. The entrance was barricaded with luggage.

Gleefully we watched the haughty families of the Third Reich, who had smugly monopolized the hotel, move toward their bombed and terror-stricken Germany. The hotel became an empty shell overnight. There was a sudden abundance of rooms and suites at low prices.

Von Papen and his high-powered assistants departed with fanfare. Anyone attending the ceremony at the station would have imagined that what

was being marked was a triumph rather than a failure of a mission. He was his usual suave self, saying a final word of instruction to one, patting the back of another, and finally setting off to the border of Bulgaria, waving his hat to a cheering, pro-Axis crowd of Turks, Germans, Japanese, and their sympathizers.

The first two weeks following the break of Turkish relations with Germany were unforgettable in their turmoil. Whereas German Government officials had been given notice to return to Germany within ten days, German nationals, *except for the known anti-Nazis,* were to be interned in concentration camps some fifty miles beyond Ankara in the mountains. Those sent to the concentration camps found themselves in the predicament of having to pay their way, as though they were going on a vacation. Turkish concentration camps are unlike others; board and keep are not free. The internees were put into third-class railroad cars, with whatever belongings they could gather quickly, and shipped off.

Once in the camps, although under strict guard, the Germans were left to shift for themselves. If they had the price, they could rent a comfortable house, a crude lean-to, or even a tent; if not, they were simply left to their own devices. It was not possible for anyone to communicate with them.

As winter approached, tragic stories of suffering filtered into Ankara. Dr. Eckstein, the brilliant Ger-

man refugee doctor, set up a committee to collect funds from the small group of teachers and professional people who were under contract to the Turkish Government and thus allowed to remain but were sent to the camps in that country. Only trifling sums could be raised, for the salaries paid members of the German colony were anything but munificent. One of the last things I was able to do before leaving Ankara in October was to arrange with Simond to have the Red Cross send to the camp money, blankets, and clothes provided by the Joint Distribution Committee.

Apparently von Papen had left many dirty jobs behind. Among them was an arrangement with the Turkish police whereby a black list of some one hundred and fifty of the most outspoken and vigorous German anti-Nazis were not to be interned but were to be herded into trains and sent back to Germany to pay for their resistance with their lives.

The Turkish police had been bought. Suddenly they descended on the anti-Nazis and ordered them to appear at the railroad station that same day for departure for Germany. One can imagine their consternation and despair. After escaping from the hands of the Nazis within their own country, they were being collected by the police of a country which had just broken off relations with Germany and were being shipped back to their death.

The scenes of hysteria among them were indescribable. Most of the anti-Nazis eventually found their way to the American Consulate and to my office. We managed to spirit most of them to places of hiding and, with the aid of the British, to provide visas for them to Syria and Palestine. We were able to pull one woman off a train as it was starting, although a Turkish policeman was clinging to her hair.

At the height of the melee caused by this latest Nazi maneuver, a young couple rushed into my office, the wife carrying a baby in her arms. The husband was the first violinist of the Park Hotel dining room. On many a lonely night he had treated me to Schubert and Mozart instead of the usual dinner potpourri. He was Viennese, his father a Jew, his mother a Catholic. He had married a Protestant from the Sudetenland of Czechoslovakia.

I tried to calm them by saying that if they would leave the necessary information with one of my secretaries and return the next day, I would try to get them visas for Palestine. "Look out the window," he screamed, pointing to the street. Two Turkish policemen were marching up and down the street like two operatic supers. "They chased me and I ran in here," he cried. "If I leave here they will take me to the train. At five this afternoon I will be sent back to Germany and they will kill me."

We kept the family in the Consulate until nightfall

and outwaited the Turkish police. When the supers got tired and left their posts, we hid the family in the apartment of one of the professional rescue workers.

On the way out of the Consulate, the violinist thanked me fervently, but he still seemed troubled.

"What's the matter now?" I asked.

"But what about my violin," he pleaded. He hadn't stopped to take it.

I promised to send someone to his house to collect it for him. A day or so later, we managed to obtain visas from the British for him and his family to go to Syria. He was then able to come out of hiding.

On returning to my office from lunch the day after, I found a large bouquet on my desk—a luxury in Turkey, for flowers are inordinately expensive there. With the flowers was his card: "Thank you for saving my life. I have my visas and tonight at the Park Hotel I will play my last concert here. It will be devoted to Beethoven and Mozart, a program especially arranged for you."

That night a group of us dined at the hotel. Beethoven and Mozart received an inspired performance. All the heart and soul and mind of this Viennese were poured into the music; the usual noisy hum of the dining room subsided. The air breathed harmony, and we were deeply moved and happy.

The violinist came to my table after the Beethoven

and sat down. I said to him, "You tried to thank me today for saving your life. I did not do it. It was the great and free people of the United States of America who came to your rescue. Always remember that, and try some day to give something back to that idea."

13. *The Bulgarians Negotiate*

The American Consulate next to the historic Hotel Pera-Palas was formerly one of the elegant homes of Istanbul. Massive gates opened on a delightful garden which one crossed to climb an impressive marble stairway. Here Burton Y. Berry, the Consul General, had surrounded himself with a staff of experts on Balkan affairs.

One of the first men I saw when I had come to Istanbul in February was Dr. Floyd H. Black, an invaluable member of Berry's staff. For eighteen years he had been President of the American College at Sofia, Bulgaria. Black had married a Bulgarian, spoke the language fluently, and enjoyed a well-earned reputation as an expert on Bulgarian affairs. Black is the kind of American about whom sagas can be written. In a remote part of the world like Istanbul he symbolizes American culture. The thousands of young Bulgarians who had been under his tutelage had come to love him. The invitation for him to join the Consulate

staff dated back to the day when Bulgaria cast in her lot with the Nazis.

The very moment when Black started telling me about Bulgaria, I knew that I had struck a mine of information. He showed a profound understanding of that politically entangled country. His reports to Washington on the atrocities within Bulgaria and the specific activities of those who had perpetrated them were incisively documented. I decided that a man who had access to such detailed information from the enemy country must have connections which could be of enormous value to me in my work.

Dr. Black gave me a necessary political perspective and orientation on Bulgaria; the little country stood not only at the crossroads of the Balkans, it stood at the crossroads of history. For the second time in a generation it had taken sides with the loser.

The Bulgarian leaders regarded with fear the rolling might of the Red Army. Economically the country was in a sorry plight. The Germans had milked it dry and piled up a debt of millions of dollars which would never be paid. Essentially an agricultural country, it was stripped of its crops and cattle. Ten Nazi divisions (one hundred and twenty thousand men) maintained a stranglehold on its life. The Parliament, which had not been convoked in two years, was dominated by representatives who had sold out to the Nazis.

The Axis orientation of the country had its inevi-

table effect on minority groups. A Bulgarian version of the Nuremberg Laws, which reduced the forty-five thousand Jews to complete penury, had been enacted August 29, 1942. Anti-Semitism was an importation. Until the rise of Hitler there had never been an active anti-Semitic movement in Bulgaria. This did not lessen the plight of those who were now about to be engulfed. A Bulgarian population of about forty-five thousand Jews, and others in political disfavor, had to find some way of emigrating or face extinction.

At the time we were building our bridge of ships from Rumania, "the boys" had proposed chartering similar ships from the ports of Burgas and Varna in Bulgaria. Two ships, the "Pirine" and the "Vita," were ready to sail but for lack of clearance papers. The steamship "Maritza," of Bulgarian registry, had been one of the first ships to come through carrying refugees from the Balkans. It had been sunk without passengers while returning for a second rescue mission. Not wanting to lose any more ships, the Bulgarian Government refused to release any additional ships for carrying refugees. I pressed for the revocations of these orders, but to no avail. The door of Bulgaria was locked from the inside.

The situation had not improved when I returned to Istanbul in July. According to the eye-witness reports of refugees who had recently escaped from Bulgaria,

the condition of the minorities had gone from bad to worse. One refugee reported:

"I saw a man killed before me because he was in the street after curfew hours. No one has to account for killing."

It was impossible for them to leave. The refugees, the majority of whom were working people, were allowed no means of livelihood.

The only hope of saving them from death lay in overland emigration, but Turkish and British visas were, as always, desperately lacking. Jews applying at the Turkish Embassy in Sofia were continually told that there were no visas for Jews. In the rare instances when one came through, it was the result of bribes to petty Turkish and Bulgarian officials. In fact, there was an active trade of bribery, carried on by so-called "brokers."

Bringing forty-five thousand people out of Bulgaria in groups of a few hundred at a time by rail and boat might satisfy our craving for action, but certainly did not meet the emergency. By the time the machinery for saving them could be set up most of them would be dead.

In this dilemma a conversation I had had in New York with Ambassador Steinhardt, then home for consultation, came to mind. The Ambassador had felt that we would save people in Bulgaria if the arch-

devil P. Gabrovski were replaced. Gabrovski was the head of the Department of the Interior of Bulgaria and was charged with refugee matters. He used his position *à la* Himmler.

During April, while I was in Washington reporting to the War Refugee Board, the Bulgarian Government underwent a change, and it was upon returning to Ankara that I learned more about the Bagrianoff Government. Istanbul was filled with so-called Bulgarian "experts," each differing in his analysis of the situation. They all agreed, however, that the Bagrianoff Government was weak, shaky, unstable, and on the verge of toppling.

I went to see Dr. Black at his cramped office in the Consulate. He was not there. During my absence he had been designated President of Robert College, the American college in Istanbul. The campus is on a high bluff at the narrowest neck of the Bosporus where it empties into the Black Sea. The road to the college winds up a steep, intensively cultivated hill covered with rich foliage. At the summit are magnificent buildings shaded by the most majestic trees I have ever seen—linden, Lebanon cedar, spruce—which fill the air with their all-pervading scent.

The inspiration, and the money, that built Robert College in this remote part of the world was, of course, American. But it is a flower blooming in an intellectual desert. Here Turkish students are schooled by

American and European teachers in a broad culture.

I reviewed the situation in Bulgaria with Dr. Black, whose diagnosis was diametrically opposed to the gloomy predictions of the other "experts." His faith in the Government's ability to pull out from under the Nazi heel was convincing. Although he did not say so, I could sense that he enjoyed the confidence of the Bulgarian leaders who were striving to get out of the war and to find a means of winning back the good will of the Allies. I knew the Bulgarians trusted him and that he could serve as a liaison with the leaders of the new Government.

He told me that Nicolas Balabanoff, Bulgarian minister to Turkey, was then in Sofia having his first conversations with Bagrianoff. I begged Dr. Black to get a message to the Prime Minister while Balabanoff was still there. He promised to help.

Two days later I had urgent word from Simond of the International Red Cross that Balabanoff was eager to see me. I flew back to Ankara and again waited in the little sitting room at Simond's.

Since my negotiations with the Rumanians had been successful, it followed that I should try the same tactics with the Bulgarians. Simond, with his usual tact, had arranged a rendezvous at his home as secretly as he had maneuvered the one with Alexander Cretsianu. The contrast between the

two diplomats was striking. Cretsianu was bland, handsome, inordinately polite. Balabanoff was rotund, wore a flowing black beard, and was disingenuous. He seemed to be constantly on the lookout for an opening to place me on the defensive. A diplomat of the old school, he had spent the last quarter-century in posts at Prague, Paris, and Vienna. It was obvious that the governments had sent their most seasoned diplomats to Ankara at this crucial time. Turkey had become a pivot in world politics.

This was to be my second interview with Nicolas Balabanoff. In my first meeting he had listened attentively while I outlined the purpose of the War Refugee Board and the deep outrage with which we viewed the Bulgarians' relentless persecution of helpless minorities. He had mildly promised to urge his Government, which was headed by Bogdan Filoff at that time, to take measures to interrupt the pattern of ruthlessness. But nothing had come of the interview, either because the pressure of the Nazis at home was still dominant or because of the unwillingness of his Government to act.

This day at Simond's, Balabanoff was radiant with smiles and good humor. In fluent German he told me he had good news for me. He explained that in his previous conversation with me he could say nothing because the former Government had been opposed to assisting the refugees (its own people). His

hands had been tied. "This new Government," he said, "is prepared to take a new course with regard to minorities."

He had spent two days with Bagrianoff, and they had talked for two hours on that specific subject. I was smoking as I listened to Balabanoff pour out his excited report and I placed a cherished pack of American cigarettes on the little tea table in front of us, offering one to the Minister.

"I do not smoke," he said, "but my wife does. She would love an American cigarette." Forthwith he appropriated the entire pack.

Balabanoff continued expansively on the aid which his Government intended to give. He insisted that the oppressed peoples would be relieved at the "earliest opportunity."

I had heard that phrase too often, especially from suave diplomats, to accept it at face value. It was becoming obvious that Balabanoff and his Government were on the defensive. The Russians were moving in; I knew that there were secret conversations about peace terms. I decided to take one of those "shots in the dark" and to request a letter from him, committing himself and his Government to the cessation of their persecution of minorities.

Governments do not address letters of any kind to belligerents. I was astonished when Balabanoff amiably agreed to address such a letter as I requested,

not to me, an enemy envoy, but through Simond, the Swiss intermediary.

"When will I have this letter in my hand?" I asked pointedly, pressing the situation. "By tomorrow noon," replied Balabanoff. "It will be delivered to Simond before that hour."

Simond and I set a rendezvous at the Hotel Ankara Palas at 1:00 P.M. the next day. I waited nervously for him, pacing the floor in my little room. Would the letter arrive, or would there be more excuses and delays? Punctually at one o'clock Simond arrived with the coveted letter. He had two copies written in French on Balabanoff's personal stationery and signed by him. It is an amazing document. Considering the fact that we were at war with Bulgaria, a note from that country's Minister, criticizing the former Bulgarian Government, was unprecedented. Here is a translation of the historic document:

There is no doubt that the new Bulgarian Government regrets exceedingly all the anti-Jewish measures taken by our country and that it does not in the least approve these measures.

I have the impression that the Government intends to abolish the present laws concerning the Jews at an opportune moment. However, for the present it has firmly decided to do away with arbitrary methods in the application of these laws, as well as with all restrictive measures not provided by such laws.

BALABANOFF

When I showed the letter with Balabanoff's signature to Dr. Black he could hardly believe it. "How did you get it out of him?" he asked repeatedly. "We will hold him and his Government to these promises," he exclaimed, as he paced the floor.

This gave me an idea. We would demand of the Bulgarian Government that the entire persecuted population be saved *inside* Bulgaria. Hardly able to control my excitement, I returned to the hotel and sent for Katzki. "Come for a walk," I said. "I want to try out something on you." As we guided our steps with flashlights in the blackout, I outlined the strategy of testing the Bulgarian Government's sincerity. We would demand that the Government call the dormant Parliament into special session at once and have the nefarious anti-Jewish laws stricken off the books. There would then be no refugees from Bulgaria.

I decided to address a communication covering the situation to Dr. Black, well knowing that it would somehow find its way to the leaders of the new Government. In his position as President of Robert College he was in a delicate situation and could not play an open part in political affairs. Yet the Turks were fully aware of his friendly interest and influence with the Bulgarians. I knew we could count on his American passion for the liberty of all people.

Sundown was a magic hour in Istanbul. I recall

pacing up and down the floor of my office in the American Consulate in Istanbul and glancing out of the window at the Golden Horn as I dictated my letter of resolution to Dr. Black. I had reason to believe that this letter would reach the hands of the top Bulgarian officials and I tried to picture how the words would read in the office of the Bulgarian Prime Minister in bomb-scarred Sofia:

Istanbul, August 1, 1944

Dear Dr. Black:

The conversations with and reports from Balabanoff for his Government were encouraging as first possible steps. His letter written to Simond for our Government, which has been transmitted to Washington, is confirmatory of the above. But I believe that you will agree with me that the Bulgarian Government is not going far enough at the crucial hour on these matters. I am thoroughly convinced that the Government will take whatever possible steps are available to expedite the release, within technical possibilities, of their citizens who happen to be Jews. From information at hand, confirmed by you and Balabanoff, these steps, at this time, can result in only a pitifully small emancipation.

I am bothered by two aspects of this problem: (a) that few refugees will be able to leave Bulgaria in the next important weeks and months; (b) that The War Refugee Board, watching daily for specific acts of large refugee movements out of Bulgaria, will have no choice but to

interpret these negative results as a breach of faith by the Bulgarian Government in the face of its verbal and written representations by Balabanoff.

The Bulgarian Government stands today in the position where it can create a priceless measure of goodwill (without as I see it, giving up anything fundamental) by taking the essential steps without delay to abrogate the scandalous anti-Jewish laws and to permit us to announce it forthrightly to the world. Whatever sacrifice on its own part is necessary at this time for it to do so, I am confident that the scales will weigh heavily in its own favor after the decision is announced . . .

Why send refugees in lost groups to strange lands, if, as the Minister of their country asserts, they will "gradually" find themselves back in the position of respect and responsibility where they were before the war? It may even be that the Bulgarian Government some months hence may find itself in the position of beckoning for the return of these self-same citizens whom they helped to deport to Palestine at great expense and inconvenience. I insist that the step we are suggesting will be of even greater advantage to Bulgaria than to those who will be saved.

I have no way of knowing whether the actual letter reached the Bulgarian Prime Minister, but I learned that the contents did. I then telegraphed to John Pehle, asking him to support this alternative in the Board's program, that is, rescuing an entire population within its own country instead of leading small groups of its citizens into strange lands. In my tele-

gram I pointed out that most of them would probably want to return to their own countries after the war, thus adding another postwar problem of relocation.

John Pehle supported my program as he had done in all previous instances, but I received a telegram from the State Department (the only critical one during my entire mission) in which I was questioned for appearing to concern myself with an aspect of the postwar problem. On this I answered the State Department tartly and probably conclusively, for I heard no more about it.

The Russians were pressing the Bagrianoff Government. The Bulgarians were known to be asking for peace terms. I had knowledge of actual discussions going on behind the scenes. "The Bagrianoff Government may fall any day," Dr. Black now warned me. Finally the Bulgarian Parliament was called into session on September 1, 1944. Matters of high policy were under discussion. Each day the Bulgarian radio reported the progress of the sessions, and prominent among the announcements was the plan for consideration of the revocation of the anti-Jewish laws.

It meant flying in the face of the Nazi representatives in Parliament and the German troops, who still held key places such as airports. Would the Government have the courage to repeal laws which were part of the inflexible policy of the Nazi masters? These

were tense hours. Word came back that other matters of first importance had to be considered; that a minority group of forty-five thousand was incidental compared with the preservation of their entire population. I sent a reply back through Balabanoff that if it were a small matter, it was therefore all the easier for them. The good will of the American people could be won through giving way on a "small matter."

Each night at about 11:00 P.M. I got by messenger, from the office of War Information in Istanbul, translations of the official radio announcements by various governments—the Turkish, Rumanian, Russian, German, etc. Each country's message was put on a different color paper. Bulgaria's color was blue. I had picked my way in the blackout to Abdullah's, a famous restaurant on the Rue de la Pera. The curtains blocked out the air, and it was stifling. Suddenly Helen Tannenbaum, the supervisor of personnel records at OWI, rushed in and handed me a blue sheet of paper. I was afraid to look until my eye caught the word, "revoked"; then I read rapidly. It was a translation of the Bulgarian Government's announcement that the anti-Jewish laws had been revoked; the entire population was free to pursue its normal life; property would be returned to its rightful owners and the people fully liberated. I could see the wandering, tired people leaving the concentration camps and

trudging back to the cities and villages to build up their bodies and live out their lives. Forty-five thousand people liberated by edict of the enemy while we were still at war with him!

14. *Farewell to Turkey*

Toward the end of September, 1944, the machinery for rescuing refugees from the Balkans through Turkey was in operation. None of us was satisfied with the relatively small number that was permitted to come through. Still, refugees kept flowing into Turkey regularly, by ship and by rail. Equally important was the fact that tens of thousands of persecuted people in Rumania and Bulgaria had been reinstated in their civil rights and emigration for them was no longer a matter of life and death. Meanwhile both Rumania and Bulgaria had been knocked out of the war and were under Russian military government. These military operations virtually sealed Hungary as an escape route. Transylvania, between Hungary and Rumania, was rapidly becoming a major battlefield.

When the Russian steam roller had passed over Bulgaria and Rumania, and these countries had come under the administration of the Russians, our ally, the

British and Americans took it for granted that they could move into these countries also. A military mission consisting of a few British and American Intelligence officers and some newspapermen immediately flew to Bucharest, Rumania. Another group was leaving for Sofia, Bulgaria, by automobile. Of course, I was anxious to accompany one of these missions for it would be better to appraise the value of our rescue measures and estimate the relief needs of the victims of persecution and intolerance on the spot. I therefore urged Ambassador Steinhardt to authorize me to go with one of the missions; as a government official I could not leave my post without permission. Ambassador Steinhardt telegraphed my request to Washington. Permission was withheld, however, until legations could be set up in the two countries. This was understandable. The Russians were in complete control of the two countries, and Ambassador Steinhardt advised me not to press the matter.

For months I had looked with yearning at the two countries across the Black Sea. I felt confident that if I were able to set foot in Bucharest and Sofia I could break more deadlocks and rescue more victims. Moreover, I would be able to study the situation firsthand and bring in sorely needed relief. Refugees arriving from these countries and our own Intelligence officers brought back heartrending reports of suffering and privation.

I was still trying to find a way of breaking through restrictions to go to Bulgaria when I received a telephone call from a Reuters newspaperman in Sofia. He said that the military mission composed of Britishers and Americans, which I had tried hard to join, had been given twenty-four hours notice to leave. At first I did not believe him. However, the Turkish and German radios soon began to boom a triumphant news "beat":

"The Russians have escorted the British and American mission to the border and seen them off on the train for Istanbul."

The Russians had apparently decided to keep the control of Bulgaria in their own hands for the moment. The chance of finally entering Bulgaria vanished with this decision on the part of the Russian Government.

At the moment the policy of the Soviet seemed unreasonable. Now seen in perspective, however, it was understandable. "The American armies are now about to enter Paris," Ambassador Steinhardt reminded me. "What would General Eisenhower say if his intelligence officers picked up some Russians snooping around in our sphere of jurisdiction without a prior understanding?"

The Germans, according to our military attaché, were pulling out of Greece. This was a happy omen. There would be need to send missions with food and

medicine into martyred Greece, rather than ships of rescue.

I made the overnight trip to Ankara to confer with Ambassador Steinhardt. We talked together in his small, box-like office, which was quite inexpensively furnished. Through the months of tension, of work, of hope, of disillusionment, and of success, during the weeks of impatient fretting to move forward with our front-line soldiers and those of our Allies, reclaiming as many of the victims as was possible, I had not been conscious that there had occurred a change in the nature of the work ahead. The realization came over me suddenly in the office of the Ambassador. Our talk was carried on in a mood of finality, as of a job done. With the retreat of the Germans, the primary needs of the refugees would be food, shelter, and medical care, rather than rescue. Appropriate government agencies, U.N.R.R.A. and the State Department, would now move in and assume jurisdiction. Ambassador Steinhardt had reached the same conclusion. He said that the War Refugee Board's rescue program in Turkey was now drawing to an end, and that perhaps I ought to return to Washington for consultation.

Together we dictated a telegram to the War Refugee Board, asking them to confirm our decision. This was the last message on which we collaborated. Many

had preceded it. It was Steinhardt who had taught me the technique of writing State Department telegrams, which is in itself a special art, and at which he is a master. It was he who had taught me the first steps in diplomacy as practiced in the Middle East by the numerous diplomats concentrated in this little village in the Anatolian hills.

Back in Istanbul, where I returned immediately to make the final arrangements for my departure, there were many farewells and souvenirs, among them some touching letters from the Palestinian "boys." We had believed in each other from the start and had shared many anxieties and some rewards, and it was difficult to say *au revoir* to these courageous young friends of humanity.

There was also a farewell luncheon with Dr. and Mrs. Black on the balcony of the Park Hotel, now free of its arrogant Germans. We looked out over the Bosporus and reviewed the political events in Bulgaria during the turbulent months just passed. No more rewarding gift could have come at parting than the consciousness of our success in the work we had done together to free the Jewish population of Bulgaria.

My last day in Istanbul was one of the few rainy days while I was there, but as I was leaving at sundown on the boat which took me back across the Sea

of Marmara to Haydarpasa for the train to Ankara, the sky cleared. A small group of men and women who had worked with me for many months saw me off at the train—a quiet, thoughtful parting. Then, at twilight, as the train wound its way around the coast of Asia Minor, a beautiful sunset covered the heavens. The interplay of clouds sketched borders of purple, gold, and mauve, and furrows of greenish yellow across the horizon. Nature provided a magnificent farewell.

Back in Ankara I made the rounds of the embassies, as I had done nine months before on my arrival. The realization that I had been in Turkey only a very short time came to me with a shock; it seemed as if a long life had been telescoped into these months.

The last embassy I visited was that of the Russians. The Ambassador was ill, but I spent several profitable hours with Mikhailov, the First Secretary of the Soviet Embassy. During my first visit the Russians had suggested that my mission in Turkey was hopeless. As I reflected on all that had happened since, this farewell assumed unusual significance for me. Mikhailov, who was consistent to the end in his disarming bluntness, congratulated me on my bold decision to approach the Rumanian and Bulgarian Ministers at the climax of the war and to work closely with them. He revealed that, following the Soviet occupation of Rumania and Bulgaria, the Russians

had concluded that the two former enemy Ministers, Cretsianu and Balabanoff, had been "on our side." They were therefore being protected and retained in office. In fact, they had had the respect of the Russians all along, he said, and my original decision to deal with them openhandedly had been sound. I telegraphed Mikhailov's statement back to the Board, as final justification of its policy in having authorized me to deal with the enemy.

Before leaving the Soviet Embassy I made a plea to Mikhailov to urge his Government to issue instructions to the advancing Russian armies to protect the refugees who might be further helped in the Balkans. The Red Army was then sweeping through the Rumanian plains. We parted with friendly bows and felicitations and expressed the hope of meeting next time in Washington or Moscow.

I walked out of the palatial surroundings of the Russian Embassy into the dry, still air of Ankara with a real sense of regret that it was to be my last official call. The Russians had made a strong impression upon me during the preceding months. What pleased me most about them was their disarming frankness and their quiet self-assurance. All the smoothness and adroitness, the charming amenities which are an accepted part of the business of diplomacy, they discarded for simplicity and directness. This approach suits the American temperament. Plain dealing, un-

equivocal and unambiguous talk are certainly of the American school. Now I could understand why Wendell Willkie had returned from his odyssey convinced that this incredibly powerful people was on the way up and would have a significant part in shaping the new world.

15. *Clover in the Desert*

The troubled stream of men, women, and children flowed into Palestine with an ever increasing surge after World War I, when Palestine, for the first time since the Crusades, came under the rule of a Western power.

At first this stream carried to Palestine mostly men in their prime; men who valued freedom; men who had turned away in anger from the early acts of discrimination in central Europe. These were joined by a pilgrimage of pioneers from Europe and America, men and women who joyfully gave up their established homes to work the soil of their new world.

In the decade of the thirties the stream flowing to Palestine began to fill with the human tide from Nazi intolerance. Most of those who then drifted to Palestine were carried along by the rushing current of mortal fear. They were the advance guard of a people who had known persecution.

After 1939 the tide of war carried to Palestine

mostly the fragments, the tattered remnants of a people—orphans, widows, and hunted men. Engraved on their minds were the memories of a thousand horrors.

We watched this saddening stream from the shores of the Bosporus as it drifted toward the warm hospitality of Palestine. When we could, we eagerly assisted this flow by clearing away the many obstructions tending to check or deflect this movement. Palestine, small in area and gigantic in spirit, the only refuge from the barbarous assault, became the magic word to the homeless, the friendless, the weak and the sick.

What was happening to Palestine as the stream of suffering humanity flowed over its borders? What had become of the children from Transnistria who had reached there?

The first view I had of Palestine was from the air. From above, the vast emptiness of desert looks endless, drab, and inert. The solitude of Sinai exhales a dry and oppressive heat. Heat, altitude, and sand blotted out the toy figures of men and camels far below. As we neared the Mediterranean coast of Palestine, bright patches of green began to appear in the uninterrupted expanse of desert, welcome reminders of man's creation.

We were set down at Lydda Airport, near Tel Aviv, and continued by automobile, climbing for an hour

and a half up steep, winding hills to Jerusalem. The roads are bordered by seemingly endless orange groves and green olive trees. The ascent is inspiring. One senses somehow the historic import of this Bible land, the many dramatic stories of our civilization written among these hills.

Compared with the semifeudal world that I had left behind me in Turkey, here in the most ancient land was the fullest supply of youthful optimism. Here, in the land rooted most deeply in the historic past, were to be found ideas, vitality, and tranquil confidence in their new world. The fears, the despair, the skepticism and the sickly dejection that infused other lands had been laid aside. No matter to whom one talked, whether farmer, teacher, worker, journalist, the present and its problems were something to be conquered for the sake of the future. The thoughts of every Palestinian converged to one end—the future. In the building of Palestine, work and dreams go hand in hand. Twenty-five years ago the pioneers visualized fields and groves in an ocean of sand. Today the parched land burgeons with the fruits of the field; there is clover in the desert.

At sunset I went with Dr. Magnes to his study on the roof of the library of the Hebrew University for a view of the surrounding country. The old city of Jerusalem was etched in a fading light. One star shone eloquently. Below, in the distance, were the inde-

structible walls of the old city. Gethsemane, the tragic garden, was on the right, and the Mountain of Olives on the left. Ahead we could distinguish the site of the original Temple of Solomon and in the vague distance far below one could barely perceive the outline of the Dead Sea. In the magic of this ancient setting one sensed the flow, the continuity, from the rich past into the future.

The roar of General Allenby's artillery could still be heard in the distance when the first important step in the building of the "homeland" had been taken. Significantly, that step was the laying in 1918 of the cornerstone of the Hebrew University on Mount Scopus, often referred to as the "University in the desert." In a generation the University has grown into the chief center of learning in the Middle East. The imposing structures house its three faculties of Humanities, Science, and Agriculture, as well as a postgraduate Faculty of Medicine. The last offers facilities for advanced study and research and is part of the magnificent health center consisting of modern hospitals, a clinic, and the School of Nursing which the amazing Hadassah Medical Organization built, supports, and operates.

The Hebrew University is the scientific hope of the Middle East. The three small laboratories functioning at the time the University was dedicated have ex-

panded until today there are institutes in Anatomy, Pathology, Physiology, Biochemistry, and Pharmacology, the best to be found in those parts. Their experiments and medical service have contributed immeasurably to the improvement of the hygiene and health of a backward people and to the winning of the war. The experiments in tropical disease patiently pursued on Mount Scopus have achieved world fame. It is impossible to estimate the large number of American and British lives saved during the war by the thorough control of epidemics in the Middle East, made possible by the institutions on Mount Scopus.

As impressive as the material contribution to the war was the selfless, patient spirit with which the work was carried on despite the privations of war. Some of the young scientists I saw were working with instruments which had been put together with rubber bands, adhesive tape, and wire.

The Palestinians face a multitude of problems, economic and political. The struggle with the British and their Arab foils is continuous. An ever increasing population must be fed; industries and agricultural colonies must be initiated and enlarged in the face of British obstruction.

Keeping alive their traditions and their dignity, in spite of suffering and injustices unparalleled in history, they have manifested the imagination, physical toughness, and resourcefulness of a forward-looking

people. Deserted and homeless for centuries, the Jews of Palestine are determined that the national home shall remain a living reality and not an experiment.

With his new-found faith, the Palestinian works and plans with inner power and a confidence that is contagious. His aim is to build an industrial and agricultural democracy, a work which is already well advanced. He has drained swamps and built roads, towns, and cities. He has harnessed the Jordan River and has given Palestine an electrically driven industrial establishment like those of Europe. The agricultural settlements are models of modern scientific farming. A desert now boasts vast reaches of fertile fields and blossoming orchards. The Middle East had never known anything like it before.

One afternoon I rode down the winding paths to the Dead Sea, deepest canyon in the world, lying thirteen hundred feet below the level of the Mediterranean. As we wound our way down and down, we could feel the increasing pressure.

The water in the Dead Sea is saturated with minerals. Swimming in it is a strange experience. One is covered very quickly with a metallic film of silvery hue; a drop of water in the eyes burns sharply. It is impossible to sink. One lies inert on the water, toes pushed in the air.

Engineers and scientists have insisted for many

years that the Dead Sea could be used for the production of minerals. The Palestinians have actually installed the machinery, which I saw in operation, for distilling the water to obtain chemical salts and minerals. Through techniques developed by their own scientists, they have found ways of distilling the waters of the Dead Sea to extract potash, bromine, and other minerals.

The distance from the Mediterranean to the Dead Sea is about forty miles, and plans have been drawn for cutting the land between these seas by means of a tunnel of fifteen square yards, to carry twenty tons of water a second. The cheap electric power which would be available through utilizing the Dead Sea would support industries of great productive value. Oil, which comes by pipeline from the Mosul fields to the refinery at Haifa, will also result in cheap power.

In Jerusalem I met an American engineer, James B. Hayes, who had formerly worked on the TVA enterprise, and now was busily studying the plans for a similar project in Palestine. This man, who had worked on the most successful of all power projects, was enthusiastic about the potentialities of a giant irrigation program in the Jordan Valley and challenged those pessimists who see in Palestine only a hopelessly dry and barren country. Given the opportunity it deserves, a free political and independent economic status, Palestine can develop a new industrial civiliza-

tion with cheap electrical power and a higher standard of living for all, including the Arabs. It has the climate, the soil, and the soul.

It has been estimated that six hundred thousand acres of arid, unused land could be reclaimed through a Palestinian TVA guaranteeing an ample living to two million additional people. If true, not only all the stateless Jews on the continent of Europe could be provided with a home, but also many of the backward, poverty-stricken Arab peasants.

This raises one of the most debated questions in the world today: What is the absorptive capacity of Palestine? The question is argued in endless discussions in the cafés, offices, and homes in Jerusalem.

"Palestine can absorb a million . . . a million and a half . . . two million people. . . ." The figure is debated, but no one speaks of a ceiling on immigration here. Dr. Walter Clay Lowdermilk, eminent agronomist, believes that, with proper exploitation of the Jordan, four million additional people could be absorbed in Palestine.

There is no telling precisely how large a population Palestine can hold, because the solution is not a matter of size. The area of Palestine is a little over ten thousand square miles, about the size of the State of Vermont. The neighboring state of Trans-Jordan, with three and one-half times this land surface, supports only one-fifth as many people. Who would have

predicted a century ago that New York City's sixty-five square miles had an absorptive capacity of over eleven millions?

History has demonstrated that where the land is made available to the people, its absorptive capacity is almost limitless. The relative overpopulation of the Arabs (used by British propagandists against the immigration of Jews to Palestine) while thousands of miles stand idle, is ample proof of the necessity of a new land policy.

David Ben-Gurion, a fiery leader, Executive Chairman of the Jewish Agency, told me:

"Palestine has the unique advantage of wanting five hundred thousand Jews. We welcome refugees. No other nation in the world is in a similar position. Certainly the United States and England would not dare to open their doors to so many refugees."

Just before I arrived, two thousand immigrants had come from Yemen, the southwestern part of the Arab peninsula. They were not only welcome, but the various groups in Palestine fought for them. Workers were needed immediately in the agricultural settlements. This need and this welcome for refugees are Palestine's greatest asset. Contrast this with conditions in other countries, where the refugees are idly wasting away in displaced-person camps!

The economy of Palestine is young, and growing as America grew in the last quarter of the nineteenth

century. It is begging for more people. It is bearing the torch of Freedom. The light of the Statue of Liberty in New York harbor still falls on this inscription:

Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door.

But the words have lost their meaning for many Americans. Our golden door is shut. But a small aperture in Palestine's door is somehow being kept open despite the strenuous efforts of the British to bottle it.

The Palestinian Jew has grafted science to the tree of the spirit. This tree is bearing rich fruit in a new civilization, perhaps the best balanced in existence. Agriculture has been promoted through studies in the laboratory and work in the fields; industry thrives on new techniques and discoveries; maritime trade is expanding. The primary wealth of the Palestinian is his membership in the community and his ability to contribute to it.

The challenge of his responsibilities and his opportunities have not only restored the self-respect of the Palestinian; they have changed his appearance. Having watched the refugee trains take off from Haydarpasa, Turkey, I found it hard to believe that the

rugged, smiling workers I saw at the tool benches and in the fields were once the sick, disheartened specters who had groped their way in the refugee lines. The sunshine was now in their features and on their tanned bodies. They had become tough in sinew and in mental fiber.

The issue of Palestine is not locked in the question: Who has the better historical claim, Jew or Arab? Nor is the question of who is in the majority important. Majority and minority must enjoy the same rights, the same protection of the law. Even the question of whether the Arab landowners and the British imperialists are in favor of a Jewish homeland in Palestine is irrelevant. The fact is that the Jews were promised a homeland in Palestine twenty-nine years ago, and today, when only the remnants of a people remain after the butchery of Nazism, who, except the exponents of Nazism, could dare say that those tortured, broken remnants shall not have their homeland?

The hidden issue is the freedom which must be established for Palestine—the freedom which must be won for the people within Palestine. The Jews have demonstrated their ability to develop Palestine and give it leadership, to help the downtrodden Arab masses out of misery and poverty to a better way of life. They must unite with the Arabs to throw off the semi-Colonial yoke placed upon both of them by the

British. By continued and further co-operation with the Arab people, by helping them, also, to come out of the past, the Jews can hasten the day when their homeland can be their own, in a peaceful setting with their neighbors.

The Arab leaders under British domination brood over their lost empire and their past achievements. They have made Arabia one of the most tragically backward areas in the world. Yet the majority of Arabs do not bear the Jews any malice. Incited by their leaders who have been spurred by the British, they have, on various occasions, and notably in 1936, tried to terrorize the Jews with mass attacks and bloodshed. During that period of disorder, fifteen new colonies were established in upper Galilee, and a seaport, Tel Aviv, was built—this at a time when the British hoped to use the Arabs to strangle the Jews.

Is Palestine's hard-won fertility to be buried again under the sand of the desert, to satisfy the greed of a few and appease the enemies of progress and of human dignity? There is only one answer to this question consonant with the hopes of all men.

16. *A Scrap of White Paper*

The history of modern Palestine, of the Jewish National Home, is short in point of time. It dates from the Balfour Declaration, which was issued on November 2, 1917, in one of Great Britain's "dark moments." The declaration was in substance a pledge:

> His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.

A joint resolution of the Congress (Sixty-seventh) of the United States and President Woodrow Wilson confirmed and approved the statement, and it was included in the mandate of the League of Nations. Behind the move there were practical and moral considerations which blended into a policy both humane

and constructive. Since Great Britain viewed "with favour" the establishment of a national home, and Great Britain was to hold the mandate over Palestine, Zionist hopes were finally to find realization. It was natural that, in recognition of this, the Jews of Palestine and of the world would aid the Allied war effort to the utmost. The Moslem world, under Turkish leadership, was allied to the Central Powers. The few tribes stirred up to rebellion by Lawrence of Arabia did not play a significant role.

During another of England's now frequently recurring "dark moments," May, 1939, the White Paper was issued. The promise in the Balfour Declaration of unlimited immigration was broken; the hopes of a homeless people were shattered.

At the alleged request of the Arab overlords who were opposed to the influx of Jews to Palestine, the White Paper placed a ceiling on immigration. (Seventy-five thousand were to be admitted to Palestine between 1939 and 1944.) At the end of 1944 no more immigration would be permitted, except with the consent of the Arab States. On January 3, 1946, a news item appeared in the New York *Times* stating that the seventy-five thousand immigration certificates granted to Jews under the 1939 White Paper "were now exhausted," according to J. V. Shaw, Deputy Chief Secretary of the Palestine Administration.

England's decision left the homeless Jews without a haven, without an alternative to the concentration camps and gas chambers which the Nazis were preparing for them. Moral and ethical considerations had been sacrificed to imperial policy. Meanwhile, lawyers were put to work to discover ambiguities and loopholes, of which there were many, in the Balfour Declaration.

Eight million Jews still lived in Europe when the White Paper was issued. With the armies of the Reich at their heels and the door of escape shut in their face, over six million of them perished. England's appeasement policy made her accessory to the crime.

Since the end of World War II the British and their cohorts, the Arab leaders, have made the question of Palestine a pivot around which revolves the whole strategy of the Mediterranean. In war, England was fighting Fascism; in victory she is struggling to retain her Empire. Control of the Empire in the East, the Middle East, and Africa depends upon the control of the Mediterranean.

This struggle is further complicated by the fact that there is oil in Arabia. To industrial nations oil is more precious than gold. The Persian Gulf region has more than double the potential reserves of oil of the United States of America. The struggle for the control of the oil fields is bound to be bitter.

The Arab leaders who hold the title to the oil lands but lack the finances to drill for it, refine and sell it to industrial nations, or develop an industry of their own, are making what political capital they can of their control of this vital commodity. For their purpose they are linking two totally unrelated problems, oil and Palestine. The price of Arab co-operation for oil is the forfeiture of the Jew and his rightful home.

The standards which the Jews were bringing with them were those of the Western democracies. New ideas of freedom and industry were infiltrating Arabia and were threatening social conflict and betterment where feudal lords had formerly reigned supreme. The homeless Europeans who wanted to emigrate to Palestine were the first victims of the White Paper. The policy which it put into effect bottled up eight million Jews, for the Germans to deal with as they willed.

The lives and the future welfare of the people already living in Palestine are also jeopardized by the White Paper. It is the rope by which the Palestinian Jew is to be slowly strangled, for the White Paper restricts Jewish settlement to territory west of the Jordan River. This territory amounts to only six per cent of the entire area of Palestine. The Jews are also to be limited in number; they must not exceed one-third of the present total population.

Palestinian Jews are also the victims of constant

acts of aggression and injustice in their daily lives. The very incomplete list [1] which follows will show the tyrannical use that England is making of her power under the League of Nations mandate:

1. Britain's police authority is used to hamper the Palestinian Jews in their fight to extract a livelihood from the unyielding soil. Their settlements are raided, often with the excuse of tracking down terrorists, and property is destroyed. With each raid a few more dead Jews are left behind.
2. The British use their authority with a legalistic brutality that falls with unequal weight on the Jews and the Arabs. They maintain a neutral attitude when the Arabs undertake one of their periodic pogroms, disclaiming jurisdiction, but enforce the letter of the law with murderous efficiency when the Jews take up arms in self-defense.
3. The Palestinians are limited in their efforts to acquire land by purchase. They have to pay exorbitant prices for swampland and undesirable marginal land. On the other hand, the mandatory power has made lavish gifts of desirable land to the Arabs.
4. The laws imposed by Britain are tending to destroy Palestinian industry.
5. In placing obstacles in the way of immigration to Palestine, Great Britain is inflicting a Nazi doom on the forgotten Jews of Europe as well as those of Palestine.

In answer to British aggression, a group of youthful misguided extremists, having decided that peace-

[1] Since this was written, Great Britain has extended her tyranny and brought about a virtual destruction of life in Palestine.

ful persuasion is futile in the face of Arab violence and British obtuseness, have organized themselves into an underground and consider themselves self-appointed martyrs to the cause of justice and decency. Their patriotism is white hot, and their fighting temper is comparable to that of the Maquis of France. Their purpose is the expulsion of the British by terrorization and liquidation of any vital "member of the enemy force."

When I arrived in Palestine in February, 1944, I found the city under a curfew imposed by the Government. There had been an attempt to assassinate Sir Harold MacMichael, the outgoing High Commissioner. Few condone the methods of these extremists; the majority of the people feel that terrorism achieves little for the cause of the homeland.

On my way back to America in October, 1944, I met, at the Lydda airport, an American Intelligence officer who spoke with apprehension of coming events in Palestine. He predicted that attempts would be made to assassinate the men who stood in the way of Palestine's development. His opinion was: "A small group of youngsters here are full of fire and not afraid of the consequences. They will not tolerate partition and will fight it out first."

On November 6, 1944, Lord Moyne, British Deputy Minister of State in the Middle East, was assassinated in Cairo by two Palestinians. As British

Colonial Secretary in 1939 Lord Moyne had been presumably responsible for the policy of the White Paper. As Minister in Cairo, he was in authority when that policy led to the "Struma" and "Patria" disasters.

It required just such a deplorable event to ignite the issue of Palestine into a front-page explosion. But the question may well be asked: "Who is responsible for putting the guns into the hands of the two assassins?"

Man's struggle for freedom against imponderable forces provides us with some of history's most stirring pages. We are reminded of the David and Goliath legend appearing again and again in history. One of the glories of man is his ability, at a certain point of insufferable injustice, to throw consequences to the wind and to fight back heroically with whatever weapons are at hand.

Who then is responsible for the unhinging of minds blinded by rage at beholding nothing but injustice? If there are a few who broke down under the strain of injustice, there are thousands who feel it bitterly but retain their self-control.

Here in America it is not possible to comprehend what five years of ruthless human carnage by the Germans can do to men of courage and faith who have been victims and witnesses of its bestial feroc-

ity. Should a whole people be held responsible for the misdeeds of a few, especially when that people has been betrayed by the very Government which is daily preaching "justice and honor"? It is a strange turn in the human mind which holds minority groups responsible as a whole for the acts of individuals. Is this the measure used, let us say, for judgment of the British or the French? Should we condemn the whole French people and the Resistance movement, for the perfidious acts of Laval and Pétain? Do we castigate the British people as a whole for the weakness of Baldwin and Chamberlain which brought the entire Empire within an inch of wreckage? Or the entire American people for the lynching of helpless Negro citizens? Are a whole people's hands bloody? It is not the hands of the Jew that are bloody with centuries of murder, nor is it his mind that is darkened with prejudices and discrimination. What can you expect of a people which has had its gates locked to innocent refugees; which has watched, as I have, while children and old men and women were refused permission to disembark from storm-ridden boats en route to Palestine, though those responsible for this refusal had full knowledge that by this act a death sentence was being passed? The tragic events occurring in Palestine must be considered in their true light, and the British part in all that has happened cannot be evaded.

In recent years a number of influential American Jews have been antagonistic to the cause of the Jewish homeland in Palestine because they feared it would increase anti-Semitism generally. This opposition has gradually dwindled as the American people, through four years of war, have learned that anti-Semitism and Fascism go hand in hand; that once Fascism is dead, anti-Semitism can no longer live. The frightful events since the rise of Hitler and the fact that Palestine almost alone provided a haven for those who escaped the Nazi butchers have served to convince most of the remaining diehards. Had there been no Palestine, the remnants of a people would have had nowhere to go. The work of the War Refugee Board in Turkey is incontestable proof of this. Perhaps in order to grant this fully, one has to undergo the experience of actually watching children rise out of the shadow of the Balkans to find their way to the door of Palestine.

The British mandate was a provisional arrangement, temporary in nature. The time has come when the British must stand responsible for the tragedy of Palestine; for their silent acquiescence in and deliberate effort at the destruction of a people.

In the words of Senator James E. Murray of Montana: "There was hardly another instance in the memory of our generation where promises have been so lavishly made and so consistently broken." Senator

Murray described British rule in Palestine as "a black chapter in English history, full of evasion and duplicity." [1]

Neither in law nor in equity can imperialist Britain be the sole judge of the future of Palestine. If the British are sincere in their demands that the United Nations serve as the tribunal for the decision of questions relating to the rights of people, they now have the opportunity to prove it by submitting to it the issue of Palestine.

[1] Reported in the New York *Times*, October 2, 1945.

17. *Unholy Alliance in the Holy Land*

One of the questions most frequently asked of me in Turkey was: "Why is your country so interested in saving nameless people so far away from America?" Minister Cretsianu of Rumania raised it in my first conference with him. Sometimes while at work, applying the resources of our Government to rescue people of whom no American had ever heard and probably never would, I asked the same question of myself.

Why did we set out in time of war to save these people so far from our shores? What is there in the nature of a people which inspires them to concern themselves with the fate of others so far away?

In answer to these questions, I could say that the heart of America is big enough to beat for others. We have learned, too, though we must often be reminded of it, that what happens to one nation affects all nations; that if one person on the banks of the Bug or the Dniester Rivers is saved for Freedom, the sum total

of Freedom on the Hudson River and elsewhere is that much more.

Although our humanitarian efforts might cause surprise in a Europe atrophied with hate and strangled economically, Americans may well ask themselves why they didn't do more, and why they didn't do it sooner. Our failure to offer havens, temporary or permanent, to the persecuted people, prior to the creation of the War Refugee Board, is an indelible black mark on our spiritual record. Moreover, this failure proved, in time of war, to be a powerful weapon in the hands of the enemy. In Turkey I heard frequent broadcasts from Berlin sneering at our "crocodile tears" and "our sanctimonious protests." This was no diabolical invention; the sneers were justified. When measured by our resources, our rescue efforts were indeed pitiful.

The example of some of the smaller European countries should give us pause. Switzerland, a miniature country cut off from the sea, and living under the shadow of the Nazis, received, in spite of food shortages, over one hundred thousand refugees. And the world will not forget the valiant deeds of the Swedish people when they co-operated in the secret rescue of six thousand Danish Jews and members of other minorities from across the Öre Sound. One of these was the physicist, Niels Bohr, Nobel Prize winner, who escaped in a rowboat.

The fact is that approximately half a million more immigrants could have been admitted to our country under the quotas of our existing immigration laws during the War. Since 1924 we have had a quota law which allows 153,774 immigrants to enter the country annually. Immigration has dwindled from year to year to a point where it is now practically nonexistent. In the year ending 1942, 28,781 immigrants were admitted, and only 11,000 of the allowable 153,774 came from Europe; the rest came from Canada and Latin America. Thousands have been condemned to death by the failure of government officials to permit our own immigration laws to function.

Evidence in our country of wasted opportunities for the humane administration of our immigrant quotas derives also from the fact that, despite the above-mentioned influx of aliens, the net balance of the number of alien immigrants living in this country has *decreased* regularly since about 1930 because of deportations and voluntary departures. "In the seven-year period from 1932 to 1938, inclusive, there was . . . a *net decrease* of 72,206 in the total number of alien immigrants in the country. The number was further decreased by the high death rate which exists among the 4,000,000 aliens now in this country, half of whom are now over fifty years of age." [1]

[1] Louis Adamic, *America and the Refugees* (New York: Public Affairs Committee, 1939), p. 9.

The "little people" of the world still look hopefully to America. If these hopes are to be fulfilled, the people of the United States must be aware of today's profound international issues in order to be prepared to assume the obligations of a great nation, a nation which, under Roosevelt, played a signal part in uniting the world for a successful struggle against militant Fascism. It must now use the same co-ordinating power to apply in peace the ideals which we professed in war.

This American ideal of the freedom of all people, so urgently desired by us, but not necessarily reflected in the actions of our representatives, runs counter to the imperial policy of Great Britain. Are the questions of Palestine and of the needs of displaced persons, for example, being attacked from the point of view of human need or from the point of view of imperial strategy? The Alliance which Britain forged and fostered with the Arab leaders—exposed with the publication of the notorious White Paper—sabotaged the future of Palestine and subordinated the rights of an already grief-stricken people to imperial strategy. The Paper indicated clearly that the British intended to consult only with the Arabs on matters pertaining to Jewish immigration and Jewish interests in Palestine.

Before this policy was openly admitted, the groundwork was laid for it by the creation

of the "independent" nation of Trans-Jordan, despite the fact that this action was contrary to the terms of the mandate by which Britain came to rule over Palestine. This policy of building up a political counterweight by the creation of an ambitious rival nationalism on the borders of Palestine and by the establishment of the Arab League has gone forward with methodical application.

There is a great deal of confusion and misconception about the Arab League. It is a useful tool. The truth is, as anyone knows who is familiar with the political machinations of the Middle East, that the League is a British creation—a device for world propaganda and furthering British imperialistic aims. It is no secret that the Arab leaders are financed by the British.

It cannot be too strongly emphasized that the Jews and the Arab people in Palestine have no difficulty in working together. When the Jews are left alone to work with the Arabs without the interference of the British, the results are constructive and harmonious for both. Give the Jews a status as a free people which will permit them to deal with questions of immigration, irrigation, and industrial progress—the last of which they have well advanced despite mischievous interference—and they will continue the peaceful, constructive development of the country.

That the British policy is designed to unite the Arabs through the artificial device of the Arab League should be fairly obvious. They could not unite them on the basis of Pan-Arabism because of strong internecine differences among the Arab leaders. It was found easier to unite them on the subject of anti-Zionism. Certainly the creation of Trans-Jordan as an independent state was designed not only, as explained before, to create a rival nationalism on the borders of Palestine but also to serve as a bulwark against Ibn Saud, the king of Saudi Arabia. It will also serve as a military base for the British, in view of the fact that they have withdrawn their troops from Syria and promise to withdraw them from Egypt. These are first considerations. The larger implications of British Middle East policy *vis-à-vis* Soviet Russia is not a matter for discussion here.

Only recently, Britain, while setting up a façade of independence for Trans-Jordan, announced it would maintain British troops there to safeguard communications and would organize a native military force on the spot. There was a momentary flare-up in Congress. Representative Augustus W. Bennet (Republican, N.Y.) insisted that Britain had agreed not to change the status of Palestine without United States approval. "I strongly urge the House," he said, "to censure this unwarranted division of Palestine and command the American people to keen watchfulness

as to the ultimate disposition of that country and the attitude taken by our State Department." [1]

Nor can the complete silence of our State Department about the changed status of Trans-Jordan be overlooked. Senator Francis J. Myers (Democrat, Pa.) called upon the State Department, in a Senate speech, to "explain" its lack of protest. . . .

"When the United States of America sits idly by while a flagrant violation of its solemn treaty is committed," Senator Myers asserted, "and when, in fact, a treaty is abrogated by unilateral action in contempt of the Senate, it is my duty to call attention of the Senate and the people of the country to the matter . . .

"If the peoples of the world are to believe in the moral position of the United States as a world leader, then they must have evidence that we will strike out against violations of treaty and human rights no matter which nation is concerned." [2]

The State Department, while otherwise concerned about the rights of small nations, ignored these protests, and no one has revived the issue.

No one will accuse Major General William J. Donovan, former Director of the Office of Strategic Services, of being vague, emotional, or prejudiced in his views. In appealing for unlimited Jewish immigration to Palestine, General Donovan said: "Hitler is

[1] United Press dispatch, April 14, 1946.
[2] New York *Herald Tribune*, April 6, 1946.

dead, but his legacy of hate might yet destroy the living Jews of Europe, if we all do not rise to our obligations." [1] Hitler's "legacy of hate" would die if all Nazi elements in Europe and the Middle East were removed from positions of power and responsibility and if there were no forces at work in Britain and America to further this "legacy of hate."

Although the problem of anti-Semitism is a living, cruel reality in many parts of the world, we must not be confused into thinking that anti-Semitism exists in isolation or that the problem of Palestine is primarily one of anti-Semitism. The Jews in Palestine are a minority group living in territory mandated to Britain, whose policy of "divide and rule" is too well known. The problems of the Jews in Palestine should be recognized, therefore, as of grave concern to all those who would see minority groups everywhere freed from domination and oppression.

British ruling circles, whose foreign policy has been unchallenged by their new Labor Government, successfully maneuvered the United States into becoming an accomplice in their Palestinian policy when they managed to set up the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry on Palestine.

Senator Edwin C. Johnson of Colorado, during a Senate discussion on Palestine immigration, spoke only plain facts when he charged "that Britain has

[1] *PM*, March 26, 1946.

made the Jew a 'political football.' . . ." [1] He also accused the British of retarding the development of Palestine by a policy of "evasion and political jockeying," adding that, "unbelievable as it is, the United States has acquiesced in this policy of retardation." [2] He said, further, that the State Department "has never protested officially" and had not "raised its voice" against what he contended were violations by Britain of treaty obligations.[3]

President Truman, speaking for the United States Government, requested the British Government, in October, 1945, to allow one hundred thousand Jews into Palestine. It will be interesting to see whether the American Government acquiesces in the stalling tactics and delays suggested by Prime Minister Clement Attlee in putting into effect the recommendations of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry.

One salient truth has come from British officialdom. It is the statement of Prime Minister Attlee that England alone cannot solve the problem of Palestine. Nor can it be solved by the acquiescence of our Government in Britain's game of power politics in the Middle East. The problem of Palestine must be removed from the clutches of imperialists and imperial strategy and made the responsibility of the United Nations.

[1] New York *Times*, October 2, 1945.
[2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ibid.*

There is a "present" and a "future" to the question of the place of Jews in the world. The "present" lies in the answer to the question whether the nations after victory have anything better to offer the Jews of Europe than Hitler had; whether the Jews are going to be saved from the fate that Hitler willed for them. The "future" has to do with the question whether the stateless Jews are to have a National Home, the natural aspiration of all the peoples of the world, or whether they are going to be forced to wander over the earth in search of what does not exist. People cannot feel at home if they are not free. People cannot be free if they have no home.

As they take up their stupendous task of reconstruction through the United Nations, it is only just that the peoples who achieved victory over Fascism recognize their full responsibility toward the group that was first singled out for extermination by the Fascists; that these first victims be accorded protection and security. This is what is owed to them. The citizens of this "People's World" must insist not only that racial and religious discrimination be outlawed, so that those Jews who wish to remain in their native lands be reinstated in their rights of citizenship and in their property, but that those who feel they can no longer go on living where anti-Semitism has been so deeply rooted shall have the door to Palestine and elsewhere opened fully and graciously.

But the world focus on Palestine's rescue efforts is out of all proportion to that country's size and its ability to care for the displaced peoples, compared with the resources of the great nations which profess profound concern with the fate of lost people in distress. Palestine has been a harbor in a storm. But the United States of America, Canada, the South American countries, Australia, New Zealand, and Sweden, among others, are all countries that were physically untouched by the ravages of war and which materially profited through the industry of war. They can well afford to open their doors to these homeless people instead of permitting the unsettled issue of Palestine to be used as a distraction from shirking their own humane responsibility.

The turbulent issue of Palestine's independence must be put in the hands of the United Nations. In the interim, the struggle to settle the Palestine issue must not be permitted to obscure the immediate need and duty of caring for the stranded people who must live from day to day.

Some remnants of a lost people have been rescued at a heavy price in blood. They cannot now be permitted to die a second death, but must be rehabilitated, relocated, and treated as charges of a civilized society.

Postscript

I had scarcely completed the manuscript of this book when I was recalled to public service and sent to Turkey on a special mission for Director General F. H. LaGuardia of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. There our mission concluded negotiations for Turkey's contribution to the UNRRA organization.

While in the Middle East I revisited Palestine and found Jerusalem an armed camp; giant British tanks clanked through the narrow streets. Doubtless the attack upon the Jewish community was in preparation. No sober consideration of these melancholy events will overlook the heavy responsibility of the British government in playing fast and loose with its promises. I am convinced every impartial observer must conclude that Great Britain—because of imperial considerations—has been more concerned with preserving the pro-Fascist Arab landowners than with the safety and future well-being of Fascism's victims.

Anyone who assesses all the facts on the Palestine scene can see at once that a hundred thousand human beings who are now dying a second death physically and spiritually inside Germany can rapidly be adjusted and integrated into Palestine's economy and rehabilitated into useful world citizens without displacing a single inhabitant there or causing economic harm. On the contrary, there is every evidence to show that they will do that country a great deal of economic good.

After an inspection of the displaced persons camps in Germany and seeing at first hand the remaining hundred thousand Jewish victims of Fascism daily deteriorating, it becomes inescapable that the problem of saving these people is the immediate issue. While an international jockeying for position in the Middle East goes on, these people will die.

Let us not be sidetracked by the political designs of one nation or another in the first duty to our fellow man—to rescue him from persecution and death without further delay. In time of war President Roosevelt managed with his admirable creation of the War Refugee Board "to take immediate action in rescue." Certainly we can do no less in time of peace.

We must abandon any partnership in and support of the British colonial game in the Middle East and demand the immediate rescue of these lost people.

At the same time we must re-open our own doors to these remaining victims of Fascism in the grand tradition of a nation that arose from the strength, courage, and hope of those who sought and found shelter on our shores. Then, for the sake of world peace, we must insist that the question of the independence of Palestine be settled in the Security Council of the United Nations, where it belongs, and nowhere else.

I. A. H.

New York, N. Y.
August 12, 1946

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